

The Effectiveness of Mime Game in Teaching English Grammar

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Teaching English to young learners has been growing very rapidly all over the world, including in Indonesia. This is partly because the government requires that the starting age of learning English should be earlier. One of the identified problems is that many non-native speakers find the complexities of English grammar difficult to apply and thus, becomes a great hindrance to conveying the intended message of the speaker.

The fact is most young learners have difficulties to express what they really mean to say. One of the reasons is because they have difficulties to internalize the meaningful grammar piece and use right grammar that conveys the right meaning in practice.

Grammar teachers should change the image of learning grammar from boring, complicated, and confusing into fun, challenging, and exciting.

The challenge for language teachers is to determine what strategy is the most effective. Furthermore, teachers have to find the strategy to keep children to concentrate to the teaching, to make them enjoy the lesson and to have fun and amusement.

Teaching grammar with games will be even more effective than teaching it through repetition and memorization. Teaching grammar with games will be even more effective than teaching it through repetition and memorization. Therefore, games are the right choice to be applied in teaching English to the young learners, because naturally, children always want to have fun, besides, children cannot be separated from their natural need which is playing games. Children like being physically active as they learn, because they are naturally imaginative and creative (Nedomova, 2007) Teachers should see games not only as tools but integrate them into the language teaching program, because they encourage learners to direct their energy towards language learning by providing them with meaningful context(Wright et.al. (1984) quoted inYolageldili and Arikan. (2011), because a proper game is one of the highest motivating techniques (Avedon (1971), quoted in Deesri, 2002.

Guessing game could be an effective technique to develop and reinforce some concepts of grammar. The most important function of implementing guessing games in teaching is to give practice in communication (Richard-Amato: 2003). One of the most effective guessing games is Mime Game where one child comes forward after the teacher secretly gives him a word, phrase or sentence and mimes an activity and his group or the whole class try to guess what he really means (Pinter: 2006, Doff: 2000) Goleman (1996) adds that children always enjoy fantasy, imagination and movement, and he claims that learning does not take place in isolation from children's feelings. Children will remember and learn faster when they are happy, relaxed and unthreatened, therefore teachers have to create a conducive and pleasurable atmosphere, so that what they learn can have a lasting effect on them.

The primary aim of the study is to explore the effectiveness of using mime game in teaching grammar to young learners. 30 fifth graders aged 11-12 years old participated in this research. They were grouped into two classes: group A and group B. One of the classes was assigned to the control class, and taught in a conventional way, and the other one was treated as the experimental group randomly and taught by using mime game. The result shows Mime game is an affective technique to teach grammar to young learners.

Key words: *Mime game, English grammar*

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1. Introduction

Young learners often learn more indirectly than directly from everything around them, by seeing, hearing, touching and interacting. They show enthusiasm and curiosity about their surrounding. Therefore Harmer(2007) states that a teacher needs to be flexible and to plan activities for a period of time. Halliwell (1992) argues that children will get bored when they spend all the time sitting still on their chairs, because they always like discovering things, and they are very good in using their imagination. They love to be involved in physical movement, in puzzle-like activities or in games. Rixon (1999) states that young learners are those learners aged between 5 years old to 12 years old and games are a natural part of young learners, therefore young learners should be engaged in a game when they learn a new language.

In addition, Lee et.al (2011) suggests in teaching English to young learners, activities like games are highly recommended, although he mentions that there are some weaknesses in applying games. One of them is when the learners feel they are not learning anything.

Besides, (Richard-Amato:2003) states that games are associated with fun and lowers anxiety. In other words, they will learn more effectively when their level of anxiety is low. Children always like to ask questions, practice again and again until they understand the concept. Richard-Amato (2007) claims that games are divided into five kinds: nonverbal games, board-advancing games, word-focus games, treasure hunts and guessing games. And Mime game is one of the guessing games besides picture guessing, and sentences guessing.

One important fact is that children always like to ask questions, practice again and again until they understand the concept. Thus, children are always active in searching for new experiences. (McIlvain. 1978. Tizard and Hughes, 1984, Montessori, 1983)

1.1 Teaching grammar using games

Why is teaching grammar to young learners by using games?

The fact is most young learners have difficulties to express what they really mean to say. One of the reasons is because they have difficulties to internalize the meaningful grammar piece and use right grammar that conveys the right meaning in practice.

Grammar teachers should change the image of learning grammar from boring, complicated, and confusing into fun, challenging, and exciting. The challenge for English teachers is to determine what strategy is the most effective. Using games is a good option, because they will strengthen the learners' grammar accuracy, increase their grammar awareness, and they will be able to express themselves more confidently. As a matter of fact, a good game always has clear rules, so does grammar. As it is claimed by Venon, 2006 and Hadfield, 1990 in Yolageldili and Arikan:

2011, one of the criteria of a good game is that it must have a clear and easy rule. Besides, Richard-Amato (2007) also adds that games also develop or reinforce concept. Therefore teaching grammar by using games can strengthen each other, strengthen the activities, movement, as well as their understanding of grammar, and help children be able to apply and use the grammar contextually, as well as use appropriate rules of grammar.

Grammar is not only taught with focus on form, but it functions more to give practice in communication. Like what Venon (2006) also suggests that games in grammar learning help children be able to apply and use the grammar correctly and communicatively.

1.2 Why teaching grammar with games?

All teachers know that teaching grammar to young learners need extra efforts, if they want to obtain best result out of the teaching and learning. One of the efforts is to play games, however not all games are good and meet the need. As Hong (2002) mentions that games are not used only as a time filler without regarding the linguistics purposes.

There are some important characteristics that games should have in teaching grammar: Games can motivate students in learning and internalizing the grammar they learn (Venon (2006) and Yolagildili and Arikan: 2011), and can create bonding between teacher and students and students among themselves. Yolagildili and Arikan (2011) add that playing games while learning will acquaint the students more with their environment. In addition to that, games should provide enjoyment and relaxation (Yolagildili and Arikan, 2011) by increasing the cooperation and competition though Vernon (2006) does not agree to a competition completely, since competition is not always appropriate. Besides, games can encourage learners to focus on their language learning if given with meaningful context (Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (1984) in Yolagildili and Arikan (2011).

The main purpose of administering a game is the learners can absorb the grammar learning, therefore learners should be learning in a relaxing situation, and a game can decrease learners' anxiety. Crookal(1990) in Yolagildili and Arikan (2011) claims that games can increase positive feelings and reduce anxiety as well as build learners' self-confidence, because learners are not worried of getting a punishment or criticism when they make mistakes.

1.3 Why Mime games?

A Mime game is one of the guessing games besides guessing pictures, and guessing sentences. Guessing game could be an effective technique to develop and reinforce some concepts of grammar. The most important function of implementing guessing games in teaching is to give practice in communication (Richard-Amato: 2003). One of the most effective guessing games is Mime Game, where one child comes forward after the teacher secretly gives him a word, phrase or sentence and mimes an activity and his group or the whole class try to guess what he really means (Pinter, 2006; Doff, 2000)

In doing a mime game, learners feel very excited, imaginative, enjoyable and communicative when performing their task by acting out, describing the structure learned. A Learner feels excited because he has to perform an activity related to the present material learned, that he knows, but his friends do not. He has to use his imaginative skill, because his job is to describe an activity by acting out or miming an activity without saying a single word to his friends in a team in a

certain period of time that has been agreed upon. More over they enjoy doing acting out a role. In playing a mime game, learners communicate with each other through acting. As it is known that communication has two forms; verbal communication and non-verbal communication. Verbal communication when learners can get the message across using words, whereas in non-verbal communication, learners can only get the message across using body language which means they use a facial expression, body movement and hand gestures. In a mime game, a learner has to communicate non-verbally.

2. Method and Result

This study was designed as an experimental study with the aim to see if teaching grammar using mime game is effective or not. At the end of the treatment session, the students were interviewed in order to get their impression and perception about learning a grammar using a mime game.

There were 30 fifth graders participating in the study. They were divided into two groups of 15. Group A as a control group was taught using traditional way, in which the author only explains the use of present continuous, and then gave an oral and written exercises on present continuous tense for 3 meetings (45 minutes each). Group (B) is an experimental group, in which an explanation of present continuous tense was given and then for a re-inforcement, a mime game was administered for three meetings (45 minutes each). The class was divided into 3 groups of 5 students. One student of each group represented his group and he was the one who acted out describing an activity in front of his friends. After the duration of performance was agreed among the three actors of the groups, then the one who dared to perform in the least time performed the action. Some of the question examples were: The man is washing the car, the children are not playing football, and the teacher is helping the students. While the actor was acting, his friends kept guessing until they figured out what action the actor really meant. When they got the right answer, they got points. At the end, they collected all the points they obtained and the teacher ranked which group was in the first, second and third place.

After the treatment, the writer gave both groups the same tests of present continuous tense using pictures and the students had to describe in written sentences using correct present continuous tense form.

The alternative hypothesis (H_a) was the group taught using mime game was more effective than the group taught without using mime game. Whereas, the null hypothesis (H_o) was the group taught using mime game was not effective than the group taught without using mime game.

After the results of both tests were collected. The mean score of group A was 7.1833 and the mean score of group B was 8.0667. Then, they were analyzed using one-way ANOVA Test, with df_1 was total data group minus 1 which was $2-1=1$, and df_2 was total data minus total data group which was $30-2=28$. The level of significance was .004. The result showed that the calculated $F > \text{table } F$ or $F \text{ calculated } 9.787 > F \text{ table } 4.196$, therefore H_o was rejected and H_a was accepted. Overall, it can be concluded that teaching using mime game was more effective than that of without using mime game.

From the interview and observation, it can be summed up that the students were very motivated and excited about the process of learning grammar using a mime game. They showed their enjoyment and involvement without any worries or fear when they played the mime game. They

admitted that they understood the meaning as well as the form of the material taught faster and better.

3. Conclusion and Recommendation

The main aim of this study is to find out if teaching grammar using mime game is more effective than without using mime game or not. The finding shows that teaching using mime game was more effective than that of without using mime game.

In addition, during the experimental study, learners showed their enthusiasm, enjoyment, excitement, motivation, and involvement. In other words, the students enjoyed learning grammar using mime game better than doing deskwork.

Teachers of elementary schools should always consider using games when they teach grammar, because in that way, learners will not get bored, but excited, will not be passive, but active and get involved, they will not be reluctant, but motivated. But even more important, they will understand and internalize the grammar learned much better and faster

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