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Graduation Project

(Final draft)

The Role of Using Games in the Acquisition of English as a Foreign Language

for Children from Teachers' perspectives

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Abstract:

The use of games in an English classroom is not uncommon. Since it is the most valuable tool to assist language acquisition, physically and mentally growth. The objective of this research is to view the perspective of teachers and students regarding the reasons for using or avoiding educational games in an EFL classroom. Furthermore, how they can help in the acquisition of English language. As well as that what obstacles teachers May face when using this method and try to find solutions for them. The main tool used in this research is a different set of a questionnaire for both teachers and students. Also, to get accurate answers from the two parties, we will conduct an experiment on two groups of teachers and students before the questionnaire. Through using two ways in teaching, traditional and games.

Introduction:

The reason why I write about this topic is because I was a kindergarten teacher for five years. In those years, I practiced teaching using the Montessori method, which means learning through play, and also in this way I discovered the world of language games and its impact on young learners in terms of language skills. According to student achievement we can access through the use of pre- and post-tests to see whether or not the progress of our students, and if our approach is useful and effective or not. Educational toys and games in particular, are one of the techniques and methods that may be used by the teacher in the teaching of a foreign language.

Unfortunately, some teachers believe that using language games should be limited to only young students. Others believe it is nothing more than a waste of teaching time and has no educational value. Other teachers like to use them, but do not give them an essential role in the teaching of an EFL program, but use them to fill up time at the end of the lesson. On the other hand, teachers who know all the advantages of the use of games in the teaching of English, and are aware of the importance of educational games are very few. Therefore, when using games in the classroom, it is the interest of the teacher to be fully aware of the meaning of the games. Which is usually known as a form of play that includes rules, competition, and the element of fun.

There is an assumption that the similar situation as stated above can be found in primary schools because of previous facts. I did this research to determine the attitude of both teachers and students towards using or avoiding games in an EFL classroom. In addition how it can help in the acquisition of English language. As well as what obstacles prevent teachers from using this method and try to find solutions for them. Also preparing the teachers with the correct ways on using them.

Literature review:

Games can be a valuable teaching element. A successful game is not going to be effective unless if it for based on specific time arrangement, it has clear significance to the material, there is suitability to all members of the classroom and finally; the learners' pleasure is increased through their participation together. "Acquiring language skills meant having to endure a great deal of effort for a long time. Games can help to ease the stress that has developed in this period and encourage students to maintain their enthusiasm and good work". Wright et al (2006). Students may want to play games for one reason, and that is for fun. Teachers, however, need more convincing reasons. Teachers need to think carefully about what kind of games to use and what is the perfect time to use them and how to make them suitable for lessons. To be precise, to give students different games each day will improve their skills in various ways.

According to Carrier (1986) "teachers should first pay attention to the type and level of the game to see if it is suitable for their students language level. They should choose the game that fits the goal of that class or content. Moreover, teachers should respect students characteristics: when they are old or young, staid or cheerful, and if they are eager to learn or not. They should also keep in mind when the game should be used". As Ersoza (2000) states, "choosing a variety of good games grant students a non-strict time to practice language skills. Games are greatly stimulating because they are entertaining and at the same time testing students abilities. Besides, they utilize essential and useful language in real contexts. They also boost confidence and

enhance collaboration”. Continuing with reasons to why teachers should use games as learning aids. According to Avedon (1971) the primary reason is, “they stimulate motivation to students, which leads them to be competitive in every aspect of the games; moreover, they will try their best at games than any other course”.

Keeping in mind though language learning games, in general, has advantages. It may also encounter some obstacles. Like when the students already know the game and they played it many times, they will feel bored and might not participate in the activities. Also, insufficient rules instructions may cause students to stray away from the purpose of the game. Needless to say that some learners may see games as a childish thing, especially teenagers.

Significance of Research:

School is the place where all learners of all ages in the EFL class can acquire and improve their language skills. Through the four core activities [listening - reading – speaking - writing] as well as grammar and vocabulary. Nowadays, the evolution of science, technology, and economy and the tendency of globalization have brought about a great need to communicate mutually. To fulfill this requirement, English has become an international language and a vital and mandatory subject at schools. As a result, teaching English has grown to be a compulsory subject in schools for many years. Moreover, for the time being, it has become more important. However, the problem in our teaching system is that it is too abstract at all levels.

For example, children in Kg3 learn what an island is as follows:" an island is a part of land surrounded by water on all sides. This classical definition, and as such is lacking life. It leaves almost no scope for imagination, but if it was linked with a story told by the teacher, of a man whose boat sank and swam to shore, and then tried to go home but wherever he went there was more water. This story should be enhanced by all sorts of details on what the man found, trees, animals, and so on. It could be followed by a lovely sketch made by the teacher on the blackboard using colored marker. The sketch should leave space for imagination, and not contain all practical details as though it were a photograph. In this way, young learners use their individual images and internally engage in the drama felt by the champion of the story.

They could design a living island in their perception. After such a story, the young learners would be asked to draw with their choice of color whatever they liked about the story (this way we give them the element of freedom in the classroom), thus challenge them with some outside activity, and not just intellectual absorption.

Moreover, teachers give lessons in the most traditional way expecting students to sit for hours and absorb intellectually without any external action, and that makes their Classes not balanced in a rhythm of inspiration and expression. Which brings them psychological factors like the sense that the English language is difficult to understand and needs painstaking effort. So a student come to attend the school and in his mind this misconception. Also, here comes the role of the teacher to correct this concept, and help students break the barrier of difficulty by facilitating educational material ways and means available. This research attempts to provide practical information for the use of educational games on the field of teaching a second language. Both students and teachers will gain benefit and get to learn how to overcome obstacles in this method.

Research questions:

What is the role of using games in the acquisition of English as a foreign language for children for teachers' perspective?

Research Methodology:

This research will be held in a Private Primary School in the city of Damman to reveal the beneficial reasons for both teachers and students for using games and what obstacles would interfere with this method in their perspective.

Participants:

The research will be performed on a group of primary English teachers as well as a group of students from different basic grades (4th -5th -6th) . In general, there will be (6) teachers and (45) students. The main tool for this research is a questionnaire giving to both parties consist of 10 questions for each. Moreover, for teachers and

students to be more accurate in their answers, we are going to divide them into two groups (A and B). And put them on two different methods of teaching before the questionnaire. Group (A) is going to be on the traditional method, and group (B) will be on the games method.

Ethical Consideration:

The teachers and students in this questionnaire will participate willingly. A permission will be taking from the school administration to conduct this experiment. All participants will be informed of why and how this research is made. Furthermore, will be telling them what materials should be used and provide them with the curriculum of the experiment. In addition, they will have the full right to stop participating in the experiment if they want to. Besides, the answers of both teachers and students will remain secret. And all participant's names, including the school will be kept confidential.

Limitations of the study:

The research is largely based on the answers of students and teachers in the questionnaire. Since we are not sure on how accurate these responses. This will give us unsupported results. However, the questionnaire results would be more accurate if we divided the students and teachers into two groups, and teach one group through games and the second group through the traditional method. We do this for one semester. After the semester is done, we allow both parties to answer the questionnaire. By this way, we will be able to have accurate and reliable results for differentiation between the two methods and find out the causes of the problems.

Expected Results:

I believe there will be a drastic change in the point of view of teachers and students on using games in the classroom after we conduct the experiment. Also, I expect that we will be able to help the teachers as well as the students by discussing the obstacles

that they confront while experimenting, by providing them with more information and technics about how to present and play the games. Moreover how to choose suitable games for their students and lessons. Although this research maybe contributed to the improvement of teaching in a foreign language classroom, yet it may raise some important issue and stimulate further research on the subject. I hope to entice teachers to consider the possibility of using games more frequently than they do.

References:

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Appendix:

Teachers Questionnaire:

You can tick as many boxes if necessary

1- What class do you teach?

4th grad

5th grade

6th grade

2- How long have you been teaching?

2 – 3 y

4 – 6 y

new in teaching

3- Do you use games in class?

yes

no

sometimes

4- What are the reasons for using games in class?

presentation of a new lesson

present language in meaningful context

learning grammar is easier

new vocabulary learning is easier

other reasons

5- What are the reasons for not using games in class?

there are better methods than this

makes a mess in the classroom

teachers can't follow the work of students

a game doesn't have educational value

other reasons

6- Do games influence students achievement?

very often

sometimes

rarely

7- Does the use of games improve design skills and the ability to present information using the second language?

yes

no

sometimes

8- What do you think the obstacles to using games in class?

because of the curriculum

lack of time

unfamiliarity with the method

students negative attitude

no obstacles

9- Do you think age has any significant difference in learning by using games?

yes

no

maybe

I don't know

10- Which method do you think is best?

games method

traditional method

both

Students Questionnaire:

You can tick as many boxes if necessary

1- In what class are you?

4th grade

5th grade

6th grade

2- Do you like English class?

very much

not much

it's ok

3- Do you play games in class?

yes

no

sometimes

4- How often do you play games in class?

very often

sometimes

rarely

never

5- Does the teacher use different games every day?

yes

no

sometimes

6- Why do you think that the teacher should use games in class?

lesson will be more interesting

helpful in learning

because of group work

reason for attending class

7- Why do you think the teacher should not use games in class?

uninteresting

distract in class

prefer learning to playing

prefer some other activates

8- Do you think games help you understand the lesson better?

yes

no

sometimes

9- Do everyone play in class before time is up?

always

sometimes

10- Which method do you like better in learning?

games method

traditional method