



## Using Barbie Games to Teach Speaking for Young Learners

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### Abstract

The demand for the need to start learning English from an early age has made many experts try to find methods to improve English language method. As an early reference in learning to speak foreign language is the ability to speak the language as earlier as possible. Therefore, the teaching of speaking foreign languages to the early childhood must be considered.

The very complex characteristics of early childhood students are also a reference to how to make successes in teaching methods for the right students to achieve learning objectives. Early students are students who are in the play phase and still like to imitate. Therefore, the author offers Barbie Games as one of the methods of teaching English for young children. Barbie games are a mixture of role playing and contextual teaching, where students are directly involved in the pronunciation, repetition and vocabulary in the form of playing with Barbie as a medium.

Keywords: the ability to speak English in early childhood, Barbie Games

### A. INTRODUCTION

Young learners soak up knowledge like sponges. When they start learning a second language, children will often pick up everything a teacher says. It is important to have clear and correct pronunciation since young learners will often repeat everything they hear. Although repetition of phrases doesn't mean that children are learning the language, it is still an important aspect of the learning process. Repetition prepares children for more meaningful conversation and it helps them get used to English. Repeating certain phrases also gives children the chance to practice the intonation pattern and boosts their confidence especially if the teacher praises the made quately.

Teaching speaking skills to young children is relatively easier since kids are natural chatter boxes. They love to talk and look for chances to communicate meaningfully. Teachers should find the right balance between controlled activities and letting children talk naturally in the classroom. Teachers should take care that children talk accurately and correct their linguistic errors. However, no correction should be done when children are talking in free speaking activities.

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These types of activities help children achieve fluency and develop communicative competence.

Young learners should get as many speaking and listening opportunities as possible in the classroom. Their speaking time should steadily increase as the teacher prepares them for various communication situations.

Teachers should remember that in teaching young learners, the students come with varied abilities, expectations and preferred learning dynamics. Teachers need to vary their approaches and offer as much opportunities for the class to grow and develop.

Teaching English for young learners will very completely different with teaching English for adult. Young learners are unique. They are different with adult, they have very different needs, interest and abilities from adult and more enthusiastic than adult in language activity. Young learners mean children from the first year of formal schooling (5 or 6 year old) to eleven or twelve year age. Young learners have own special characteristics that differentiate them from adult learners. There should be known and understood by the teacher to give contribution to improve their quality of teaching and learning process.

Some young learners have their own characteristic. There are some of their generally characteristic that teachers and parents should know: Physical side, social side, and psychological side. The physical world of young children is dominant. Their understanding comes through hands, eyes, and ears. They perform physical activity in many ways: such a scooting, drawing, and writing. They are at the developing stage (Critical Period).

Social side is the side that's howling how the children are happy playing and working in the company of others (Sitting with others encourages co-operation). Young learners learn best when they learn through games. They are aware of themselves in relation to others. On the other hand, psychological side of the young learners show that they have short concentration span. So teachers should vary their techniques to break the boredom. They should give varied activities as handwriting, songs, games etc. Also, young learners are free of prejudice, they get bored easily. Children have no choice to attend school. The lack of the choice means that class activities need to be fun interesting and exciting as possible by setting up the interesting activities. Children also are forgetful. They like imitating. They enjoy imitating and skill full in listening accurately and mimicking what they have heard. They have high curiosity. They are risk taker. They are imaginative. Use pictures to teach new vocabulary related to concrete meanings, but may have some difficulties distinguishing between imagination and real world. They are very active. Try to ask them to play games, role-play dialogues and involve them in competitions.

Children get bored easily. Children have no choice to attend school. The lack of the choice means that class activities need to be fun interesting and exciting as possible by setting up the interesting activities. Based on those characteristic teaching a language to young learners also need to focused on their special character and uniqueness. There are some children's special characteristics in learning the language. Children respond the language well through concrete things (visual things) rather than abstract things. Children need physical

movements and realactivities to stimulate their thinking. Children will be enthusiastic if they are taught using fun activities or being involved in activities. Children love to play, and learn best when they are enjoying themselves. Children learn well through something that is close to their culture. Children like to work together. Beside the characters above, there are some unique characters that children have. Hyperactive children, these children tend not to sit still. He tends to move continuously, sometimes like running, like jumping up and down, screaming and even in the classroom. This child is difficult to control. It performs activities in accordance with his own will. He also likes to annoy his friends and even his teachers. Distractible child is a child who tends to get bored quickly. He often turned his attention to a variety of other objects in the class. Children are cannot focus on the activities that take place in the classroom.

Poor self-concept tends to quiet kids in class, passive, or hyper sensitive so easily offended. Characteristics of these children tend not to dare to ask or answer, and felt he was not capable. As such, it is less likely to get along as well as bold and aloof. Impulsive child is a child who quickly reacted every teacher gives lessons. The answer given is often not demonstrated the ability to think logically. Such a child wanted to show that he is a smart kid, but he answered the way it reflects the inability. Children destructive behaviour of students who like to destroy things around him. Negative aggression in the form of slamming and throwing indicates that this child is a child with problems (trouble maker). Such a child irritable. He has high temperament, which leads to aggressive behaviour.

In Indonesia, interest in teaching English to young learners has been steadily growing in recent years. Many parents believe that by studying English from an early stage their children will get a better future. Because of that the Indonesia Ministry of Education has begun to respond by introducing English as a foreign language in elementary school, even in kindergarten. ESL/EFL specialists justified the use of games with reference to the motivation that they can provide for the students. "Games are, by definition, fun, and nearly every one would agree that if learning can be made enjoyable, the students will learn more" (Celce-Murcia and Macintosh, 1979, p.36)

Therefore, language teachers can plan to introduce relevant vocabulary before undertaking any communication activity and/or encourage students to look the word up in the dictionary.

Almost all of students love playing game, it is really on country when they are asked to study. Thus, teachers have to find away to make their students love studying as same as they love playing. As been talked before, that plot game can be used as a media to improve elementary school's students' vocabulary acquisition. The students love playing game, they enjoy it. Therefore, they will do it continually. The students acquire more vocabulary every time they do that enjoyable activity. The point is they have more vocabulary without any compulsion. As it is known that when an activity is done just because been asked, it will be bored activity, and finally, they will stop doing that bore activity when students love an activity, they will do it repeatedly, teacher or even parents should not be afraid when their students or children love playing, because a creative

people are questioning, adaptable, persistent, and free whether love of playing game.

Although English has been taught from elementary school, there are so many students who are still shy and unable to speak English, there are very few students who can speak English fluently. The other students seem to have a big difficulty in speaking that had made them almost can not speak. Many experts believe that the English learning in Indonesia is more focused in grammar and theories but not in speaking and practices. In fact, speaking is more needed in seeking job. As we know, that the best way to reach from the lowest level of education. To overcome this problem, using Barbie games improve the elementary school student's ability is really a good idea.

## **B. Discussion**

### **1. Using Barbie Game to Improve Young Learners' Speaking Ability**

As the explanation above, Barbie Game can be used as an alternative media in teaching English. In this paper, using Barbie Game helps teacher in teaching speaking to elementary school students, especially to make it become their routines.

The game that involved drama seems to be too high for elementary school students, but actually, it is not. As Shinhas stated some special characteristics of young learners aged 7 – 12 years old that will support them to do this activity:

*Students are developing as thinkers*

*Understand the difference between the real and the imaginary*

*Can play and organize how best to carry out an activity*

*Can work with others and learn from others*

*Can be reliable and take responsibility for class activities and routines*

These characteristics will allow them to work in pairs, set their own situation, act as their own imagination and responsible for their own decision. The drama that will be going to use in this game is only the very simple one that all students can practice it. It ends to use a simple drama in this game because it has been proved that drama brings a good effort in student's ability and motivation to learn English. In addition, Peck stated that children can be strongly connected to the lesson through drama easier than through lecture and instruction.

Honestly, this game can be played with any kind of soft toys that have body and can be easily moved. Despite of the fact, it's still recommended you to use Barbie because it is unique and interesting doll that has ever produced. The student will like it very much and it makes them enjoy learning English with you. They will unconsciously throw away their shyness in speaking because they do not feel it is a part of your command, but it is only a fun game they should try. In addition, I believe that if we do something interesting, we will enjoy doing it, and then the process will be very fun and there will be good. As Peck declined, activities in the class should be child centered and communication should be reliable. It means the student are listening or speaking about something that makes them interested in, for their personal reason, and not just because of their teacher's command.

## **2. The Preparation For Applying Barbie Game**

In teaching and learning process, especially dealing with the young learner with all of their uniqueness, teacher sometime have problems in dealing with the students. For instance, boring lesson and bad classroom atmosphere will lost students' interest in learning English. To overcome those problems, teachers must be able to prepare all of thing well, such as warming up the class first, giving prologue about the day's lesson and grouping the students.

### **– Warming Up**

This stage is necessary to be done before your start the class. It will call out your student's motivation and their concentration to follow your class. This stage should be a very waiting for moment of your class. It can be filled by song or a short interesting funny story. In this case, we will use Barbie movies that usually contain dancing and singing scene. This is similar to what Shinhas stated in his module, that Children love to sing, chant, and be creative and they love stories. In addition, it is very important to teacher to have special relationship with her / his student that can be grown from this activity. Singing together after watching the movie will build a special sense in a student's heart and also engage them to love your class. Automatically, once a young learner loves a class, she / he will follow any direction that her / his class love their lesson.

### **– Prologue**

During this stage, the teacher will explain about what kind of game that they going to play today, what are the rules also the equipment needed for the game. You can explain your material first, then reviewing the movie before and explaining the student what they are going to do. You will also introduce the doll to the student; make sure you bring asset of dolls or a pair of doll that can be played by a group of student. It will be best if you can ask the student to bring their own Barbie doll, since almost all of the children own it, so you can arrange the activity holding in pairs.

### **– Grouping**

Before starting the game, the student should be divided into several groups that each of group contains 2 – 3 students. The teacher should make sure that the group work is done and the student could cooperate to make a good team. More explanation about working on the team to win the game may be necessary.

## **3. Procedure of Teaching by Using Barbie Game**

After doing all of the preparation above, the teacher can directly run the lesson of the day. In order to create a systematic and well-organized Barbie game, there are some stages in using this game in the classroom:

### **– Lesson Time**

In this stage, the teacher will explain about the lesson of the day. It must focused on speaking for the third grade elementary school's students. The

materialis mostly the simple expression like how to greet someone, how to introduce yourself, and how to express your thanks. Here are some examples of expression that can be integrated with Barbie Game:

Hi!

Hello!

My name is Ken

I'm Coraline

Good morning...

How are you?

Thanks a lot!

Oh, that's very kind of you

Thank you very much

These simple expressions are used in this game to make the student feel common with the expression, and soon they will practice it unconsciously. This game is aimed to make students love speaking English which they are going to keep as their routines. So, those expression above are very suitable because those are common expression that are usually used in real life.

The Game

The teacher could relate the lesson before with the movie behind it first. Then the teacher give a lottery to find which group should present. After that, the chosen group will be given a piece of paper that contain several expressions which are their lesson before and a theme on it.

Here are some themes that can be applied in the classroom:

+ going to a birthday party

+ meeting old friends in a park

+ going to a zoo

+ planning to have a summer camp together

+ watching the new series of The Lion King

For example, Group 1 with two members gets a "going to a birthday party" theme, so they will get these expressions in their cards:

Hi, how are you?

My name is Ken

Congratulation!

Nice to meet you too...

The team will get a doll for each of the member; they should elaborate the theme and the expressions that had been given before. Then, they are asked to hold the Barbie and say that expression before while pretending as the Barbie. The student will act the Barbie going to a birthday party; they will play the doll as it really walks. In addition, the expression change in to drama-contained. Then they list will be like this:

Hi, Coralline. Congratulation!

++ Hi... Thankyou

How are you?

++ Great, thanks. What about you?

I'm fine, thanks

++ Ha-ha... Nice to meet you, Krystal  
Nice to meet you too...

This kind of simple expression will be presented by each group with different themes. They will be allowed to make some improvisation in their performance, whether they will add some activities like shopping, doing laundry and soon. In fact, Peck said that children have some enthusiasm to play in a drama that adult has, so they will easily find some improvement sentences for the drama under coaching of the teacher.

### **Conclusion and Suggestion**

#### **1. Conclusion**

Speaking is one of the most must be-mastered English skill due to its big role inactive communication. Getting students be in common with English is important to improve their speaking ability. It will help students in acquiring the target language, English, unconsciously. In improving students' speaking skill, especially young learner, it is important to make sure that the learning process held in an interesting way. This condition will lead the student in to a deeper understanding about the less on that had been given by the teacher. I hope this example of less on plan can inspire other teacher and help them to design successful less on that motivate their students in improving their speaking ability.

#### **2. Suggestion**

The suggestion for teacher as follow:

The teacher needs to be creative while teaching English in order to improve their students' speaking ability.

It is suggested to improve the students' speaking ability, not only by using the Barbie Game depends on how the teacher creates the activities

However this paper has been prepared, but there are still weaknesses that need to be improved.

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