

INVOLVING PLAY IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO ACCOMMODATE YOUNG STUDENTS' LEARNING STYLE

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Abstract

Tujuan dari penulisan makalah ini adalah untuk menjelaskan bagaimana caranya melibatkan ketiga jenis permainan, yaitu *musical chair*, *chain message*, dan *snake and ladder* ke dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris agar dapat mengakomodasi ketiga jenis gaya belajar siswa yaitu kinestetik, auditori, dan visual. Makalah ini disusun berdasarkan sejumlah kajian pustaka yang nantinya diharapkan dapat menginspirasi guru untuk melibatkan permainan dalam pengajaran bahasa Inggris.

Kata Kunci: Play, Learning Style, Accommodate, Young Student

A. Introduction

English teaching at elementary school is directed to prepare the students to be able learning English at junior high school. It means English teaching at elementary school is proposed to familiarize students with English. In addition, English teaching at elementary school is also intended to develop language ability which is used to accompany action. Thus, to familiarize students with English, a teacher has a task to lead students at elementary school learning English through language that accompanying actions. In other words, a teacher teaches English to student by doing something. So, a teacher has a task to provide activities that makes students doing something when learning English in order to get students familiar with English.

However, teachers fail to make students familiar with English. English teachers at elementary school usually tend to explain the lesson to students by writing the material on the whiteboard and ask students to do exercise on notebook. This activity drives students tired of learning English.

Teachers' failure to familiarize students by using the activity above occurs because of some reasons. First, this activity does not make students do something because students do not involve actively in learning. Students only ask to copy the material and do the exercise on the notebook. Second, this activity also does not develop students' cognitive and social-emotional development. Piage in Santrock (1994) states young students at the age of 7 to 11 are in the concrete stages according to their cognitive development. It means elementary school students can only be taught by using concrete things. While, this activity drives students struggle with abstract concept since there is no demonstration that using concrete

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things to help them learn. In socio emotional development, Erikson in Santrock (1994) says young students at this age are in industry and inferiority stage. At this stage students are full of energy toward mastering knowledge that indicates students are very enthusiastic. In contrast, this activity does not direct student's energy because students just sit on the chair to copy the material.

Moreover, this activity also does not accommodate students' learning style. This activity does not help visual, auditory and kinesthetic learners in learning English because teachers do not provide the explanation by using picture or puppet that can be seen and touch by visual and kinesthetic learners, and do not put video or sounds that help auditory learners. It is clear that this activity makes students hard to deal with English and causes frustration in learning it. Finally, they feel English learning is a big problem.

To solve this problem, activities in English teaching to young students must fulfill those requirements above. The activities must be able to accommodate students' learning style. They must be able to make students doing something in learning and also be able to develop students' cognitive and social-emotional development. The best way is by involving play in English teaching.

Play is defined as things that people, especially children, do for pleasure. Since it is for pleasure, young students must enjoy playing when it is involved in learning. Ytreberg (1990) explains that young students have greater ability in learning through play and other activities that enjoyable for them. Besides, play is an enjoyable activity for students; it also meets the requirements above. Involving play in teaching makes students doing something in learning English. Through play, a teacher is able to prepare various instructions for students which make them do actions.

Then, involving play in teaching will develop students' cognitive and social-emotional aspect. Piage in santrock (1994) says play is a medium that advances cognitive developments. It emphasizes by Fromberg and Gullo in Fox (2008). According to them play enhances creativity, imagination, thinking skills, language development, and social competence. Moreover, Frost in Fox (2008) states that "play is the chief vehicle for the development of imagination and intelligence, language, social skills, and perceptual-motor abilities in infants and young children". Frost idea similar with Piage in Santrock (1994) who also saw that play provides the perfect settings for exercise cognitive because he believe cognitive structures need to be exercised. Due to creativity, imagination, thinking skill, language development, and intelligence are in cognitive area, enhancing them also advance cognitive development directly.

In addition, play also foster socio emotional development. According to Erickson and Freud in Santrock (1994) play is a useful form of human adjustment, helping the child master anxiety and conflicts, release the tension and work off excess energy that they have. In this psychosocial stage, Erikson says that young students at elementary school years are very enthusiastic and has a lot of energy to master knowledge. Through playing this energy is transferred appropriately.

Furthermore, play also accommodates students' learning style. Students get more chance in using their learning style to learn English since students are playing with plenty of object, pictures, and videos that prepared by teacher.

Children learn about their world in different ways, using their preferred learning styles. They may be characterized as visual, auditory or kinesthetic learners. A visual learner learns best if they see what is happening and links to their understanding. On the other hand, an auditory learner will need to hear the input, while a kinesthetic learner will learn best if the learning involves physical movement.

Considering children's preferred learning styles is important because of some research. Berman in Rodliyah (2009) showed that there was a correlation between success in language learning and preferred learning styles. This is also supported by Rosemary Smeets in Rodliyah (2009) who conducted research in Switzerland in 2004, she looked at young language learners and VAK learning styles and she found that the students *did* seem to be able to learn more words when using their preferred learning style (visual, auditory or kinesthetic). Further, Nancy Foss in Curtain and Dahlberg (2004) points out that when students are asked to learn in a way that makes them uncomfortable, they experience stress. In a classroom where students learning style is never included, that students is constantly operating under stress, and learning is seriously affected.

Based on the explanation above, writer proposes three kinds of plays that can be set up as classroom activity. The first play is chain message. Chain message is a play that is done in a group of five. Each group has to make a line from front to back and is given pictures (as the message) that related to the topic that is being learned (five pictures) that is not in the same order for each group. The teacher prepares the same picture with the picture given to each group which is put in the box (there is a box at front), and holds a whistle as a sign when giving instruction.

Second play is musical chairs. Before starting this play, the teacher should prepare the material such as chairs, punishment's papers, and children songs. The punishment's papers contains some instruction that relate to the topic that is learned such as wash your pet, groom your pet, and put ribbon in your pet. The teacher makes groups consist of five students for each group.

The third play is snake and ladder. Before starting the play, the teacher should prepare the material such as a big dice, a plastic mat that has been modified into a snake and ladder board. The teacher makes groups consist of five students for each group.

In conclusion, involving those three plays in English teaching helps teachers to familiarize students with English. It also forces students doing something when learning. It develops students' cognitive and social-emotional development, and accommodates students' learning style. Therefore, this paper will discuss how to involve those three plays in teaching English to accommodate young students' learning style.

B. Discussion

1. Involving Play into Teaching English at Elementary School

There are many types of play has proposed by expert, but not all of the plays are appropriate for students at grade four, five and six. Symbolic play and

manipulative play are plays for pre-school children. The other types of play – physical play, expressive play, dramatic play, familiarization play and games- are suitable for students at fourth grade until the sixth grade and can accommodate their learning style.

In physical play, a teacher creates instruction that makes kinesthetic learners do an action. Visual learners learn through this play by seeing the action that is done by kinesthetic learners since they like to see presentation or performance. Auditory learners learn by hearing the instruction from teacher since they like oral report.

Then in expressive play where students get chance to express the emotions by engaging the material such as paints, watercolors, crayon, colored pencil and marker, a teacher prepares some picture that show emotion or mood-card, videos that show some emotions. It is useful for kinesthetic students since they can learn how to express their emotion by showing and coloring the mood card. A visual learner learns when a teacher asks students to watch the video and to color the mood-card; while auditory learners learn through video which is played by teacher.

Further in dramatic and familiarization play, kinesthetic and auditory learners learn well because this play asks students to act which are loved by both of these learners; and visual learner learn by seeing the others acting. The last is games. Games accommodate learning style easily because teacher can manipulate games or create a new game that helps those three kinds of learners learning. A teacher can do vocabulary game for example. In this play all of students' learning styles are accommodated. Visual learner learns when a teacher shows the picture of some food materials and asks the students to mention the name of the picture. Auditory learners learn when other students answer the question and kinesthetic learner learns when a teacher asks the students to find out letters of the picture. To conclude, plays that proposed by Linwood are able to accommodate learning style.

2. Chain Message

There are some preparations that need to be prepared before applying this play in the classroom. A teacher needs to group students into five students for each groups, prepare the material and the media.

Before doing this play, a teacher has to divide students into groups. In this play, it is easy for teacher to groups them based on their seat arrangement. So, there will be eight groups that each group consists of five students.

After that, a teacher needs to prepare material that suitable with this play. Since chain message is a play that foster students memory, this play is suitable for learning vocabulary. For this play, the writer chooses the material for students at grade four semesters two. Elementary school students at grade four in second semesters learn the vocabulary around the class context such as the stationery, part of body, and things in the classroom. So, for this play the writer chooses "stationeries in my box" as the topic for learning vocabulary.

Next, a teacher needs prepare the media. The media for this play are pictures of stationeries such as a pen, a pencil sharpener, a ruler, an eraser, and a pencil. A teacher prepares five pictures for each group that given not in the same order. A

teacher also prepare a box contains the same pictures with picture that students have which has sticky tape behind each pictures. A teacher divides spaces in the whiteboard for each group and gives each space a group name. The last, a teacher prepares a whistle to conduct students.

a. The Procedure

There are some steps that should be followed by a teacher to play this game.

First, a teacher blows the whistle and asks students in the first row see the picture in front of them and whisper the picture that he/she sees to friend at the back. This step helps visual learners in learning because they see the picture and store the information into their mind. Second, after the teacher blows the whistle, students at the second row tell the third row what picture that he/she hears. It is continued for student at third, fourth and the fifth rows. This step helps auditory learners because they get the information through their ear.

After that, the teacher blows again the whistle when the message is reached the fifth row as the last row, and asks the students come to front to choose the suitable picture in the box that appropriate with what she/he hears, and stick it to the white board. This step helps kinesthetic learners since they do the action-choose the suitable picture and stick it on the whiteboard. Next, the teacher blows the whistle and asks students to change the position. Students at the first row move to back, and the second row move forward, followed by the third, fourth, and the fifth row. This step helps teacher to make sure that all of students can learn through their own learning style. Finally, the teacher repeats the activity until the five pictures are stuck on the white board.

3. Musical Chair

The teacher needs to prepare some preparations before applying musical chair in the classroom. A teacher needs to group students, prepare the material, and the media.

Before playing musical chair the teacher need to divide students into groups. The teacher asks students to count from one to eight and for students who get the same number is in the same groups.

After that, a teacher needs to prepare material that suitable with this play. For this play, writer chooses the material about asking someone to do something for students at the fourth grade. The topic is taking cares the pets.

Next, a teacher needs prepare the media. The media for this play are four chairs, some children song, an audio tape or a handphone with big speaker, a box, punishment papers and some realia such as a dog doll, a comb, a towel, a hair dryer toy, and a ribbon. The teacher only picks four chairs for five students since they will compete to take a seat on the chair. Then, the teacher prepares children song that is played while students walk around the chair and when the teacher stops the song, students take a seat on the chair. Next, the teacher prepares an audio tape if the song available on the cassette or a handphone with a big speaker that contains the children song. Further, the teacher prepares a box that contains punishment papers. After that, the teacher prepares the punishment papers. The punishment papers contain some instructions that ask them to do something, such as you are going to make over your cat, you need a brush, ask your friend to give

you a brush; you are going to wash your dog, you need shampoo, ask your friend to give your shampoo; the dog has been washed, you need a towel to dry it, ask your friend to give you a towel.

a. The Procedure

There are some steps that should be followed by teacher to play this game.

First, each group sends a representative to play the game. So, there are five students in front of the class. Second, the teacher prepares four chairs for students playing the game and each representative stands around the chair. Third, when the song plays, they are walking around, and take a sit when the song is stopped. Fourth, for a student who does not get a chair, the group gets *punishment* from the teacher.

Then, teacher asks the representatives of the group to take a paper from a box that contain some punishments, and ask the student to read the instruction, such as you are going to make over your cat, you need a brush, ask your friend to give you a brush. This step helps auditory learner in learning since they hear the instruction through the ear and acted-out he instruction. Students in the group acted out the punishment. This step foster kinesthetic learner because they acted out the instruction. By watching the punishment group acting out the instruction, it also helps visual learners in learning. Finally, the teacher takes a chair out after a student get punishment, and continues playing until all of the paper taken out.

4. Snake and Ladder

The teacher needs to prepare some preparations before applying snake and ladder play in the classroom. A teacher needs to group students, prepare the material, and the media.

Before playing, the teacher groups the students that each group consists of five students. Later, one representative from each group comes to the front to play the game as a counter, while the other group members watching and do punishment when the representatives land on snakes.

After that, a teacher needs to prepare the material that suitable with this play. For this play, the writer chooses the material about asking someone to do something for students at the fourth grade. The topic is let's playing the game.

Next, a teacher needs prepare the media. The media for this play are a dice made of cardboard that covered by gift-wrapping paper and stick number for each side. A teacher also prepares a plastic mat that has been modified into snake and ladder board. If the counter land on snakes the group member will do the punishment by choosing the punishment in the box. The teacher prepares some punishment that is written in a paper and put in a small box. The punishment are can you sing a song, would you move forward, can you move backward, ask your friend to jump three times, and ask your friend to dance.

a. The Procedure

There are some steps that should be followed by teacher to play this game.

First, each group sends a representative as a counter to play the game. So, there are five students on the mat. Second, the teacher asks to spin the dice, and the groups who get a big number go first, and followed by group who get small number. Third, each group spins the dice, and after getting the number, the teacher

gives the representatives instruction such as run to number four, jump three times, move backwards, and move forward.

This step helps kinesthetic learner to enhance the information since they do the instructions from teacher. It also helps visual learners in absorb information through watching others students while doing the instructions. By hearing the instructions, auditory learners are easy to get the information and store it in their mind. Fourth, if the representative lands on snakes, the group member gets punishment by choosing a punishment paper in the box. This step enhance kinesthetic learner in getting the information by doing the punishment. Auditory learner learns by acting out the punishment and by hearing the punishment read by the teacher. Visual learner learns by seeing both of others learner doing the punishment. Finally, groups who place on finish square first, win the game.

C. Conclusion and Suggestion

In teaching English to young students, a teacher has to familiarize students with English first. One of the ways to familiarize students with English is by involving play in teaching English.

Among various types of play, the writer proposes three kinds of play. They are chain message, musical chairs, and snake and ladder. They are classroom activities that can be used by teacher to teach young students. Teacher must prepare the material, explain the steps, and rules to students before doing the activity.

In chain message, students are using all of their sense of perception. This drives students to understand and learning quickly. This activity accommodates all of students learning style. By seeing the pictures visual learner are learning quickly. Auditory learner learns by hearing the words from friends, and kinesthetic learner learns when they stick the pictures to the whiteboard.

In musical chair, the teacher provides students with a lot of physical activity, music, and realia that encourage them to learn well. This play foster kinesthetic learner in learning since it involves moves and students act the punishment. Visual learner learns by seeing other student does an action and auditory learner learn by listening to instruction stated in punishment paper.

In snack and ladder, the teacher supplies students with a lot of instruction in the board. These instruction help three kinds of learner learn well. This play enhance kinesthetic learner in getting the information through instruction given by teacher and by doing the punishment. Auditory learner learns by acting out the punishment and by hearing instruction given by teacher. Visual learner learns by seeing both of others learner doing the punishment.

There are some suggestions proposed dealing with the conclusion above. First, it is better for teachers to explain the rules and the procedure how to play before starting. Second, Teachers are suggested to give some pictures that suitable with a topic of lesson. Third it is better for teachers to use the pictures that can attract students' interest. Fourth, it is better for teachers to varying the instruction on the punishment paper and it must suitable with the materials. The last, it is better for teachers to evaluate every student's work in order to see whether students comprehend the material or not.

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