

**SPEAKING ENGLISH THROUGH GOOD MORNING BALL
GAME
A Game for Young Learners**

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Abstrak

Sekarang bahasa Inggris telah diajarkan di sekolah dasar sebagai salah satu pelajaran muatan lokal. Pengajaran bahasa Inggris di sekolah dasar ini tidaklah mudah karena siswa sekolah dasar cenderung mudah bosan dalam belajar. Untuk itu, guru harus dapat menggunakan cara yang tepat agar siswa dapat termotivasi untuk belajar bahasa Inggris. Salah satu cara yang cocok untuk mengaktifkan siswa sekolah dasar untuk berbicara bahasa Inggris adalah dengan menggunakan sebuah permainan yang dikenal dengan “Good Morning Ball Game”. Pada permainan ini guru menggunakan tiga buah bola yang berbeda sesuai dengan kalimat yang akan diucapkan siswa. Permainan ini dapat mengaktifkan keinginan siswa untuk belajar. Jadi, siswa sekolah dasar tidak mudah bosan dalam belajar bahasa Inggris.

Kata kunci: games, speaking, young learners, English

A. Introduction

English is formally studied from junior high school to university, but now it is introduced in elementary school as a local content. It is clearly stated in the curriculum of elementary education “selecting and applying English as a local subject for elementary school. This curriculum is obliged for all the students from the first to sixth grades (*Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, 2006*). It has four skills that should be mastered by the students. They are speaking, listening, reading, and writing. These four skills should be integrated in several meetings with topics already provided by the curriculum.

However, the teaching of English in an elementary school is not an easy thing to be taught especially to the elementary school students as the beginners. There are some difficulties that make the elementary school students find it difficult to learn English. Firstly, the students easily get bored and do not pay attention to the lesson. Elementary school students are the students who cannot be engaged in learning. They tend to learn through playing. Secondly, the student is difficult to pronounce the word correctly because in English, spelling of words is not the same with the pronunciation of that word. The students tend to pronounce the letters of the words

as they see. Thirdly, it is difficult for elementary school students to remember the words so that they often make mistake in doing exercises. This difficulty can be caused by translation method doing by the teacher in early stage which makes the students remember the word faster, but forget it faster too. For example, the students may be able to remember the meaning of animal in Indonesian as they learning, but when they are out of classroom they find it easier to forget it. This is a duty for the teacher to find a way that can make the elementary school students engaged in learning English.

The elementary school students have their own tendency in learning based on their characteristics as young learners. They have enough energy to move around to do something they think more fun. Chodidjah (2007: 3) said that elementary school students or children tend to do activity or do something imaginative and active. They have an instinct to interact each other. It means that psychologically, young learners or elementary school students like to learn through playing. The students cannot learn a thing directly. They need something which can attract their interest; something that can make them enthusiastic.

Young learners are the children who have certain characteristics which are different to adults have especially in learning. They are children, not little adults. They have own cultures or ways of doing things. Erikson (1968) said that the children who are in the school age (6 to 12 years old) are the children who have tendency to develop a sense of industry. They are very active to learn everything around them. They are in industry phase where they can accomplish numerous new skills and knowledge to produce something. Furthermore, based on stages of child cognitive development by Piaget (1970), the elementary schools students or young learners are in the third stage where the children can perform operations, and logical reasoning replaces intuitive thought as long as reasoning can be applied to specific or concrete examples. The teacher is proposed to create such of the appropriate and effective model for teaching children. Such as, using pictures, realia, flash cards, or many others in order to create an enjoy atmosphere while they are studying.

There are some characteristics of young learners especially elementary school students that should be considered by a teacher before teaching English to them which were stated by Paradowski (2012). They are:

1. Involuntary attention
Children do not pay attention to the language system. The children will be able to manage what they learn through their attachment to the language, not through their focus on the language.
2. Limited attention
Children have short attention and little concentration in learning. They easily get bored and tend to get something instantly. Musthafa (2002) said that the children are able to hold their attention in learning at least 15 to 20 minutes only.
3. Weak memory

Furthermore, children cannot control what they are taught; the younger the learner, the patchier storage and recall.

4. Mechanical memory

Children are quick to learn words but slower to learn complex phrases and structures.

Teaching English to children or to young learners is different from teaching English to adult. It is challenging and needs appropriate technique. Children tend to change their mood in every second. They cannot sit for long time. They will move around that they think more fun. However, they show greater motivation than adult do.

The teaching of English in beginner level according to Chodidjah (2007: 2) is to build students' positive attitude to English language. The competence to be achieved is a competence to do a simple conversation around school and house. She suggested the teacher of English to direct the elementary learning to: (1) encourage the students to love English; (2) lead the students to have self-confidence in using English written or orally; (3) improve students communicative competence through developing the four language skill integrated; and (4) understand the students that English is a tool of international communication.

One of the appropriate techniques that can be used by the teacher in teaching language is a game. Through the game elementary school students can enjoy learning as they love to play. Rixon (1999) said that as the definition of young learners is the children between the ages of about 5 years old to 12 years old, it can be suggested that games are natural part of young learners live. By playing a game, young learners or children can make acquaintance with the environment and learn life beside the game also provide enjoyment and relaxation. Furthermore, According to Latorre and Baeza (1975), games have been long accepted in English language teaching because it can relieve students from the strain the result from work demanding concentrate attention, then by using games students remember things faster and better. For instance, Moon (2000) said that playing games, making things, action songs, rhymes and drama can provide excellent contexts for children to learn English. When children are having fun, they usually want to continue the activities. It means that learning through game decreases the stress from lesson and makes the students enjoy during learning process.

Games are student-focused activities requiring active involvement of learners. Games bring real life situation to classroom where the students have opportunity to use the language. Games are activities that encourage the participants to compete with one or with more individuals. They have certain rules. Game is a kind of play that can be used as a teaching technique in English classroom. Game is often associated with fun activities. Besides that, learning English will be more interesting by playing games.

Learners are motivated to learn the language when they are in a game. McCallum (1980, p. ix) emphasizes this point by suggesting that "games automatically stimulate student interest, a properly introduced game can be one of

the highest motivating techniques.” Avedon (1971; Quoted in Deesri, 2002, p. 2) further argues that “games spur motivation and students get very absorbed in the competitive aspects of the games; moreover, they try harder at games than in other courses”. In other words, games stimulate students’ interest in classroom activities and as a result, students become motivated and willing to learn.

One of the appropriate games that can make the elementary school students enjoy learning English is *Good Morning Ball Game*. This game can engage the elementary school students using English in communication through the activities during the game played.

Good morning ball game is an interactive game to activate the students’ willingness to study. As Cooper (2002) said that this game is a fun game that can get the class goes first in the morning. It can be applied in English language classroom activities. Furthermore Cooper (2002) also said that Good Morning Ball game is a game which is appropriate for any English students’ level. In this paper, the writer focuses on elementary school students, in which motivation is very necessary. Through this game the students will be asked to do an instruction as they get the ball. This game is interesting enough and can change untrue judgment that learning English is so complicated and boring.

Cooper (2002) stated that there are some procedures should be done in using Good Morning Ball game to activate elementary school students to speak English. Firstly, the teacher gets the students to make a circle or other kind of formation. Then she or he provides three different balls. They may differ in color or size. After that the teacher chooses three students to hold a ball first. Each ball will have its own sentence or word which should be told by the students who get the ball.

For example:

- Red Ball - Good Morning
- Green Ball- How are you?
- Blue Ball - Fine thank you and you?

Then the teacher throws the ball at first to the students. The students who get the ball say the sentence that comes with the ball. Then, The class members pass or gently throw the balls and the person who receives them also says the sentence that comes with the balls. The sentence that comes with the ball can be what the students will be learned at that day. For example, it may about greeting; it may about color, animal etc.

Good Morning Ball game can be applied in activating elementary school students to speak English because it can make them be encouraged to speak when they get the ball. So, the elementary school students learn English through an enjoyment activity – that is Good morning ball game- not through a serious learning process that can make them easily get bored.

Based on the explanation above, the purpose of this activity is to activate the elementary school students to speak English through a game known as Good Morning Ball Game. It is expected that the elementary school teachers find this an

alternative thing to make their students enjoy learning English and they do not easily get bored.

B. Discussion

There are some stages that are used in applying Good Morning Ball Game as mentioned on the following sub topic.

1. Preparation

In the preparation stage, the teacher prepares everything related to the game as mentioned below:

a. Learning material

There are many kinds of English learning material that can be taught through Good Morning Ball game. The teacher can choose the learning material based on the topics that are already provided by the curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, 2006). It means that the teacher has a duty for selecting and deciding what kind of material that is appropriate with the elementary school students' level by considering to topic provided by the curriculum. The examples of learning materials are introducing self, greeting, giving response to simple instructions, expressions of thanks, asking for apologize, alphabet pronunciation, etc.

The examples above are some examples that writer suggest to use in Good Morning Ball game. However, there are many kinds of learning material that can be taught through this game. It depends on how the teacher can choose the appropriate material for it based on the topics provided by the curriculum (Kurikulum Tingkat Satuan Pendidikan, 2004).

b. Time

Before playing the game, the teacher should decide time allocation for the game. It may about ten until fifteen minutes played during pre teaching activity in order to activate the students to learn English.

Good Morning Ball game is played during pre teaching because this game is to activate the elementary school students to speak English and to help them enjoy learning English. So, the elementary school students do not easily get bored and think that English is a difficult subject.

c. Media

In activating elementary school students to speak English by using Good Morning Ball game, the media used are ball as the main media and other supporting media like picture, flashcard, power point slide, etc based on the learning material will be taught by the teacher.

The balls used should be different each other. They may differ in color (if the teacher teaches about color); size (the biggest one, medium one, and the smallest one), etc. Then, each ball should have its own sentence based on what material is going to teach by the teacher.

2. Procedure of Activating Elementary School Students to Speak English by Using Good Morning Ball Game

The procedure in activating elementary school students to speak English by using Good Morning Ball Game is having similarities with teaching other language

skills. Generally, the activities in teaching and learning process are divided into three phases. They are: pre-activity, whilst activity and post activity. However, activating elementary school students to speak English by using Good Morning Ball game is done in pre teaching activity because this game is played to activate the elementary school students and speak English and to learn with fun.

Below is a model of a teaching procedure with the topic is greetings by applying for speaking skill.

Good Morning Ball game is played to activate the elementary school students when the class goes first in the morning. It is hoped that this game can activate and increase the motivation of clumsy students who are not ready yet to study. The game is played about ten to fifteen minutes. Before playing the game, the teacher should prepare the three different balls which have a sentence for each. The example of using Good Morning Ball game to activate elementary school students to speak English is about greeting. Here is the illustration:

First, the teacher asks all the students to stand up. Here the teacher should use an easy word to give instruction in order to make the students easier to do the instruction. For example, “stand up please!” It should be clear and easier to be caught by the elementary school students. The students stand after they have listened to the instruction given by their teacher. Additionally, the teacher may stand first after giving the instruction so that the students understand what they should do even they do not know the exactly meaning of the instruction given.

Second, the teacher arranges the students to make a big circle (Cooper, 2002). The formation can be changed every meeting in order to make the elementary school students do not feel bored to play the game. The formation can be a circle, rectangle, U shape, etc. The teacher may make line on the floor and the elementary school students will stand or sit on that line. It may look like an animal, flower or other that the students like (Pollard, 2002).

Third, the teacher gives explanation about the rule of the game. The elementary school students should do the instruction given based on the sentence comes with the ball. If the skill is being learned is listening so that the students do the instruction based on the sentence comes with the ball. For example, the first ball has sentence such as a command to “stand up”, so the students will stand up. Then the students will speak when they get the sentence comes with the ball which asks them to speak and also they will read or write a simple sentence if the skills are being learned reading or writing. Furthermore, the teacher also explains to the elementary school students about the pattern of throwing the balls between them. That is the students gently throw the ball to their friends randomly.

Fourth, the teacher gives three of the students a ball (Cooper, 2002). The first ball (red ball) comes with sentence “Good morning!” is thrown to the first student. The student who gets the red ball will directly say “Good Morning” as the sentence comes with the ball. Then, the teacher gives the second ball (green ball) with the sentence “How are you?” to the second student. The second student is not the student beside the first student but the teacher shakes it up to receive the ball. The

second student will directly say “How are you?” when he or she gets the ball. The last, the teacher gives the third ball (blue ball) to the third student with the sentence “fine, thank you and you?”. The third students also say the sentence comes with the ball directly.

Then the students who get the ball from the teacher throw the ball gently to the other students randomly (Cooper, 2002). The students throw the ball one by one to their friends. It restarts from the first ball given by the teacher; that is the red ball. The students who get the ball should say the sentence “Good morning!” which comes with the ball. After that, the student who holds the green ball throws the ball to his or her friend. The student who gets the ball says the sentence “How are you?”. The last, the third student who holds the blue ball throws the ball to his or her friend. The student who gets that ball says “Fine, thank you and you?”. This continues until all the students get their turn to get the ball and say the sentence comes with the balls.

During the game played, the teacher should pay attention to the students’ pronunciation by listening carefully to the way the students say or pronounce the sentence that comes with the balls. The students may speak incorrect pronunciation so that the teacher makes it correct by asking the students to repeat the sentence after him or her. In addition, the teacher also can see whether the students understand or not about the sentence that comes with the ball by looking at their response to the sentence when they get the balls. For example, when the skill used is listening, the students are asked to do the instruction given through the sentence that comes with the ball. If the students cannot do the instruction, it means that they do not understand about the sentence. Here, the teacher is able to evaluate the students’ understanding about the lesson.

The game is ended when all the students get their turn in playing the game. The teacher now can see whether the students have been motivated or not to learn as the purpose of this game is to activate the students to learn.

In conclusion, Good Morning Ball game is played before the teacher starts to move to the new lesson in order to activate the students to learn. This will make the students become spirit and enthusiastic and the class will be more fun and lively. So, the elementary school students do not easily get bored and can enjoy learning process as one of their characteristics that they cannot be engaged in serious learning and they need something that can attract their interest. It means that this game is the solution.

C. Conclusion

Based on previous discussion, it can be concluded teaching English to elementary school students is not an easy thing. As specific characteristics of young learner or elementary school students have where they easily get bored in learning, it needs appropriate technique to teach English to them which is fun and interesting.

Good Morning Ball game is the appropriate one in activating elementary school students to speak English.

Good Morning ball game is easy to play. The teacher just facilitates the media used; that is balls. The balls should be completed with the material given based on the topics provided by the curriculum. Then give the balls to the students. The student who gets the ball should mention the sentence that comes with the ball. It will make the students speak even though just one word or one sentence. It will also improve elementary school students' pronunciation.

Beside Good Morning Ball game is easy to play, it also gives many advantages for both the teacher and the students especially. This game can make the class become lively and fun and of course it will make the students enjoy to learn and do not easily get bored. They will be easy to remember what they have learned too. In addition, using Good Morning Ball game in activating elementary school students to speak English also can help the elementary school students to improve their pronunciation beside they also be able to interact each other. Besides that, this game cannot only be played for acting elementary school students to speak English, but also it can be played for activating junior high school students to speak English. It depends on how the teacher applies it. So, Good Morning ball game is the appropriate game to activate elementary school students to speak English.

Note: this article is compiled based on the writer's paper with her advisor Rima Andriani Sari, S.Pd., M.Hum.

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