E-MATCHING GAME IN TEACHING ENGLISH FOR YOUNG LEARNERS

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Abstract

This study aimed at developing an educational game in Teaching English for Young Learners (TEYL). Young learners easily feel bored if they are taught by using conventional teaching method, therefore the teachers have to be creative in designing the teaching process. One of the ways can be done by teachers in order to make their teaching become fun is by providing a good media. One of media is in the form of a game. Teaching English through game is appropriate and needed, especially for teaching young learners. In addition, young learners love to learn through game. Therefore, this article aims at explaining how to create e-matching game and how to use it in teaching English. This game should be based on young learners' characteristics. Specifically, this article discusses about: (1) the role of game in TEYL; (2) how to design and develop e-matching game; (3) how to teach young learners using e-matching game; and (4) the benefits of TEYL using e-matching game. This article is expected to give information for English teachers who want to develop e-matching game.

Keywords

E-matching Game, Teaching English for Young Learners, Teaching Media

1. Introduction

Nowadays, the effect of globalization in economic sector throughout every part of world has increased the numbers of EFL learners. It is because English becomes the *lingua franca* in EFL sector. English has been widely recognized as the language of the international research community (Podhovnik: 2015). English is a global language in the world. As Crystal (1997) stated that 'English Rules' is an actual example, presenting to the world an uncomplicated scenario suggesting the universality of the language's spread and the likelihood of its continuation. This situation made every country teaches English in schools, even non-English speaking countries introduce English as early as possible. Therefore, teaching English for early childhood or known as TEYL grow rapidly. To teach young learners, the need of adequate young learners' teachers should be accomplished. But, first we should know the fact that TEYL are different with teaching English for adults. Young learners have different characteristics with adult learners that could be identified during learning process. One of the characteristics is young learners learn through playing. Johansson (2004) pointed out that school children's thoughts about play and learning are interesting in the way many children express similarities in their ways of talking about the two. In addition, many studies today claim that children create knowledge when they play (Dau, 1999; Levin, 1996).

When young learners are playing, there should be media for them to play, even in learning process. The use of game is very popular in teaching and learning English. Kuo (2008) stated that games and game-like activities have always been a popular tool in an English class in order to interest and "wake up" uninterested students. The intergration between learning and game (technology) has been started several years ago. Learning using technology in form of game was shown to be possible in primary school classes and there were also improvements in these students' understanding and activeness (Suzuki, 2015). Various experts (Chan & Lin, 2000; Jiang, 2008; Kuo, 2008; Robinson, 1960; Zheng, 2008) maintain that young learners' motivation and confidence can be enhanced in the process of playing games when they achieve learning goals in a relaxing environment. Therefore, it is like creating and building safe zone for young learners where they do not feel afraid while learning. In addition, making young learners enjoy the instruction is very important, because they will learn better when they feel happy and fun (Scott & Ytreberg, 2000).

Based on the explanation above, it is important to provide young learners with the activity that involved playing. One of the ways to deal with it is by using a game. TEYL through

game can be an interesting activity. However, to find a game for teaching young learners that is appropriate with learning objective is not an easy task. One best alternative to find an appropriate game is by creating it. One of the games that could be used is called E-Matching Game. E-Matching Game is an electronic-based game to match similar contents. But, the problem is not all of English teachers could produce a game using electronic-based game. Hence, this article provides the information about how to create E-Matching Game by using Microsoft Power Point and the way in TEYL by using this game in simple.

2. Literature Review

Game can be defined as an activity with goal and element of fun (Haldfield, 1999). Game and teaching is related since many teachers already used game as a mean in teaching, especially in TEYL. The game is believed that game makes young learners focused with the material taught. Whenever the game used, young learners feel enthusiastic to learn. Teaching game mostly used to bring young learners into more concentrate with learning. Numerous scholars (Chan & Lin, 2000; Jiang, 2008; Kuo, 2008; Robinson, 1960; Zheng, 2008) have pointed out that games are useful for children involved in the learning of English since games can strengthen students' motivation and self-confidence. If young learners are informed that they are going to learn English either vocabulary or grammar, they are going to feel enthusiastic to participate in that activity. They will look forward to join activity and to apply the thing that recently they learned. Deesri (2002) stated that games offer a chance for real communication, while also decreasing the stress-levels experienced by students. In addition (Wang et al., 2011) argued that young learners prefer to be immersed in a game-teaching environment which is highly effective in raising their motivation and interest in English language learning. In addition, the focus of using game in the class is not only to help students to learn more effectively but also for fun (Tuan & Doan: 2010).

Furthermore, Tuan and Doan also explained the advantages of using game in language teaching and learning process which is consists of: a game motivates learners, games promote learners' interaction, games improve learners' language acquisition, and game increase learners' achievement. It is clear that game increases young learners' motivation since they are enthusiastic for it. It is stated by Hansen (1994: 118) in which games are highly motivating and entertaining, and they can give shy learners more opportunity to express their opinions and

feelings. The reason why game is motivate because it is amusing, entertaining, and challenging. Hopefully, the boring class will be overcame with challenging situation.

Through game, young learners will be able to communicate with each other. When game involves group work, young learners is expected to develop their skill in working with others. As Jacobs & Kline Liu (1996) expressed that several games can be played in pairs or in small groups, therefore it provides a place for students to develop their skills in collaborating with others such as the skill of asking help or disagreeing something.

Game improves young learners' skill in language acquisition as well. Young learners are programmed to gain knowledge that they seek for. This perspective is associated with theory stated by Noam Chomsky. Chomsky's early formulation of a Language Acquisition Device (LAD) logically explicated the preconditions for acquiring linguistic knowledge on the basis of projection from input (Chomsky 1984; Chomsky 1999). The LAD contains knowledge of grammatical rules common to all languages (Shaffer et al., 2002). It allows children to understand the rules of whatever language they are listening to as well. This is why in learning language, children start from what they are listened to. Furthermore, Richard-Amato (1988: 147) emphasized on game which enable young learners to have lower anxiety, thus making the acquisition of input more likely. The earlier language being taught toward young learners, the more they could master in the future.

Young learners' achievement will be increased through game. Game involves young learners' four skills of language, consists of listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Moreover, the sub-skills of language, such as vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, etc are also involved. Zdybiewska (1994: 6) stated that games are a good way of practicing language, for they provide a model of what learners will use the language for in real life in the future exercises that practice and utilize the new language have been completed, games can then be introduced as yet another means for enabling greater comprehension. In brief, game proved to be an excellent tool to be used regularly in language teaching.

Based on the explanation above, it is clear that game has an important role in TEYL. Game takes role in motivating young learners to learn, promoting young learners' interaction, improving young learners' language acquisition skill, and increasing young learners' achievement. Moreover, game actually could involve all of skills in learning English, therefore it

improves language skill as well. Besides, game also teaches young learners about character education.

3. Methodology

3.1 How to Design and Develop E-Matching Game

Before discussing how to design and develop e-matching game, it would be better to understand e-matching game first. E-matching game is actually the same with common matching game which requires players to match similar contents. Jacobs (2010) stated that matching game, as the name implies, participants need to find a match for a word, picture, or card. But, the difference with e-matching game is it is an electronic-based game. This game is developed by using software named Microsoft Power Point. Since, it uses Power Point, it would not be a problem for every teacher. The process is actually the same with making power point presentation. Different version will not be an issue. The main key in creating this game is in hyperlink tool which enables to connect files, inside or outside of power point content.

In order to find the pictures for the game, English teachers have to find it in the internet through search engine, e.g. www.google.com. English teacher could access it in the images menu of Google. For example, the material is about things in the classroom. English teachers may download several pictures relate with it, such as background of classroom, pencil, pen, book, etc. But, consider the pictures are in the form of cartoon, fiction, or colourful.

To develop effective e-matching game, it used steps of multimedia instructional design proposed by Lee & Owens (2004) which consists of Analysis, Design, Development, Implementation, and Evaluation. Those steps are explained below.

3.2 Analysis

In this step, teacher has to find what kind of matching game want to be developed. Since the function of game is to match between one element to another, whether it is between words with words, pictures with pictures, or mixed. Then, teacher needed to determine the contents that are going to develop whether it is matching between two elements, three elements, or more. The most simple analysis could be done by determine the needs of young learners themselves.

3.3 Design

The design will be made in the form of a blueprint because it is made in the software as shown in Table 1. The blueprint could be designed by writing it in the notebook or typing it in the laptop. In designing the game, English teachers have to concern with the appropriateness of

young learners' level in English. As suggested by Tuan & Doan (2010), games designed for different levels as well as topics, hence students with different language proficiency levels can enjoy and gain the best results from them. Therefore, the game should not too difficult or too easy as well. On the other hand, designing this game, English teachers have to determine these elements, such as: learning material, content of game, target of game, name of game, objectives of game, and applicable for every young learner.

Table 1: *Blueprint of the Game*

BLUE PRINT OF THE E-MATCHING GAME			
Leaning Material: Things in the Classroom Grade: 5th grade Software: Power Point			
Slide Number	**Things in Classroom**	**Things to be prepared**	**Special Effect**
1st slide	-	Opening picture Music	-
2nd slide	-	Start game slide	Play Button
3rd slide	-	Introduction slide	Go Button
4th slide	-	Loading slide	-
5th slide	-	Video slide	-
6th slide		Loading slide	
7th slide		Case Slide	
8th slide	Chalk	Picture of a green bag Item Name	Hyperlink
9th slide		Correct Picture	Hyperlink
10th slide		Wrong Picture	Hyperlink
11th slide	Chalk	Picture of chalks Item Name	Hyperlink
12th slide		Correct Picture	Hyperlink
13th slide		Wrong Picture	Hyperlink
Etc.			
		Victory Slide (Congratulations)	
		Thank you	
		Ending Slide Again / Quit	Hyperlink

3.4 Development

When blueprint is finished, the next step is developing the e-matching game by following the blueprint. In developing step, English teachers need to visualize the idea by using power point. English teachers have to input the pictures inside each of the slide along with its text. The steps of developing e-matching game can be done by following these steps, namely: making the introduction and background slide, putting "clues" or "questions" and "pictures" or "answers" in the slide, deciding and putting the correct and wrong expression slides, make the hyperlink between the "clues" or "questions" and "pictures" or "answers" with the correct or wrong expression slide, deciding custom animation, special effect, sound, anime, speed, timing, etc. After the power point is finished, then English teachers have to save it. To make sure it works properly, English teachers could try it first through slide show. If still there are something wrong, like malfunction of hyperlink, troubleshoots with the clicking slide, sound, etc, English teachers need to repair it and save it again.

The game is started when Junior, the name of the character came to a messy classroom. Then, he found the teacher who wanted him to clean the room. The instruction of the game is "to help the teacher to clean that messy room". Young learners will play as Junior who became detective to find the stuffs based on teacher's instruction. The first instruction is "Please find my green bag!" young learners supposed to find it just by clicking the picture of green bag among those many things. If young learners click the right thing, then there will be "correct expression" appears and vice versa. As mentioned before, that slide is connected by using hyperlink, one of feature in power point.

Figure 1: *Sample of First Instruction of E-Matching Game*

3.5 Implementation

In this step, English teachers determine the way to implement the way of the game is going to be used, whether the format of the file or the form of it. The format could be changed into another format, such as: Power Point Presentation, Power Point Macro-Enabled Presentation, and XPS Document. Besides, the file also can be transferred into CD-ROM if English teachers want to make it real like a CD game.

3.6 Evaluation

When the game is ready, before using it in real teaching situation, it will be better to try it out first. Try out aims at finding the problems during implementing e-matching game during teaching and learning process. This evaluation can be categorized into formative evaluation. The easiest way to do formative evaluation is by conducting one-to-one trials (Dick & Carey: 2005). To run formative evaluation method, it needs three to five young learners to be involved to be the sample following the representatives of fast learners, moderate learners, and slow learners. In order to evaluate e-matching game, those three learners should be used the game. While implementing the game, English teachers should observe and evaluate the young learners while playing the game in order to identify the problems. Furthermore, English teachers interview the young learners after they play the game. It is needed, because English teachers may identify the problems and do revision based on the problems found.

3.7 How to Teach Young Learners Using E-Matching Game

After the game is finished, English teachers need to determine the way to teach young learners using e-matching game. In this section, the method used is three-phase framework which proposed by Sheils (1988) which consists of: Pre-activity, While-activity, and Post-activity. Those phases are explained below:

3.8 Pre-activity

In this first activity, English teacher engages young learners to use their prior knowledge by asking several questions related with topic. English teachers also try to relate with the main activity in which young learners are going to learn through playing.

3.9 While-activity

In this activity, this game is mainly focus on introducing vocabulary toward young learners. Based on the game, young learners have to combine between "clue" or "questions" and "answers" or "pictures". Hence, the game is related with the technique introduced by Nation

(1988), a technique for teaching vocabulary, he calls it split information activity and it can be applied for vocabulary learning exercises. Young learners read the information of "clue" or "questions" and find the appropriate "answers" or "pictures".

The goal of learning English is to enable young learners to use it for communication. In e-matching game, young learners are not only has to match the content, yet they have to guess the answers as well. This is one of strategy in communicating English in which young learners can guess the meaning of words from context (Oxford: 2003). This strategy also develops young learners' reading skill (Merawati: 2003). In addition, it also develops young learners' autonomy because they have to be good guessers (Omaggio, 1978 in Wenden as cited in Khan et.al, 2004).

3.10 Post-activity

When young learners already finish answering e-matching game, English teachers can ask the young learners to mention the vocabulary they found or write it down on the whiteboard. Therefore, young learners also learn about speaking, writing, and listening. This activity mainly focuses on enable young learners to use their psychomotor ability.

From those explanations above, it is clear that e-matching game can be used for teaching English four language skills. Furthermore, some studies also supported the implementation of game, especially for matching game which is effective to enhance young learners' language skill, especially e-matching game which is more effective that conventional matching game. Based on those facts, it makes e-matching game is recommended to be applied in TEYL.

4. Results & Discussion

There are several results of TEYL using e-matching game. Those benefits are:

4.1 Teaching English through E-Matching Game is Effective and Fun

As already mentioned previously, many scholars agree that game enables make learning become effective and fun. Ara (2009) argued that the first reason why games are useful is that since games make learning fun, children are willing participants and are not just present in class because they have to be. During teaching by using fun, children do not realize that they are learned. In addition, Ara also mentioned that learning activity is just passed by since they enjoy their learning through game. because of the fun involved in the game a massive amount of vocabulary and grammar can be revised in a short time because it is very difficult for learners to remember vocabulary if they never use it. Game focuses upon motivation and vocabulary

acquisition, and the reduction of anxiety from peer pressure, in relation to the pedagogical goal of improving students' English proficiency (Wang et al., 2011).

A game is effective as well to be implemented in teaching. Haldfield (1999) further emphasizes the effective use of games. It is more effective if young learners can play and learn at the same time. Since, when the learning material is quite a lot, then English teachers have to teach it in a very short time. Hence, the only method used is by using game for the sake of effectiveness.

4.2 E-Matching Game is an Economical Game

E-matching game is produced in the form of softcopy, thus it could be duplicated rapidly. It is different with paper based/conventional matching game which needs a lot of money to be spent in order to make duplication of it. Moreover, since e-matching game is in the form of softcopy, it is very easy to modify it for different objectives. This modification can be done in computer, in consequence the use of money for this is low. Gunduz (2005) explained that computer assisted language learning is inexpensive, because the product can be easily to be copied and produced. It is also supported by Miangah & Nezarat (2012) which stated that teaching media which are developed through information and communication technology will be low in cost.

5. Conclusion

The English teachers who teach young learners should creative in designing the instruction. Since young learners merely like to learn through play and game, by choosing an interesting teaching and learning process is very needed for young learners. E-matching game is one of media that can be used for creating fun and effective learning activity for young learners. Developing e-matching game is not difficult, since it uses Microsoft power point and some pictures from internet. Teaching English through e-matching game is recommended because it trains and involves young learners' English language mastery. In addition, teaching English through e-matching game is also effective, fun, and low in cost.

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