

The Effectiveness of Using Games on Primary Stage Students for the Achievement of English Language skills.

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Abstract

English Language Teaching is a vital fact in the modern society. Sri Lankan Education system has given full attention to develop English Language skills among the students of the country. It has greatly identified that the teachers need to deploy appropriate teaching method with the level and the need of the students to master the language. This study found that using games for language teaching in primary students in the schools has greatly benefited. The selected was ideally matched with the deployed method. It was found positive to use games with beginners where it is appropriate.

Key words: Education, English Language Teaching, Teaching method, Games

1. Introduction

As a communication tool, language has taken a significant place in the human society. Among the world languages, presently, English has become the bridge language for different nations and people. So this growing popularity in English language teaching and learning made the country to encourage English language learning through school curriculum. In Sri Lankan educational system, now English language teaching has become very important and essential thing because of the demand that the language has. It has started to teach English from primary to secondary sections of government school, but many students feel it difficult to learn English and use it correctly where the usage is compulsory. Though the employment of different techniques was high to cope with these difficulties, still students struggle to master the language. This has become very common fact that students need to participate for private classes to master the language. According to some conducted studies it has revealed that the techniques that the teachers are using can be a reason for the failure of the students to gain the language. In this study it is going to see the effectiveness of games which are used in English language teaching for the students who are learning in primary section.

According to Wikipedia, it says that game is a structured form of [play](#), usually undertaken for [enjoyment](#) and sometimes used as an [educational](#) tool. They emphasized that game is a tool which can use to conduct the education in a funny way. When it refers to a tool, it simply talks about the usage of games to do something. So the role of games in teaching and learning cannot be denied. Not only in teaching and learning, now it has become a trend to use games in many fields since it is very successful to have certain results.

However, in order to achieve the most outcomes, it is important that suitable games are chosen. Whenever a game is to be conducted, the number of students, proficiency level, cultural context, timing, learning topic, and classroom settings are factors that should be taken into account.

Especially in teaching, teachers use many techniques to keep the language very familiar for the students. However, it has become very difficult for the teachers to go for some advanced techniques with little students or learners. From nature these learners don't like to stay in one place and do their learning. So, teachers try to employ different

interesting and active activities to keep the students engaged. These games have become more successful according to some investigations. And also the attitudes of the students have a great impact of the learning process. In many of the schools which are situated in rural setting, students are very poor in English, because they have no more exposures to the language as the learners in urban areas. So, these using games in language teaching will be highly productive for acquiring the language.

In the same manner learners are vary in their level of knowledge and age. In Sri Lankan schools English language teaching starts from grade one but a few numbers of students only get through the expected outcomes. Sometimes even in adult classes English has become very boring subject according to the comments of the students. So all these things remind the teachers that teaching and learning process should be interesting things which can keep the students engaged. Since little children always like to play with their friends in outside, this method can use in the classrooms for teaching. When the games are included with teaching, students will participate in learning eagerly. In this study it is going to test the effectiveness of using games inside the classroom for language learning for the primary students. Here the primary students refer to the learners who are studying from grade one to five in Sri Lankan government schools.

2. Problem statement

Learning a language is entirely different from acquiring a language by the children. However, depending on the communicative needs of the human beings, the necessity of the additional languages can be a vital fact. In accordance with the said fact, in Sri Lankan educational system, teaching and learning English Language has taken a considerable importance and doing much for enhancing the competency of language skills of the students. What so ever, the students face with difficulties and lethargic attitudes to learn English. Especially with the primary level students, a great need of the attention and strategies are highly demanded to keep them engaged. This study tries to have an investigation by using games to see whether it will give effective outcomes to teach the language productively.

3. Limitations

This study has been conducted to see the effectiveness of using games on primary stage students for the achievement of English language skills. The present study limits to grade 04 students in the selected schools. According to the plan, the study focuses on the primary level students but it selected grade four as the participants. And also, under the games, it has selected wording games, and hope to help the students to earn marks in dictations. The game is limited to ten minutes.

4. Methodology

This study was conducted based on both primary and secondary data to arrive at the overall findings. The primary data is collected through the feedbacks from the teachers and the result of the students, whereas many details were taken from books and journals through the internet.

Two surveys were conducted in this study to collect data. At the beginning direct method was used by the teachers in the class to teach the vocabulary: mother, hospital, vacation, weekend, cricket, bottle, umbrella and purse as the normal way that the teacher uses in the classroom.

After two days from the first survey the second one was in operation with a game of wording for ten minutes. There the students were taught the following words playground, doctor, teacher, temple, Examination, interval, province, school through a game and the marks were recorded by the teachers. Through these methods the data was collected and analyzed by using graphs and charts to reach the final result.

5. Result and analysis

This section talks about the collected data from the survey to see the applicability of games to teach English language for the primary students in Sri Lankan schools. According to that the data from the conducted teaching sessions with direct method and using games are going to be analyzed. In the same manner, feedbacks also will be discussed as the study has planned.

5.1. Teaching vocabulary with direct method.

For acquiring a better idea about the way that the normal teaching is going on with the language teaching of the students, the first survey was conducted with the direct method. There the teachers were instructed to do the teaching as they do in the classroom to see the attitudes they are bearing regarding the vocabulary learning and to observe the participation of the students with the lesson. According to the conducted first survey, the below result was gathered.

Table 01. Students' performance under the direct method

The below table shows the collected data from the vocabulary teaching under the direct method. In the following table, according to the order it shows first, second, third and fourth: the name of the school that was used for the survey, number of students in grade 4 in the respective school, number of students who gave correct answers and the number of students who couldn't come out with the correct answers.

Name of the school	Number of students	Number of students with correct answers	Number of students with wrong answers
Kuli/Vilbagedara Vidyalaya	37	10	27
Kuli/Rathmalla Vidyalaya	35	16	19
Kuli/ Palugahawela Vidyalaya	21	9	12
Kuli/ Kiriwanagara Vidyalaya	13	3	10
Kuli/ Dematawa Vidyalaya	33	6	27

The above table displays the data collected from the different schools as following. According to that there are 10 students from Vilbagedara Vidyalaya who could do the dictation test well and 27 have not come to the expected level under the direct method. In Rathmalla Vidyalaya, it records 35 students as the total in grade 4. Among them, 16 students have done the activity well while 19 was failed. However, in Palugahawela Vidyalaya, it shows that 9 students have come out with the correct answers. In the same way, there is only 3 students who had done the test well and 10 students had failed Kiriwanagara Vidyalaya. Finally, in Dematawa Vidyalaya, 6 students have done the test correctly. According to the collected and analyzed result it shows that many of the students haven't able to come to the expected level through the teaching under the direct method.

7.2 Teaching vocabulary using games

After conducting the survey with direct method, the second survey was conducted with wording game for teaching students the vocabulary. Here the teacher was given a set of vocabulary to teach and the students were supposed to a dictation session after teaching vocabulary. The eight words were taught by a game. According to that students were instructed to write English alphabet in separate provided sheets and asked them to mix it with others. After that students were given a set of words that they should select the letters and fix the order to make the words. The game was well planned and the students participated happily and they were eager to go for another game in that particular day in English session. The result of the students is displayed in the following table.

Table 02. Students' performance after using game to teach vocabulary

The collected data after introducing the wording game for teaching vocabulary can be seen in the following table.

Name of the school	Number of students	Number of students with correct answers	Number of students with wrong answers
Kuli/Vilbagedara Vidyalaya	37	18	19

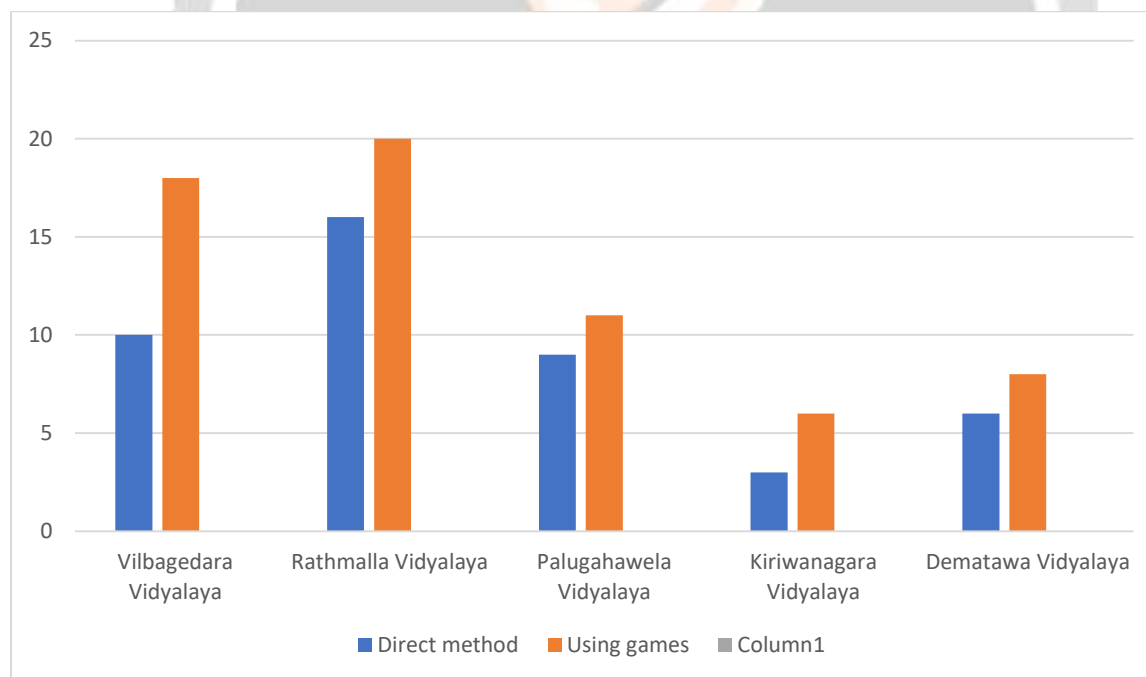
Kuli/Rathmalla Vidyalaya	35	20	15
Kuli/ Palugahawela Vidyalaya	21	11	10
Kuli/ Kiriwanagara Vidyalaya	13	6	7
Kuli/ Dematawa Vidyalaya	33	8	25

The result of using games to teach English vocabulary for primary students can be seen from the above table. According to that it shows that 18 students from Vilbagedara Vidyalaya and 20 students from Rathmalla vidyalaya had done the dictation test correctly. It means that they all have done the eight words correctly which they were given for the activity. And also, 11 students from Palugahawela Vidyalaya and 6 students from Kiriwanagara vidyalaya had done the test well. Finally, it shows that 6 students from Dematawa vidyalaya have done the dictation nicely.

7.3 Comparison of the students' performance under direct method and using games.

According to the analyzed information collected from the aforesaid schools, it shows that some students have taken the maximum advantages of using games in the classroom to teach vocabulary. Here it is going to have a formal comparison of the displayed data to have a better understanding about the effectiveness of using games to teach vocabulary.

Figure 01. Comparison of performance of the students



According to the displayed data in the above figure, it shows that using games for teaching vocabulary has become very successful with this selected primary student in the schools. It is very happy to see that number of students who have done the list of dictation correctly has been increased after using games in the teaching session.

7.4. Feedbacks of the teaching staff

A questionnaire was used to collect the feedbacks of the teaching staff. There were five primary teachers who helped to conduct the survey. It was considered important to take the ideas of the teachers about the used method to teach

vocabulary for the primary students. So, the following feedbacks were taken from the teachers about using games to teach English vocabulary.

Table 03. Opinions of the teaching staff

The below table shows the opinions of the teacher who helped to conduct the survey.

No:	Question	Yes	No
01	Do you think that games can keep the students active during the teaching and learning process?	05	
02	Were they engaged willingly with the activity than the direct method?	05	
03	Do you think that using games is beneficial for primary students?	05	
04	Were the students comfortable during the session?	05	
05	Do you like to use games for teaching?	05	
06	Was this an effective method for teaching vocabulary?	05	
07	Did the students increase their marks?	05	
08	Do you hope to use games for other teaching areas also?	05	
09	Was this consuming time than the allocated time period?	02	03
10	Is this an effective teaching tool?	04	01

According to the above table, it shows that from the question 01 to 08, all the five teachers have agreed with the used method. They all have replied as yes. However, in number 9, it has reported that using games consume times than expected. In the same way, one teacher has said that using games is not much effective teaching tool for the primary students.

6. Discussion

The present study talks about the effectiveness of using games for the language teaching of the primary students in the Sri Lankan government school. According to that the survey was conducted in five schools by using the students in grade five. There the vocabulary teaching was done with a wording game. The employed method was found positive and effective to use with primary students since it can keep the students engaged and active during the process of teaching and learning. As same it was identified that students are bearing positive attitudes regarding English language when the teaching happens by keeping them engaged with the teaching. Teaching English language in government school can have good result if the teachers use proper teaching methods in appropriate situations.

7. Conclusion

English Language Teaching is must in school system since it is the duty of the system to make the students ready to catch the future up comings in the world. Even the students attend many classes for learning English many students face with difficulties to acquire the language well with reading, speaking, writing and listening. In this study, it has tried to find the applicability of games for English language teaching among the primary students by selecting the students who are in grade four. So, the study has proved that applicability of games in proper situations to teach English would be effective for language teaching and learning.

8. Referencing

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