Simon Says: a Fun Technique to Teach English to Young Learners

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ABSTRACT

English teaching that is communicative and fun has an important role in the success of English learning. Several teachers try to find out the techniques to make their teaching classes communicative and fun, so the students are not easily bored. This study aims to describe the implementation of teaching English using the simon says technique. This is a descriptive qualitative study in which the data described were collected through observation and interview to the teacher. The research was participated by the fourth-grade students at Gayam State Elementary School (SDN Gayam) 3, Kediri. The results of inserting games Simon Says in English lessons were responded well by students, they learned to be good listeners of instructions, memorized new vocabulary, became patient and careful when carrying out instructions and most importantly the atmosphere of learning in the classroom becomes exciting and fun. The result of this research is significantly useful as a reinforcement of knowledge for teachers and students.

KEYWORDS: *Simon says, Teaching English, Young Learners*

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Teaching English to children differs from teaching it to adults. Despite their high levels of activity and creativity, children often have short attention spans. Teacher should develop learning environment as entertaining as possible to keep their spirit up during teaching and learning process (Bansa & Wenny J, 2021).

Simon says is one of the popular classic game which not only entertains but also helps build vocabulary, listening skills, and comprehension in an interactive way. This technique can transform the classroom atmosphere, turning language learning into a playful experience. According to Hines (2014), that playing Simon says is one of the activities that fosters students' listening comprehension, this technique gives students the opportunity to practice using language in an interesting and fun context, and encourages students to do it repeatedly. This makes students understand, accept and then be able to use language.

Although teaching English to children is not a simple task, it is also not difficult if teachers are already proficient in the language, thus the best way to put Simon's advice into practice needs to be looked into. In addition to having shorter attention spans, teaching children can be a special, enjoyable, and challenging experience because they acquire language in accordance with developmental stages (Avezova, 2022). Misunderstandings and incorrect idea acquisition can result from major pedagogical failure caused by a lack of knowledge about how to best approach children's learning.

Simon says has been experimented by Humairah et al. (2023). They attempted to find out whether the Simon Says game is effective or not for use in learning, especially vocabulary. The results of this study indicate that the Simon Says game is very effective for teaching vocabulary. In her study about teachers' creativity in teaching English to young learners, Taula'bi' (2022) suggested that

playing games like Simon Says can be a creative teaching strategy for teaching English to young learners. Another similar study has also been conducted in Chile by Bravo & Cisterna (2020). They found that the puppet called Simon plays an active role in all the English lessons interacting constantly with the children and concluded that in the EFL classroom, it effectively helped young learners to become more confident when they face the learning of a new language, encouraged them to speak in English and facilitated the teacher's interaction with students, creating a suitable emotional environment that promoted the learning of a foreign language.

Despite the facts that Simon says promotes positive impact toward students' language development, there is not adequate information concerning with the best practice of the implementation of the Simon says technique. To unveil the way Simon says implemented in teaching English to young learners, this current study focuses on observing and describing the steps of the implementation of Simon says by an English teacher in English classroom. The finding of this study is suggested to be a model of a fun teaching technique for teaching English as well as an enjoyable tool for student learning.

2.0 METHOD

This research was conducted on 4th grade students of SDN 3 Gayam Kediri with a total of 25 students. The researcher used qualitative method. This study does not use data in the form of numbers, but in the form of a narrative. The data was obtained from case studies and observations. According to Yusuf (2014), Qualitative research is an inquiry strategy that emphasizes the search for meaning, understanding, concepts, characteristics, symptoms, symbols, descriptions of a phenomenon, natural and whole, prioritizes quality, and use several methods. In this study, the researcher emphasizes the description of a phenomenon that explained the research results using narrative.

A. The technique of collecting data
1. The researcher previously completed a teaching SDN Gayam 3 Kediri. The researcher has solid working relationships with the school principal, the board of teachers, and the administrative personnel. Classroom observation was carried out in order to capture the true scenario of teaching and learning processes such as how the instructor presents content, builds relationships with students, and assigns homework. Furthermore, the researcher acquired spontaneous comments from students while they were studying English in the classroom by employing classroom observation. From observations that have been made to 25 students, researchers get the results that by using simon says students are more active and learning is more exciting and fun.

3.0 FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The classroom observation and interview to the teacher about the implementation on Simon says as a technique to teache English to young learners have led to the identification of some steps as described below.

The Implementation of Simon says

1. **Step 1**
   The teacher gathered all the players, wher the students played this Simon Says by both standing and sitting.
2. **Step 2**
   Within the group of players, the teacher choose one person to be Simon. The first Simon can be the oldest player or chosen at random.
3. **Step 3**
   The game begins when Simon gives commands to the group of listeners. Simon's commands can be given in two different ways: beginning a command by saying "Simon says", i.e., "Simon says hop on one foot" or simply stating the command, "Stand on one foot". Simon's goal is to eliminate as many listeners as possible, until there is one listener remaining as the winner.

4. **Step 4**

   The listeners must listen closely to what the leader, Simon, commands them to do. If Simon gives a command by first stating, "Simon says…" the listeners must obey Simon's command. If Simon gives a command without first saying, "Simon says…" the listeners should not obey the command.

5. **Step 5**

   If a listener incorrectly obeys or does not obey Simon's command, they are eliminated from the game round and must sit out until another round is started. (Suggestion – choose one player to sit out each round to keep track of who obeys Simon correctly.)

6. **Step 6**

   Depending upon Simon's age, try to mix up the commands – switching back and forth between saying "Simon says" and not saying it. When someone incorrectly obeys one of Simon's commands, the teacher called them out so they can be eliminated from the remaining group of players still in the game. Some common commands for Simon include:

   Raise your hands.

   Touch your nose.

   Hop on one foot.

   Do jumping jacks.

   Wave hello.

7. **Step 7**

   Keep playing until there is one remaining listener left. The remaining listener is the winner for the round and can become the new Simon.

Thus, Simon Says is a popular children's game that involves players following instructions given by a leader, typically called "Simon." The leader leads the game by telling the players to do certain actions, which can be movements, sounds, or even acting tasks (act like a monkey). A player should only do an action if the leader uses the phrase "Simon Says" before their instruction. If a player does the action and "Simon Says" did not precede the instruction, that player is out. The results of inserting games Simon says when English lessons are responded well by students, they learn to be good listeners of instructions, memorize new vocab, be patient and careful when carrying out instructions and most importantly the atmosphere of learning in the classroom becomes exciting and fun.

This finding is consistent with the concept that teaching English refers to the systematic process of instructing individuals in the English language and language skills. However, Simon says mostly teaches, speaking and listening skills. This finding is also in line with Brown's definition that teaching is showing or helping someone to learn how to do something, giving instruction, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or understand (Brown, 2000, p.10). Brown further explains that teaching cannot be defined apart from learning. Teaching is guiding and faciliting learning for the learner to learn, sitting the conditions for learning. The teacher's understanding how the learner learns will determine the philosophy, the teacher's teaching style, teacher's approach, method and classroom teachniques (Brown, 2000, p.7). The definition of teaching above explain that teaching is an activity to teach by giving example, instruction, and guiding from teacher to students for get information and knowledge to students.

Young learners of English can benefit from the Simon Says game since it can enhance their vocabulary, listening comprehension, and concentration: 1) Listening: By interacting with other players in the game, students can get practice listening, 2) Vocabulary: Students can pick up new words and practice using discipline vocabulary, 3) Focus: Students that play the game are better able to concentrate on the current assignment, 4) Self-confidence: Since they aren't concerned about receiving criticism or punishment for their errors, students may feel more self-assured, 5) Communication: During the game, students can work on their interpersonal communication skills.

The weakness of this research is that it is conducted only in young learners class. In order to understand a more comprehensive understanding of the use of Simon says larger contexts, future

researchers may conduct a similar study in higher education.

4.0 CONCLUSION

In conclusion, using Simon says as a fun teaching technique for young learners proves to be responded well by students, they learned to be good listeners of instructions, memorized new vocabulary, became patient and careful when carrying out instructions and most importantly the atmosphere of learning in the classroom becomes exciting and fun. The steps of using Simon says can also be implemented easily and interestingly which encourage students to learn English. It is however might be somewhat challenging as teachers are required to be skillful and creative enough in orchestrating their students. The result of this research is significantly useful as a reinforcement of teacher pedagogical knowledge for teachers and students' fun ways of learning.

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