

## THE ROLE OF YOUNG LEARNERS IN TEACHING PROCESSES

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*Abstract:*

Teaching a foreign language can be challenging since students need to take into account the cultural distinctions between their native language and the language they are trying to learn. Foreign language teachers should try to find new ways to teach it effectively. So every teacher knows that there is no best method to teach because day by day new contributions are being made. Thus, especially, a foreign language teacher has to know and use at least one or more methods in language teaching.

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Language is a means of communication. In the last decades English takes a place as a global lingua franca, in particular the political and social connections. It plays a great role in social relationship. And the English language is the first and essential language that we teach to children at very early stages of schooling.

Pre-service teacher's education in school is very important to build future career. The background knowledge of English they learn from their school, becomes the foundation of their next step of learning.

In this century English language is being the language that most commonly taught at schools. Now in most countries, children are officially starting to learn English from the first grade, even some kindergartens are also introducing English in limited use. Preschools and schools have been described as the first step of introducing English language. Obviously, there are some typical reasons for this tendency.

1. It is often assumed that it is better to begin learning language early. Despite the fact that "the earlier the better" is not always appropriate when it comes to learning a foreign language, when the starting age for English has dropped in most countries around the world.

2. Parents want their children to develop English skills to benefit from new world orders. A common belief is that if you know more languages, you have more opportunities to take advantages of modern society.

It is primarily essential for children to learn English from a young age in this rapidly globalizing world. This English knowledge will help them to open many opportunities in future and develop their future career. Nevertheless, teaching English is not so easy job. Most of the teachers find this teaching process both

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challenging and fun. Young age children are starting to learn English from the first grade at school. It can help to develop their listening, understanding and pronunciation very well. It also enables them to become more communicative with some inaccuracy in grammar structures.[8,23-29]

The intellectual and linguistic development of the child demands different approaches at different ages. Younger groups can achieve higher standard of pronunciation using English phonemes and intonation patterns because "language learning blocks" are not taken shape yet. Only later will they be prepared to continue with more complex and abstract structures.

Teaching the phonetics at an early age is very important because it can be hard to be achieved at an older age, when the language mastering process requires a great conscious effort since the imitative capacity is lost and language cannot be acquired by mere exposure to it. Natural interest in learning the foreign language disappears because of the biological process of maturation of the brain. For this reason, foreign accent cannot be overcome after this time. [12,105]

First phase (I - IV grade) The most important task in this period is to teach the phonetics by imitation, because this is the most favorable period for imitating pronunciation. Grammatical structures are also practiced, but without any linguistic explanation. Some problems and performance difficulties in learning English can be faced in pronunciation, the command of structures and the use of vocabulary. Young learners can master the phonetic system provided they have good models to imitate. This is why complete accuracy in pronunciation, rhythm and intonation should be included. In songs, riddles or nursery rhymes they will, in a parrot-like way, correctly memorize and repeat the lines, while in producing their own sentences they will leave out whatever they feel redundant (Mum cooking in the kitchen) since their primary communicative intention is to convey meaning. [12,106] At Early ages they need to be active. This is why different methods should be used during the teaching process and allowing children to participate orally and physically in dialogues, role playing, dramatizing.

Unlike adult learners, young learners are not self-motivated to learn English, because they love daily games and teacher should capitalize their curiosity, the desire to play and explore. Teaching process should be planned in such a way that learning should be interesting and even entertaining for them. If we want teaching to be more successful and fruitful we should consider our learners' interests and motivations, because some researches show that learners pay more attention to class if they are motivated enough.

In teaching process Jean Piaget approved four stages of cognitive and sentimental development in youngsters. He states, the child develops cognitively through vigorous involvement with the environment, and each new step in development builds on and becomes incorporated with previous steps.[38, 56]

Due to the fact that two of the four developmental stages typically take place throughout the elementary school years, it is crucial for language teachers working with children to continue to emphasize the distinctive qualities of each cognitive stage. They are as follows:

1. The age of sensory-motor intelligence (0-2 years old). At this stage, behavior is primarily moving. Even while "cognitive" development is perceived as being as the

schemata are constructed, the infant does not yet internally represent experiences and "think" conceptually.

2. The stage of preoperational thought (age 2 to 7 years). This stage is characterized by the development of language and other forms of representation and rapid conceptual development. Reasoning during this stage is pre-logical or semi-logical, and children tend to be very egocentric. Children often focus on a single feature of a situation at a time—for example, they may be able to sort by size or by colour but not by both characteristics at once.

3. The stage of concrete operations (age 7 to 11 years). During these years, the child develops the ability to apply logical thought to concrete problems. Hands-on, concrete experiences help children understand new concepts and ideas. Using language to exchange information becomes much more important than in earlier stages, as children become more social and less egocentric.

4. The stage of formal operations (age 11 to 15 years or older). During this stage, the child's cognitive structures reach their highest level of development. The child becomes able to apply logical reasoning to all classes of problems, including abstract problems either not coming from the child's direct experience or having no concrete referents.

In teaching process several experienced school teachers have supplemented their observations about students in different grade levels, primarily from the point of view of the language teacher. They are:

Preschool students (ages 2 to 4) Preschool children are in a sensitive period for language development. They absorb languages effortlessly and are adept imitators of speech sounds. Because they are very self-centred, they do not work well in groups, and they respond best to activities and learning situations relating to their own interests and experiences. Although they have a short attention span, they have great patience for repetition of the same activity or game. Preschoolers respond well to concrete experiences and to large-motor involvement in language learning.

Primary students (ages 5 to 7): kindergarten and grades 1 and 2. Most primary-grade children are still preoperational, and they learn best with concrete experiences and immediate goals. New concepts and vocabulary are more meaningful when presented as pairs of binary opposites. Children like to name objects, define words, and learn about things in their own world; they also have vivid imaginations and respond well to stories of fantasy. They need to know how to feel about something in order to learn it well. Primary-age children learn through oral language; they are capable of developing good oral skills, pronunciation, and intonation when they have a good model. They learn well, especially beginning in first grade, through dramatic play, role-play, and use of story form with a strong beginning, middle, and end. Because of their short attention spans, they need to have a great variety of activities, but the teacher must keep in mind that children of this age tire easily.

Intermediate students (ages 8 to 10): grades 3, 4, and 5. Intermediate-grade students are at a maximum of openness to people and situations different from their own experience. For these children, a global emphasis is extremely important, because it gives them an opportunity to work with information about countries in all parts of the world. As intermediates develop the cognitive characteristics of the concrete operations level, they begin to understand cause and effect. Students in

intermediate grades can work well in groups. They can begin a more systematic approach to language learning, but they continue to need firsthand, concrete experiences as a starting point and to benefit from learning that is embedded in context. Students can work readily with rubrics and they usually enjoy peer editing and scoring activities.

Early adolescent students (Ages 11 to 14): grades 6, 7, and 8. During the middle school and junior high school years, students are undergoing more dramatic developmental changes than experienced at any other time in life, and on widely differing timetables. The early adolescent must learn to deal with a variety of experiences: emerging sexuality in a changing and often unpredictable body; reaching a cognitive plateau for a time, and then finding new, adult intellectual tools; multiplying and rapidly shifting interests; a fluid and flexible self-concept; a need to rework interpersonal relationships with adults; turbulent emotions; extreme idealism; a need to assert independence; and a powerful peer group. A major goal of all schooling for children of this age is the encouragement of positive relationships and positive self-image.

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