

UNDERSTANDING BEHAVIOUR OF YOUNG LEARNERS IN TEACHING
ENGLISH

Ismailova Zebo

Master of SamSIFL

Ashurova Nigina

Teacher of SamSIFL

Annotation: *In this article factors in understanding the behavior of young learners in teaching English are discussed.*

Аннотация: *В этой статье обсуждаются факторы понимания поведения младших школьников при обучении английскому языку.*

Annotatsiya: *Ushbu maqolada Ingliz tilini o'rgatishda yosh o'quvchilarning xatti-harakatlarini tushunish omillari muhokama qilinadi.*

Key words: *method, phrase, communicate, interaction, teaching, context.*

Language is a very important tool that is needed by the people in interaction. According to Pringawidagda, language is the main tool for communicating in human life, both individually and socially. By using language, people can do the social interactions by expressing their desires, feelings, and hopes. One of many important aspects of language, which enables the speakers to use it in its social function, is language acquisition. Therefore, this research focuses on teaching English to young learners (e.g. “anyone under the age of 18”). The objective of this study was to investigate their behaviors toward the teaching of English as a foreign language.

Language is very helpful for young learners, especially when they are in primary school. According to Zubaidah, through language, young learners can connect, share experiences, and improve intellectuals, in order to their development of knowledge and language skills. Moreover, as a communication tool, language also helps primary school students to understand the material provided by teachers and even assists them in interacting in their environment.

In facing of the development of the times, the mastery of foreign languages is an effort made by various countries to improve the quality of human resources. Nowadays, English is one of the most commonly used languages in the world. The statement is reinforced by Held et al., in Condruz-Băcescu that English has also become the central language of communication in business, politics, administration, science and academia, as well as being dominant language of globalized advertising and popular culture.

As a foreign language, learning English is not an easy thing especially for students (young learners) in primary school. It is because after learning English, the students do not apply it into their daily communication. Therefore, students will find it difficult to be learned. In facing the difficulties in learning English, students will give different responses or reactions. This shows that the teaching of English in primary school affects the behavior that will be shown by students in the classroom.

Constructivism is a theory based on observation and scientific study of how people learn. According to this theory, people construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through experiencing things. When something new appears, it is related to previous ideas and experiences, provoking a change in the existing schemata or discarding the new information as irrelevant. As regards learning, the constructivist view may refer to a number of different teaching practices, encouraging students to use techniques such as experiments and realworld problem solving, to create more knowledge and to reflect about how their understanding is changing.

Cognitive development results are genetically predetermined. The initial structures affect learning but Learning modifies and transforms the structures, and thus, it allows for learning experiences of greater complexity. For Piaget, the child is a subject who solves the problems presented by the environment. Children's knowledge results from action which is actively constructed. In that sense, the developing cognitive understanding is built on the interaction between the child and the objects that can be observed or manipulated. Piaget presented four basic stages of cognitive development from sensorimotor stage through the formal operational stage, in that way, the child goes from interacting with concrete objects to abstract thought. Thought derives from action after it is internalized or carried out mentally in the imagination. The psychologist presented two ways in which knowledge develops: assimilation and accommodation. Assimilation happens when action does not produce any change to the child; accommodation represents an adjustment of the child to features of the environment. Piaget considered action as fundamental for cognitive development. However, social interaction is not important for Piaget.

Vygotsky shares the constructivist conception of learning with Piaget. However, he differs from Piaget because Vygotsky gives significance to the role played by the media and culture in the cognitive process development. For him, the social is essential in order to transform reality and education. Social interaction plays a fundamental role in the process of cognitive development. Learning is the process of internalization of culture, and each individual gives meaning to what he perceived on the basis of its own possibility of significance and at the same time, incorporates new meanings. According to Vygotsky, children develop understanding through interaction with other people, since development and learning take place in a social context where people interact. Language provides the child with a new tool for doing things and for organizing their information using words as symbols. Children learn actively by interacting with other people who help them. Vygotsky developed the Zone of proximal development hypothesis, which is the area in which children cannot solve a problem by themselves but they can make it with the help of more knowledgeable peers or adults. However, children learn best if they are helped by more knowledgeable people. He argued that in a supportive environment, children are able to advance to a higher level of knowledge and performance.

Generally, it is difficult to give precise age range of this learner group. However, young learners are usually considered to be pupils between six to ten or eleven years of age. Since there are great differences between pupils at the beginning of their schooling and older children, for the purposes of this part thesis I shall work with the group of young learners

between the ages of four to six. This age group is commonly represented in the third, fourth and fifth preschool grades, which are also target grades for this part.

These young children “generally display an enthusiasm for learning and a curiosity about the world around them”. Brumfit agrees that they tend to be keen and enthusiastic learners. This is mainly because of the fact that they do not have inhibitions about learning which older children and teenagers often bring to school.

Harmer says that young learners are able to respond to meaning even if they do not understand the meaning of individual words. Halliwell mentions the children’s ability to grasp the general meaning as well. She explains that intonation, gestures, facial expressions, actions and circumstances help young learners to tell what the unknown words or phrases mean. This general message-interpreting skill is already highly developed in primary school children. Apart from this ability to perceive meaning, young learners also show great skill in using their new limited language resources creatively and meaningfully.

It is very common that young learners frequently learn indirectly rather than directly. Harmer explains this phenomenon saying that, “they take in information from all sides, learning from everything around them rather than only focusing on the precise topic they are being taught. Their understanding comes not just from explanation, but also from what they see and hear and, crucially, have a chance to touch and interact with”.

Harmer also mentions that young learners “find abstract concepts such as grammar rules difficult to grasp”. Halliwell develops this point further. She claims that “the children’s capacity for conscious learning of forms and grammatical patterns is still relatively undeveloped”. However, in contrast to this weakness in learning, they possess an enormous instinct for indirect way of learning.

When discussing young learners, experts agree that their attention and concentration span is very short. Harmer says that with their limited attention span, “unless activities are extremely engaging, they can get easily bored, losing interest after ten minutes or so”.

Among other dominant features of young learners belongs their instinct for fun and play. Halliwell says that children “take great pleasure in finding and creating fun in what they do”. I think that this is also the reason why they are usually so enthusiastic and positive about learning. “Young children love to play, and learn best when they are enjoying themselves. But they also take themselves seriously and like to think that what they are doing is ‘real’ work”. In fact, when teaching young learners, game-like activities indeed are real work. Since games have a central role in teaching young learners, this topic is dealt with separately in chapter “Using games in teaching young learners”.

Scott and Ytreberg further claim that eight to ten year olds are already able to discern between fact and fiction. However, Halliwell mentions that they still delight in imagination and fantasy which, similarly to games, has a very constructive part to play in the language classroom. It is worth realizing that the adult real world and the child’s world are not the same. Halliwell explains that reality for young learners still includes imagination and fantasy as well.

Young children indulge in talking. Especially, they are keen to talk about themselves. They “respond well to learning that uses themselves and their own lives as main topics in the classroom”.

It is generally agreed that the way of teaching young learners largely depends on their developmental stage. Therefore, good primary practice should be based on the knowledge and understanding of theories of child development, the ways in which they learn languages and studies of classroom conditions which promote foreign language learning.

Various theories have described the way that children develop. Vygotsky stressed the role of social interaction in development. Particularly, the role of an adult guidance or collaboration with more capable peers that help a child who has entered the 'zone of proximal development' and is ready to learn new things.

According to both Erikson and Maslow, children's development is closely bound up in their confidence and self-esteem. In other theory, Feuerstein suggested that child's cognitive structures are infinitely modifiable with the help of a modifier, which is similar to Vygotsky's theory.

In conclusion, understanding the behaviour of young learners is essential in teaching English effectively. Young learners have unique learning needs and behavioural characteristics that require teachers to adopt specific teaching strategies and techniques to engage and motivate them. Teachers need to create a positive learning environment, incorporate games and activities, use visual aids, and provide opportunities for interaction and feedback. By understanding the behaviour of young learners, teachers can tailor their teaching approach to meet their needs, enhance their learning experience, and achieve better learning outcomes. Ultimately, effective teaching of English to young learners requires patience, creativity, and a willingness to adapt to the diverse needs of each student.

REFERENCES:

1. Alp, I.E. (1994). Measuring the size of working memory in very young children: The Imitation Sorting task. *International Journal of behavioural Development*, 17, 125-141.
2. Applebee, A. (1978). Teaching high-achievement students: A survey of the winners of the 1977 NCTE Achievement Awards in writing. *Research in the Teaching of English*, 1,
3. Cain, K. & Oakhill, J. (2007). Reading comprehension difficulties.: Correlates, causes, and consequences. In K. Cain & J. Oakhill (Eds.), *Children's comprehension problems: Oral and written language* (pp.41-75). New York: Guildford.
4. Cain, K., Oakhill, J. V., & Bryant, P. E. (2004). Children's reading comprehension ability: Concurrent prediction by working memory, verbal ability, and component skills. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 96, 31-42.