

The Problems of Improving Elementary Learners Language Skills

*Azimbaeva Ranokhon Yuldashevna*¹

Abstract: The article considers about some issues of teaching language skills to elementary learners. There are suggested some effective ways of improving language skills of young learners. Besides this, some basic methods and ways of teaching English to young learners of elementary school are discussed as well. By the help of these methods we analyzed, we hope teacher may have effective lessons.

Keywords: elementary English, language learners, adult learners, history of language, primary education, methods of teaching, benefit of comprehending, abstract concepts.

The way elementary English language learners (EELs) receive information in their native language (L1) as well as in the foreign language (L2) differs from adults. From an early age, children first begin to sort out phrases involving concrete objects. When introduced into the L2 class, they “need very concrete vocabulary that connects with objects they can handle or see” (Cameron 2001: 81). In contrast, adult learners are able to cope with abstract ideas (ibid). EELs do not comprehend abstract ideas such as grammar. Bourke (2006: 280) notes that elementary learners don't get a concept of ideas such as parts of speech, discourse or phonology. Adult learners get the benefit of comprehending these concepts through their knowledge of the L1. Any attempt to explain these abstract concepts at an early age will likely serve only to confuse EELs. Howatt (1991: 293) found, in a study on the history of language studying, that studying which concentrated prematurely on these abstract forms “meant that linguistic forms became divorced from the meaning they were meant to convey”. In order to avoid dealing with abstract ideas, Cameron (2001: 53) recommends dealing with topics children find familiar, such as family and friends or school life. Since they get a clear mental image of these objects or exercises, it is easier for them to process the information in the L2.

What is different in the foreign language to children, in contrast to teaching adults and adolescents? Some differences are immediately obvious; children are more enthusiastic and lively as learners. They want to please the teacher rather than their peer group. They will get a go at an activity even when they don't quite comprehend why or how. However, they also lose interest more quickly and are less able to keep themselves motivated on tasks they find difficult. Children do not find it easy to use language to talk about language; in other phrases, they do not get the same access as older learners to meta-language that teachers can use to explain about grammar and vocabulary. Children often seem less embarrassed than adults at talking in a new language, and their lack of inhibitions seems to help them get a more native-like accent. But these are generalizations which hide the detail of different children, and of the skills involved in teaching them. We need to unpack the generalization to find out what lies underneath as characteristic of children as language learners. We will find that essential differences do arise from the linguistic, psychological and social development of the learners, and that as a result we need to adjust the way we think about the language we teach and the class exercises we use. Although conventional language teaching terms like ‘grammar’ and ‘listening’ are used in connection with the elementary learner class, comprehending of what these mean to the children who are studying them may need to differ from how they are understood in mainstream language teaching.

Teaching English to elementary learners (TEEL) has become its own field of study as the age of compulsory education has become higher and higher in countries around the world. It is widely believed that starting the study of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) before the critical period—12 or 13 years old—will build more proficient speakers of English. However, there is no empirical

¹ Associate Professor of the "Foreign Languages" Department, Tashkent institute of finance



evidence supporting the idea that an early start in English language studying in foreign language contexts produces better English speakers (Nunan 1999). As single year of age makes a huge difference among children, the generalizations made for elementary learners may need more detailed analysis and some sub-categorization. Although different sources classify elementary learners taken into account different ages or grade levels, the following grouping reflects the EFL teaching environment and the learners of English in the primary education in Uzbekistan.

Very Elementary Learners	Elementary Learners	Older/ Late Elementary Learners
Age: 3-6 years old	Age: 7-9 years old	Age: 10-12 years old
Grade: Pre-school Education	Grade: 1 st – 3 rd grade	Grade: 4 th - 6 th grade
Language Focus/ Skills Used: Listening & Speaking Vocabulary Items (concrete & familiar objects) No Grammar Teaching or meta-language (can't analyze language but may be exposed to chunks through songs, class language) No reading & writing (may recognize letters or short phrases)	Language Focus/ Skills Used: Listening & Speaking Vocabulary Items (concrete & familiar and new objects) New in Reading and Writing (word to sentence level) No Grammar Teaching or meta-language (chunks through songs and class language)	Language Focus/ Skills Used: Listening/Speaking/Reading/Writing Vocabulary Items (concrete & abstract) Grammar (inductive)
Characteristics: *Low concentration span but easily excited *High motivation; active involvement *Love talking but problems in sharing *Short memory: Learn slowly Forget easily *Repetition and revision is necessary *Limited motor skills (using a pen and scissors) but kinesthetic and energetic *Learn holistically *Love stories, fantasy, imagination, art, drawing and coloring	Characteristics: *Low concentration span: Wide variety of exercises needed *Short memory: frequent revision is needed *Logical-analytical: Asking questions *Problems in sharing in group work * Developing confidence in expressing themselves * Developing world knowledge *Limited motor skills (left-right) *Reasonable amount of input *Love stories, fantasy, imagination, drawing & coloring	Characteristics: *Longer attention span but still children *Taking studying seriously *World knowledge *More cooperation in groups and in pairs *Developed social, motor and intellectual skills *Studying strategies are used and developing

Elementary Children	Adolescents	Adults
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They respond although they do not comprehend. - They learn from everything around them: they learn indirectly rather than directly. - They comprehend mostly when they see, hear, touch and interact rather than from explanations. - Abstract concepts are 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Despite their success in language studying, they are seen like problematic learners. - They commit passionately when they are engaged - Most of them start to comprehend the need for studying. - Attention span is longer as a result of intellectual 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They can engage with abstract thought - They get a whole range of (positive or negative) life and studying experiences. - They get expectations about the studying process and they get their own patterns of studying - They are more disciplined



<p>difficult to deal with.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They generally display a curiosity about the world and an enthusiasm for studying a language - They like talking about themselves and respond to studying that uses their lives as the main topic. - They love discovering things, making or drawing things, using their imagination, moving from single place to another, solving puzzles. - They get a short attention span; they can easily get bored after 5-10 minutes. - Teachers should get a rich repertoire of exercises to help elementary children receive information from a variety of sources and plan a range of exercises for a given time period. - Teachers should work with learners individually or in groups - Teachers need to be aware of the learners' interests to motivate them. - The class should be colorful and bright with enough room for different exercises. 	<p>development.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - They can talk about abstract issues to a certain point. - They can use many different ways of studying and practicing language. - They search for identity and self-esteem; thus they need to feel good about themselves and valued. - They need teacher and peer approval and are sensitive to criticism of their own age group. - Teachers should link teaching to their everyday interests and experiences. 	<p>than the other age groups and know how to struggle on despite boredom</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Unlike other groups, they know why they are studying and what they want to get at the end. - They sustain a level of motivation even for a distant goal, which is difficult for the other groups. - They can be critical of teaching methods or they may feel uncomfortable with unfamiliar methods. - Older singles worry that their intellectual powers diminish by age. - They get a longer concentration span to continue an activity than the other groups. - Teachers should consider their (positive or negative) studying experiences.
---	--	---

Here are some basic methods of teaching English to young learners at school:

1. The Method of Speaking

In teaching speaking teacher uses drilling method. Teacher drills the learners by asking them to repeat after him to make them remember about the lesson, even after they get already arrived home and get done other exercises. Drilling on making good sentences and imitating good pronunciation is the effective way of fluency. Practicing drills are followings:

A. Repetition

It is done by asking the student to repeat what the teacher says. For example:

This is a handout this is a handout

That is a door that is a door

B. Simple questions and answers:

Is the pencil red? Yes, it is



Is the bag blue? Yes, it is

C. Translation

My name is Kate менинг исмим Кейт

I am nine years old мен тўққиз ёшдаман

1. The Method of Vocabulary

In teaching new vocabulary the teacher uses memorizing methods. The teacher gives word to learners to memorize. The phrases are about in the class, body and so on based on the handout. For example: In the class: blackboard, chairs, handouts, etc. Body: hair, eyes, etc. Animal: cat, dog, etc.

2. The Method of Reading

In teaching reading the teacher uses the materials reading or reading the handout. The procedures are as follows: Firstly, the teacher reads the text slowly and clearly. Secondly, the teacher asks to some students to read the text turn by turn. Thirdly, the teacher lets the learners to ask the difficult word. Fourthly, teacher and learners translate the text together. Fifthly, the teacher asks the learners to answer questions based on the reading text. Sixthly, the teacher collects the learner's exercises and then discusses them in class.

3. The Method Writing

In teaching writing teacher uses the following methods.

A. Dictation

The teacher reads the word and he learners write it. For example:

brother

Daughter

Friend

B. Re-arrange the words

The teacher asks the learners to arrange the words so that the phrases become a right sentence.

For example:

Is-name-Rose-my

Live — street - I — at — Babur

4. The Methods Listening.

Teaching listening is used same as teaching writing. First, the teacher pronounces the word several times. And the learners just listen to the teacher. Then, the teacher asks the students to follow what he says. When he is sure that the learners are able to pronounce the phrases, he asks them to do it within the group and then individually.

5. The Method of Games

Like any others useful methods, games and fun are also useful in teaching English to children since games are fun for them. Students might not realize that while playing games, they study something about language. Of course, in this case the teacher should be careful enough to make the game enjoyed by his children. Some language items are learned. In addition, a good game is effective to break the routine of the class. The teacher sometimes uses games to teach the learner a new vocabulary, like as: she divides the learners into four groups. Then, she mentions new vocabulary and writes to board and then asks the learners to find new words from the new vocabulary in the board. For examples: Blackboard, black, bad, etc.



6. The Method of Song

Songs are very useful in teaching English to children since almost every child likes singing. Teacher can introduce new enters of new structures. There are many motivating songs especially written for elementary learners. Some songs are good for singing and others for doing action.

7. The Method of Dialogue

Sometimes the teacher uses a method of teaching like dialogues. A dialogue is particularly well suited for practice authentic language in real communication situation where people listen and read, either by speaking or by performing some actions.

8. The Method of Stories or Play

The teacher uses stories, the teacher tells short stories and the learners just listen. Then, teacher asks them to ask questions about the story.

9. The Method of Drama

The teacher uses the methods of the teaching like dramatization. These methods are close to children's life situation, but both are not appropriate for the very beginning level.

The above given methods are very useful for presenting materials for student is comprehending easily.

Literature

1. Harmer J. (1991), *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, New York: Longman Publishing.
2. McDonough S, H. (1995), *Strategy and Skill in Studying a Foreign Language*, London: Edward Arnold

