



THE ROLE OF INTERACTIVE METHODS IN TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES FOR PRIMARY SCHOOL CHILDREN

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Abstract

Teaching a foreign language to young learners requires special attention to engagement, simplicity, and communication. Interactive methods—such as games, songs, dialogues, role-playing, and group activities—stimulate interest and create a positive language learning environment. This study examines the effectiveness of interactive teaching methods in primary school foreign language classrooms, using classroom observation, teacher feedback, and student responses. The findings reveal that interactive methods significantly improve vocabulary retention, pronunciation, participation, and overall confidence in young learners. The paper also suggests that such methods, when applied regularly, support language learning in a way that is age-appropriate and fun.

Keywords: interactive learning, primary school, foreign languages, language games, student motivation, early education

Introduction

Learning a foreign language at an early age has many advantages, including improved pronunciation, memory, and language adaptability. However, children in primary school have short attention spans and are more motivated by play and interaction than by traditional teaching methods.



Interactive methods use movement, visuals, cooperation, and communication to make learning enjoyable and memorable. These techniques help children feel less anxious and more eager to participate, which is critical for building their confidence and language fluency (Cameron, 2001). This study explores how interactive methods impact the success of foreign language learning among primary school children.

Literature review

Characteristics of young learners

Primary school children (ages 6–10) learn best through experience, exploration, and repetition. According to Pinter (2006), young learners:

- Prefer visual and physical activities
- Enjoy cooperative tasks and games
- Learn through doing, seeing, and hearing

They may struggle with abstract grammar rules but excel at mimicking sounds and learning language in context.

Interactive teaching methods defined

Interactive methods involve techniques that actively engage students in the learning process. These include:

- Songs and chants – Improve pronunciation and rhythm (Murphey, 1992)
- Role-plays and storytelling – Build communicative competence (Ellis & Brewster, 2002)
- Language games – Encourage repetition in a fun context (Wright et al., 2005)
- Group and pair work – Develop social and speaking skills (Moon, 2000)

Studies show that learners exposed to interactive techniques show better language retention and motivation (Cameron, 2001; Shabani, 2013).

Methodology

This case study was conducted using a qualitative approach, with data collected through classroom observations, teacher interviews, and short learner surveys.

Participants

- 3 public primary school classes (students aged 7–9, total 75 pupils)



- 4 foreign language teachers with at least 3 years of teaching experience

Instruments

1. Observation checklists to record student engagement, participation, and interaction
2. Teacher interviews to collect insights into teaching strategies and outcomes
3. Student response forms with simple smiley face feedback to assess enjoyment and ease

Data collection

Data were collected over a 3-week period. Each class used interactive methods during English lessons for the duration of the study. Observations and responses were compiled for analysis.

Results

Observation findings

- In all classrooms, student participation increased during games and group activities.
- Songs and chants helped students pronounce difficult words correctly.
- Role-plays encouraged even shy students to speak in English.

Teacher interview insights

- Teachers confirmed that students remember new words better when learned through games or songs.
- Lessons with interactive elements were more dynamic and productive.
- Teachers noted that behavioral issues decreased when students were engaged in interactive tasks.

Student feedback

- Over 85% of students preferred lessons with games, singing, or acting.
- Students reported feeling “happy” and “not bored” during lessons with interactive activities.
- Vocabulary learned through games was used more often in later speaking tasks.

Discussion / Data analysis



The findings indicate that interactive methods are highly effective for teaching foreign languages to young learners.

Engagement and motivation

Children are more focused and enthusiastic when learning through songs, games, and hands-on activities. This supports Moon (2000), who emphasizes the need for movement and variety in teaching young learners.

Language retention and usage

The use of repetition, visual cues, and emotional connection in interactive tasks helps learners remember and use vocabulary more effectively (Cameron, 2001).

Confidence building

Interactive methods reduce fear of making mistakes. Role-playing and group activities allow students to practice without pressure, improving fluency and social interaction.

Recommendations

1. Incorporate at least one interactive element (game, song, or group task) into every language lesson.
2. Provide training for teachers in child-friendly and interactive techniques.
3. Use visual and physical aids, such as flashcards, puppets, or props.
4. Balance structure and freedom – Use lesson plans, but allow creativity and spontaneity.
5. Encourage pair and group work to support social and communicative development.

Conclusion

Interactive teaching methods significantly enhance the effectiveness of foreign language learning in primary schools. Through games, songs, storytelling, and collaborative tasks, children develop not only linguistic skills but also confidence and motivation. These methods respect the learning styles and needs of young learners, making language acquisition natural, enjoyable, and lasting.



Teachers and curriculum developers should prioritize interactive elements in early language education to support engagement, understanding, and communication from the very beginning of a child's learning journey.

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