

TEACHING FOREIGN LANGUAGES (ENGLISH) TO YOUNG LEARNERS THROUGH INTERACTIVE METHODS

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ABSTRACT: This article discusses innovative and interactive methods for teaching foreign languages, especially English, to young learners. It focuses on how teachers can apply creative, game-based, and visual strategies to help children understand and remember new words and grammar structures effectively.

Keywords: interactive learning, foreign language teaching, young learners, visual learning, storytelling method.

Introduction: Since Uzbekistan gained independence, great attention has been given to improving the teaching and learning of foreign languages. From early childhood education to higher institutions, foreign language instruction—particularly English—has become an essential part of the curriculum. Psychologists have proven that language learning is more effective when started at an early age. Young learners possess a strong memory and a natural curiosity that helps them acquire new concepts quickly. They are visual and kinesthetic learners, meaning they learn better through seeing, doing, and experiencing rather than through abstract explanations. Therefore, teachers must use interactive and engaging techniques to capture children's interest and support their learning process.

Main Part

Games are one of the most powerful tools for teaching English to young learners. For example, the “Fish Skeleton” game can be used to strengthen grammar and sentence structure. In this game, students are divided into groups and given paper fish skeletons with jumbled sentences written on the bones. Their task is to reorder the sentences correctly using their grammar and vocabulary knowledge. This fun activity encourages teamwork, problem-solving, and grammatical accuracy. Another enjoyable game is the “Color Card Challenge.” Teachers prepare two sets of cards—green for correct and red for incorrect answers. The teacher shows a picture (for instance, an animal) and says its name in English. If the name is correct, students raise the green card; if not, the red one. This method keeps children attentive and helps them actively participate while learning vocabulary through visual memory. Storytelling is another effective method for vocabulary and language acquisition. Teachers can show simple drawings of actions or objects and create short stories using new English words. Later, students retell or reconstruct the story using those words. This approach develops not only vocabulary but also imagination, logical thinking, and speaking fluency. To make storytelling more interactive, teachers can include “Story Sequencing Cards” where students arrange pictures in the correct order while narrating the story. This method helps young learners understand sentence order, grammar, and meaning connection in a creative way.

The “Snowball Game” (or “Word Ball”) is a dynamic activity for reviewing vocabulary. Each student writes a previously learned English word on a small piece of paper. These papers are rolled up into a large “snowball.” Students stand in a circle and throw the snowball to one another while music plays. When the teacher stops the music, the student holding the ball opens it, reads a word, translates it, and says who originally wrote it. This game develops attention, memory, and communication among students, while making review sessions enjoyable. Modern classrooms also benefit greatly from digital and multimedia tools. Teachers can use interactive whiteboards,

animated videos, or language-learning apps such as Kahoot, Quizizz, or Wordwall to make lessons engaging. These platforms allow children to learn vocabulary and grammar through competition, sound, and animation—elements that suit their cognitive style and curiosity.

Addressing these challenges requires institutional support, curriculum adaptation, and continuous teacher professional development. The future of English education is closely linked to EdTech innovation. As VR and AR technologies become more affordable and accessible, they will likely become integral parts of the classroom. Integration with Artificial Intelligence (AI) and Natural Language Processing (NLP) can make immersive environments more adaptive and responsive to learners' linguistic needs. Moreover, hybrid models that combine traditional instruction with immersive experiences can balance technology with pedagogy, ensuring sustainable learning outcomes. Virtual and Augmented Reality are reshaping modern English education by turning passive learning into interactive, engaging, and realistic experiences. They bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical communication, offering learners authentic opportunities for language use. While challenges such as cost, accessibility, and teacher readiness remain, the pedagogical value of these technologies is undeniable. The successful integration of VR and AR into English language teaching depends on the teacher's ability to align technology with learning objectives, creating meaningful and motivating experiences that foster linguistic, cultural, and cognitive development.

In conclusion, teaching foreign languages to young learners should always be based on their interests, creativity, and cognitive development. When the learning process is enjoyable, visually stimulating, and interactive, students are more likely to stay motivated and remember what they have learned. Teachers must select and adapt methods that match the learners' needs and make English learning a fun and meaningful experience.

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