

THE IMPACT OF INTERACTIVE TEACHING METHODS ON YOUNG LEARNERS’ ENGAGEMENT AND UNDERSTANDING

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Abstract. Nowadays, learning foreign languages is gaining popularity among young students, as it is offering wide range of opportunities to them. This article analyses the significance of implementing interactive methods in teaching foreign languages, as an example English, among young learners. The research was conducted with 15 students aged 13-15 at A1 and A2 levels. Two types of lessons were conducted: interactive and non-interactive lessons on comparable language topics. After both lessons, students completed a questionnaire to measure their enjoyment, understanding, participation, confidence, vocabulary and grammar learning, and lesson preference. The results of the study show that interactive lessons were responsible for significantly higher levels of student engagement, confidence, and satisfaction. The findings reveal that interactive methods can improve both classroom participation and learning effectiveness in foreign language teaching.

Key words: *interactive methods, young learners, foreign language teaching, student engagement, communicative approach, classroom interaction*

Introduction. In today’s globalized world, there is a widespread interest in learning foreign languages, most commonly English as a second language, among younger generation. Thus, considering this large-scale interest, foreign language education has undergone some notable changes. There was a shift from traditional methods to interactive ones, which is shift towards student-centered lessons. Traditional methods mostly focused on rote memorization of words without contextualizing them, and grammar lessons, create sentences based on structure of the grammar topic with no relation to life-based conversations, that lead to losing students’ attention and interest. In contrast, an interactive approach prioritizes real-life communication topics, engagement of participants, relevance and contextual learning. Therefore, using an interactive approach by planning everything accordingly, teachers can improve the effectiveness of their lessons, create a more engaging learning environment and increase students’ motivation. Important aspects of interactive methods are informal discussions, freely express ideas on the given topic, small number of lectures, but large number of seminar lessons, and less teacher - talking - time. This article examines the application of interactive methods of teaching strategies and their effectiveness on young students’ academic performance compared to non-interactive methods.

Several studies have already examined the effectiveness of interactive methods in teaching foreign languages.

Muminov (2023) examines the role of interactive methods in the educational process, focusing on primary education. The study emphasizes that interactive methods increases lesson effectiveness by having informal discussions, group work and independent thinking. A significant contribution of this article is the detailed explanation of the “Cluster” method, which helps generate ideas and organize them logically, identify relationship between concepts.

Sheripbayeva (2025) focuses on interactive methods of teaching foreign languages. This study contrasts passive, active, and interactive learning models, emphasizing that interactive learning shifts students from being passive recipients to active participants. The article discusses various interactive approaches, including collaborative learning, role-playing, task-based learning, communicative language teaching (CLT), and technology integration. Sheripbaeva emphasizes that interactive methods promote authentic communication, critical thinking, and real-life language application.

Tairova (2025) explores modern interactive methods in teaching German as a foreign language. The article gives examples of some interactive methods, such as gamification, digital tools (e.g., online platforms), task-based language teaching (TBLT), collaborative activities, and multimedia immersion. The author points out that these methods can simplify complex grammatical structures and promote meaningful conversation.

According to Wickramasinghe and Upeksha (2016), traditional teaching method that focused on lectures are being gradually replaced by student-centered approaches that encourage active participation. The authors give examples of interactive strategies, such as group discussions, presentations, case studies, role-playing activities that help students to improve their critical thinking, communication and problem-solving skills. Adding to this, it is mentioned about integration of technology, including online quizzes, digital learning materials and recorded lectures, gives students flexible learning opportunities. The study emphasizes that combining traditional classroom instruction with innovative technology-supported teaching methods can notably improve learning effectiveness and student satisfaction. (Wickramasinghe & Upeksha, 2016).

Although previous studies emphasized the importance of interactive methods in language teaching, many of them focus on theoretical discussion rather than direct classroom comparison. Especially, there is limited classroom-based research comparing interactive and non-interactive lesson types with small number of students among young English language learners.

Methodology. This study employed a small-scale quantitative comparative classroom study design to investigate the effectiveness of implementing interactive methods compared to non-interactive ones in teaching English as an example of foreign language for young learners. The research aimed to explore and compare the students' preferences, understanding of the topic as a result of our survey after experiencing both types of lessons. In addition to numerical data, some student feedback was also observed to support interpretation of the results.

The research was carried out in two stages. In non-interactive lesson firstly, students participated in non-interactive lesson. In this type of lesson, teaching was mainly conducted through traditional teacher-centered methods such as: *explanation, direct instruction, reading, repetition and individual response.*

Students had limited opportunities for pair work, group work, games, or movement-based activities. After non-interactive lesson, students participated in an interactive one on a comparable language topic. In this lesson student-centered activities were used, such as: *pair work, group work, games, role-plays, movement-based tasks and communicative language interaction.*

Both lesson types were designed to be similar in duration and level of difficulty in order to have fair comparison. This helped the researcher to examine that differences in students’ responses were related to teaching method rather than lesson content and time.

The purpose of this lesson was to examine whether interactive methods influenced students’ understanding, participation, and enjoyment more positively than non-interactive methods.

To collect data, a student opinion questionnaire was used after both lesson types. The questionnaire was designed by the researcher to identify students’ reactions to the lesson and included items related to: *lesson enjoyment, ease to understand, classroom participation, confidence and lesson preference.*

The questionnaire consisted mainly of closed-ended questions (Yes/ No or like-style response options) so data could be easily measured quantitatively. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics. Students’ responses were counted and converted into percentages to compare their reactions to the interactive and non-interactive lesson.

Results. The results of the study were based on students’ responses after participating in both the non-interactive and interactive lessons. A total of 15 students completed the questionnaire. The data were analyzed in percentages in order to compare students’ reactions to both teaching approaches.

Table 1. Students responses after the non-interactive lesson

Question	Yes (n)	Yes (%)	No (n)	No (%)
Did you enjoy the lesson?	7	46.7%	8	53.3%
Was the lesson easy to understand?	7	46.7%	8	53.3%
Did you feel active during the lesson?	5	33.3%	10	66.7%
Did you feel confident to answer questions?	5	33.3%	10	66.7%
Did the lesson help you learn new words or grammar?	8	53.3%	7	46.7%
Would you like to have more lessons like this?	6	40.0%	9	60.0%

The results show that students’ responses were low in terms of enjoyment and classroom participation. Although 46.7% of students reported that the lesson was easy to understand, only 33.3% said that they felt active during the lesson. In addition, only 40.0% of students stated that they would like to have more lessons in this format. This suggests that the non-interactive lessons may have supported understanding to some extent, but it was less effective in increasing student engagement.

Table 2. Students responses after the interactive lesson

Question	Yes (n)	Yes (%)	No (n)	No (%)
Did you enjoy the lesson?	15	100%	0	0%
Was the lesson easy to understand?	13	86.7%	2	13.3%
Did you feel active during the lesson?	14	93.3%	1	6.7%
Did you feel confident to answer questions?	12	80.0%	3	20.0%

Did the lesson help you learn new words or grammar?	15	100%	0	0%
Would you like to have more lessons like this?	15	100%	0	0%

The interactive lesson received highly positive responses from the students. All of the students stated that they enjoyed the lesson (100%), found it easy to understand (86.7%), and felt active during the lesson (93.3%). All students responded that they would like to have more lessons of this type. This analysis indicate that interactive teaching methods had a stronger positive effect on student engagement and classroom participation.

Table 3. Comparison of student responses to interactive and non-interactive lessons

Question	Non-interactive Lesson (%)	Interactive Lesson (%)
Did you enjoy the lesson?	46.7%	100%
Was the lesson easy to understand?	46.7%	86.7%
Did you feel active during the lesson?	33.3%	93.3%
Did you feel confident to answer questions?	33.3%	80.0%
Did the lesson help you learn new words or grammar?	53.3%	100%
Would you like to have more lessons like this?	40.0%	100%

As it is evident from Table 3, the interactive lesson received significantly higher positive responses in terms of all the questions compared to non-interactive lesson.

The most noticeable differences can be observed in students’ enjoyment, classroom activity and desire to have more lessons in such format. For example, while only 46.7% of students enjoyed the non-interactive lesson, 100% reported enjoyment in the interactive lesson. Adding to this, student activity increased from 33.3% to 93.3% and lesson preference rose from 40.0% to 100%. These results clearly show that interactive teaching methods are more effective in encouraging student engagement, confidence and motivation.

Discussion. The findings of the research show that interactive teaching methods have a remarkably more positive impact on young learners’ engagement and performance compared to non-interactive methods. Students demonstrated higher levels of enjoyment, participation, confidence and lesson preference during interactive lesson.

One of the most important differences was observed in student activity, which increased from 33.3% in non-interactive lesson to 93.3% in interactive lesson. Accordingly, lesson enjoyment rose from 46.7% to 100%, and confidence to answer increased from 33.3% to 80%. These results show that interactive methods contribute to create more engaging and supportive environment for students which make them feel more involved and motivated during the lesson.

The findings are consistent with previous research, which emphasizes that interactive approaches promote more active participation, meaningful communication and improved

learning outcomes. Therefore, interactive methods can be considered as more effective teaching approach than traditional methods.

However, this study has limitations, such as small sample size and a short research period. Despite these limitations, the results clearly show the importance of using interactive methods to enhance student engagement and learning effectiveness.

Conclusion. In conclusion, the results of the conducted research show that interactive methods are more effective in teaching foreign languages than non-interactive approach. Overall, interactive lessons worked more effectively as students were more active, engaged and understood new concepts better. When comparing both types of lessons, it is clear that non-interactive lessons helped understanding a little, but students were passive and less interested. In contrast, interactive lessons created a more engaging, enjoyable learning environment with more opportunities to participate actively. These findings suggest teachers should include more interactive activities in their lessons, such as group work, games and role-plays, because it helps involve students, make the lesson interesting, reduce students’ fear of speaking and encourage friendly communication.

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