Play-Based Learning: A Motive or an Impediment? A Historical Review

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Abstract: The current study aimed to trace the most critical periods that led to the origination of using play-based learning as language instruction tool in the modern Era. In addition, it aimed to investigate the effectiveness of using such method in English language instruction. Both the chronological and the thematic presentation were utilized to present the data. The results of the study showed that using games to enhance language learning was known in ancient societies (such as Greek and Rome), however, a set of pioneers contribute in this field such as John lock, Maria Montessori, Vygotsky, and Piaget. The study also found that utilizing play-based activities to enhance language learning is beneficial if the educational games are prepared conveniently (if they are purposeful, well-planned, and entertaining).

Key words: digital learning, educational games, play-based learning, multi-sensory learning.

Introduction

Experts worldwide confirmed the effectiveness of using games as a critical strategy to stimulate learners' language development, for example, (e.g. Bransford, Brown, & Cocking 2000; Bredekamp, 1997; Han, Moore, Vukelich, & Buell, 2010; Sawyer, 2006; Shonkoff & Phillips, 2000) proved that playing enhance children's vocabulary and this can promote language achievement. In the same vein, many studies reported the merits of learning literacy via playing (e.g. Bellin & Singer 2006; Christie & Roskos 2006; Neuman & Roskos 1992; Roskos & Christie 2001). These studies showed that literacy knowledge increases in settings that use playing during literacy activities. More specifically, Rampur (2011) indicated that playing has a major role in reading comprehension especially, if games were selected according to the readers' age. He elaborated that such games may comprise spelling test, storytelling and many other games that can be fun and purposeful at the same time. In contrary, other educators believed that play-based learning has many disadvantages (Cruickshank and Telfer 1980; and Meletiou-Mavrotheris and Mavrotheris, 2012). Thus, the researcher thinks that studying play-based learning through different parts of history may check these claims and arrive to better understanding concerning the use of such method.

Statement of the Problem

EFL teachers' practices reveal minimal reliance on using playing to aid language learning (Weakland, 2013). In the same line, the researcher notes that EFL teachers in Jordan do not rely on games while teaching English language. Therefore, the researcher believed that there is a need to shed light on both, the origination of this method and the importance of it to facilitate language learning.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to trace the origination of using play-based learning in improving learners' EFL/ESL level in reading comprehension and word analysis skills in the modern Era to evaluate its effectiveness.

The Questions of the Study

1. What are the most critical periods that contribute in play-based learning evolving in the modern era?

2. Was play-based learning activities considered to be a motive or a hindrance in improving learners' level in reading comprehension and vocabulary learning within different studies?

Significance of the Study

The current study tried to shed lights on the play-based learning and its importance in English language learning.

Limitations of the Study

The findings of the current study could be generalized to contexts with similar research purposes, techniques and targeted skills.

Review of Related Literature

Play is a term that has been defined and discussed by many researchers, psychologists, and scholars. According to Kimberly et al (2013), play is a term that is difficult to define; this is because it involves a broad category of behaviors, such behaviors include running, swinging, sliding, building with blocks, digging in the dirt, making nonsense rhyming words, dancing to music, making up, dressing up, and pretending. He stated that all these kinds of behaviors share a set of aspects such as being pleasurable, voluntary, and enjoyable to children. Erikson (1963) described playing as the following:

When man plays he must intermingle with things and people in a similarly uninvolved and light fashion. He must do something which he has chosen to do without being compelled by urgent interests or impelled by strong passion. He must feel entertained and free of any fear or hope of serious consequences. He is on vacation from social and economic reality—or as is most commonly emphasized: he does not work. (p. 212).

Squire (2008) viewed game-based learning (GBL), as an approach that utilizes physical, mental or digital games in learning activities. He stated that the use of these games can be implemented within and through activities, lessons, or curricula. He argued that games require players to 'know' (the rules) and to 'do' (practice the game). According to him, there is no separation between the two processes. Vygotsky (1933) cited in Bodrova and Leong (1966) defined play as a process of interaction between children's cultural and biological factors. He stressed the importance of imaginative play as a main source for children's development. Zuckerman (2006) discussed the idea of purposeful playing which is usually planned by teachers and parents to promote learning. He mentioned that learning can be achieved through 'hands-on interaction' or manipulating with physical objects which are designed to support learning. He explained that these objects are usually "popular materials in early childhood education, at school and at home"(p.1).

In ancient and contemporary societies, play dominates a great deal of learners' concerns; this is evidenced according to the huge amount of time and effort that are spent in playing. According to Whitebread (2012), learners' play was highly valued and advocated by ancient societies such as Rome and Greece. In his study, he mentioned some philosophers who promoted using games as a means for both teaching and skill development. For instance, Plato (347-427 BC), promoted using various leisurely activities such as free-play, music, and gymnastics in order to catalyze the development of different life skills and to support health. Aristotle (322 -384 BC) stressed the importance of play in the child's overall growth. Roman philosophers such as Quintilian (97-35 AD) advocated the use of children's play as a means for instruction.

Zuckerman (2006) indicated that, in the modern era, multisensory learning and learning through using objects have been started since the seventeenth century by John Locke. He led the movement that promoted learning through sensation, reflection, and hands-on experience. In the 17th century, locke (1693) cited in Zuckerman (2006), suggested a surprising and uncommon ideas concerning teaching the alphabets when he said "There may be dice and play-things, with the letters on them, to teach children the alphabet by playing; and twenty other ways may be found, suitable to their particular tempers, to make this kind of learning a sport to them" (P.148). Locke recommended using games and toys as a catalyst for more effective learning. According to him, children learn through satisfying their curiosity and this can be best achieved by games and toys. More specifically, when children interact with games and toys, this can deepen their experience and make learning easier to be retained. This movement became the premises for today's learning principles which advocate 'learning by doing'.

Locke's vision was extended by a set of pioneers who played a critical role in the development of learning through objects and, later on, for play-based approach. Such scholars and thinkers include Condillac, Rousseau, Itard, Seguin, Montessori, and Dewey. The following section will review the contributions for each one of those thinkers and educators and their role in the field as presented in Zuckerman (2006).

Etienne Condillac (1780-1714): Locke's ideas had its great impact on Condillac's work. With this respect, Condillac developed the theory of sensationalism. According to this theory, all knowledge is acquired through senses without any innate ideas. Condillac believed that intelligence is the result of sensorial interaction with objects.

Rousseau (1778-1712): was influenced by Locke's views. He emphasized learning through experimentation. According to him, one can best learn through individual experience which is gained through experimentation. Rousseau believed that each individual has his own way in thinking and, therefore, he should be enabled to discover new ideas by himself rather than teaching him others' ideas. Rousseau claimed that education is shaped from three sources namely (1) Education of nature: The internal growth of our organs and faculties (2) Education of men: The use we learn to make of our growth (3) Education of things: what individuals gain by their experience as a result of interacting with their surroundings.

Jean-Marc Gaspard Itard (1838-1774): suggested new methods which relied mainly on stimulation and sensory-training. In his educational approach, Itard cared heavily about how to teach deaf and mute children by using physical objects. Edward Seguin (– 1812 1880): Seguin expanded Itard's sensory-training approach. He believed that cognitive abilities can be improved through sensory development and physical exercises. Seguin earned fame when he developed a nonverbal intelligence test that depends on ten geometric shapes. Seguin's shapes are still used for early childhood learning.

Maria Montessori (1952-1870): was Seguin's pupil, she studied Itard and Seguin's work thoroughly. She utilized stimulation techniques and sensory training to create her own method in (1916). Montessori benefited from Itard's objects of alphabet letters and Seguin's shapes to develop her own materials which were called 'the didactic materials'; she classified her materials into four categories namely sensorial, practical life, language, and mathematics. In her method, Montessori put a set of standards for designing educational materials in order to be effective. She stated that learning objects should be developmentally appropriate, stimulate activities, support self-directed learning, and promote continuity. Montessori described the preferable environment in which learning materials should be used, she mentioned that the intended environment should enable learners to progress individually, move from simple to moderate to more complex, foster group interaction and encourage mixed age learning. According to Montessori, The teacher's role is to permit children to act independently and to provide them with ample opportunities to learn indirectly through learning objects.

John Dewey (1952 - 1859): was influenced by Locke's original ideas which focus on the importance of experience and reflection. Dewey stressed the role of social process in viewing the formation of the mind. His vision concerning his educational philosophy emanated from three main points: 1) Experience and reflection 2) Democracy and community, and 3) the learning environment. He argued that learning environment should reflect real life, as a result, children should be enabled to engage in various social activities. He believed that learning by doing means learning through practicing social activities that resemble what one can find in real life.

Vygotsky (1934-1896) had his own vision in the field of child development and play. Vygotsky (1933) cited in Bodrova and Leong (1966) stated that play has a positive influence in both language and cognition (higher mental functions). As for language, Vygotsky concluded that when children play, they make dialogues with themselves especially in imaginative play. Furthermore, role-play, which is usually occurred in stories, stimulates children to imitate others' voice and characters and develop their vocabulary to cope with different situations. Concerning the benefits of play on cognition, Vygotsky believed that play has a major role in children's cognitive development; he stated that:

In play a child is always above his average age, above his daily behavior; in play it is as though he were a head taller than himself. As in the focus of a magnifying glass, play contains all developmental tendencies in a condensed form; in play it is as though the child were trying to jump above the level of his normal behavior" (p.16).

When he discussed play, Vygotsky believed that it is a social activity that necessitates the interaction with others. He focused on make-believe or Socio-dramatic play (imaginary situation, imitation, and role-play) rather than the rest types of play such as games, physical activities, explorations, and object manipulations). Vygotsky considered play as a main source for children's development especially in preschool years. He considered play as a process of interaction between children's cultural and biological factors. To Vygotsky, this process is not static; instead, it keeps evolving according to the ever-changing children's needs.

Piaget (1980-1896): was a psychologist who studied the cognitive development of children. The field of children's play occupied a special place in his scientific work. Piaget viewed play as a systematic process that has identifiable stages. He argued that play starts at the age of 18 months when young baby practice repetitive actions and begins to manipulate with objects not for instrumental purpose but for pleasure. According to him, play has a fundamental role in promoting learning, that is, play contains two main polar tendencies namely assimilation and accommodation. In assimilation, the subject incorporates new knowledge, events, objects, or experience into his existing internal patterns and ways of thinking. In accommodation, the existing internal patterns are amended as a result of external environment. According to Piaget, play is associated with assimilation (discovering new things) rather than accommodation.

He classified play into three main types, practice play, symbolic play, and play with rules. The first type appears at the age of 18 months. In this type of play, the child practices repetitive actions and manipulates with objects not for a certain purpose but for mere pleasure. The second type appears in the second year of life and becomes strongly observable in the latter part of the third year. Piaget described it as a solitary symbolic activity which involves using idiosyncratic ludic symbols. According to him, this type is occurred during games that contain fantasy, wish-fulfillment, and liquidation of conflicts. The third type is playing with rules. This type starts from the age of 7 to 11 years. In this type, children play relying on a set of presupposed rules. These rules are internalized through imitation of other children or adults. What distinguishes this type of play is that it needs two children at least in order to be practiced which leads for more social interaction (Nicolopoulou, 1993).

Bruner (1972): argued that play is a critical opportunity for children in order to take risks without any fear of failure. He believed that play is an act that is closely related to creativity because it involves processes like exploration and experimentation. In addition, through playing, children act freely as there is no one certain way to behave. He asserted that the most sophisticated pragmatic and grammatical forms of language appear first through play activities.

Smilansky (1990:) presented five types of play; namely: (1) functional play: by which the child explore his surroundings e.g. water play and outdoor play, (2) constructive play: which involves combining pieces e.g. Lego and building blocks, (3) dramatic play: which entails pretending e.g. role play ,(4) socio-dramatic play: which contains activities that are very close to real life interaction and (5) games with rules which involves ' child-controlled rules' and it usually has a winner and a loser. According to Whitebread (2012), in the current psychological literature, play is divided into five main types. These types are physical play, symbolic play, play with objects, pretence play, and play with rules. According to Dietze and Kashin (2012), three main perspectives were appeared concerning playing theories, the classical theories which emphasized the importance of playing in burning off excess energy; relaxation and recreation (Herbert Spencer, 1903-1820). Modern theories considered playing as a main mean in child's development. Contemporary theories of play focus on the importance of play as social and cultural process and gaining knowledge of daily life.

In the recent years, the digital game-based learning (DGBL) has dominated a great deal of children and even adult's attention. According to Richard (2006), many studies revealed the effectiveness of (DGBL). Richard (2006) presented three main factors that promote using games as widespread learning tools, the first factor is the big amount of research done in this field, the second factor is the appearance of "Net Generation," or "digital natives," who no longer prefer to be taught via traditional instruction, the third factor is the increasing number of games users; according to Richard, the digital gaming is a 10$ billion per year industry, for example, in 2004, nearly 248 million games were sold.

Playing-games is an essential means for children at school as it provides them with opportunities to explore ideas, interact with different materials in reflective, social and active manner. The National Association for the Education of Young Children (NAEYC 2009) published that effective instruction for young children should consider their ages and their developmental progress as well. NAEYC explained that play is a critical component towards more developmental and appropriate practice; in addition, it is a crucial means for developing cognition, language, and social competence. Tuan & Doan (2010) asserted that educational games contribute in reducing students' stress of learning and they are taken place in a relaxed atmosphere. This is due to the fact that playing is a pleasurable experience for students. They also pointed out that playing educational games is one way to increase students' motivation and enable them to practice different learning tasks actively. To Bruckman (1999), educational games aims at presenting the educational experiences, which are usually undesirable to many students, in an attractive, interesting, and free from boredom manner, he described 'drill and practice games' as 'chocolate-covered broccoli'. Educational games can be utilized across different disciplines, educational levels, and age groups (Clarke, 2012). Weakland (2013) emphasized that game-based learning is an efficient tool to utilize inside the classroom as it has a plethora of advantages in linguistic, social, and psychological domains. Guillén-Nieto and

Aleson-Carbonell (2012) stated that educational games can be used to foster language proficiency, cultural information, and communication skills. They also found that students were very enthusiastic and fully involved during playing. Educational games also contribute in (a) exposing students to new ways of understanding, (b) urging them to try out new, creative, and dynamic perspectives (c) expanding the horizons of their minds, (d) helping them for exploring new universes, and (e) giving birth to new, authentic, immersive, and fun learning opportunities (Lacasa, Mendez, & Martinez, 2008; & Şahin, 2001 cited in Karadag, 2015).

Alongside with helping students to learn the content, there are many other important advantages of the educational games. According to Heitzmann (1983), playing educational games supports students in many ways, firstly, it advocates collaborative learning, this is because in many games, students need to work in groups each group as a team, they need to work collaboratively, support and guide each others, and provide the group with useful ideas to contribute in winning these games. Heitzmann believed that teachers should start to think seriously about including games using games inside the classroom. Secondly, the adoption of educational games meets students' different learning styles, that is, educational games are very flexible, this flexibility permits each student to interact in the game according to his/her own learning style. Kim (2012) indicated that one essential feature for educational games is that they combine the three modes of learning styles namely (Audio, Visual, and Kinesthetic) during the teaching process. Thirdly, educational games aid students' intellectual growth as they require the students to think creatively, critically and develop their problem solving skills.

In the same line, many studies indicated that educational games have a positive impact on many domains, such advantages encompass promoting students' achievement, interests of the learning content, problem solving skills, and learning engagement (Kim, Park, & Baek, 2009; Wideman, et al. 2007; Robertson & Howell, 2008). Educational games give students the chance to put the learned knowledge into practice (Pivec, & Kearney, 2007). To Ellington, Gordon, and Fowlie (1998), educational games enable students to activate their background knowledge which is necessary to accomplish different game tasks. Utilizing games also aid students to develop their higher order thinking skills, namely, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation skills. In addition, games foster a set of other critical skills such as critical thinking, decision making, problem solving, and creative thinking skills (Ellington et al.; Stern, 2007; & Weakland, 2013).

There is no doubt that educational games are versatile means that can be utilized to achieve multiple tasks. Vygotsky (1978) stated that "The influence of play on a child's development is enormous" (p. 96). For example, games can be employed in any topic through different age levels, they can be used to strengthen vocabulary learning, they can be useful to learn social skills such as patience and communication skills (Ellington, et al 1998., &Weakland, 2013). They also affect students intellectually and socially, they

increase their motivation and build their' ego, and they change their perceptions and attitude toward different reading tasks. Furthermore, such games enhance students' feeling of self confidence and self-worth, they also help to learn different life skills as a result of participating in different activities and achieving different successful results, learning via educational games also enables students to develop their numerical skills, skills of sequencing, rhythm, motor skills, verbal and visual skills, sense of direction, and different reading skills (Knobloc, 2005). To Ara (2009), educational games foster meaningful learning, avoid dull repetition, and provide students with a wonderful atmosphere to practice different language activities inside the classroom.

Some scholars stressed the importance of playing educational games as a social act, for example, Dondi and Moretti (2007) maintained that "in multi-player games, the learning is a social process, and games provide players with a continuous variety of emotional conditions such as satisfaction, peer recognition, anger or interest" (p. 520). According to (Golick, 1986), play-based activities are prescribed as a remediation to help students who face specific deficit areas in engaging with others in school activities. In Claxton's (2008) view, games are important means for increasing students' motivation. This is because through games students are stimulated to participate freely, challenge each others, and develop self learning mechanisms. Cejpekova (1996) cited in Vankuš (2005) pointed out that educational games have a positive effect on students' imagination, creativity, engagement, self-confidence, retention, thinking, and concentration. They also contribute in discovering individual needs, developing students' interests, fostering the ability to learn through living, and appreciating social learning. To Casser & Jang (2010), a key advantage for educational games is the increasing amount of students' motivation and engagement in different learning tasks. Educational games share in enhancing expressive language skills, this is because through playing games in groups, each individual student will try to interact and express himself in a competitive atmosphere (Cruickshank & Telfer, 1980).

Play-Based Learning and Literacy

Since early primary stages are very critical period for students in order to build both their basic literacy skills, they must be provided with ample opportunities to practice such skills in a preferable manner. Otherwise, they will lag behind and spend their school time attempting to cope with different school tasks instead of building a new knowledge and moving forward (Snow, Burns, & Griffin, 1998). Educational games are a powerful opportunity to gain literacy in an integrated atmosphere. Burke (2011, p.4) maintained that "Play represents a huge opportunity to create a foundation for the future literacy lives of our children". He emphasized the fact that children enter schools with varying levels of familiarity with language, interests and literacy skills. He confirmed that using Play-based learning can provide children with functional and meaningful opportunities to experience written and oral language. In addition, play-based learning supports students' emerging

literacy development through imagination, conversation, and dramatic play in a stimulus atmosphere. Kontovourki and Siegel (2009) stated that"…if teachers take play seriously, that is, as a way to learn more about children and their literacies, they may come to treat it as a valuable resource for child and teacher learning" (p.37).

Casser and Jang (2010) claimed that utilizing games has a positive effect on literacy skills in general and reading skill in specific. Educational games provide students with opportunities to practice a set of specific literacy skills (Holmes, 2011). According to Van Eck (2006), students exhibit more engagement and growth in reading and writing activities due to the inclusion of educational games. Karadag (2015) indicated that educational games have a vital role in reading, writing and other basic life skills especially in primary grades. Using educational games to achieve specific skills in literacy can both help students to develop their self-confident, and urge them to engage more within different reading activities (Griffiths, 1997).   Educational games embody powerful means for literacy (Gee, 2003). Squire (2008, p. 651) stated that "Games push our theoretical notions of learning and literacy, firmly unseparating knowing from doing". Singer, Dorothy, Roberta, Golinkoff, and Hirsh-Pasek (2006) confirmed that play is a cornerstone for oral language skills and it is the basis for reading skills. To them, students learn best through initiating playful and guided instructions. What's more, some scholars (e.g. Bruner, 1972; Wells,1983; Johnson, Christies, and Wardle, 2005) go further to indicate that play has its positive effects not merely on developing children's' level in reading in general, but also has its overt effects on more advanced linguistic abilities. Bruner (1972), for instance, confirmed that the most sophisticated pragmatic and grammatical forms of language appear first through play activities.

Methods and Procedures of the Study

The steps of the historical design were followed in the present study. Such steps included (a) presenting the introduction of the study (this comprised introducing the research topic, stating the research problem, the purpose of the study, the questions of the study, the significance, and the limitations of the study, (b) gathering data from the related studies, (c) analyzing and interpreting the data from different sources, and writing up the findings.

Findings and Interpretations

The first question of the current study was " What are the most critical periods that led to the origination of using play-based learning as language instruction tool in the modern Era " As it was mentioned earlier, playing is a broad term that is not easy to be defined because it includes a number of various activities (such as running, swinging, sliding, building with blocks, digging in the dirt, making nonsense rhyming words, dancing to music, making up, dressing up, pretending, alongside with digital games). However, any act of playing should be both voluntary, and pleasurable. Now, it is very critical to differentiate between playing (as a free, pleasurable, and aimless act) and play-based learning (as a purposeful and planned playing that is used to aid instruction). Having differentiated between the two terms, one can conclude the following: the appreciation of playing has been started very

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Piaget (18961980-) viewed play as a systematic process that has identifiable stages. According to him, play has a fundamental role in promoting learning, that is, play contains two main polar tendencies (assimilation and accommodation). Bos (19342016-) had her valuable contribution in play-based learning, she stated that such learning is characterized as being (a) student centered, and (b) developmentally appropriate for young students. Bos believed that when students have a proper environment, they will be able to choose their own learning experience (Jennifer, 2016). In the "Net Generation", all the previous ideas and perspectives were transformed into more innovative form, eventually, the digital game-based learning (DGBL) has appeared. According to Richard (2006), there are dozens of essays, articles, and books about the effectiveness of (DGBL), Including " Marc Prensky's Digital Game-Based Learning (2001), James Paul Gee's What Video Games Have to Teach Us about Learning and Literacy (2003), Clark Aldrich's Simulations and the Future of Learning: An Innovative (and Perhaps Revolutionary) Approach to e-Learning (2004), Steven Johnson's Everything Bad Is Good for You: How Today's Popular Culture Is Actually Making Us Smarter (2005), and Prensky's new book "Don't Bother Me, Mom, I'm Learning!": How Computer and Video Games Are Preparing Your Kids for 21st Century Success and How You Can Help! (2006)"(p.17). Richard (2006) presented three main factors that promote using games as widespread learning tools, the first factor is the big amount of research done in this field, the second factor is the appearance of "Net Generation," or "digital natives," who no longer prefer to be taught via traditional instruction, the third factor is the increasing number of games users; according to Richard, the digital gaming is a $10 billion per year industry, for example, in 2004, nearly 248 million games were sold. Thus, the researcher concluded that the play-based learning has been valued and evolved gradually according to a set of factors, such as the educators' perspectives about the learners' role in the learning process (whether they adopt a classical or innovative view), and the scientific and the technological progress.   The findings of the second Question:

1- The second question of the current study was 'Were play-based learning activities considered to be a motive or a hindrance in improving learners' level in language learning? As was mentioned earlier, a huge number of scholars stated that play-based learning is considered to be a supportive factor in language learning rather than a hindrance. The researcher believed that there were a set of reasons behind advocating using games as a learning tool; the first reason is the nature of the play-based learning. Admittedly, playing is an act that is characterized by being a voluntary and intrinsically motivated activity through which a child does to obtain pleasure and enjoyment. Having engaged in a certain game, a child becomes more able to focus intently on his/her objective. The second reason is the competitive atmosphere that dominates the game which urges students to work hard in order to win the game.

The third reason is the collaborative atmosphere that advocates useful strategies such as group work and pair work. The researcher believed that utilizing play-based learning gave students more opportunities to approach the reading activities using such beneficial strategies. A fourth reason is that play-based learning creates a fertile environment that permit students to express their thoughts, exchange ideas, and learn from each others within an open and flexible discussions. According to the researcher, all of these factors support the idea which indicates that play-based learning is considered to be a motive for language learning. In contrast, and like any other instructional techniques, utilizing play-based learning has many disadvantages, Cruickshank and Telfer (1980) presented eight potential demerits for such technique; firstly, teachers' unfamiliarity with games, with this regard, a significant number of teachers might not know enough information about the intended games, this can hinder the implementation of these games. Secondly, most of such games are time consuming in comparison to other types of instruction, that is, teachers often start the game by providing students with a group of instructions and game rules, they may also need to divide students into teams, they need to monitor students while playing the game, and eventually, they need to record students' results to identify the winner/winners of the game. Of course, all of the aforementioned stages need a lot of time. Thirdly, some argue that this type of instruction give a special emphasis on students experience rather than the content of the lesson. Fourthly, some think that it is difficult to afford the necessary materials for the implementation of these games, this is because these material may be expensive to buy or difficult to prepare. Fifthly, it is difficult for some teachers to control students' behavior within different stages of the game, not to mention the unwanted distractions, disturbance, and mess caused by the students as a result of excessive talking or movement. Sixthly, some students may be uninterested in these games because they think that the selected games are boring. Finally, some games are designed to allow only a limited number of students to participate preventing the rest of students from trying out this experience. A group of scholars concluded that although educational games have been positively received, many teachers are still reluctant about integrating them into their instruction (Pro Active, 2010). Besides, many teachers do not have the required knowledge and tools as to how to utilize educational games into their classrooms (Meletiou-Mavrotheris & Mavrotheris 2012). To sum up, the play-based learning is considered to be a motive rather than an impediment in EFL instruction especially among young learners. This is due to the various benefits that can be gained through using such method. In order for the play-based learning to be a motive in EFL instruction, a set of conditions must be met. Among of them is the ability to produce effective educational games that characterized as being pleasurable, planned, and purposeful. In contrast, the play-based learning is considered to be an impediment when the implemented educational games are boring, subconscious, and aimless.

Conclusions

The current study aimed to find out what are the most critical periods that contribute in play-based learning evolving in the modern era, and whether play-based learning activities considered to be a motive or a hindrance in language learning within different studies or not. After reviewing the literature and discussing and analyzing various ideas, the researcher concluded the following:

1-The establishment of playing (as a free, pleasurable, and aimless act) has been started very early (alongside with human being life). This is due to the fact that playing is an innate act and considered as a major characteristic of childhood life. Meanwhile, play-based learning has been valued and evolved gradually through different scholars starting from Lock (1693) until these days.

2-The play-based learning is considered to be a motive rather than an impediment in EFL instruction especially among young learners. This is due to the various benefits that can be gained through using such method.

3-In order for the play-based learning to be a motive in EFL instruction, a set of conditions must be met. Among of them is the ability to produce effective educational games that characterized as being pleasurable, planned, and purposeful. In contrast, the play-based learning is considered to be an impediment when the implemented educational games are boring, subconscious, and aimless.

Recommendation

Based on the findings of the current study, a set of recommendations are presented for EFL textbook designers in all Ministries of Education, EFL supervisors, EFL teachers, and researchers:

1- The EFL textbook designers in all Ministries of Education are recommended to adopt the play-based activities in designing English language curricula in order to create more motivating and enjoyable EFL classes.

2- The Ministries of Education is also recommended to conduct an ample number of workshops and training sessions in order to train teachers on designing and implementing different educational games to be used inside their classes.

3- EFL supervisors are recommended to both raise teachers' awareness about the significance of play-based teaching, and encourage them to utilize educational games within EFL classes. To do this, EFL supervisors can hold sufficient training courses to teachers so that they can make use of educational games properly.

4- EFL teachers are recommended to change their role in their classes to become guides, facilitators, councilors, and organizers. In play-based learning, teachers may need to have more innovative roles such as being a game player or even a referee.

5- The researchers are recommended to conduct further studies to find out the effectiveness of play-based learning on developing specific language skills, (namely, reading, writing, speaking, and listening) or other language components (such as vocabulary and grammar).

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