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Use of games and game-like activities in teaching English to different age groups

Anna Peters

Department of English Language, Poznan College of Modern Language,
59 Św. Marcin Street, 61-806 Poznan, Poland

E-mail address: anna.pg@wp.pl

ABSTRACT

English has become one of the most popular and common languages in the world. Its massive increase has been noticeable in the recent years. More and more people, regardless of their age, learn English. They obviously have different competences, skills and needs therefore, the topic of the thesis which the author concentrates on, is Use of games and game-like activities in teaching English to different age groups. There are three age groups mentioned in this thesis: young learners (children aged between 5 or 6 and 12), adolescents (teenagers between 13 and 19) and adults. The age of learners is the major factor in teaching English, however, games and game-like activities do not interfere in acquiring the language by people of different ages.

*Keywords***:** popular languages in the world, common languages in the world, young learners, adolescents, adults, teaching English

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INTRODUCTION

In chapter One the author of this thesis presents the most appropriate teaching methods. They are perceived as useful and successful. Each subsection describes the best teaching method for learners from the under-mentioned age groups. There is also the information about the techniques which are used in particular methods.

Chapter Two defines the characteristics of young learners, adolescents and adults. It shows their advantages, e.g. their cognitive skills and other assets, and disadvantages, e.g. things they are afraid of and problems they may encounter during learning. The short and brief description of these different age groups of learners is also depicted in this chapter.

Chapter Three contains the examples of games and game-like activities chosen as the most appropriate and efficient ones in teaching English to different age groups. There are also particular descriptions how to play or use them during the lessons. The author also tries to prove that use of games and game-like activities is necessary at any age.

CHAPTER ONE: POPULAR METHODS USED IN TEACHING ENGLISH IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

1.1 Method appropriate for young learners - TPR

1.1.1   Total Physical Response

TPR is an English teaching method developed by Dr. James J Asher whose aim is to draw learners' attention and encourage them to respond to the given commands. TPR teaches vocabulary by using psychomotor systems. Thanks to the combination of tracing and rehearsal activities the probability of receiving a successful effect in teaching rises.

The method is believed to be perfect for teaching children and for using it as an additional technique during lessons "Ogromne sukcesy odnosi TPR w kursach dla dzieci. Znaczna jest też jej rola jako techniki pojedynczych ćwiczeń przeprowadzanych w środku lekcji wtedy, gdy uwaga uczniów spada i trzeba im dostarczyć nieco ruchu i hałasu." *[TPR has been achieving great success in courses for children. Its role, as a technique of single activities used during the lesson when the students' attention decreases and noise and movement are needed, is also significant.]* (Komorowska, 2005: 30). – translated by Anna Peters.

The method consists of coordination of two elements: speech and action. According to Asher, Total Physical Response is a natural way of teaching English. He claims that the naturalistic processes should be reflected in teaching the second language and learning. Three central processes are based on this idea:

1) the listening competence is developed before speaking ability. It means that children, at the early phase of first language acquisition,   are able to understand complex utterances before they gain the ability to produce them. Creation of the mental 'blueprint' of the language, which was supposed to make spoken language production possible in the later phase of this listening, was taken into consideration by Asher.

2) "children's ability in listening comprehension is acquired because children need to respond physically to spoken language in the form of parental commands; and"

3) "when a foundation in listening comprehension has been established, speech evolves naturally and effortlessly out of it" (Widodo, 2005: 237).

According to Asher, to base the learning of foreign language upon the way in which children learn their native language is believed to be crucial (Widodo, 2005: 237).

1.1.2 Techniques

Among the numerous techniques in Total Physical Response Method some of them are described:

1) Imperative drills are the major classroom activity in Total Physical Response. "They play an important role especially in eliciting the physical actions and activity on the part of the learners" (Richard et al. 1986: 92). According to Asher, an instructor can teach vocabulary and most of grammatical structures of the target language using the imperative (1997: 4). The target language is used communicatively from the beginning of instruction; students listen to the teacher. Students do not speak at first, but the teacher's role is to help them to understand the point by showing pictures and occasionally using single words in children's native language; being as expressive as possible is also acceptable and welcome.

2) When all children are ready to respond to comments, and they do it correctly, the next step is introduced – one of those children is asked to give instruction to other classmates. It is crucial to remember that children speak when they are ready to do it; they are not and must not be forced to do so. The level of anxiety in the classroom is reduced and thanks to it student's self-confidence significantly rises. The creation of 'low affective filter' is considered to be the learning condition when the classroom is full of good atmosphere; "The filter is kept low as well by the fact that students are not put on the spot to speak" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 108). According to the following words, the absence of stress is really important in language acquisition "The learner is said to be liberated from self-conscious and stressful situations and is able to devote full energy to learning" (Richard et al. 1986: 75).

3) Listening to tape-recorded words, phrases and sentences during looking at accompanying pictures is another technique in this method. It is the Winitz and Reed's self-instructional program. The picture provides suitable context and because of it the meaning of the utterance is clear. Students are asked to respond to some questions by pointing at some pictures, but not using words. This exercise shows that they understand the language which they are listening; "Stories illustrated by pictures are also used as a device to convey abstract meaning" (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 108).

4) The Lexical Approach, developed by Lewis, is more concerned with receiving comprehensible input and is less concerned with students' production. It happens usually at lower levels when the teacher needs to talk extensively to the students and simultaneously do not get oral responses from them. The lexical exercises and activities are given to students to raise their awareness about lexical features about the target language. The phrasal lexicon of students can be developed by comprehensible input. Teachers talk abundantly to their students and simultaneously they do not require any responses from them. Thanks to the activities and exercises, which are given to the learners, students are encouraged to learn new phrases and notice lexical items. (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 108). Komorowska (2005: 29-30) claims that "Metoda ta jest odpowiednia przede wszystkim dla zupełnie początkowych etapów nauczania.

Jednak przy umiejętnym formułowaniu poleceń i stopniowym ich przedłużaniu można dojść do naprawdź skomplikowanych struktur gramatycznych. Na przykład: 'Ania, zamknij okno! Marek, kiedy zobaczysz, że Ania już zamknęła okno – otwórz drzwi', czy też 'Jeśli okno zostało już zamknięte – otwórz drzwi, w przeciwnym razie zostaw je otwarte'." *[This method is especially appropriate for completely early phases of teaching. However, there is a possibility to introduce, with the help of the skilful shaping of commands and progressive extend of them, really complicated grammar structures. For example: 'Anna, close the window! Mark when you see Anna has already closed the window – open the door' or 'If the window has already been closed – open the door, if not, leave it open'.* – translated by Anna Peters.

1.2 Method appropriate for adolescents – Direct Method

1.2.1 Direct Method

The Direct Method is one of the oldest methods of teaching English. The main point of this method is not to use a native language. Teacher is not allowed to translate even a single word in students' mother tongue. The target language is the only one which should be used in the classroom. What is more, the meaning is directly conveyed through visual aids and the demonstrations. "Teachers must encourage direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language in the classroom" (Richard et al. 1986: 9). The teacher can use the already known words, mime, demonstrations and pictures to present or explain new vocabulary rather than teach using the analytical procedures, mostly based on explanation of grammar structures and rules. Grammar is presented inductively. That means that students are obliged to figure out the rules on their own using the presented examples; teacher can never give to the students an explicit grammar. Using new vocabulary and grammar structures is practiced in complete sentences. Nonetheless, all four skills (writing, reading, listening, speaking) occur from the beginning, speaking skill is emphasized over the rest of them. As far as the oral communication is concerned, teaching vocabulary is really important (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 29).

According to Komorowska, this method is considered to be suitable for adolescents because they usually value dynamic interactive activities, which are typical of communicative approach, however, they also accept entertaining elements of TPR and the naturalness of the Direct Method. (Komorowska, 2005: 35)

1.2.2 Techniques

There is a wide range of techniques used in the Direct Method. The following examples of techniques can definitely be useful for teachers and provide them more details.

1) question answer exercise
   To practice new vocabulary and grammar structures students are given a series of questions and they need to answer them using only the target language. There is also an opportunity to change roles and students can ask questions instead of answer them.

2) reading aloud
   Students are asked to read the particular sections of a passage or dialogue. They take turns. To make the meaning of the section clear teacher uses pictures, gestures and examples to help students understand the point.

3) conversation practice

Series of questions is given to students. To answer these questions correctly students need to understand them. The teacher asks questions to and about individual students. The teacher's questions have to include a particular grammar structure. Then students ask each other their own questions. It is important to use the same grammar structure as in the teacher's presentation.

4) dictation
A particular passage is read three times by the teacher. Firstly, the teacher reads the text at a normal speed of speaking (students just listen). Then the pace is slow enough to give students the chance to write down all the words they have heard (teacher makes appropriate pauses). The last time is read again at a normal speed in order to check the written words.

5) fill-in-the-blank exercise
The appropriate grammar structure is necessarily needed to write it in the correct blank. Students have to elicit the grammar rule from the examples or remember the practice from the previous lessons. All the items have to be in the target language and there is no presentation of grammar rules. Students insert correct form of the grammar structure into the blanks.

6) getting students to self-correct
The teacher has to support students if they make mistakes and also give them choice between what they said and this what he supplied for them. To correct students' mistakes in a different way teacher can repeat what they said and emphasize the mistake using the appropriate intonation. Changed teacher's voice should give students the signal that something is wrong. Another possibility for the teacher to elicit the mistake is to repeat student's sentence and make a pause just before the mistake. It gives information that the next word was mistaken.

7) paragraph writing
Chosen topic of the paragraph is given to the students. They need to write a paragraph using appropriate grammar structures, their own words and skills. They can use the reading passage of the particular lesson as a model or write it from memory (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 30-31).

1.3 Method appropriate for adults – Grammar-translation

1.3.1 Grammar-translation

Grammar-translation method is believed to be appropriate for teaching adults. "Nie wszystkim z kolei dorosłym musi odpowiadać wymagające poczucia humoru i ruchliwości TPR, wielu z nich - szczególnie starszych - nalegać będzie na stosowanie metod gramatyczno-tłumaczeniowych lub przynajmniej kognitywnych.." *[Demanding a sense of humour and mobility TPR is a method which doesn't have to suit all of the adults; many of them, especially the older ones, will insist on using grammar-translation methods or at least cognitive methods"* (Komorowska, 2005: 35). – translated by Anna Peters.

This not new method of teaching English was firstly called the Classical Method. This name has special origin; grammar-translation method was used in the teaching of the classical languages like Greek or Latin. This method has been used by teachers for many years

(Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 11). Its aim is to teach vocabulary the grammar structures of the target language which will be helpful and useful in reading and understanding English texts. The best way to achieve this is reading and translating texts from the target language into mother tongue and the other way round. Detailed analyzing, explaining and commenting particular grammar structures and rules occur during these exercises. Texts, which are used to practice, are often written by the authors of course books or they are adapted literary texts (Komorowska, 2005: 26). The following features of grammar-translation method also deserve to be described. Firstly, the target language is considered only on the base of the level of the sentence. Secondly, not much, or even no attention, is paid to the spoken language. Thirdly, the necessary thing in this method is the high level of accuracy (Harmer, 2007: 63).

1.3.2 Techniques

The following techniques are only the part of the whole range of these associated with the grammar-translation method. However, these ones are described by Larsen-Freeman (2000: 19) as useful in this method.

1) translation of the literary passage

Students are given a reading passage and they are asked to translate it from the target language into their native language. The reading passage can be an extract taken from the target language literature or it can even be a text carefully written by the teacher; if it is written by the teacher the appropriate grammar structures and vocabulary have to be included in it. Students' translation doesn't have to be only written, they can translate the passage orally. Idioms should be translate in a way that shows that students understand their meaning; not literally.

2) reading comprehension questions

After reading and understanding of the reading passage students are asked to answer questions, written in the target language, based on the given text. There are three groups of questions: in the first group of questions students are asked to answer them using the information contained in the particular text. In the second group students have to answer questions which are not directly placed in the text. Finally, the third group of questions force students to combine their own experience with the reading text.

3) synonyms / antonyms

The set of words is given to the students and they are asked to find antonyms or synonyms, depending on what the set of words contains, in the given text. Students can be also asked to define the set of words using their understanding of the text, it means to use context to get to know the meaning of the words.

4) deductive application of rule

Examples of the particular grammar structures and the grammar rules are presented together. Exception are given to each grammar rule. When the rule is understood by students, they are asked to use it in other examples.

5) fill-in-the-blanks

Some words in sentences are missed. They can appear in brackets. Students have to insert correct grammar structure or write some parts of speech like prepositions,

adverbs or adjectives. All the items in brackets do not have to be in the target language,

6) memorization
   Students obligation is to remember all the possible lists they get from their teacher. Lists can contain vocabulary, which is given in the target language and its equivalents in the native language of the students, or grammatical paradigms (i.e. verb conjugations).

7) Use words in sentences
   Students create completely new sentences using new vocabulary or grammar structures. They do this in order to present they understand the meaning and use of those.

8) composition
   Writing about a topic using the target language. Students are given particular topic by the teacher. Topic should be suitable to the lesson. Students can sometimes be asked to write the précis of the reading passage from the lesson instead of writing a composition (Larsen-Freeman, 2000: 19-20).

1.4. Summary

In conclusion, some teaching methods of the English language are appropriate for particular age groups. Learners differ from each other and have special needs. The needs should always be provided sensibly in order to encourage students and do not repulse them. Choosing the suitable method teachers make that the students enjoy learning and do not associate it with something boring.

CHAPTER TWO: TYPES OF LEARNERS IN DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

2.1. Young learners

It is commonly believed that children learn a new language fast and efficiently. These who begin acquiring a foreign language early do not have so many problems with pronunciation. What is more, they have the possibility to imitate the teacher's accent very precisely. On the other hand, they become bored quickly and lose their concentration easily. No child is exactly the same; some children develop their language competence slower, some gradually, however, the following characteristics describe the average young learner between five and ten years old (Wendy A. Scott et al. 1995: 1-3).

2.1.1. Characteristics of young learners

Enthusiasm for learning is intensively displayed by young learners. They are curious about everything what surrounds them and this positive attitude towards acquiring a foreign language should be praised. Apart from being interested in learning, young learners are able to understand and do many more things:

1) they more often understand what is happening than the language used to describe the particular situation;

2) their understanding is based not only on words but on what they see, hear or feel;

3) they learn indirectly rather than directly;

4) they can argue and even explain why they think what they think;

5) they try to speak in a foreign language even if they do not understand individual words;

6) they can use their imagination and also decide how they are going to do some activities;

7) they are able to use a big number of intonations in their first language;

(Harmer, 2007: 82-83)

Nevertheless, children are not in the position to fulfill all expectations towards them. Their world differentiates from the real life. They are sometimes unable to distinguish fiction from fact. The following features show certain difficulties which young learners have:

1) they hardly ever admit that they misunderstand something, and they cheerfully and confidently ensure adults they understand;

2) They sometimes do not understand what the adults' conversation is about; adults sometimes have problems with understanding children too. The difference is that children do not ask any additional questions in order to find out the point; they make believe they understand it;

3) The curriculum cannot be chosen by young language learners;

4) concentration on an activity can be distracted rapidly as children can get easily become bored and lose their interest. That is why constant change of activities should appear during the lesson.

(Scott et al. 1995: 1-3)

2.2. Adolescents

Adolescent learners are often perceived as problem students. The main reason confirming it is adolescence. The period in which teenagers look for their identities and their self-esteem hesitates. On the other hand, teenagers during this difficult time are characterized by passionate commitment. When they begin doing something they engage so much and dedicate themselves to it. According to Harmer (2007), thanks to these factors, including abstract thought, they can be perceived as the most exciting students of all (Harmer, 2007: 83).

2.2.1. Characteristics of adolescent learners

Against the deceptive perception of today's teenagers, not all of them behave inappropriately. Most of them can understand that learning is needed in life, and additionally, accomplish the given tasks. What is more, they are able to discuss abstract issues with the

teacher. According to Harmer (2007: 84), "there is almost nothing more exciting than a class of involved young people at this age pursuing a learning goal with enthusiasm." The teacher's role is to encourage students to learn by preparing adequate materials concerning their interests or even "to provoke student engagement with material which is relevant and involving" (Harmer 2007: 84). The point is to encourage teenagers to respond to the text, or any other kind of material, with their own opinions, experiences or reflections. People at this age are sensitive and they can be easily humiliated. Thus, there is a risk to give them tasks which they are not able to do. The lack of the knowledge how to achieve a particular goal in the given task can contribute to the feeling of humiliation. Simultaneously, the teacher cannot forget about strengthening the students' self-esteem and being aware of their need for identity.

Another characteristic is that many teenagers want to be approved of their peers. They like feeling valued and they really take the negative opinions personally, especially these said by their contemporaries. Therefore, looking for respect among peers becomes most noticeable in teenagers. Harmer (2007: 154) claims that this situation pertains to students, "who may not be very impressed by learning success but are often amused or amazed by the humour or anarchic behavior of their peers."

But not only the good rapport with friends is desired. The teacher's approval makes teenagers happy and satisfied. When the teacher stops showing his approval, the students' behavior can change for worse. As pointed out by Osborne (2005), treating teenagers as equals and careful listening to them is considered to be a good way in teaching adolescents.

Motivation among teenagers is rather low. Teenage learners can be demotivated because they do not see the rewards or treat the learning of a foreign language as a trivial human need, which is a useless social skill. Komorowska (2005: 39) claims that teenagers sometimes tend to resist. For example, they are rebellious when they think the texts, and other materials at school, are inadequate or simply useless. According to Brown (2007: 164), motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsically motivated learners have their own needs. They do their best to achieve what they have planned; they are goal-oriented. Those, with no inner expectations, who undertake the particular tasks only to receive an external reward are perceived as extrinsically motivated learners. Teachers can provide some authentic materials such as magazines, articles from the real newspapers, catalogues, website printouts and off-air video recordings to help teenagers become more motivated, Osborne (2005) claims.

2.3. Adults

Adulthood – the period of being mature, more serious and balanced. This is the moment in life in which adult language learners have a range of life experience, and what is more, they can share it with the other students in a group. Teaching English to grownups is perceived as not so demanding as teaching children, because most of adults tend to be more disciplined (Harmer, 2007: 84-85).

2.3.1. Characteristics of adult learners

There are many special characteristics concerning adult language learners. Some of them are really helpful during English classes, but some part of them is rather offending or even worrying. The following characteristics are the positive ones:

1) a wide range of life experience, bringing by the adult learners into the classroom, allow teachers to use various activities during the classes; the topics can be miscellaneous;

2) they are much more disciplined than children or adolescents. Their teachers do not have to deal with the daily discipline problems. Adults also cooperate willingly and they are expected to do it immediately;

3) adult learners' expectations are taken seriously. They mostly come to the classes with a long history of language learning experience. Thanks to these experiences, whatever they are good or bad, grownups have got the possibility to form opinions about how both, learning and teaching, should be accomplished;

4) most of them is motivated intrinsically, knows the reason of learning and treat it with the great importance. Their attention span is rather long and they are able to continue the lesson despite being bored.

(Harmer, 2007: 84-85)

Nevertheless, teaching English to adults can have also some less convenient aspects. The description of grownups is not so wonderful as it may be presented. Their world is full of duties, which they cannot resign from, like job or family. The lack of time can cause disadvantages noticeable during the lessons.

1) above-mentioned expectations can turn into the criticism of teaching methods. According to Harmer (2007: 85), their previous learning experience "may have predisposed them to one particular methodological style which makes them uncomfortable with unfamiliar teaching patterns." Furthermore, these learners can even become antagonistic towards some teaching and learning activities, similar to their earlier ones;

2) being afraid of a failure is, according to Harmer (1998: 11), another problem which adult learners has to deal with. They are anxious because criticism at school influenced on their self-confidence. Luckily, not all of them underachieved at school, those who succeeded may think that learning English will be easy. Teachers can help to decrease the bad effects of past learning and the fear of failure by giving them attainable tasks;

3) public embarrassment is another characteristic which is noticeable among adult learners. Their level of nervousness is high because they do not want to look ridiculously in front of the whole class. As pointed out by Harmer (1998: 11), all these are related to the age "The potential for losing face becomes greater the older you get."

4) offending behaviour during the lesson is another problematic issue. They do not disturb in the same way as teenagers or children, but some grownups can spend a lesson on talking to each other at the same time when the teacher is trying to draw their attention. Some learners do not care about their homework or come late.

5) boredom in class can occur even during the adults' English lesson. It happens mostly because they, perhaps, are doing a full-time course or spending a lot of time in the same kind of classroom. According to Harmer, some kind of games or quizzes can be offered to these people. (Harmer, 1998: 10-12)

2.4. Summary

To sum up, language learners differ to each other not only in terms of age but also in terms of skills. They abilities, needs and even expectations change but characteristics, certainly specific to their age, play a crucial part in teaching English process.

CHAPTER THREE: MOST EFFICIENT GAMES AND GAME-LIKE ACTIVITIES USED IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO DIFFERENT AGE GROUPS

As the author of this thesis mentioned in the second chapter each group of learners has a variety of characteristics and skills which can be divided in terms of age. With the help of theirs' description the author presents the most efficient games and game-like activities used in teaching English in different age groups.

3.1. Most efficient games and game-like activities used in teaching English to children.

3.1.1. Songs

Thanks to singing songs children have the possibility to get to know or practice the rhythm, tone and melody. Songs improve children's listening skills, teach vocabulary and encourage children to express themselves during singing (MacNaughton et al. 2004: 184). Undermentioned examples present the ways in which the song can be used. The aim of these activities is to practice vocabulary, language point and listening skills.

1. **Find the word**
   The task for young learners here is to listen for a certain word or words and then count their number in a particular song. For example, children can count words "hello" and "goodbye" in the song "Hello, goodbye" by the Beatles (Phillips, 1993: 112). See appendix no. 1

2. **Song pictures 1**
   To prepare this exercise the teacher needs a descriptive text of the song and a picture which illustrates it. The picture can be found or drawn and it can have some mistakes or gaps. Then, children get the copies, listen to the song and they correct or complete the picture. (Phillips, 1993: 112)

3. **Song picture 2**
   A song that tells the story is needed. The teacher draw simple pictures to illustrates the story, cut them out and make a worksheet. The sequence of the pictures has to be out of order. The children's role is to listen to the song and put the pictures in the correct order. (Phillips, 1993: 113)

4. **Gap fill song**
   An important thing to do is to choose the song with the clear words in its text.

   4.1 Picture gaps
   The teacher substitutes the real words from the song for some of the pictures. Students' task is to write the full name of the thing from the picture to complete the song. For example:

Fig. 1. An example of a picture gap (Phillips, 1993: 64).

4.2 Adjective fill
The teacher chooses the song with a big number of adjectives which can be changed easily. Children listen to the song and draw a picture of it. Next they change the adjectives and draw a picture of a new description. This exercise can be also used with the written texts and descriptions. (Phillips, 1993: 64,113)

3.1.2 Physical activities

Thanks to the groupwork children can work at the same time, the language practice time increases and "children are less likely to become bored or lose interest because they are actively involved." (Toth, 1995: 6). These examples present how to avoid boredom during the classes.

1. **The washing line game**
    Before the game starts, the teacher should check the conversance of the children's vocabulary. The short length of rope has to be held between two learners in order to create a washing line.

Fig. 2. The washing-line game (Halliwell, 1992: 48)

The rest of the class is divided into two teams and their representatives are chosen to come to the front. Pupils' task is to pick out the object which the teacher asked them to bring. Pupils have to listen to the teacher's commands and bring the desirable thing. They look for it in beforehand prepared boxes. The pupil who hangs an object on a line first is the winner and scores a point for his or her team.
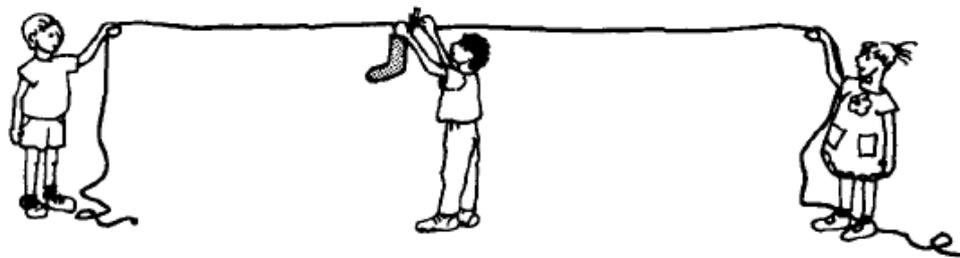
Fig. 3. The washing-line game (Halliwell, 1992: 48)

This activity provides the revision of particular words rather than the whole phrases (Halliwell, 1992: 47-48).

2. Body writing
This exercise is used to associate students with spoken or written forms of letters, numbers, words or shapes. Children can work in groups or -individually. Their task is to make shapes of particular figures with their bodies. Apart from revision of alphabet and vocabulary, this exercise provide the ability of co-operation between the students. To form the letters with their bodies, students can stand up or lie down. If children are not divided into groups yet, the teacher can start from the warming-up exercises. He or she should start from the simple letters, like I or T, which child can build on his or her own. Next, the teacher can go on to more difficult letters, like A or M, which demand co-operation between the members of the team (Phillips, 1993: 97).

3. "Disco routine"

Another energetic activity which can be used to revise the body parts and the phrases concerning this category of words. This activity is similar to the game "Simon says."
What the teacher has to do first is to refresh vocabulary using action words, e.g. 'stamp', 'point', 'shake', etc. Children obey and copy the teacher's commands. Then the game 'Simon says' can be used as a warm-up exercise. The teacher say 'Simon says' and he or she gives the instruction. The teacher can start the game with the 'stand up' command, if the children make a mistake they have to sit down. The next step is writing up the teacher's disco routine on the board and doing it with the children and chosen music.
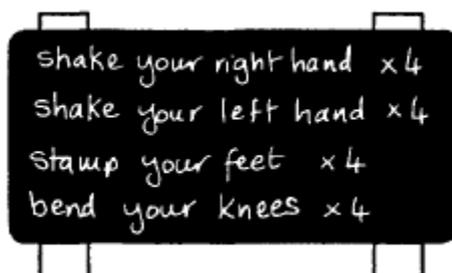

Fig. 4. The example of a "Disco routine" (Halliwell, 1992 : 150)

Then children are divided into pairs and try to make up and write down their own routine, consisting of four actions. The teacher goes around and helps them. The teacher collects pupils' papers, in order to check if there are any major mistakes, so they need to write their names at the top of them (Halliwell, 1992: 150-151).

3.2. Most efficient games and game-like activities used in teaching English to adolescents.

Teenagers mature, begin to understand and learn more about the world. What is more, intellectual, motor or social skills are developed by children when they get older. A wider gamut of topics can be used to teach teenagers; one way or another, it is a good idea to use topics related to their world. (Osborne, 2005: 142)

3.2.1. Noughts and crosses

To prepare materials needed to this game the teacher should draw a noughts and crosses grid on the board. Numbers from 1 to 9 should be written in each square and the class must be divided into two teams: X and O. The teacher thinks about the category of questions which he or she will ask during the game. The questions can concern anything e.g. general knowledge, questions about English or the previous unit in the students' course book. The next step belongs to students. They choose the square and answer the teacher's question. If they answer correctly, they get a symbol written in the chosen square. The line of three identical symbols, in any direction, have to appear on the grid. The first team to get this line is the winner.

If the teacher has no more ideas of questions he or she can tell students to write new questions for the opposing team. That will be great practice in question formation. (http://www.onestopenglish.com/teenagers/skills/games/teenagers-game-1-noughts-and-crosses/146729.article) 2012-09-12 (last access)

3.2.2. Making sentences

This game provides the practice of the sentence production and formation. It also encourage students to use their creativity. To prepare this game correctly the teacher should cut out approximately 40 words from the magazines or newspapers and make sure of the balance of parts of speech. Then he or she sticks them on a sheet of paper in random order. See appendix no. 2

Then the teacher divides class in groups of up to four and gives them the copies of the set of words. Their task is to build the sentences consisting of: three words (e.g. Radio is free), four words (e.g. Most parents are happy) and five words (Cows enjoy politics in April). Students get seven minutes to create these sentences, the time depends on the complexity of task and level. (http://www.onestopenglish.com/teenagers/skills/games/teenagers-game-8-making-sentences/146736.article) 2012-09-27 (last access).

3.3. The most efficient games and game-like activities used in teaching English to adults.

Adults represent the group of learners which see the point of learning. There is sometimes no need to motivate them, for example, by playing games or singing songs. But if these people are on a full-time course or study in the same kind of class for a long time they get bored sooner or later. Harmer claims "We won't want to treat them like children, but some

of them might, nevertheless, respond well to a lighter style of learning which does, indeed, involve quizzes, puzzles and the study of contemporary songs" (Harmer, 1998: 11,12).

3.3.1. Puzzles

Explaining what you mean

This vocabulary game, presented by Harmer, helps students with vocabulary they can use when they do not know the exact words to describe a particular thing. What students have to do is to read some descriptions and say or guess what is being described. Their answers can be checked with words situated at the bottom of the page. The next step can be a practice exercise in which students have to reorder words to make sentences and match them with the pictures. See appendix no. 3

Then students are divided into groups and asked to make a list of words from a particular category allotted to their team and draw them. Now students describe things for each other by taking part in an information-gap activity. Learners work in pairs. There are two crosswords needed in this activity, one for student A and for student B. Students' task is to describe, define or explain the words in the crossword. They are not allowed to use their exact names. For example, when student A asks student B what 1 down is, student B may reply: *It is stuff you make candles with and it is sticky when it is hot.* (Harmer, 2007: 232-233)
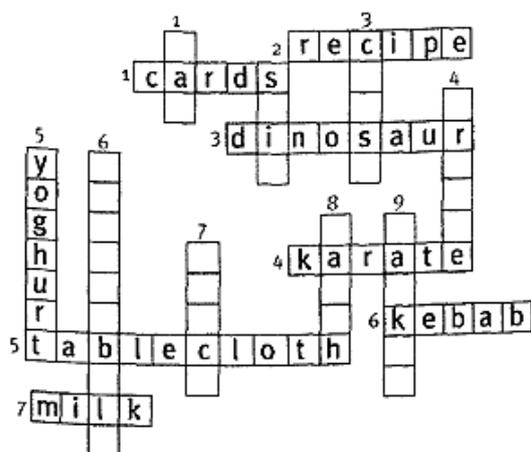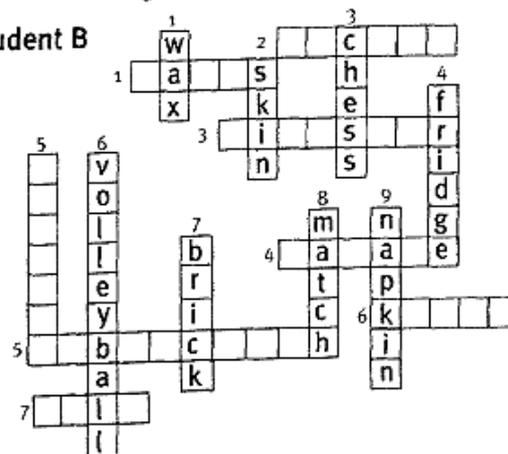

FIGURE 6: Information-gap crossword

Fig. 5. The example of a crossword (Harmer, 2007: 232-233).

This activity is very similar to a describing game. Students can also be divided into groups or pairs. They are given three category of words or phrases. A set of cards face down or in an envelope is given to each group. The teacher demonstrates the activity by choosing a word from one of the vocabulary sets and describing it to the class until someone guesses the word. The most important thing is that students cannot use the word on the card in their

definitions. Learners play the game taking turns. The teacher tell students to do not interrupt anybody's description.[1]

3.3.2. Quizzes

Test your general knowledge

This is one of a lot of examples of quizzes which can be used to learn adults. The aim of this quiz is to revise articles, check what students have remembered and by the way test their general knowledge. Students work in pairs. Each pair gets one sheet. The teacher has to set a time limit to each exercise. In the first exercise, students complete the quiz with the articles; in the second one they try to answer as many questions as they can.[2]

The next example of a quiz is a quiz concerning idioms. The students' task is easy. They have to read the questions and write their answer on a separate piece of paper. The main aim of this activity is to revise vocabulary – idioms. (Watcyn – Jones, 1993: 149). See appendix no. 6.

3.4. Summary

To conclude, every age group needs a particular attention in teaching English, special methods, techniques and furthermore games or game-like activities. There is no denying that the group of children is the most demanding one, but other groups cannot be forgotten. The proper selection of these can cause that the lesson is more interesting and students become more involved.

CONCLUSIONS

The choice of the most appropriate teaching method, games and game-like activities has a significant importance to learners in different age groups; it is crucial to the learning process. Among many different methods and ideas for teaching English, some of them are perceived as truly successful and efficient. The teacher's role is to find and tailor the best one and conform it to the particular learners' age.

The most effective ideas for teaching young learners are based on the TPR method. Its techniques and use of games and game-like activities constitute perfect conditions to acquire the language. Thanks to the briskness, appearing in most examples of games and game-like activities used in TPR method, children have the possibility to play, have fun and learn. What is more, pupils learn not because they have to but because they want to.

Teaching teenagers seems to be more challenging but equally rewarding. During the period of transition between childhood and adulthood, adolescents look for their identity and want to be as independent as possible. Thanks to some games and game-like activities, they are able to develop their creativity and increase their self-esteem. IT is rather difficult to motivate them, therefore, games have to be absorbing and related to the students' interests.

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[1] Adapted from New English File upper-intermediate Teacher's book by Oxenden et al. 2008: 221,225; (See Appendix 4)

[2] Adapted from New English File upper-intermediate Teacher's book by Oxenden et al. 2008: 195,213; (See Appendix 5)

Adults represent the group of students who exactly know what they want to achieve. Although most of them are rather highly motivated the need to diversify English lessons is still necessary. Quizzes based on general knowledge cause the improvement of students' language skills. Their life experience helps with the tasks, in which they have to describe specific situations or people.

In conclusion, appropriate teaching methods, techniques but also, really useful and effective, games and game-like activities are indispensible element of English language lessons. All of these components conduce to successful process of learning. That is why it is important to select them thoroughly and reasonably in terms of learners' abilities adapted to the particular age group.

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APPENDICES

Appendix no. 1

Hello, Goodbye   -   the Beatles

You say yes, I say no,
You say stop, and I say go, go, go,
Oh no.
You say goodbye and I say hello, hello, hello,
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello, hello, hello,
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello.

I say high, you say low,
You say why, and I say I don't know.
Oh no.
You say goodbye and I say hello, hello, hello.
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello, hello, hello,
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello.

Why, why, why, why, why, why,
Do you say goodbye.
Oh no.
You say goodbye and I say hello, hello, hello.
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello, hello, hello,
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello.

You say yes, I say no,
You say stop and I say go, go, go.
Oh, oh no.
You say goodbye and I say hello, hello, hello.
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello, hello, hello,
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello, hello, hello,
I don't know why you say goodbye, I say hello, hello, hello,

Appendix no. 2

The example of a ready sheet of paper

(http://www.onestopenglish.com/teenagers/skills/games/teenagers-game-8-making-

sentences/146736.article). 2012-09-27 (last access)

Spain	*sails*	in		on	to
The arrested		*teenagers*	very		their
Say	radio	problem		was	a
Dancing	cows	think	we	*money*	
More	*richer*	enjoy	free		politics
Most	happy	coffee	*English*	quickly	have
Parents	is	trust	eat	*green*	fat
Gets	*rich*	by	hardly	crazy	hat

Appendix no. 3

The example of the game: explaining what you mean (Harmer, 2007: 233)

3 Put the words in order to make sentences. Then match the descriptions to the pictures.

1 It's in windows something find of you front
2 It's you a pasta type cheese which on of put
3 It's you opening wine use bottles something for
4 It's Spain kind a dish of from rice
5 It's your for use stuff you hair washing the
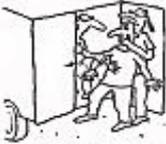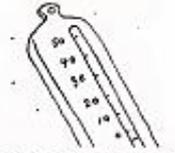6 It's large made stone figure of a

FIGURE 5: Practising 'explaining' words and phrases

Appendix no. 4

A describing game sheet (New English File upper-intermediate Teacher's book by Oxenden et al. 2008: 225)

Appendix no. 5

A test sheet (Oxenden et al. 2008: 213).

6 A Communicative **Test your general knowledge**

New English File Teacher's Book Upper-intermediate
Photocopiable © Oxford University Press 2008

a Complete the quiz with *a, an, the,* or – (no article).

b In pairs, see how many questions you can answer.

1 Which planet is nearest to ____ sun?

2 What type of fruit is ____ cantaloupe?

3 How many states are there in ____ USA?

4 In which sea can you find ____ Balearic Islands?

5 Who are more numerous in the world, ____ men or ____ women ?

6 Which animal is ____ symbol of ____ WWF?

7 What colour are ____ babies' eyes at birth?

8 What is ____ 40% of 40?

9 What letter is on ____ right of ____ 'B' on a keyboard?

10 What was ____ name of ____ Tarzan's monkey?

11 What country is ____ Lake Como in?

12 What's ____ highest mountain in ____ Himalayas?

13 How many strings does ____ bass guitar have?

14 Who was ____ second person to walk on ____ moon?

15 How many players can be on court in ____ volleyball team?

16 What is ____ fourth sign of ____ zodiac?

17 Which nation first gave ____ women ____ right to vote?

18 Which animals were domesticated first, ____ cats or ____ dogs?

19 Which European country hasn't fought in ____ war since ____ 1815?

20 What is ____ largest man-made structure on Earth?

21 What vegetable is ____ vodka often made from?

22 Is ____ spider ____ insect?

23 What colour is ____ black box on ____ plane?

24 What's ____ sacred river in ____ India called?

25 Which travels faster, ____ light or ____ sound?

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Appendix no. 6

A quiz (Watcyn – Jones, 1993: 149).

85 IT'S QUIZ TIME: IDIOMS

Read through the following questions and write your answers on a separate piece of paper.

1 What kind of party is a **stag party**?

2 If you were at a restaurant and the person with you offered to **go Dutch**, what would this mean?

3 Our postman **kicked the bucket** last week. What has happened to him?

4 A tiresome, irritating person is often described as **a pain** in what part of the body?

5 Jim's **behind bars**. Where is he?

6 Amanda's **down in the mouth** today. How is she feeling?

7 Why wouldn't you normally go to a party in your **birthday suit**?

8 What sort of a relationship would you have with someone if you **got on like a house on fire**?

9 Why are **blacklegs** generally unpopular?

10 My uncle has been given a **golden handshake.** What has happened to him?

11 Where on the body would you find **crow's feet**?

12 How would you be behaving towards someone if you were **giving him or her the cold shoulder**?

13 What does a **gate-crasher** usually do?

14 How would you be feeling if you were **full of beans**?

15 Where (or what) would you be if you were **in the land of Nod**?

16 What's a **busman's holiday**?

17 What are you doing when you **name the day**?

18 What sort of person is an **early bird**?

19 Why don't people usually like **playing gooseberry**?

20 I've just bought **the local rag**. What have I bought?