Teaching English through Online Games for Junior High School Students

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Teaching language is an attractive activity both for the teacher and for the acceptor. They can interact together in this act. Teaching English is a challenge for the teachers to make the students interest in English because as we know English is not the first language for some countries in this world including Indonesia. There are various ways and ideas to teach English so that it can be fun and interest to be taught and to be learnt. But those ways and ideas also should be an up date method and also use a modern technology to be implemented. Along with the development of modern technology, the teachers should involve with it and make it as a part of English teaching tools. Two of the famous and sophisticated tools are computer and the internet. These things have a close relation to be urgent equipment for people. In this article, the writer wants to purpose the use of online games as a way to teach English for junior high school. Te article aims to give another teaching alternative in attracting the junior high school students to learn English in funny and enjoyable way. Through online games they do not only can play the various games but also indirectly they do the exercises of English skills.

Introduction

Every country and region in this world has their own language. The means to unite people from there is an international language namely English. Of the 4,000 to 5,000 living languages, English is by far the most widely used. As a mother tongue, it ranks second only to Chinese, which is effectively six mutually unintelligible dialects little used outside China. On the other hand the 300 million native speakers of English are to be found in every continent, and an equally widely distributed body of second language speakers, who use English for their day-to-day needs, totals over 250 million (Broughton, 2003:1). As Richard and Rodgers (1986:3) said, English is the world's most widely studied foreign language. Therefore, English is very urgent to be taught and to be learnt by people to have a good communication.

As we know each country and region not always know English. Most of them suppose it as a strange and confusing language. It happens because English is not their first language. In Indonesia, English suppose to be the foreign language. It, of course, has

different structure with Indonesian. In English teaching and learning, there are four important skills we have to master, namely, reading, listening, speaking, and writing. Those skills are the most important factors for people who want to master English well. And it usually makes the learners feel difficult to master English fast and easily.

Teaching English, in the country whose language is not English as the first language, is not an easy thing. The teachers have to master English well and the important thing is they can also master the learners (students). A language teacher, so do an English teacher, should have a brilliant idea to always think a lot of methods of teaching language. The methods that they apply must have always up-to-date methods for the students. A language teacher should always try to manage the class well and under control. They have to explore more in how the language can be taught and learn easily and enjoyable.

Technology has become a good alternative way to help the students in learning English. One of the famous technologies is computer. In the computer, they can play the English games in various kinds. It can be more interesting if they can directly choose whatever games they want. The solution is through the internet. The use of computer which connected to the internet will be a very good alternative in teaching (Clyde and Deloheri, 2005). If the students have already known how to operate the computer, it is also easy for them to browsing in the internet and chooses their favorite English games. So, it becomes an effective way to learn English in up date method related to technology.

The writer focuses on the junior high school students because in this level it is the first time they were introduced by the computer at school in Indonesian curriculum. They have taught how the way to operate computer. Therefore, it is important for the teachers to involve this technology in teaching English as a Foreign Language in a fun way.

English Teaching

According to Brown (1980: 7), teaching means showing or helping someone how to do something, giving instruction, guiding in the study of something, providing with knowledge, causing to know or to understand. Teaching can be focused to help the students build up the knowledge and give the information. So, teaching English is a

transferring of language knowledge from teachers to learners to make them able in use English as a language.

For the most people, whose English is not the first language, English viewed as a difficult language with complicated skills start from its pronunciation, structure, and vocabularies. In teaching English the teacher should have an ability to make the learner can accept the lesson easily. They should have an attractive and interesting style. They should manage the class well so the teaching and learning activity can run well.

To attract the students in order they interest in learning activity, the educators have found and implemented the various kinds of teaching methods in five English skills such as, debate, role-play and speech for teaching speaking, teaching listening by using auditory media, puzzles for teaching vocabularies, etc. Beside, English teachers should be able to use various kinds of media; the familiar media surround the students or related to technology. For example, teaching speaking through movie or teaching vocabularies by using cards of words.

Online games

During the development of time, people invent various kinds of things to easier their life. In here, the internet appears as a hero to help people overcome their problem. The Internet is a worldwide, publicly accessible series of interconnected computer networks that transmit data by packet switching using the standard Internet Protocol (IP) (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/internet). It is a "network of networks" that consists of millions of smaller domestic, academic, business, and government networks, which together carry various information and services, such as electronic mail, online chat, file transfer, and the interlinked web pages and other resources of the World Wide Web (WWW). People can find detail information that they need through browsing. They can easier their communication through sending an IM (Instant Massage) or an e-mail (electronic mail).

The internet also takes an important role in teaching and learning activity. It can be the resources of English materials and also become media of teaching English.

Game's world grows fast during the higher creativity from the games developer. The gamers can enjoy various kinds of games start from Nintendo, PS1, PS2, PS 3, flash games, and online games in the internet.

In the internet, the gamers can choose any games they like to play. The gamers can be any level of ages. They can be elementary students, junior high school students, senior high school students until college students. Selecting the games freely in the internet gives them their own satisfaction. They just sit in front of the computer and open the website provides the online games.

Online games not only function as something to entertain the users but it also can educate them. How it can be the educator? Games believe as the way to sharpen our mind. In playing the game, the gamers usually think how to solve the problems to be the winner. The time needed also limited so they have to be more attractive in playing the game. Beside, the education experts also have find the way in order the gamer not only play the games but also learn the lesson especially English. There are a lot of websites provide online games to learn English. There are different games with different skills.

Discussion

Most of children do not interesting in English because they feel it's difficult. Other reason is it isn't interesting to be learnt. It also depends on how the teachers can make English be more interesting. Today, education expert have develop various kinds of teaching methods by using various kinds of media, too. One of them is by using online games for teaching language especially English.

Why online games?

During the development of technology, teachers have to deal with sophisticated equipments especially computer and the internet. There are a lot of things that we can use for teaching English. One of them is by using online games. As we can see, children like to try something new, they interest in something that can make them be entertain and can attract them. Most of them like to play animation games and through the internet facility, they can choose the games that they want freely by getting them free or buy them.

Teaching by employing the internet requires much more preparation than that of using books (Warschauer, 1997: 30). The teachers only guarantee the students know how to operate the computer and browsing the internet. So the activities can run well without wasting more time. It also can be enjoy by the students because it's not a monotone lesson.

Computer Games for Students

The advance of technology has become the greatest part for humans' life. One of the media is computer. Computers have variants types which are offer to the society based on their needs. Computers used do not make any distinction for the users. Adult, youth and children are involving to this media for different purposes.

One of the interesting computer applications is game. Computer games are very popular today with the various kinds which offered by many computer games' companies. The games can be only for fun or for learning. The games are online and offline. The online games can be played by the connection of internet. The offline games can be downloaded from some websites but we do not have directly connected them to the internet connection.

Since the computer games are interesting, many educators use them for language teaching media. This is a good alternative way to attract students to learn in a fun way. Computers are creating a world that places a premium on innovation and creative thinking (Shaffer, 2006:8). Operating the computer needs a creative thinking since we have to figure out what to click and what to open. Computer games lead learners to interact with the learning things through the games (Shaffer, 2006:115). When they start to click the game they will find the next steps to go to the next level. But first, they have to figure out the way to get to the next level by solving the problems, answer the questions or complete the mission in the game.

Use Online Games for Language Teaching

The first important thing is the students have to know, at least, how to operate the computer. After that, the teachers give the direction on what skill they want to teach.

They not only focus on only one skill but they can cover some of skills to teach in one meeting.

As the one who know the website address, the teacher have to give the item of the website address or they have chosen one of the address for the games. Then, let the students play and do the exercise indirectly in the games.

The implementation of this method is difficult sometimes. The problem that always appears is the less technology use in each school. Not all schools have the media to deal with the internet. There is another alternative that is go and fine internet cafes. But it also spends much money. Besides, not all of the teachers master the computer operation.

Forgetting the weaknesses, it still becomes an effective way to teach the students to understand the lesson easily through playing games. This method will be success supported by supporting media.

English skills and related games

On the website or games provider, students can choose the games freely related to the lesson that they want to play and learn. There are various names of the games and it can be very interesting for play. Each game has its own unique and characteristic in giving the lesson. Every games provider tries to attract the user to visit the website. So they complete them by the creativity and accessories to make them interesting.

Here are the examples online games related by the English skills.

➢ *Reading*

The games relate of reading skill are in the form of *Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade*, *gangster life, description detective*.

➢ *Writing*

The writing games we can find on the websites like *Write a Fairy Story ,Write a Tall Tale, Writer's Block*, etc.

➢ *Grammar*

To learn about grammar and structure students can play games like, fashion game English star, the garden game , quick click bricks ,pitfall!, weather , whose dragon?, the letter thief, the amazing maze ,categories , big game fishing similes, number hunt ,containers, quality ,small to large, Rocking English, trigger finger gone fishing. The activities usually includes theory, multiple choice exercises, missing word exercises and also exercise in the form of passages.

➢ *Vocabularies*

To add students English vocabularies they can play the games like balloons, bubble struggle, hangaroo, red beard, alien clones, crosswords, around the world in fifteen pictures, etc. in these games, students have to fulfill the answer or do a goal in a limited time.

➢ *Pronunciation*

Pronunciation games we can find are ghost says, Sentences, Spelling and Words,etc. The activities are seeing the words and spell it correctly.

The websites you can visit

These websites are the websites provides the online games and other teaching materials.

➢ http://www.ego4u.com, http://www.polseguera.com/freegrammar.htm

➢ http://www.eslmonkeys.com/student/grammar_lesson.php

➢ http://perso.wanadoo.es/autoenglish/

➢ http://www.englisch-hilfen.de/en/exercises_list/fragen.htm

➢ http://www.teach-nology.com/worksheets/science/animals/if

➢ http://www.eslgold.com/writing.html

➢ http://www.readingrockets.org/

➢ http://www.eslmonkeys.com/student/storyroom/storyroom.html

➢ http://www.eslgold.com/reading.html

➢ http://members.tripod.com/exworthy/teachread.htm

➢ http://www.english-online.org.uk

➢ http://www.languagegames.org/

➢ http://www.manythings.org/vocabulary/

➢ http://www.teflgames.com/interactive.html

> ➤ http://www.teachingenglishgames.com/
> ➤ http://www.englishbanana.com/games-a-z.html
> ➤ http://www.englishclub.com/esl-games/
> ➤ http://www.learnenglish.de/gamespage
> ➤ http://www.quia.com/shared/
> ➤ http://www.bellenglish.com/courses/freegame/
> ➤ http://www.kinglishschool.com
> ➤ http://www.languagegames.org/

Conclusion

English is the foreign language for Indonesian people. As the international language it's important to learn English. But the problem is it's difficult to learn it because of the reason above. The learners should learn the different and complicated skills in English.

There are five important skills in English. We have to master it well if we want to have perfect English. To understand those skills, the learners should have the motivation and interest in study English skills. The motivation can be gotten from teachers methods, styles, and supporting media.

There are various kinds of methods and media used to teach English. Those should be up date and interesting to be implemented. Teaching English by using IT is a good way to do and to try. The related media are the use of computer and the internet as one unit of teaching and learning media. The interesting thing we can find is by using online games as the way to teach some of English skills. It is effective for junior high school students because they have got the lesson to operate the computer. So it is easy for them to browse and play the games.

This way can be very effective if every school has already known and provide the media based on IT for teaching and learning activity. Learn English can be fun if we not only implement the old method without any brand new idea and creativity to teach English. It is also important to understand the learner (high school students) that they also want an update and enjoyable way to learn.

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http://www.quia.com/shared/

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http://www.kinglishschool.com

http://www.languagegames.org/