

**NO PRESSURE, JUST PROGRESS: LET THEM FORGET THEY ARE
LEARNING**

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Abstract

This thesis examines effective ways of teaching English to preschool and early primary school learners through play-based activities in a pressure-free learning environment. It focuses on the “Let Them Forget They Are Learning” approach, which enables children to acquire language naturally through games, role-play, storytelling, creative tasks, and Total Physical Response (TPR) activities. The thesis highlights the importance of reducing academic pressure, avoiding excessive correction, and creating a safe and supportive classroom environment to develop children's vocabulary, speaking skills, communication abilities, and self-confidence. It emphasizes that meaningful, enjoyable, and interactive learning experiences can encourage young learners to participate actively and use English more confidently in real-life communication.

Keywords: young learners, English language teaching, play-based learning, hidden learning, pressure-free learning, Total Physical Response (TPR), language acquisition.

Introduction

This thesis explores how English can be taught to preschool children and early primary school learners through playful, engaging, and meaningful activities without pressure or strict academic expectations. The main idea is to help children learn English naturally through methods that allow them to enjoy the learning process while developing essential language skills without even realizing that they are learning. When children feel free, safe, engaged, and successful, and are unaware that they are doing “serious learning,” they are more likely to demonstrate their full potential. In such an environment, they can begin to acquire English in a way similar to how they acquired their mother tongue.

Children are often afraid of making mistakes or being reprimanded by their teachers. When excessive pressure and responsibilities are placed on them, their emotional well-being and attitudes toward learning may be negatively affected. Although young children can memorize vocabulary relatively easily due to their strong

receptive memory abilities, they may hesitate to use the language in real communication and overcome language barriers when speaking. Constantly correcting their mistakes and evaluating them negatively from an early age can undermine their self-confidence and willingness to communicate. Preschool and primary school learners need less pressure and more meaningful opportunities to learn English and use it in practice. Therefore, this thesis discusses how teachers can introduce young learners to the world of English effectively through games, enjoyable activities, and a relaxed learning environment.

Methodology

This practice-based study draws on classroom experience with primary school learners. It explores the use of play-based activities, pair work, storytelling, visual materials, gift-giving, and positive reinforcement to support the development of English-speaking skills. Small gifts, rewards, and encouraging feedback are used to motivate learners, create a positive classroom atmosphere, and encourage active participation. The approach aims to reduce speaking anxiety and help pupils develop confidence, fluency, and natural communication through enjoyable and meaningful learning experiences.

Discussion and Results

The philosophy behind the concept of “Let Them Forget They Are Learning” does not mean that teachers should abandon their learning objectives. Instead, teachers carefully design learning experiences while allowing children to experience them as play, discovery, communication, challenges, celebrations, or adventures. This approach can be based on the principle of **hidden learning**, in which educational objectives are achieved through activities that children perceive as enjoyable rather than formal lessons.

The following examples illustrate how hidden learning can be implemented:

- **Playing games:** Children believe they are simply playing, while they are actually learning new vocabulary and sentence structures.
- **Completing challenge-based tasks:** Children complete challenges while developing problem-solving abilities and communication skills.
- **Exchanging or giving gifts:** Through these activities, children develop speaking skills, learn to use social expressions, and become emotionally engaged in the learning process.
- **Participating in role-play activities:** Children practice natural conversations and gradually develop their ability to communicate in English.

- **Competing with friends:** Friendly competitions encourage quick vocabulary recall, strengthen language retention, and help children expand their vocabulary.
- **Creating something:** Creative activities promote imagination, collaboration, and experiential language learning, allowing children to engage with the language actively.
- **Telling stories:** Storytelling helps improve speaking fluency, develop confidence, and encourage children to express their ideas in English.
- **Participating in Total Physical Response (TPR) games:** These activities help expand children's vocabulary while keeping them physically active. By combining movement with language learning, TPR games make lessons more enjoyable, reduce boredom, and create a healthy and dynamic learning environment.



Model A



Model B

Through these approaches, teachers can create meaningful learning experiences in which children develop English language skills naturally, confidently, and enjoyably, without feeling overwhelmed by formal academic expectations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, teaching English to preschool and early primary school learners requires a child-centered approach that prioritizes enjoyment, emotional well-being, and meaningful communication rather than academic pressure. The “Let Them Forget They Are Learning” philosophy demonstrates that effective language learning can take place when children are actively involved in enjoyable activities without feeling that they are participating in formal lessons. Games, role-play, storytelling, creative tasks, friendly competitions, and Total Physical Response (TPR) activities provide valuable

opportunities for children to acquire vocabulary, practice sentence structures, and develop speaking and communication skills naturally.

Moreover, creating a safe and supportive classroom environment helps reduce children's fear of making mistakes and encourages them to communicate with greater confidence. Instead of constantly correcting errors or focusing primarily on memorization, teachers should provide meaningful opportunities for interaction, exploration, and language use. Therefore, combining play-based learning with carefully planned educational objectives can make English lessons more engaging, effective, and appropriate for young learners. Ultimately, when children enjoy the learning process, they become more motivated to participate, develop positive attitudes toward English, and build a strong foundation for future language learning.

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