Teaching Young Learners (6-7 Years) Grammar Using Montessori Method

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ABSTRACT

This exploratory action research article overviews the implementation of using the Montessori method in teaching young learners experienced by the 15 students of the 39th school in Namangan region and its conclusions.

Problem statement.

Any language must have grammar. It's crucial to provide students the freedom to establish clear concepts, convey their thoughts, and do so effectively. Learning grammar is a crucial component of learning English. It serves as the basis for speaking and comprehending English. To use English properly, learners need to be aware of its grammar rules.

The Montessori method is a pedagogical system in which the child develops independently while relying on a didactically prepared environment. Montessori pedagogy is based on the ideas of free education and the natural psychological, social, and physical development of the child. The Montessori approach is applied in language teaching also. and a main focus of this research is the Montessori in grammar.

The key principle of the Montessori method is "Help me do it myself." It implies that the adult understands what the child is interested in, provides him with a basis for interesting activities, and teaches him to use it. (Maria Montessori,1912) [7]

Teaching grammar using The Montessori method involves using a plethora of word cards, symbols, and figures which makes the lesson more interesting.

This article based on Exploratory action research will discuss the implementation of the Montessori method in teaching grammar to elementary school children and share the experience, and findings. results with the readers.

This research is focused on some classroom problems that the author faced during the classes:

1. Students found learning grammar difficult and boring.

2. Students' performances in different types of grammar activities were low.

3. Students were not engaged in the class when the teacher explained the grammar.

According to the research focus the following research questions were set:

1. What challenges do I see when I teach grammar to young learners?

2. Which tools can help my learners understand the grammar well?

3. What kind of grammar activities do my learners like?

4. What is my current grammar teaching method?

Various types of data collection tools were used such as informal discussions with my colleagues and students, teacher's reflection, google form questionnaires for colleagues, and observations by colleagues.

Studies of Montessori have been done by many researchers all over the world. This approach has been used in many different functions, the writer has chosen some of them, which were studies written by; Dorer[4], Biswas- Diener [3], Bathan-Olano [2], Feez [6], Bagby [1], Sri Handayani [8], and Cauller [4]. From those studies, the writer is able to learn, investigate, and compare one to the others in order to broaden her knowledge about the Montessori approach.

Method and Data

In order to conduct this exploratory study, both qualitative and quantitative techniques were used. The researcher herself gathered primary data through surveys, observations, and experiments carried out during the session. To establish cause and effect, the researcher conducted an experimental study, manipulating and controlling factors. The researcher used survey questions she had written for the school's teachers and pupils to gather data. By collecting the data from colleagues and students the researcher came up with the idea that students liked to learn grammar if it is in an interesting way, but the teacher's current grammar teaching method was inappropriate for the students. It was a little bit hard and a traditional method of using monotonous rules and difficult activities. So the decision was to change the method and the researcher decided to try the Montessori method in 1 month-time and analyze the results. The experience period was divided into 4 weeks schedule.

Week 1. (1-2 lessons). Plural nouns were explained using different classroom items and word cards. For instance: the teacher puts one pen and a word card where the word pen is written near she puts 2 pens and a word card with the plural form of the item. This activity is called a singular and plural box [9].

Week 2. (3-4 lessons). Simple sentence structure was explained with the help of Montessori figures and word cards teacher explained the place of the parts of speech and their functions.

Week 3. (5-6 lessons). The adjectives were taught using Montessori figures, various types of items, and word cards with adjectives and nouns. The teacher here explained the function and the place of the adjectives. [9]

Week 4. (7-8 lessons) Students had a revision of all 3 topics and a progress test was taken.

Students had an opportunity to choose how to complete the activities in this period if they wanted they worked in groups, in pairs, and individually.

Finding Statement

At the end of the experience period, a progress test was taken from the learners in order to

compare the results and see whether they had progressed in their studies. A table of the progress tests' results before and after using the Montessori method was created by the teacher and compared thoroughly. Before 3 (20%) out of 15 students got 86 and more scores, 8(53%) students got 70-86 scores and 4(26%) students' results were less than 70 scores. After implementing the Montessori method the results noticeably increased by 8 (53%) students who got 86 and more scores, 7(46%) students who got 70-86 scores, and none in the less than 70 scores list.

2 colleagues were asked to observe the lessons and give feedback.

They told that they liked the method it is proving its effectiveness and suggested applying the method not only for grammar but to improve vocabulary and writing skills as well. they noticed that students tended to study for getting marks but after using this method their aim became to learn a language. The teacher encouraged the students to care for the classroom materials they use in class, to put them in the right place, help each other if their peers need it. so by this, they learned to be independent, respect each other, and develop strong friendship skills

Key Conclusions and Contributions

The last step of the Exploratory action research was to collect all the data, results, and surveys from students and observers and analyze them. It was found that the implementation of the Montessori method helped students to improve and develop:

- ✓ motivation to learn a Foreign Language;

- ✓ interest in learning with the help of the figures, items, and word cards;

- ✓ these word cards and items helped the learners to boost their vocabulary;

- ✓ feeling of independence; in Montessori classes, the students themselves choose how to work (group work, individual work, or pairwork)

Concluding all the work which was done to complete the Exploratory action research, we can state that the Montessori approach proved its effectiveness despite it being more than 100 years old. It was proved that this method is suitable for all types of learning styles (visual, kinaesthetic, auditory and read/write), which means it fits any learners at any age. Before the action phase, it is obvious that students had trouble with their English grammar, they could not perform well in the tests their results were low, and because of this, they did not like the grammar topics they had. We see from after action Phase that the teacher's step-by-step work achieved high results. First, students became interested in the learning process. Second, they were given the opportunity and freedom to choose how to complete the activities. Third, they developed strong friendship skills and a feeling of equality among their peers as the teacher did not divide them into good and bad students by putting marks.

Exploring a classroom helps teachers to understand what kind of issues they have in the class, find the reason, and search the decision for them. It also helps to understand learners' needs and provide them with necessary and proper knowledge in the best way.

This research will be useful for the teachers of elementary schools, especially for those who work with elementary school learners, and who want to make the classes more living.

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