

Extracurricular Activities as Warm-Ups in Language Teaching

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Abstract: This article aims to discover and offer the doctrine on why ECAs should be considered as warm up activities, when they should be conducted as warm up activities, which type of learning skills can be applied during the English language teaching process by emphasizing on the relations between ECAs as warm-up activities and repetitions and whether warm-ups and repetitions are both really close conceptions as scientific terms or not. Furthermore, the relation between memory and repetition will be demonstrated.

Keywords: Extracurricular Activities, Repetitions, Warm Up Activities, Memory

1. Introduction

As it is difficult to motivate students in whole period of lesson time some techniques are essential to be used. Extracurricular activities can be a good remedy in teaching a language. They can be implemented within the school curriculum or outside the classroom. The widespread assumption is that maximum concentration for an adult learner in a lesson is just 20 minutes. After that, he/she can fly in mind or can't get her/his head ahead. To sustain concentration of learners it is inevitable and necessary to do repetitions at the beginning, in the middle or at the end of the lessons using extracurricular activities such as playing vocabulary games in groups, crosswords on the smart board, listening to a song with lyrics and singing whole class together and so on. We indicate that three concepts are greatly important to understand the value of extracurricular activities as warm-up: warm up, repetition and memory.

2. Literature Review

The issue that constitutes our paper is interrelation between ECAs as warm-ups and repetition. Orhan (2015) stresses the significance of repetition and states that "one of the matter of successful and effective learning is to repeat the topics on the same day that is learned. Making solutions with no repetitions are far from the expected benefits" (p.1). He stressed the significance of repetition. However, the difference between warm up activities and repetition should be well deciphered. It is claimed that all warm up activities should be the repetition of yesterday's topic. To some extent it is true because one should link the previous lesson to the current lesson so that he/she makes the subject well apprehensible. Moreover, some educators say that warm up activities should be organized at the beginning of the class. Sanchez(1999) adds that "beginning-of-class warm up is a great way to start class. Students need the teacher to catch their attention from the first moment he or she enters in the classroom" (p.1). In Oxford dictionary (2009) warm up is defined as "a period or act of preparation for a game, performance, or exercise session, involving gentle exercise or practice". Atchison (1994) defines repetition as "the act or instance of repeating or being repeated" (p.15).

Related to benefits of the extracurricular activities as warm up activities, a language teacher should use entertaining materials because they prompt the students to relax and motivate. Warm-up activities are essential to get people talking and to create a relaxed and open online atmosphere (Hampel & Hauck, 2009).

Warm-up activities are a part of learning process which encourage and support all type of language learning skills by means of repetition. Gass et al., (1999) states that “task repetition results in improvement in overall proficiency, selected morph syntax, and lexical sophistication” (p.6). Yildiz (2013) expresses that, “being effective and constant on something benefits to developing of spirit, satisfaction of heart and wake of feelings. For instance, in order to learn Quran and not to forget it, repetition is very important”. Some phrases and proverbs which are commonly used in everyday language such as ‘repetition is the mother of language’ and ‘practice makes perfect’ highlight the importance of repetition in learning process. In this context, it is inferred that language drills and practice play significant role in teaching and learning process and this can be provided by extracurricular activities. One of the points about repetition is to express the key points of the issue that was taught priorly from different perspectives using various elements to support. In other words, a lecturer tells the same subject in different periods of time using a wide variety of elements in order to enhance the subject and entertain the students. Literature resources and religious books may be seen quite repetitive about narrating a story but they actually are not. They are given to readers in different words and various examples. Gulen (2014) points out that “the stories are mentioned in the Qur'an and Bible for various occasions. When the matter is mentioned with its aspect each time, the matter is expressed according to aspect of the matter” (p.88). More and more repetition is a process that words and grammar are being converted to speech. A child apparently modifies his operational grammar to approximate the adult speech he hears rather than simply repeating parrot-like (Holley & King, 1971).

Looking from the memory perspective, it can be said that the more students repeat, the more lexical- and semantic knowledge they learn and the more lexical knowledge they learn the better call (memory) they own. Casalini et al., (2007) says that “the effects of lexical-semantic knowledge on verbal STM recalls result in better performance for high versus low frequency and image ability words, and for words versus non-words” (p.8). In addition, Kinoshita (1995) states the importance role of memory within education saying; “word frequency is a variable that has a reliable effect on recognition memory tests: Low-frequency words are recognized better than high-frequency words” (p.1). However, he states the reliability of word frequency and draws attention to memory and repetition. Guthercole et al., (1994) also indicates the relation between repetition and working memory.

3. Result

Using extracurricular activities as warm-up activities language teachers can raise the awareness of the topic, activate pre-existing knowledge of language, relax and motivate students. Language teachers and learners might think that warm-ups are arranged only at the beginning of the lessons but they can be set during and at the end of the lesson as well because they help students concentrate on the lesson at different times. The activities should be between 5 to 15 minutes and they should be planned before the lessons. By means of interesting, educating and thought-provoking activities lessons can be more motivating and fun. Subsequently, students get interested in the class to interact with their lecturers and classmates.

Taking all literature sources into account, we advise all language teachers to use an extracurricular activities as warm-up while teaching because warm-up stage is a process to enhance students' downstream target-language comprehension and performance in a specific lesson.

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