Effectiveness of Language Games in Learning English Grammar

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Abstract

Grammar is the structural foundation of any language and it empowers the learner's communicative ability. The more we are aware of how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use the language. Grammar can help foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English. But our students hesitate to learn English Grammar. Young learners love to play and they participate in a game with more enthusiasm and willingness than in any other classroom task. Children in general learn better when they are active. If games are properly designed, they may become an excellent and essential part of children's learning programme. It also helps every teacher of English in making the teaching learning process more effective and entertaining. This paper aimed at finding the effectiveness of language games in learning English grammar. The data analysis results reveal evidently the significance of language games in teaching English Grammar.

Introduction

Donn Byrne (1976), one of the noted writers, has emphasized the importance of language games and Communicative Competence in English, in his practical hand book entitled Teaching Oral English argues that games provide not only a welcome break in the lesson routine, but also form an integral part at both the practice and production stages of learning. Jane Ellis (1984) in her book, Teaching English through English - A course in classroom language and teachings, feels that games should provide some light hearted fun and entertainment. Adrian

Doff (1988) in his trainer's handbook entitled Teach English - A training course for teachers, emphasizes the importance of games in English Language Teaching.

'Language learning is a hard task which can sometimes be frustrating. Constant effort is required to understand, produce and manipulate the target language. Well-chosen games are invaluable as they give students a break and at the same time allow students to practice language skills. Games are highly motivating since they are amusing and at the same time challenging. They also encourage and Increase cooperation. Using games is one of the most important ways to teach efficiently in a language class. Nothing is more fun than playing games for children because they feel happy and free while playing. We adults even remember the games that we played in our childhood which seem to be the happiest moments in our life. We can't deny the importance of games. If students learn with games that provide fun, happiness and freedom, it means that the teacher have reached his goals. Games strengthen language skills. Also learners develop social skills and good relationships while they interact with each other. Every game that students play, is much more useful than tons of exercises and worksheets that gives more positive results than anything else. Generally group games are more useful. They are competitive and children come closer with each other. With the feeling of coming first they often have a look at their books or notebooks before a game. Giving small prizes and rewards motivates the children to a great extent Sometimes it is necessary to mix the groups during a game so they can play with different ones. Using games is an efficient way to teach English in the classroom. It arise students' motivation. Games prepare young learners for life and they acquire positive social attitudes. So this kind of learning is lasting.

Grammar is the structural foundation of our ability to express ourselves. The more we are aware of   how it works, the more we can monitor the meaning and effectiveness of the way we and others use the language. It can help foster precision, detect ambiguity, and exploit the richness of expression available in English. And it can help every teacher of English in making learning more effective and entertaining. But our students hesitate to learn English Grammar. Language Games are a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class. They are motivating and challenging. Learning grammar requires a great deal of effort. Games help students to make and sustain the effort of learning .Games encourage

students to interact and communicate. They create a meaningful context for language use.'

Statement of the Problem

Good teaching always aims at the arousal of interest, effective communication and appropriate learning out comes. So method of teaching English grammar along with games can be more effective and useful. Therefore, the present study had been under taken with a view of finding out the Effectiveness of language games in learning English grammar among VI standard students.

Objectives of the Study

- To develop and validate language games for learning grammar among middle school students.
- To find out the effectiveness of language games in learning English grammar among middle school students

Hypotheses

1. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of control groups.
2. There is no significant difference between the pre-test and post-test scores of the experimental groups.
3. There is no significant difference between the pre-tests of control group and experimental group.
4. There is no significant difference between the posts-tests of control group and experimental group.

Development of Language Game

The language game on the topic noun and verb developed by the investigator for this study is comprised of seven items such as crosswords, identifying, matching, searching, guessing and listing which are all suitable for sixth standard students. Time frame procedure has been followed. Language game, thus prepared was shown to twelve experts in the field of English Education for their opinion. Almost all the experts provided high rating for the language game.

Population and Sample

School students studying VI standard of Coimbatore District is the population for the study and 60 students studying in Government Middle School, Chavadi is taken as sample. Simple random sampling technique has been employed. The sixty students were divided into two groups (i.e) control group and experimental group

on the basis of their quarterly examination scores. Each group comprised of 30 students.

Design of the Study

In this study the pretest posttest parallel group design experimental method was adopted. The control group and experimental group were taught English Grammar by using the conventional method and language games respectively. The investigator administrated pre – test for both control and experimental group students. Experimental group was given treatment through the language games and the control group was taught as traditional method of teaching grammar for six weeks. After the treatment is over, the post-test was conducted for both control and experimental groups. Finally, the collected data was tabulated and analysed statistically.

Tools

In this study, the following research tools were developed.

- Language games were developed and validated by the investigator in learning nouns and verbs in English grammar among VI standard school students.
- Criterion Reference Test (CRT) was constructed and validated by conducting pilot study.

Data Analysis

In the present study, the relevant data obtained from test scores have been tabulated and analysed. Mean and standard deviation were calculated to determine the central tendencies and dispersion of variables through descriptive analysis. The value of 't'- test were calculated to determine the difference between the two groups.

Table-1 Significance of the mean score difference in pre-test and post-test scores of control group students.

Control Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	t-value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Pre-test	30	9.30	2.32			Significant
Post- test	30	11.00	2.75	29	2.5849	

From table-1 the calculated t-value is 2.5849.which is greater than the tabulated value (2.064). Hence hypothesis 1 is accepted at 0.05 level. This reveals that there is significant mean score difference between pre-test and post-test of control group in learning grammar through conventional method.

Table-2 Significance of the mean score difference in pre-test and post-test scores of experimental group students.

Experimental Group	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	t-value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Pre-test	30	11.70	2.04	29	19.2825	Significant
Post- test	30	19.63	0.96			

Table 2 shows that the calculated t-value is 19.2825. This is greater than the table value (2.064). Hence hypothesis 2 is accepted at 0.05 level. This reveals that there is significant mean score difference between pre-test and post-test of experimental group in learning grammar through language games

Table-3 Significance mean score difference in pre-tests of control group and experimental group students

Pre-tests	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	t-value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Control group	30	9.30	2.32	29	4.2564	Significant
Experimental group	30	11.70	2.04			

From table 4 the calculated t-value is 4.2564.whoch is greater than the table value (2.064). Hence hypothesis 4 is accepted at 0.05 level. This reveals that there is significant mean score difference between the pre-tests of control group and experimental group in learning grammar.

Table-4 Significance of the mean score difference in post-tests of control group and experimental group students.

Post-tests	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	t-value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Control group	30	11.0	2.75	29	16.2039	Significant
Experimental group	30	19.63	0.96			

From table 5 the calculated t-value is 16.2039 which is greater than the table value (2.064). Hence hypothesis 4 is accepted at 0.05 level. This reveals that there is significant mean score difference between the post-tests of control group and experimental group in learning grammar. Language games motivate the students and help them retain their knowledge. There is a significant relationship between the control group and experimental group in learning grammar among middle school students.

Table-5 Significance of the gain Mean score difference between the control and experimental group students.

Gain Mean Score	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	Df	t-value	Level of significance at 0.05 level
Control Group	30	2.67	2.31	29	9.5152	Significant
Experimental Group	30	7.93	1.96			

Table 3 reveals the mean gain score of control group is 2.67 and the standard deviation is 2.31. The mean gain score of experimental group is 7.93 and the standard deviation is 1.96.   The calculated t-value is 9.5152. This is greater than the table value (2.064). Hence hypothesis 3 is accepted at 0.05 level. This reveals that there is significant mean score difference in the gain score between the post-test of control group and experimental group in learning grammar. The data analysis results reveal evidently the significance of language games in teaching English Grammar. Thus it is found that teaching grammar through language game is very much effective than teaching grammar through conventional method.

Results and Discussion

'Many experienced textbook and methodology manuals writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value. W. R. Lee holds that most language games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms (1979:2). He also says that games should be treated as central not peripheral to the foreign language teaching programme. They also enable learners to acquire new experiences within a foreign language which are not always possible during a typical lesson. Furthermore, to quote Richard-Amato, "language games add diversion to the regular classroom activities and they are used to introduce new ideas" In the easy, relaxed atmosphere which is created by using games, students remember things faster and better (Wierus and Wierus 1994:218). S. M. Silvers says many teachers are enthusiastic about using games as "a teaching device," yet they often perceive games as mere time-fillers, "a break from the monotony of drilling" or frivolous activities.

Conclusion

          'Games encourage, entertain, teach, and promote fluency. If not for any of these reasons, they should be used just because they help students see beauty in a foreign language and not just problems that at times seem overwhelming..'The British Council helps English teachers by providing books and materials on language games to those interested. They also conduct workshops on language games frequently for teachers at different levels. It offers valuable training to teachers in the different in the language teaching learning process. Obviously, there are a lot of other sources, such as pictures and stories. Pictures serve as a visual stimulus, while games use both visual and aural channels and activate language production. The more variety we can introduce into teaching, the more likely we are to meet the needs of all.

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