



“Fixing the Fox’ Tail!” – To Learn and Practice, ‘Question Tags’ at the Secondary Level

KEYWORDS

GAMES: According to Hadfield (1999) “A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun... Games should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus, not as an amusing activity for Friday afternoon or for the end of the term”

This definition highly evaluates the importance of games in teaching. It adds to teachers’ techniques in teaching that games serve not only as an ‘amusing activity’, but as a technique to carry out tasks to learners amusingly as well.

TO PRACTICE: Teachers after their usual traditional method of teaching grammar lessons, drill students through exercises. These exercises are given on what he/she has learnt. These exercises are usually found at the back of each grammar lesson called ‘the book back exercises’. But here, it is our innovative games which are self –developed and are used for practice to gain thorough knowledge by playing in teams. This turns to be a healthy competition, binding a social relationship amongst them.

SECONDARY LEVEL: Students studying from 8th to 10th fall under this category called ‘Secondary level’. The investigator has taken the 8th std students as the sample group for the study and they are under the age group 13-14.

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ABSTRACT *In the present study effectiveness of games in teaching and learning English Grammar Proficiency was investigated. Pre-test post-test equivalent groups design was adopted to a sample of 60 secondary school students. It is found that the experimental group shows significant difference in their English grammar Proficiency while learning through games.*

Introduction

Many learners do make comments that grammar classes are boring and monotonous. To bring a shift to this, the investigator self- developed an innovative and creative game which can be implemented on any kind of platform. These games can be conducted by using few models which are made out of few low cost materials like: pen, paper, chart papers, markers, etc. Normally for practicing, we include different types of exercises that are found back of each grammar lesson. And here, on this platform, we have games to practise grammar after each grammar lesson. By doing this, the children are with an impression that they are made to learn grammar thoroughly in the exam point of view than to develop any extra interest for learning the grammar items. Games may relieve children from the boredom of routine types of exercises which are out rightly pedantic. Language games, like other physical games, would create a healthy competitive spirit. Riedel (2008) emphasises the advantage of games in improving learners’ achievement, “we are teaching a new generation of students, which requires unconventional teaching strategy be put into practice in the classroom. And when schools use the games, the student benefits, to speak for themselves- a greater desire to learn and higher test scores.”

2. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To prepare instructional materials which consists of language games such as ‘FIXING THE FOX’ TAIL’ to enhance learning grammar of the secondary level pupils in ‘Question tags’
- To implement the instructional materials for the experimental group.
- To find out the significant difference in the English grammar proficiency of the experimental and control group in the pre stage with respect to Question Tags..
- To find out the significant difference in the English gram-

mar proficiency of the experimental and control group in the post stage with respect to Question Tags..

- To find out the significant difference in the English grammar proficiency of the experimental group in the pre and post stage with respect to Question Tags..
- To find out the significant difference in the English grammar proficiency of the control group in the pre and post stage with respect to Question Tags..

3. Hypotheses of the Study

- “there is no effectiveness in games for grammar learning over conventional grammar teaching and learning method”
- “There is no significant difference in English grammar proficiency between the experimental group and control group in the pre- stage with respect to ‘Question Tags’.”
- “There is significant difference in English grammar proficiency of the experimental group Versus the control group in the post stage with respect to ‘Question Tags’.”
- “There is a significant difference in the English grammar proficiency of the experimental group in pre and post stage with respect to ‘Question Tags’.”
- “There is a significant difference in the English Grammar Proficiency of the control group in the pre and post stage with respect to ‘Question Tags’.”

4. METHODOLOGY

Pre-test-Post Test Equivalent Groups Design is adopted in the study

➤ SAMPLE

The 8th standard pupils in a Government Higher Secondary School, Mettupalayam, Coimbatore district of Tamil Nadu was selected based on the ‘Convenience Sampling Technique’. This is due to the invigilator’s convenience to go to this school in order to make a frequent visit to handle and to

give remedial change for the selected experimental group. The total strength belongs to sections A, B, C & D (n=60) and were divided as A & B (n=30) sections for experimental group, and C & D (n=30) sections for control group. The samples were divided randomly as control and experimental group by numbering 1 and 2.

TOOL

The main objective of the investigation is to enhance the learning of English grammar through games and for which the following tools were employed.

1. Pre and post-test questionnaire (self-developed)

Module Preparation:

The self-developed, low cost materials were used for executing the Intervention strategy with eye-catching models that were used for the intervention programme to be conducted for the Experimental group

ADMINISTRATIVE PROCEDURE

The investigator selected the grammar entity, 'Question Tags' from the prescribed Tamil Nadu Text Book Society. Specially designed activity focused on language games were prepared by the investigator as an interventional strategy. Low cost materials were used for the interventional programme to promote learning grammar. Initially, Pre-test was administered to the total sample (Control and Experimental group) by using the achievement test as a tool for assessment. The investigator consumed a period of two weeks for the intervention programme

CONTROL GROUP

(Total Periods: 10 periods (2 weeks) in the forenoon sessions)

Total hours: 900 minutes

WEEKS	Pre- planned Schedule for FOUR full weeks	
First	Participant recruitment, orientation and consent from parents were carried out. Tools given for jury opinion	
Second	Preparation of material and planning for the Conventional method of teaching	
	Grammar units	CONVENTIONAL METHOD OF TEACHING FORENOON SESSION
Third & Fourth	QUESTION TAGS	Positive Statements- Negative tags Negative statements- Positive tags Hidden verb- (10 days)
	POST - TEST	Fifth day of the last week

4 weeks in the Afternoon sessions

WEEKS	Intervention Programme	
	Grammar units	Language games for
1 st and 2 nd Weeks	QUESTION TAGS	For the first one period –knowledge was brushed up in order to recapitulate what was already learnt about 'Question Tags' (Positive Statements- Negative tags & Negative statements- Positive tags along with the Hidden verbs also,) before introducing the games to the experimental group - Related language game 'Fixing the fox' tail' was executed in the class (10 days)
	POST – TEST	Last one period of the 10 th day

INTERVENTION PROGRAMME

Periods for Intervention: 10 periods in the Afternoon sessions.

Total hours: 900 minutes

(9 periods for games and 1 period for the post –test)

Practicing Grammar (Tags) Through Games

Game: "Fixing the Fox' Tail ..."

Instruction Given:

The game for the Question Tags starts in order to practice or recapitulate the previous knowledge. For this the game named as, "Fixing the Fox' Tail" was conducted.. The sample for the study was 30 who were divided as 15 for each team. The investigator used a big picture of a tail- less fox fixed on a flannel board. Using pink colour chart paper, a number of tails were finely cut and kept in a basket beside the board on the table. The tail- less fox was labelled with the statement which is the question for the right tag was inserted on its torso-ventral side within the two slits. The student who represents the team comes forward, reads the labelled statement and searches for the exact tag (tail) from the tag basket. Like this , the student scores a point if he fix' the right tail (tag) for the tail- less fox within the time allotted (60 seconds) failing, the player was out of game with zero scoring. The investigator stood as a referee of the game to decide the winner. The pupils enjoy while fixing the tail to the fox. This goes on till a team completes 10-15 sentences alternatively. The team won was appreciated with a big applause.

5. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

TABLE-1:

ENGLISH GRAMMAR ROFICIENCY OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP AND CONTROL GROUP PUPILS IN THE PRE-ASSESSMENT STAGE with regard to 'QUESTION TAGS'

Grammar Units	Experimental group		Control group		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Question tags	2.56	1.22	1.93	1.59	1.72 (NS)

NS: Not significant

Table value 0.01 level=2.75

From the table 1, it was inferred that the obtained 't' values 1.72 of 'Question Tags', respectively are found to be not significant. It means that there was no significant difference between both groups at the pre stage. **Thus the hypothesis stated, "there is no significant difference in English grammar proficiency between the experimental group and control group in the pre- stage with respect to Question Tags", is accepted.** The result shows that there is no significant difference between both the groups at the pre stage level.

FIGURE-I

BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING THE MEAN VALUE OF DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE PRE-ASSESSMENT STAGE

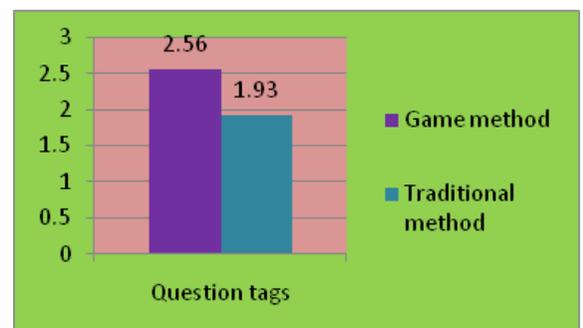


TABLE-2
MEAN, SD AND 't' VALUE OF DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE POST- ASSESSMENT STAGE

Grammar Units	Game method group		Traditional method group		t value
	Mean	STD	Mean	STD	
Question tags	5.53	1.61	2.16	1.08	9.48**

**Significant a 0.01 level
Table value 0.05 level=2.75

From the table 2, it was inferred that the obtained 't' value, 9.48** of 'Question Tags' is found to be significant at 0.01 level. It means that there was significant difference between the mean scores of the two groups at the post-stage level. Thus the hypothesis stated, "there is significant difference in English grammar proficiency of the experimental group Vs the control group in the post stage with respect to Question Tags" is accepted. Resulting that there was a vast significant difference between both the groups at the post stage level and it can be concluded that the Game method of learning and practicing the grammar units is more effective. It was statistically proved to be the best method to learn grammar than the traditional way of teaching and learning.

FIGURE-2
BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING THE MEAN VALUE OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR PROFICIENCY OF DIFFERENT GROUPS IN THE POST-ASSESSMENT STAGE

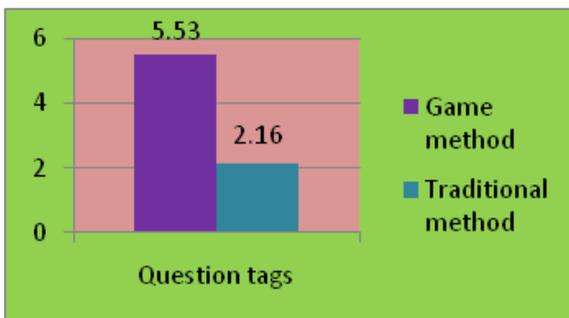


TABLE – 3: DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE PRE AND POST TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP with regard to Question Tags

Grammar Units	Pre Test		Post Test		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Question tags	2.57	1.22	5.53	1.61	9.97**

** Significant at 0.01 level
Table value 0.05 level=2.76

From the table 6, it was learnt that the obtained't' value of 'Question Tags' is 9.97, which is found to be significant at 0.01 level. It means that there was significant difference between the pre- test and the post- test scores of the experimental group. Thus the stated hypothesis, "there is a significant difference in the English grammar proficiency of the experimental group in pre and post stage with respect to Question Tags" is accepted. As a result, it was statistically concluded that the post test scores of the experimental group have risen very high when compared with the pre- test scores. This proves that learning and practicing English grammar through game method is effective statistically.

FIGURE-III
BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING THE MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRE AND POST TEST SCORES OF THE EXPERIMENTAL GROUP with regard to Question tags

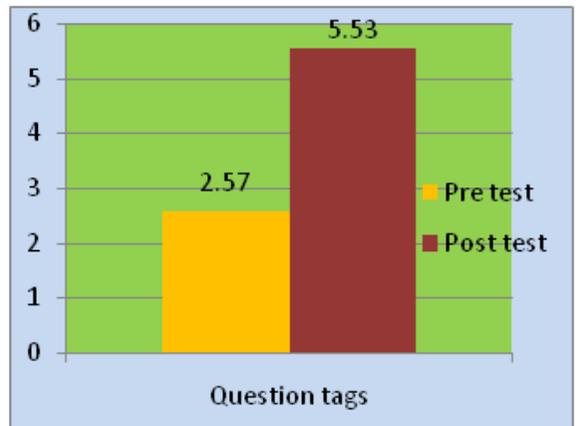


TABLE-4: THE PRE AND POST TEST SCORES OF 'Question Tags' OF THE CONTROL GROUP

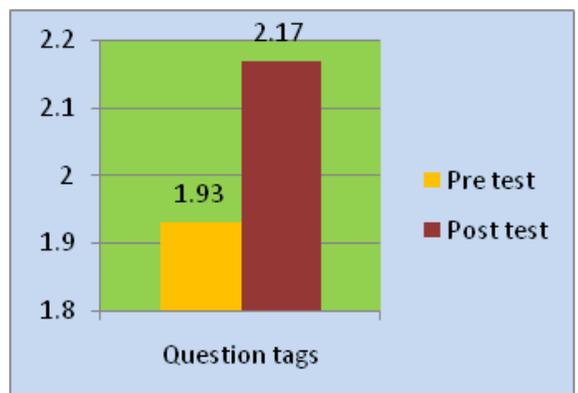
Table value-0.05 level=2.76

NS: not significant

Grammar Units	Pre test		Post test		t value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Question tags	1.93	1.60	2.17	1.08	1.07 (NS)

Table 7 shows the obtained 't' value of Question Tags is 1.07 (NS) and found to be not significant. It means that there was no significant difference between the pre- test and the post test scores of the control group. Thus the stated hypothesis, " there is a significant difference in the English Grammar Proficiency of the control group in the pre and post stage with respect to Question Tags" is rejected. It can be concluded that even though there was a meagre raise in the mean scores of the control group, it was not statistically significant. Thus the traditional method of teaching and learning are statistically insignificant.

FIGURE-4
BAR DIAGRAM SHOWING THE MEAN DIFFERENCES BETWEEN THE PRE AND POST TEST SCORES OF CONTROL GROUP FOR Question Tags only.



Findings of the study

- Grammar learning games proved to be more effective over conventional grammar learning method in learning the English grammar units taken for the study

- There was no significant difference between the experimental group and the control group in the pre stage and it was proved statistically that both the groups are equivalent in the English grammar proficiency before treatment. Thus, this shows that the game method of learning and practicing the grammar units (5 units) as a whole was statistically significant and **much effective**
- No significant difference in English grammar proficiency was found between the experimental group and control group in the pre- stage with respect to the grammar unit, **'Question Tags'**.
- There was a vast significant difference between both the groups at **the post stage level** and it can be concluded that the grammar learning games for learning and practicing the grammar units such as **'Question tags'** was more effective. It was statistically proved to be the best method to learn grammar than the traditional way of teaching and learning
- The post test scores of the Experimental group have risen very high when compared with the pre-test scores. This proves that learning and practicing English grammar through grammar learning games was effective statistically.
- There was a meagre raise in the mean scores of the Control group, it was not statistically significant. Thus the traditional method of teaching and learning are statistically insignificant.

REFERENCE

Riedle,C., (2008). Web 2.0: helping reinvent education. Available at <http://www.thejournal.com/articles/21907>