Perception of English Teachers in Using Language Games

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ABSTRACT

Games provide language practice in all four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. The learners understand better when they are active. They encourage students to interact and communicate. They create a meaningful context for language use. If games are properly designed, they may help in making the teaching-learning process more effective. The objective of this paper is to identify the perception of English language teachers in using language games in second language teaching. The investigators prepared a self-made tool to identify the Perception of English Teachers in using Language Games. The sample selected for this study is the English teachers. The tool is shared with them as a G-form. Percentage analysis and t-tests are used for statistical analysis.

Keywords: Language games, CLT approach, Perception, English teachers, teaching tool, classroom, mixed-methods, qualitative, quantitative, benefits, challenges, student engagement, motivation, pedagogical practices, learner outcomes.

Introduction

Teachers for centuries have been using games as a learning tool to give a break from routine in their classrooms. Frobel in his introduction to the kindergarten in the 1800s introduces learning through play. The basics of game-based learning are teaching through repetition and practice using fun-filled activities. The result of game-based learning is active participation instead of passive listening. When a student learns through games he or she becomes the owner of learning and this improves the retention of learning content. Games provide a safe environment for students to try out new things. It is exciting for students and at the same time, they learn different concepts easily. Teachers meet with diverse learners in the classroom and they have to use varied strategies to impart knowledge to them. John Dewey, Gardener, Vygotsky, Stephen Krashen and many other language and psychology experts supported adopting language games in ELT. We are born with innate capabilities which help us to acquire language (Chomsky, 1986). A child gets more exposure in acquiring a first language whereas hard work alone can develop the second language skills.

Learners get limited opportunities to practice the target language during school hours. Though some learners have a fundamental understanding of the target language yet they have an inhibition to use English in the real context. It is observed that learners can play and learn in the ESL classroom to enhance their language skills in the second language. Language learning in a Play-way Method or Game-based method is the most interactive one advocated by many researchers in which learners show an active interest in participating in the teaching-learning process (Froebel, 1837). Language games help to foster interest in learning the target language. They learn new items as well as practice new language forms and revise what has already been learnt.

Language games may be able to satisfy the four conditions of second language acquisition such as motivation, instruction, exposure and use (Willis, 1996).

Many teachers are of the opinion that using games in the language classroom is a waste of time. But, experience-based, project-based and game-based learning transform a simple activity into an opportunity for language learning. In such classrooms, teachers become facilitators, guides, and helpers (Spruck-Wrigley, 1998). ESL teachers can use language games to meet the different learning styles of the learners. Language games are developed based on different types of intelligence and hence learners can apply their learning style to learn the target language using different language games.

Literature Review

Language games are part of the CLT approach for its characteristics that include learner-centredness, meaningful collaborative and interactive activities, the use of relevant and authentic materials, the focus on meaning and linguistic forms in context and also the roles of teachers as facilitators (Ngoc & Iwashita, 2012). Language games provide a platform for learners to communicate using the target grammar forms in a more interesting and authentic manner as supported by Ellis (2006, as cited in Alijanian, 2012) that "grammar is no more considered as meaningless, a context-independent set of rules prescribed about language forms but it is regarded with respect to communication" (p.415). In a wider context, when games are integrated with language lessons, it supports higher-order learning and thinking skills (HOTS) which are very important for learners to develop themselves as future professionals (Rahman &Bakar, 2018; Thirusanku &Yunus, 2014). Language games as a task-based language teaching (TBLT)

approach are designed to produce ESL learners who are able to use English in the real world, using the learned grammar forms in real-life communication (Willis & Willis, 2013) and participate effectively in society (Richards & Rodgers, 2014).

Game-based learning through the social constructivist lens stresses the interaction among players and games, which are socially constructed as students construct new knowledge in a social setting (Wu et al., 2011). Vygotsky (1978) wrote, "Play creates a zone of proximal development for the child. In the play, a child always behaves beyond his average age, above his daily behaviour." Woo (2014) explained that "Students use games to explore and ultimately construct concepts and relationships in authentic contexts. The concept of learning-by-doing comprises core constructivist principles that underlie game-based learning" (p. 293). Woo (2014) explained that "Students use games to explore and ultimately construct concepts and relationships in authentic contexts. The concept of learning-by-doing comprises core constructivist principles that underlie game-based learning" (p. 293).

OBJECTIVES

The objective of this paper is to identify the perception of English language teachers in using language games in second language teaching.

HYPOTHESIS

1. To find the percentage analysis of English teachers using language games in their classroom with respect to the following variables
- Level of teaching
- Gender
- Educational Qualification
- Medium handled by the teacher
- Years of experience

2. There is no significant difference in the perception of English teachers in using language games with respect to the variables

☞ Medium handled by the teacher

☞ Gender

METHODOLOGY

The investigators prepared a self-made tool to identify the Perception of English Teachers in using Language Games. The sample selected for this study is the English teachers. The tool is shared with them as a G-form.

STATISTICAL TECHNIQUES USED

☞ Percentage Analysis
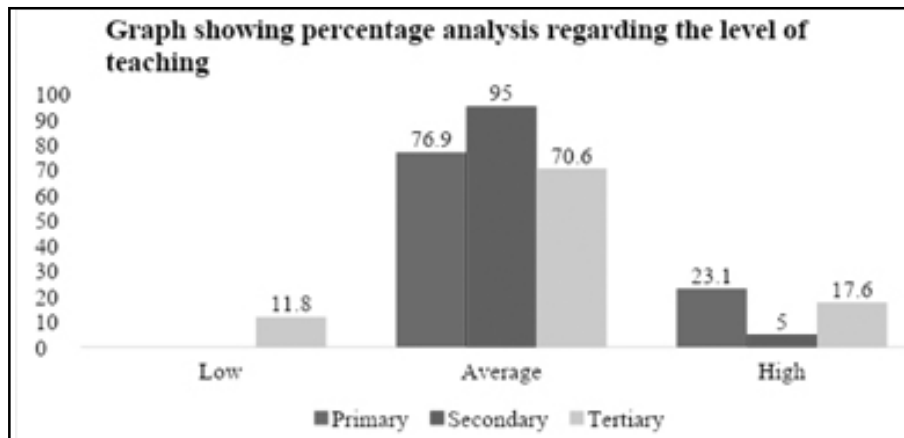
☞ T-test

INFERENCES

PERCENTAGE ANALYSIS

Variables		low		Moderate	High		
		N	%	N	%	N	%
Level of Teaching	Primary	0	0	10	76.9	3	23.1
	Secondary	0	0	19	95	1	5
	Tertiary	2	11.8	12	70.6	3	17.6
Gender	Male	0	0	10	83.3	2	16.7
	Female	2	5.3	31	81.6	5	13.2
Educational Qualification	UG with B.Ed	0	0	9	90	1	10
	PG with B.Ed and above	2	5	32	80	6	15
Medium handled by the teacher	English Medium	2	6.1	29	87.9	2	6.1
	Vernacular	0	0	12	70.6	5	29.4
Years of Experience	0 to 5	1	8.3	11	91.7	0	0
	5 to 10 years	1	11.1	8	88.9	0	0
	Above 10	0	0	22	75.9	7	24.1

The perception of English teachers in using language games with respect to the variable level of teaching in their classroom

INFERENCE

● Regarding the variable level of teaching, it is found that 0%, 76.9% and 23.1% of English language teachers show low, average and high levels of impact in teaching while integrating games in primary classes. It is found that 0%, 95% and 5% of English language teachers show low, average and high levels of impact in teaching while integrating games in secondary classes. It is found that 11.8%, 70.6% and 17.6% of English language teachers show low, average and high levels of impact in teaching while integrating games in tertiary classes.

Graph showing percentage analysis regarding the level of teaching

Primary | Secondary | Tertiary

Low: Tertiary 11.8
Average: Primary 76.9, Secondary 95, Tertiary 70.6
High: Primary 23.1, Secondary 5, Tertiary 17.6
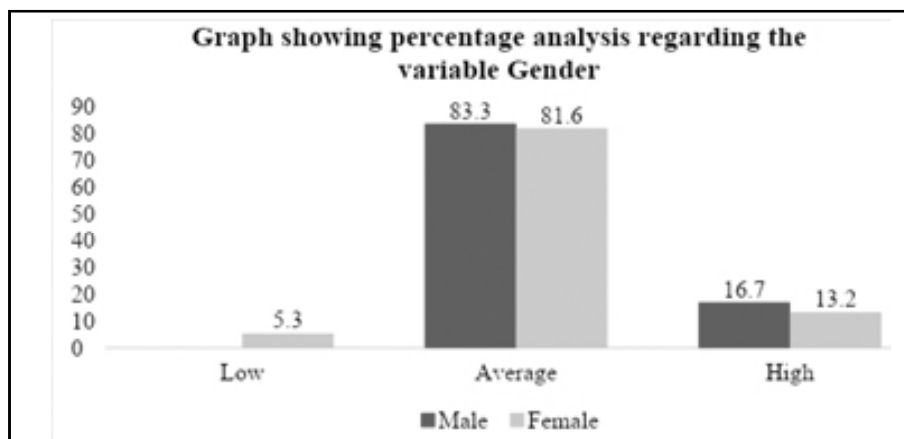
DISCUSSION

- Based on the analysis made, it is found that secondary-grade English teachers show a higher level of perception in using Language Games in their classroom. The reason may be that Secondary teachers might have received in-service training for all the activities prescribed by the syllabus of the Government of Tamil Nadu. Many language resource apps like Diksha and Shiksha are available free of cost. The apps incorporated animated and game activities to engage secondary learners.

The perception of English language teachers in using language games with respect to the variable gender
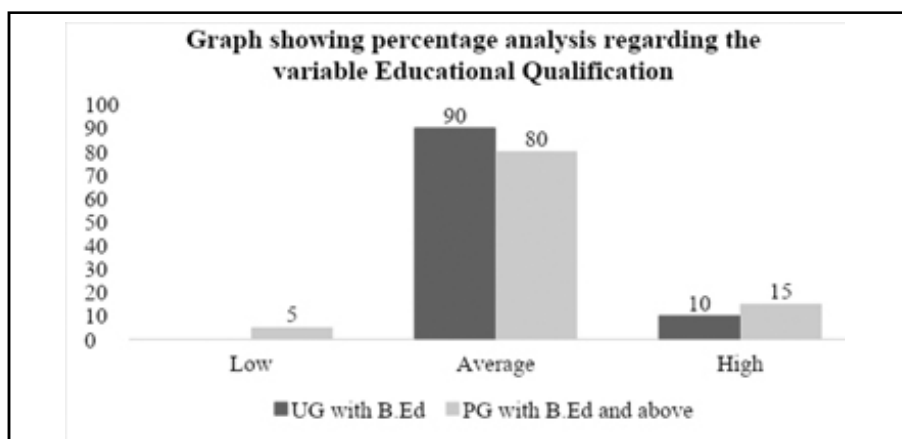
INFERENCE

- It is found that 0%, 83.3% and 16.7% of male English teachers show low, average and high levels of impact in teaching while integrating games in their classes with respect to the variable gender. Also, it is found that 5.3%, 81.6% and 13.2% of the female English language teachers show low, average and high levels of impact in teaching while integrating games in their classes with respect to the variable gender.

Graph showing percentage analysis regarding the variable Gender

Male | Female

Low: Female 5.3
Average: Male 83.3, Female 81.6
High: Male 16.7, Female 13.2

DISCUSSION

● From the table, it is inferred that male English language teachers' perception of using language games is better than the of female English language teachers. This may be due to the fact that male teachers' attitude towards physical activities is slightly higher than females and hence they might be integrating more games activities in their daily lesson plan. Their time of exposure in the playfield is generally higher than their counterparts. This made them integrate and implement the game plans effectively to transact LSRW skills and hence their perception of using language games is higher.

The perception of English language teachers in using language games with respect to the variable educational qualification

INFERENCE

● With respect to the variable educational qualification, 0%, 90% and 10% of English teachers who have completed U.G along with B.Ed Show a low, average and high level of impact in teaching while integrating games in classes. It is found that 5%, 80% and 15% of English language teachers who have completed P.G along with B.Ed and other higher academic degrees show low, average and high levels of impact in teaching while integrating games in classes.

Graph showing percentage analysis regarding the variable Educational Qualification

DISCUSSION

● Based on the analysis from the table and graph, it is found that English teachers who have completed U.G along with B.Ed show more perception in using language games compared to English teachers with higher academic qualifications. The reason may be that experienced and highly qualified teachers might be very good at planning game-based activities. The UG teachers might be smart in the implementation of the same. Because most of them might be freshers and want to explore their pedagogical process. They might be curious about incorporating games in English teaching to develop language skills among students.
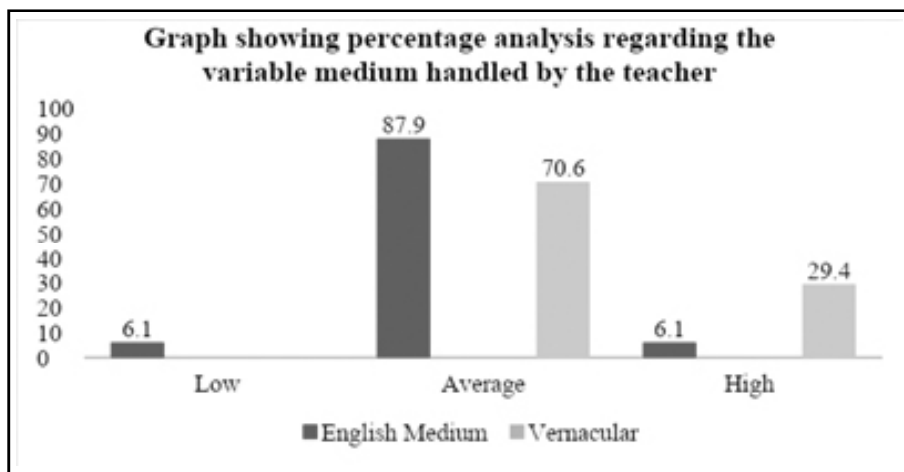
The perception of English language teachers in using language games with respect to the variable medium handled by the teacher

INFERENCE

● Regarding the variable medium handled by the

teacher, it is found that 6.1%, 87.9% and 6.1% of English teachers who are teaching for English medium sections show low, average and high levels of impact in their teaching while integrating games in their classes. It is found that 0%, 70.6% and 29.4% of English language teachers who are teaching vernacular medium sections show low, average and high levels of impact in their teaching while integrating games in their classes.

Graph showing percentage analysis regarding the variable medium handled by the teacher

Low: English Medium 6.1
Average: English Medium 87.9, Vernacular 70.6
High: English Medium 6.1, Vernacular 29.4
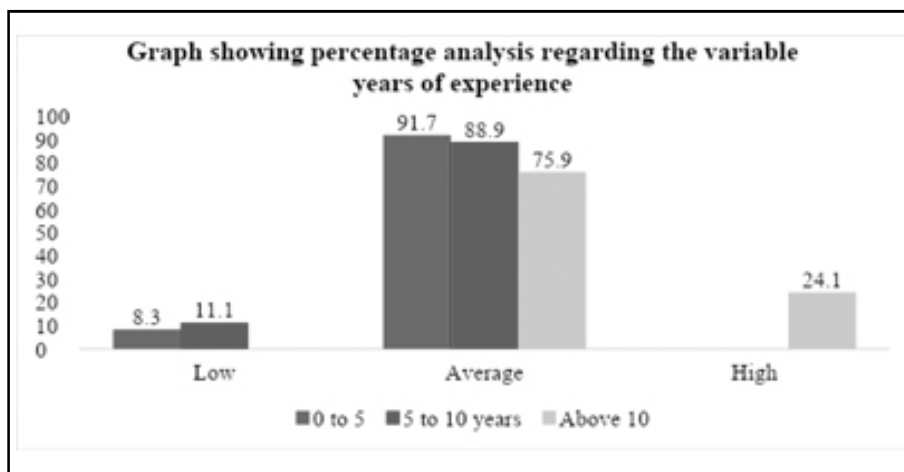
■ English Medium ■ Vernacular

DISCUSSION

- The English teachers who are teaching English for English medium sections show more perception of using language games than those handling classes for vernacular mediums. The reason may be that there is no need for the English medium handling teachers to transfer the content into their first language.

The perception of English language teachers in using Language Games with respect to the variable years of teaching

Graph showing percentage analysis regarding the variable years of experience

Low: 0 to 5 = 8.3, 5 to 10 years = 11.1
Average: 0 to 5 = 91.7, 5 to 10 years = 88.9, Above 10 = 75.9
High: Above 10 = 24.1

■ 0 to 5 ■ 5 to 10 years ■ Above 10

INFERENCE

- Regarding the variable years of teaching, it is found that 8.3%, 91.7% and 0% of English teachers whose years of experience in teaching is between 0 to 5 show low, average and high levels of impact in their teaching while integrating games in their classes. Also, it is found that 11.1%, 88.9% and 0% of English teachers whose years of experience in teaching are between 5 to 10 show low, average and high levels of impact in their teaching while integrating games in their classes. It is found that 0%, 75.9% and 24.1% of English teachers whose years of experience in teaching is above 10 show low, average and high levels of impact in their teaching while integrating games in their classes.

DISCUSSION

- It is inferred from the table that the language teachers whose years of experience are between 5 to 10 show more perception in using language games. The reason is that their experience in handling students, their pedagogical process, and their planning for activities would be high compared to new recruits. Their confidence level would be high when compared to new recruits. Based on their experience in the implementation of language skill development activities, they might be revisiting and reviewing their pedagogical process and hence their perception in using language games is better.

DIFFERENTIAL ANALYSIS

Table showing the perception of English teachers in using language games with respect to the medium handled by the teacher

(At a 5 % level of significance, the table value of 't' is 1.96)

Variable		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	calculated 't' value	Table value	Remarks at 5% level
Medium handled by the teacher	English	33	86.79	7.470	2.414	1.96	Significant
	Vernacular	17	92.06	6.995			

It is inferred from the above table that there is a significant difference in the perception of English teachers in using language games in their classroom with respect to the medium handled by the teacher.

DISCUSSION

The mean value of the Vernacular medium handled by the teachers shows a higher value compared to the mean value of English medium handling language teachers. The reason is that students would be able to understand concepts better in their mother tongue compared to a second language. The usage of the mother tongue as a teaching medium improves cognitive abilities as it is easier for a student to understand a lesson in their mother tongue.

Table showing the perception of English teachers in using language games with respect to their gender

Variable		N	Mean	Std. Deviation	calculated 't' value	Table value	Remarks at 5% level
Gender	Male	12	89.67	4.207	0.559	1.96	Not Significant
	Female	18	88.24	8.490			

(At a 5 % level of significance, the table value of 't' is 1.96)

It is inferred from the above table that there is no significant difference in the perception of English Teachers in using language games in their classroom with respect to their gender.

DISCUSSION

It is inferred from the table that gender does not play any role in the perception of English Teachers in using language games in their classroom. Irrespective of gender, language teachers train students to develop vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, reading and writing in the second language.

Conclusion

Language games have gained recognition as an effective and engaging method for enhancing language learning, yet little is known about teachers' perspectives on their implementation. Activities and games accelerate language learning inside a second language classroom. The findings of the study show that an average level of English teachers are using language games regularly in their classroom teaching. English teachers should be given special training in incorporating games in language classrooms. English teachers with B.Ed. use many web tools in second language teaching and this confirms that teachers need training to adapt games in teaching English. Games are highly encouraging and increase cooperation among learners. The benefits include increased student engagement, enhanced motivation, improved language acquisition, and the development of communicative skills. The language games facilitate a relaxed and enjoyable learning environment, promoting active participation and peer interaction among students. Despite acknowledging the advantages of language games, teachers also encountered several challenges during implementation. The most commonly reported challenges included time constraints, limited access to suitable resources, difficulty in adapting games for various proficiency levels, and concerns regarding curriculum alignment. Teachers also expressed the need for professional development opportunities to enhance their skills in utilizing language games effectively.

Years of experience of English teachers play a vital role in incorporating games in the English classroom. Also, the vernacular medium sections show higher levels of perception in learning the second language using games. If games are properly designed, they will help in making the teaching-learning process more effective. An individual course on Games as a Pedagogy can be included in the teacher education programme which can enhance the skill of using games effectively among prospective teachers.

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