Using Games in Primary Schools for Effective Grammar Teaching: a Case Study from Sebha

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ABSTRACT

Teaching and learning a foreign language like English is not an easy task. The situation become more difficult when the learners are primary school children and teaching and learning focus is grammar, an activity often regarded as ‘boring’, ‘uninteresting’ and ‘tedious’. However, one’s mastery over a language is determined by the appropriate use of language by that individual following grammatical rules and failing to follow the rules of grammar marks one’s use of language as erroneous. Therefore, systematic attempt is done to teach grammatical rules and structures to the language learners from the beginning of language teaching and learning process. However, the success or failure of learning, mastering and using the grammatical rules and structures is largely determined by the technique and approach used by the grammar teacher to teach. The learner-centered, interesting, motivating technique of grammar teaching is believed to generate positive results whereas traditional, teacher-centered, uninteresting, uninvolving method is believed to be a cause of failure for learners to learn and master grammar rules and structures. Therefore, the grammar teaching technique, which involves language learners, to maximum, in learning in amusing and creative way, motivating, challenging and stimulating his/her mental processes, and reducing classroom anxiety and fear, is desired and recommended for fruitful language teaching and learning process. In this respect, the present paper discusses the effectiveness of using games for teaching grammar to primary school students as a technique which could easily be utilised and exploited for maximum benefits for learners. The study is based on the practical experiment done on the students of two primary schools in Sebha city of Libya using grammar games. The results, which proved to be fruitful and positive, are discussed as a basis for the argument in support of using games for teaching grammar to school children.

1. Introduction

“Learning and fun go together”


So should be the case with grammar learning, particularly in EFL context. Grammar learning has always been viewed as crucial to language learning but nowadays, it is often perceived as a tedious and laborious process. This is particularly the case in countries like Libya where English is taught and learned as a foreign language and where students often have negative attitudes towards grammar learning due to various reasons. If teachers find ways to fully engage students in the learning process; grammar learning can become more enjoyable, interactive and motivational. Research (Uberman, 1998) has shown that children learn and develop fastest when they are at play. Therefore, it is desired that teachers should think how to teach grammar through enjoyable activities. And, in this respect, the use of games can be considered to be one of the most interesting activities to be applied in ELT classes. Therefore, the use of games and its application in grammar lessons form the topics of discussion of this paper.

1.1 Rationales of the study

Language games are the games with rules which have linguistic aims and they are agreed with the participants. Teaching grammar through games is argued for many reasons. One reason is that, games have the advantage of allowing the learners to learn, practice and internalize grammar and structures extensively. Games can do this through providing repeated exposure to the target grammar. Another reason is that students will be more motivated to play games than they are to do deskwork. Many experienced textbook, methodology manuals and writers have argued that games are not just time-filling activities but have a great educational value. According to Sabatová (2006:12), games are surely the most interesting and the most favourite way of how to learn and practice grammar. As the games are fun, interactive, and exciting, students can study English grammar with games very easily, in a relax atmosphere, and more interestingly. Thus, games can help not only in learning and mastering the very crucial aspect of foreign language learning-grammar, but also in developing positive attitudes of learners towards the whole language learning process. In this respect, the paper attempts to discuss the effectiveness of the use of games in grammar teaching to the students of primary schools in Sebha, Libya where students often face problems with grammar learning and regard it as tedious, uninteresting and demotivating process of foreign language learning. It is believed and argued that if the EFL school teachers in Sebha, Libya use games in their grammar teaching techniques, it would certainly help not only in changing the negative perceptions of the learners towards grammar but also in imparting more dynamic, interesting, involving, learner-centered, motivational teaching of grammar in the primary schools of Sebha, Libya.

1.2 Background to the study

English is taught and learned as a foreign language in Libya. Being an international language and language of international communication, opportunities, education, commerce and trade, the Libyan government has introduced English from the primary school level itself so that the Libyan school children can be the able citizens of global village and can cope with its demands and challenges. As a crucial part of foreign language pedagogy, teaching grammar forms the central aspect of EFL teaching in Libya. This is with the belief that learning and mastering grammar can help an
individual in mastering the target language and establishing successful communication in that language.

English in the public schools in Libya is first taught for the learners in the fifth year of schooling when the students’ age is about 11 years. During the first 2 years, that is in 5th and 6th year of primary schooling, students study the alphabet of English, reading, spelling, and elementary writing. They are also introduced some grammatical terminology, categories and relations such as- nouns, verbs, conjunctions, prepositions, simple past tense, present tense, plural and singular etc. It is expected that the Libyan EFL teachers in schools use techniques and methods which involve learners and motivate them to learn English. However, the reality seems to be quite opposite. Most of the teachers rely heavily on traditional grammar-translational method where everything is literally translated and students are supposed to memorize numerous grammar rules and structures. The teacher controls almost all the activities in the class and hardly any activity is introduced and encouraged which involves learners and stimulates and challenges their creativity. One of the reasons, for this, can be the fact that most of the teachers prefer to teach the way they themselves were taught- just presenting set of rules and dozens of examples and exercises without much focus on inserting any sort of fun/amusement while teaching.

1.3 Research Problem

This typical scenario, outlined in the section above, hardly contributes to achieving the desired aims and objectives of foreign language teaching and learning in general and teaching and learning grammar in specific in Libyan primary schools. Lack of training in teaching grammar with innovative teaching techniques and unwillingness to devise any interesting, motivational, learner-centered technique on the part of the teachers leads to monotonous grammar classes where learners, consequently, start developing negative attitude toward learning English grammar regarding it as ‘very boring’ and ‘waste of time’ activity. This also makes them demotivated learners, a problem commonly encountered and reported by most of the Libyan EFL teachers. This situation, where both teachers and learners face problems while teaching and learning grammar, has been taken as a research problem for investigation in this study.

1.4 Research Questions

The following research questions have guided the study-

1- Do the Libyan EFL learners in primary schools in Sebha enjoy and like grammar classes?
2- What techniques of grammar teaching are used by the Libyan EFL teachers in schools while teaching grammar?
3- Do games form important part of grammar teaching techniques in primary schools in Sebha?
4- Can the use of games be an effective technique of teaching grammar and motivating EFL learners in primary schools in Sebha?
5- What are the perceptions and attitudes of the Libyan EFL learners toward the use of games for teaching grammar in their classrooms?

In the society of today, where interaction, fun, play and amusement are encouraged for healthy social growth of children, similar approach is also encouraged and recommended in foreign language teaching to develop positive attitude among EFL learners toward the target language and for making learning a fun-an activity loved and desired by all.

children across the globe. In this respect, the paper investigates the above discussed problem of grammar teaching and learning in Libyan EFL primary schools and also discusses the effective role of games in overcoming the problems faced both by the learners and teachers.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Defining Grammar

In the Middle Ages, grammar meant the study of Latin, the language of choice for educated people. In fact, grammar was so closely associated with Latin that the word referred to any kind of learning. This meaning of grammar shows up when older people talk about their grammar school, not their elementary school. Thus, the term grammar school is a leftover from the very old days. However, these days grammar refers to the set of rules that allow us to combine words in our language into larger units (Greenbaum, S & Nelsonan, G., 2002:1). Grammar also refers to “the formal study of the structure of a language and describes how words fit together in meaningful constructions” (Woods, G. 2010, P.9). Williams, J. D. (2005:2) argues that this definition has the advantage of linking grammar to education. This definition is important because this paper is designed for teachers and it has been such an important part of education. Hartwell (1985, pp. 352-353) organized different meanings in an attempt to clarify our understanding of grammar by offering five different definitions. These are summarized in the following figure:

_Figure: 1 Five Points definitions of grammar by Hartwell (1985)_

2.2 Importance of Grammar Teaching & Learning

According to Alexander, L. G. (1998), there is no point in learning grammar for the sake of learning grammar”. This is because Jeffrey F. Huntsman (1983) argues grammar was thought to discipline the mind and the soul at the same time. Learning grammar is really important to achieve the higher levels of the language. Grammar is the support system of communication and we learn it to communicate better. Grammar explains the why and how of language. We learn it because we just can't do without it. Some scholars, such as Chapman (1986); Holderer (1995); and Marzano (1996), believe that grammar should be taught as a formal system because it represents order, authority, and something that seems absolute, without question. There are several applications of grammatical study according to Greenbaum, S & Nelsonan, G. (2002:5). Four of these applications are presented in the figure below:

_Figure: 2 Applications of grammatical study according to Greenbaum, S & Nelsonan, G._
According to Harmer, J (1998) the grammatical information can be given to students in two major ways. The first one could be extremely covert and the second will be made extremely overt.

**Figure: 3 Grammar teaching methods according to Harmer, J (1998).**

Covert grammar teaching

Covert grammar teaching implies that student's attention will be drawn to this activity, and not to the grammar in which grammatical facts are hidden from the students where a new grammar is presented or introduced.

Overt grammar teaching

Overt grammar teaching implies that the grammatical rules and explanations are openly presented to students. The focus is to provide a lot of information rather than engaging them in various activities.

Harmer (1998) also argues that:

"It is expected to do a lot of structures in teaching and practicing, and less really free communicative activity at the beginner level. The teaching of grammar is likely to be fairly covert since the main aim is to get students to use language as much as possible. On the other hand students at intermediate levels should be involved in more communicative activities and should have less grammar teaching. Teaching grammar would probably be more overt. Then advanced students can actively study grammar in more overt ways". (P.20).

In this regard, Palánová, K. (2010) also argues that "All grammar teaching should not be covert. Teacher should not always draw students' attention to grammatical facts and rules. Sometimes pupils should discover facts about grammar through problem-solving activities and sometimes through practicing grammar". (P.15).

In short, teachers of grammar often act on the assumption that grammar learning is mostly a matter of learning a series of patterns or structures. Teachers then focus mainly on giving the form and the examples which indicates the possible uses of specific rules without much focus on teaching grammar with pleasure. "In grammar, the grammar rules are properly explained, the teachers concentrate especially on sentence structure. It could be demotivating for pupils. This method is not very suitable for young learners". (Musilová, L 2010:14).

Willis, D. (2009) claims that if learners were given grammatical rules or they are encouraged to discover rules for themselves, we are acting on the belief that rules make a valuable contribution to language description and that this kind of understanding helps promote learning (P.1).

He also argues that teachers of grammar often start with the present tense of be, and soon students are exposed to the definite and indefinite articles. At a later stage teachers add the passive voice and reported speech, and continue until they reach the dizzy heights of the third conditional. The syllabus is presented to learners in a ‘logical’ order and the language is built up piece by piece until learners have achieved a usable competence, a form of the language which meets their needs.

### 2.3 Games in Grammar Teaching

Grammar teaching has long been dominated by the traditional approaches. However, there has been increasing shift in the grammar teaching and learning...
methodologies due to various factors. With the focus of teaching and learning shifting from teacher to the learner, new approaches are devised, tested and recommended for effective foreign language teaching. The use of games in grammar classes has been such a popular technique which is being exercised by many educators in the classrooms and recommended by methodologists for effective teaching of grammar particularly in primary schools. This is due to infinite advantages and implications of the use of games for the EFL school learners. In this regard, Geoffrey Petty (2004) rightly states that:

“During my schooldays, learning was regarded as a serious and difficult process; if laughter ever burst from a classroom, passing teachers would peer in with anger and suspicion. Yet games can produce intense involvement, and a quality of concentration no other teaching method can match. What is more, the increase in interest and motivation produced by a short session of game-playing can produce positive feelings towards the subject (and the teacher) which last for weeks”. (P.234).

Musilová, L (2010) also points out that games support using new grammar rules and to teach pupils to cooperate. He adds that pupils can learn not only grammar but other four skills—speaking, writing, listening and reading through communication and fair-play (P. 16).Grammar games typically refer to those games that require players to use different aspects of grammar to either progress through the game or ultimately win it. Different aspects of grammar, that might be required in such games, include spelling, word choice, punctuation, and understanding different parts of speech. Grammar games might be designed to be played merely for fun, or they may be more like competitive games in which a player progresses through the game and ultimately wins due to his or her understanding of grammatical concepts. “With the use of games, the teacher can create various contexts in which students have to use the language to communicate, exchange information and express their own opinions” (W right, A & et al. 2009:1).

2.3.1 What is a game?

Nicolson and W illiams (1975, p: 1) define the game as a form of teaching which may be used in circumstances where ordinary approaches are not well tolerated; when attention is hard to get and harder to keep. A game is a structural activity with learning at the end (Salopek, 1999: 29). Klauer (1998) says that a game must be governed by rules. If it is not, it is not a game.

2.3.2 Motivation and grammar games

Maffione, L. (2008), claims that the learning experience should involve as much fun (or at least enjoyment and satisfaction) as possible because it has been shown that a relaxed atmosphere may facilitate the learning process (p.23). The best choice for higher motivation of pupils, that the teacher could use to teach grammar, is playing a game. As Petty (2004) asserts, games are able to involve children to the process of learning and they can make them to be really concentrated which is not possible in any other method. Thanks to the interest and motivation, which are caused by using a game, they can gain a positive relation to the subject. As he rightly states, learning and fun go together (2004, p.188). When teachers introduce amusing and challenging games, students become highly motivated to do well. For competitive games, students have an intrinsic motivation to do well so that they don’t let their teammates down. Vernon (2006) argues that the theory of intrinsic motivation may give some insight as to why teaching grammar through games actually works. Intrinsic motivation refers to the internal factors that encourage us to do
something. Most young learners will not internally decide that they want to learn grammar. They do not yet understand the concepts of why it is important to know proper grammar, so these external factors will not affect them much either. Instead, intrinsic motivation can encourage them to play games. If these games are good then they will be learning while they are playing.

2.3.3 Advantages and disadvantages of teaching grammar by using games

Understanding the advantages of grammar games can help the teacher to decide if she/he wants to integrate these games into her/his classroom. Grammar games offer many advantages to the learning process. Some of these include:

1. Games increase motivation by being potentially amusing.
2. Games also provide a competitive element that enhances effective learning as they keep learners interested (Nguyen & Khuat, 2003).
3. Games can help the learners to remember and learn grammar rules.
4. Another advantage is that they lead to spontaneous practice and consolidation of grammar through the learner’s natural desire and the desire of children is they naturally like to play.
5. Most students enjoy the challenge of participating in games, and the process of playing some of the activities may actually make them smarter and more capable.
6. Among other abilities, games help develop students’ motor skills, social capacities, memory and creativity.
7. According to Agoestyowati (2007: xiii), the use of games in a learning environment will not only change the dynamic of the class, but it will also rejuvenate students and help the brain to learn more effectively. She says that games allow students to work co-operatively, to compete with each other, to strategize, to think in a different way, to compare and to share knowledge, to learn from others and from mistakes, to work in a less stressful and more productive environment, and to allow the students to have fun, and to be able to help students use and practice the language in relaxed way.
8. Games enable learners to use English in a meaningful communicative context (Nguyen & Khuat, 2003:11)
9. Games bring real world context into the classroom.
10. Grammar games make learners use the language instead of thinking about learning the correct forms (Lee, 1979:2).
11. Grammar games can also give practice in all the skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking).
12. Games also help in constructing a cooperative learning environment.

Games have certain disadvantages too.
1. First, not all games can work for all pedagogical purposes.
2. Second, choosing or designing the right game for the lesson you want to teach can be more time-consuming than planning a traditional grammar lesson. Teachers should take this extra workload into account when planning their lessons.
3. Third, because games are fun and game play involves a lot of relaxed and informal interaction between students and teachers, some teachers and even students may view them as unproductive busywork.
4. Another disadvantage is that the game may create anxious feeling if it ended before finishing the tasks because the time runs out so teachers must put a time limit for each game to solve such problem.

However, when done strategically and skillfully, teaching through games can be more effective than teaching through traditional methods of drill and memorization.

2.3.4 Types of grammar games

There are number of types of grammar games that can be played to help improve a person’s grammar skills. Types of grammar games vary depending on the level of students, the material which are available and what specific grammar are you
introducing or practising. Most games are either physical or digital.  

**Physical or traditional games** usually include games like “hangman” or games that use flashcards or boards to allow players to progress through the game by using various aspects of grammar, such as spelling. Some grammar games can provide players with part of a sentence that has blanks in certain spaces, usually indicating the part of speech that goes there, allowing players to otherwise fill in the blanks as they see fit to create strange and humorous sentences.  

**Digital grammar games,** on the other hand, are often similar to traditional games, but might incorporate certain aspects of digital technology that reward players for using language to solve problems in different ways. For example, a digital game might allow players to battle monsters by spelling words that “damage” the monster based on the length of the word. Some games even provide players with problems to solve, and allow them to solve the problems by providing them with objects that match words typed by the player.


2.3.5 **How to use grammar games in the classroom**  

Nowadays, a lot of available ELT journals, magazines and books are available which provide information on different grammar games that are suitable for different levels of learners. However, in order to gain maximum benefits from the game, various things must be taken into account. If teachers wish to adopt some games from books or from the internet, they must read the instructions carefully and make sure they have the necessary material. Either they should explain or demonstrate their learners how the game or activity works. “All participants of the game must know the rules and aims of the game. Rules should be clear and easy for understanding. They need not to be long” (Musilová, 2010:15). Thus, teachers should be very careful about choosing games if they want to make them profitable for the learning process. Teachers must have convincing reasons for choosing the game because some students may wish to play games purely for fun. Teachers also need to consider the purpose of the game, which games to use, when to use them, how to link them up with the syllabus, textbook or program and more specifically, how different games can benefit students in different ways (Khan, 1996).

The time is also important factor while using games. That means games must have a time limit. The teacher also should consider the length and the time limit for the games that he/she wants to use in the class. According to Siek-Piskozub(1994), the teacher can either allocate more or less time depending on the students’ level, the number of people in a group, or the knowledge of the rules of a game, etc. (P. 43). Classroom management is important too. It means that the teacher must manage
the class while playing games by providing clear instructions, grouping the students in a way suitable for the game i.e. pair work, group work or the whole class and controlling the time.

3. The Present Study

3.1 Background

Acknowledging various pedagogical benefits of games for grammar teaching and learning, particularly in EFL context, the researchers decided to test the effectiveness of such games on the Libyan EFL learners in primary schools in Sebha. Their aim was to check if the games can be an alternative, dynamic, learner-cantered, learner-involving, motivating and amusing technique for teaching grammar to the Libyan EFL learners in the primary schools who often regard grammar learning as 'boring' and 'difficult' activity and have negative attitudes towards English in general and grammar in particular. Researching various factors such as the age of the learners, their level, socio-cultural background, time limit, status of English etc, some games were designed to use to teach grammar and to check and test the effectiveness of the use in overcoming the problems faced by the learners. The permission was sought from the school authorities to experiment the effectiveness of the use of games in teaching grammar to the learners. They were explained the nature, types and level of games and the importance of the experiment for seeking an alternative grammar teaching technique which would make learning not only grammar but English in general a fun and amusement among the Libyan EFL learners with the use of selected games. The detailed on the participants and the procedures are specified below.

3.2 Participants and the Locale

The study was carried out in two primary schools in Sebha: Al-Nasser and Salah Alden Primary Schools. Sebha is a city in the south of Libya with population of about 100,000. It is the capital city of Sebha province. The participants of the study were 50 Libyan learners from the two primary schools mentioned above. As English is taught and learned as a foreign language in Libya, these participants were studying English language as a foreign language. The teachers of English, in all the primary schools in Sebha, are the Libyan nationals who hardly receive any teacher-training. They are qualified to be a teacher after completing B. A. Degree in English. Of the 50 selected students, 25 students were from the 5th year from Salah Alden School (17 females and 8 males) and 25 students were from the 6th year from Al-Nasser school (11 females and 14 males). All the participants were selected randomly to avoid any type of bias, to maintain the objectivity of the study and to achieve neutral/impartial results. The selected participants aged between 11-12 years.

3.3 Techniques and Procedures of data collection

The study proceeded through the following steps.

1. First, after seeking the permissions from the school authorities and from the class teachers, one of the researchers observed the grammar classes in the selected primary schools. The aim of the observation was to understand and note the techniques and activities used by the course teachers while teaching grammar to the learners as well to understand the
participation level and difficulties faced by the learners in grammar classes. The observation of the classes continued for 2 weeks. Total six classes were observed from both the selected schools. The important observations, relevant to the aims and scope of the study, were noted down in a notebook for the purpose of the study as the essential data.

2. After the observation phase, the students were given a Pre-Test to understand:

1) Their initial perceptions towards learning English in general and grammar in particular
2) Difficulties and problems faced by them in grammar classes
3) Their attitudes towards using games for teaching grammar

Due to the age and level of the learners, the Pre-Test was made quite simple and informal. It was oral test where in learners were asked questions (using English as well as Arabic-mother tongue of the learners) and were asked to raise hands for and against the argument in the question. Their answers, for and against, were noted down in a diary regarding them as essential data for the purpose of the study. The aim of this simplified nature of the Pre-Test was to make learners understand the real purpose of the study and to get the correct answers from them.

3. After understanding the initial perceptions of the learners towards the use of games and difficulties faced in grammar classes, lesson plans were prepared to teach grammar to the selected learners using games. The aim was to check the effectiveness of games in teaching and learning grammar among the Libyan EFL learners and its motivational and pedagogical effects.

Two games were selected for the experiment due to the time constraint as limited time was allowed by the school authorities for the study. With the help of the course teachers, the researcher divided the students into groups. The course teachers were involved in the devised activities as the aim was to encourage them to use the games in their classes. The aim behind dividing the participants into two groups was to create some sort of spirit of competition and willingness to win. However, the participants were divided, again, randomly to avoid any sort of bias which would affect or influence the results in any way. The details of the selected games are as follow-

**Game: 1**

**Name of the game:** The alien

**Time:** 10-15 minutes

**The Material:** Any available classroom furniture

**Organization:** The whole class

**Aim:** Teaching present simple with [this, that, these, those].

**The procedure:** One student is asked to pretend that he/she is an alien from another planet who knows nothing about even simple things on the Earth. The student’s task is to walk around the class asking other students questions about items or people, for example:

- **Student 1:** W hat’s this? [Pointing]  
- **Student 2:** This is a chair.  
- **Student 1:** W hat are these? [Pointing]  
- **Student 3:** These are pencils.  
- **Student 1:** W hat’s that? [Pointing away across the room]  
- **Student 4:** That is a board.  
- **Student 1:** W hat are those? [Pointing at pictures on the wall]  
- **Student 5:** Those are pictures.

To ensure the targeted practice, the teacher and the researcher had explained the rules of the game before the beginning of the game. These rules included-

1) The ‘alien’ would ask questions to ‘earthling’ in- ‘this, these, that and those’ sequence.
After a student has asked four questions in this manner, it is agreed that the ‘alien’ returns to the mother spacecraft to rest.

As the activity continues in this manner, the teacher listens and writes down information that was conveyed by ‘alien’ and ‘earthling’ using correct structure, ignoring the information that was not. In this way, the teacher allocates class points for the activity and presents a list of all the information that was accurately conveyed.

**Game: 2**

**Name of the game:** spelling the plurals  
**Time:** 5-10 minutes  
**Aim:** teaching and testing how to make the plural forms  
**Organization:** pair or group work  
**The material:** A crossword puzzle game on a piece of a paper (See Appendix: 1)  
**The procedure:** the students are given the game papers and they must try to write the correct plural forms of each of the 24 single words across and down in each paper as shown in appendix: 1 in the correct space within the crossword puzzle.

After the experiment, by using games to teach grammar, a Post-Test was offered to understand the effectiveness of the games on the learners while learning grammar. The questions were simple, like the Pre-Test, due to the proficiency level of the learners. All the findings observed are reported and discussed below.

### 4. Findings, Analysis and Discussion

After observing the classes of the teachers teaching grammar and then teaching grammar using games, the following findings were observed:

#### 4.1 Findings of the observation:

Based on the observation, the researcher noticed that there was minimal variation in the teaching style which is used to teach grammar. The teachers sometimes used games for teaching words but not for teaching grammar. Teaching grammar was based on writing the rules and the examples on the board, explaining the lesson and then giving some exercises to answer. The rules then were copied by the students in their notebooks from the board and they had to revise and memorise the rules at home. For the teachers, this strategy was effective as the lessons were usually given in the limited time of the class but unfortunately at the end of the lesson, most of the students did not participate actively and some even could not understand what the teacher explained. Only a very little number of students participated in solving the exercises. It was observed that the learners, who were sitting in the front, participated with the teacher while those sitting at the back, were almost sleeping. The students felt bored, from time to time, with the same grammar exercises. The students seemed to suffer from various problems, mainly associated with factors like low motivation as they could not see the rationale behind learning grammar and this probably caused passivism observed during the grammar lesson.

#### 4.2 Finding of the Pre-Test

During the pre-test, some questions were asked to the students. Arabic language was used when there was difficulty in understanding the questions. Answers received are tabulated below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Q. 1 Do you like learning English? (Yes, No)</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>22%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>78%</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The findings indicate that the majority of the students were not interested and motivated to learn.

Q. 2 Do you like learning grammar? (Yes, No)
The students' responses are shown in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 3 Is learning grammar easy or difficult for you?
The following findings were obtained to this question. 70% of the students replied that learning grammar was hard and difficult task for them. The other 30% responded that learning grammar was easy for them.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentage</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning grammar is simple and easy</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>30%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning grammar is difficult and boring</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>70%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Q. 4. Do you like the idea of learning grammar by using games? (Yes, No)
To this question, the following responses were obtained.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Do not agree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning English is easy</td>
<td>85%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning grammar is easy &amp; fun</td>
<td>90%</td>
<td>10%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

As is visible from the table above, the Libyan EFL learners' perceptions towards learning English in general and grammar in particular changed positively after the use of games inside their classrooms. Almost 85% of the participants replied positively and considered learning English easy. Same were their responses for learning grammar. Almost 90% of the participants reported that learning grammar was not only easy but also interesting and fun for them. This implies the effectiveness of the use of games in changing the earlier negative perceptions of the Libyan EFL learners towards learning English in general and vocabulary in particular.

Q. 2. Do you like the experience of playing games in the class?
To this question, following responses were received.

**Table: 6 Learners' responses to question 2**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To this question, surprisingly, all the participants (100% learners) replied positively saying that they liked games and they enjoyed learning during the process of playing. This implies that the use of games had positive and wide acceptance among all the participants. The students said that they were interested and also their motivation was very high.

**Q. 3. Do you think the games were useful and effective to teach and learn grammar?**

The following responses were received for this question:

**Table: 7 Learners' responses to question 3**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Again, to this question, all the 50 participants replied positively saying that the use of games was very useful and effective to teach and learn grammar.

**Q. 4. What benefits you experienced while learning grammar through the use of games?**

The students’ answers to this question varied. 89% of the students reported that games provided them with more enjoyment and motivation. 75% of the participants were happy with the interactive environment created through the use of games which helped them to start communicating with each other. 94% of the participants also reported that the games helped them to learn, understand, and memorize and retain different words and structures more easily and interestingly. 75% of the participants also noted that games helped them in taking more active part in the activities inside the classroom as almost all the learners were involved in the activities that took place inside the classroom. This implies that the use of games helped in increasing learner-participation inside the classroom as well as in making learning process learner-centered.

**Q. 5. Do you wish your teacher to use games to teach grammar?**

To this question, almost 98% of the participants replied positively saying that they wish and would like their teachers to teach them grammar using games inside their classrooms. Only one participant replied negatively. The responses received are presented in the following table.

**Table: 8 Learners' responses to question 5**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Options</th>
<th>No. of responses</th>
<th>Percentages</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes</td>
<td>49</td>
<td>98%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From all the responses received, the following findings were obtained:
1. The Libyan EFL learners’ perceptions towards learning English in general and grammar in particular changed positively after the use of games inside their classrooms.
2. The use of games had positive and wide acceptance among all the participants. The students reported that they were interested and also their motivation was very high.
3. The use of games was reported to be very useful and effective to teach and learn grammar.
4. Games provided the learners with more enjoyment and motivation.
5. The participants were happy with the interactive environment created through the use of games which helped them to start communicating with each other.
6. The use of games helped the Libyan EFL learners to learn, understand, and retain different words and structures more easily and interestingly.
7. The use of games also helped them in taking more active part in the activities inside the classroom and helped in increasing learner-participation inside the classroom as well as in making learning process learner-centered.
8. The Libyan EFL learners loved and would like their teachers to teach them grammar using games inside their classrooms.

4.4 Discussion of the Findings

From the analysis of the collected data and the findings obtained before and after the use of games, it can be concluded that the use of games for teaching grammar in the primary schools in Sebha was quite effective. It helped in changing the negative perceptions of the Libyan EFL learners towards English in general and grammar in particular. It also helped in making learning English grammar interesting and fun and also helped in increasing learner motivation and participation inside the classroom. To sum up, the use of games was quite effective and beneficial in many ways inside the EFL classrooms of the Libyan primary schools in Sebha for teaching and learning grammar. This confirms the findings and arguments in support of the use of games presented by various scholars like Brumfit (1995), Dolati and Mikaili (2011), Cameron (2012).

It was also observed that the students who practiced in learning with games felt more motivated and interested in what they were doing. They were active and fully involved in the process of learning grammar. The learning atmosphere in the class was quite relaxed and cheerful. Even the shy students showed the enthusiasm to participate in the activity. Games helped in making grammar learning meaningful rather than just memorizing and reproducing rules without understanding. Teachers also expressed an interest in the use of games as well as a belief that games helped them in changing monotonous atmosphere of the class and in increasing students’ participation. The use of games made teaching and learning fun and interesting activity as well as also helped both teachers and learners in their preparation for class and tests.

Using games, especially during teaching English as a foreign or second language, has various linguistics and motivational benefits both for teachers and learners. The findings of the present study confirmed this as both the learners and teachers indicated that the use of games in their grammar classes helped them positively. The students had more fun while learning and participated in the class because games provided them with more enjoyment and helped them do better and felt better about themselves. While playing games, the selected participants also felt released and relaxed as games helped them in overcoming their inhibitions. Learners became highly motivated and the level of stress was at the low level. Similar experiment of applying grammar games in ELT classes was carried by Musilová (2010). The findings from his experiment shows similar results in which using games whilst teaching and explaining grammar rules or structures, was definitely very effective and successful for teaching young learners. In his conclusion, he affirms that although the preparation for teaching grammar by this way is a little bit time-consuming and it needs much thinking and creative approach from the teacher, but it is definitely worth because children do not consider grammar as the necessary evil.

The findings of this study are also in line with the views expressed by many writers and linguists as Lee (1979) who has listed several advantages of grammar games including “a welcome break from the usual routine of the language class", "motivating and challenging", and "language practice in the various skills", etc (P. 35). To sum up the discussion, all the data collected during the observation, Pre-Test, Experiment using games and Post-Test substantiate that teaching grammar through games can be a
successful and effective approach or technique in foreign language teaching and learning situation like Libya. It is the technique which can prove to be very effective in increasing learner participation, learner motivation and in helping developing positive attitudes towards foreign language like English in general and aspect like grammar in particular. It can help both teachers and students to present and revise the grammar rules in a more interesting, shorter, smarter and better way. It can also be beneficial in creating a good learning environment and acquiring the target language in more easy and interesting manner.

4.5 Recommendations
Based upon the findings of the study, the following recommendations are offered for EFL teachers to make teaching and learning grammar, with the use of games, easy, learner-centered, motivational and more dynamic.

- Grammar games should be a part of grammar teaching activities and techniques among the EFL teachers.
- Teachers should use and exploit the use of games for making their teaching easy, interesting, learner-centered and motivational.
- Teachers should be careful while selecting grammar games if they want to make them profitable for the learning process.
- If games are to bring desired results, they must correspond to either the student’s level, or age, or to the material that is to be introduced or practiced.
- Not all games are appropriate for all students irrespective of their age. Different age groups require various topics, materials, and modes of games. Children, for example, benefit most from games which require moving around, imitating a model, competing between groups.
- The teacher needs to behave in different ways at different stages of a lesson to ensure the success of using games.
- A teacher’s role is very significant in achieving the desired outcomes while using the grammar games. The teacher role refers to the different functions a teacher can have in the class. To achieve the maximum benefits from the use of games in EFL grammar classes, the following roles of an EFL teacher are desired. A teacher must:

Figure: 4 Roles of teacher in grammar classes with the use of games

5. Conclusion
For many students, learning grammar is a really boring and a hard job. To show pupils that learning grammar could be a fun and interesting, different activities like games should be used as one of the ways. The experience from the relevant research reveals: that teaching “grammar” through different activities like games is better than teaching grammar as a formal system.
through sticking to the given exercises in the textbooks, if our aim is for students to use grammar more effectively and conventionally. When planning the use of games, the teacher needs to consider what his/her objectives are. Also the teacher should have experience and be familiar with the ways of using games, puzzles, their rules and concentrate on the time, place, tools, and the groups as well. Although, it cannot be said that games are always better and easier to cope with all students, many pupils can find games relaxing and motivating. Therefore, games should be an integral part of a lesson, providing the possibility of intensive practice while at the same time very enjoyable both for the students and teachers. To sum up, the preparation for teaching grammar using games, can be a little bit time-consuming which requires much thinking and creative approach from the teacher, but it is definitely worth as it can help in achieving the true aims and objectives of EFL teaching and learning in general and grammar in particular by making the process learner centered.

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