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The Effect of Computer Games on the Proficiency of the B.Ed. Teacher Trainees in Using the Conventional Expressions in Conversations

Rajendran Muthiah

Asst. Professor, Education Dept. SRM University, Kattankulathur, Chennai,
Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract: The purpose of the study is to assess the effect of computer games on the proficiency of the B.Ed teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations. The role of technology in language learning has made outdated, drills, grammatical explanations and translation of texts, and the focus is shifted to communication based contexts. Recreational Computer Games make a positive impact on children's subsequent performance after instructional tasks. Playing the games, children live in both physical and virtual spaces such as chat rooms, email, and communication. The tool to test their proficiency has thirty items. The achievement test has ten dialogues with three blanks in each for the students to fill them up. This is an experimental study with a single group design. After a stratified sample of 70 female and 34 male teacher trainees were exposed to some computer games involving fun and conversations for a week, they were tested for their proficiency. The tool was a standardized one. The levels of proficiency of the male and female teacher trainees were found to be average and above average. The 't' test was applied. The proficiency of the female teacher trainees was found to be significantly higher than that of the male teacher trainees. The computer games have the potential to improve the cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills of the student-teachers.

Keywords: CAI; Lexis; Machinima; Serious games; Skype.

1. Introduction

The introduction of instructional software programmes in English language has produced tremendous improvement in teaching and learning English grammar. The focus of instruction has broadened from the teaching of discrete grammatical structures to the fostering of communicative ability.

The role of technology in language learning has made outdated, drills, grammatical explanations and translation of texts, and the focus is shifted to communication based contexts where task based, project based and content based approaches are integrated with technologies.

The use of multimedia in education has significantly changed pupils' learning processes and enhanced students' learning performance in science, mathematics, and literacy. Computer-assisted instruction (CAI) programs have important factors that can motivate, challenge, increase curiosity and control, and promote fantasy in children. Recently, the availability and popularity of the computer-based video games have been ever-growing, and game developers and researchers have started to investigate the impact of the video games on students' cognitive learning. Recreational Computer Games make a positive impact on children's subsequent performance after instructional tasks. Children in Europe and America spend more time with media and are spending more hours a day watching television and videos, using computers, and playing video games. "When children play games in online environments, they often emphasize interactivity that is communication patterns in conversation, consultation, transmission and registration. Playing the games, children live in both physical and virtual spaces such as chat rooms, email, and communication in relation to online games, discussion forums and new groups and establish new social relations", said Birgitte and Bente (2007).

With the arrival of computers, tablets, cell phones and smart phones, there is no necessity for scribbling letters, essays and poems in the paper. The on-line teaching and testing of the languages and other subjects have adversely affected writing practice on paper and notebook. The games are entertaining and challenging and so the teachers should implement games-based learning in existing curricular context. When new games arrive, the old ones recede to the background as it happens in all the fields. Mingoville is based on the idea that children learn and are motivated by problem solving and game activities rather than traditional, skills-based and text-book-based material focusing on reading, writing, spelling and listening. It is a serious game exploiting the 'fun-factor' of gaming and is structured around themes and activities that cater to children's desire to explore, interact and play games. 'Creative

Lab' is a laboratory where children can draw pictures or sing karaoke in English. 'Games' are serious games that involve construction of sentences and the recognition of words.

Screenshots can be used for discussion. Press the key, 'PrtSc' and the word processor opens. Right click, choose and paste. One can see the screen shot now. Students will bring their own screenshots and describe the scenes and also predict what will happen next and why. They can attempt to write out a possible dialogue.

Smaller games are available in 'Mystery of Time and Space'; in which the adventurer has to (<http://www.albartus.com/motas/>), solve riddles and puzzles, find and use objects, escape from locked rooms, find hidden passages and be a detective and examine everything to unlock the doors of the 'Mystery of Time and Space'.

The term, 'MMORPG' stands for 'massively multiplayer online role-playing game. Success in playing the game depends on participants' ability to plan ahead and to use strategies –crucially, with the help of others. This involves communication via chat. Many students play this game in their L₁ but are quite happy to play in English. In a game called, 'Toon Town', players as Toons join forces to save the world from the invading robot cogs/humourless business robots who are attempting to turn the colourful, happy world of Toon Town into a corporate metropolis. Because cogs can't 'take a joke', Toons are cartoon gags to crack them up. Machinima, a form of story telling is popular with teenagers. It is a contraction of machine and cinema. It is the telling of a story based on games graphics. Gamics (games + comics) involve 'still images'. Students use images from their favourite cartoons to create their own. The free software like, 'Scratch' (<http://scratch.mit.edu/>) lets students create environments, characters and animations, using a simplified programming language

Most written communications now take place electronically in the form of e-mails as children learn from their parents and peers. Video games offer a lot of potential to motivate students to write a wide range of text types.

2. Review of Related Literature

Luu and Nguyen (2010) reported that the things a teacher does using LCD screen and a Mouse can't be done in traditional setting classroom with only chalk and board. The visual and interactive features of many technology-resources focus students' attention and encourage them to spend more time on learning tasks. Online grammar teaching has become the order of the day. Mistakes in spelling are highlighted in the computer. Telly has made positive contribution to learning grammar. The diagnostic tests reveal their areas of difficulty and the teachers can plan remedial teaching. Computers with all the multimedia, animations and clear photos, sounds and videos help the teachers and students. Games should be an integral part of the language syllabus. Games can be used from controlled to free practice. It can serve as a memory and repetition drill. A game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun. Students need to digest these rules before they start. Games are designed for different levels as well as topic. Games comprise many factors such as rules, competition, relaxation and learning. There are linguistic games, communicative games, Information gap game, sorting/ordering/arranging games and so on. Educational software is creatively developed not to substitute for teachers, but to supplement to teaching and learning.

Rizvan and Bahman (2011) studied on "Computer-based video games for vocabulary acquisition among Young children: An Experimental study" and found computer-based video games facilitated children's cognitive learning achievement. Teaching language through computer games foster language development and compensate for their shortcomings. Playing video games improve children's fact/recall processes and promote problem solving skills by recognizing multiple solutions for problems. The sample was 418 EFL teachers and students. They found no significant difference in students' achievement when they received instructional treatments under traditional CAI programme and a Computer based Videogame. But every treatment produced significant difference in learning separately. Analysis of data was made by SPSS 11.5. The experimental group who used computer games outperformed the control group at ($P < 0.05$)

Ying and Hui (2011) studied on "Investigating the impact of using games in teaching children English". Games were used to develop language skills and their proficiency in relation to their motivation, vocabulary acquisition and anxiety due to peer pressure. The aim is to find out the relationship between the usage of games and students' English proficiency. The sample was 50 grade-six EFL students from an elementary school. Students evidenced significant improvement in vocabulary acquisition, learning due to motivation and in reduction of anxiety level due to peer pressure.

Graham (2013) has suggested in his article on "Integrating technology into Secondary English Language Teaching" that a teacher can conduct activities to foster all the skills using the smartphones the students have. The learners are given worksheets and the activities consisted of:

Listening: The learners used a barcode scanner application on their group's smartphone to scan a QR (Quick Response) code. The information contained in the QR code led them to a recording of a poem. The learners then had to listen to the poem, complete a cloze activity and solve a puzzle hidden in the poem.

Speaking/reading. The learners had to make a recording of a radio play script using the audio blog software VocalPost (<http://vocalpost.com>) and email it to their teacher.

Writing: The learners scanned one of two QR codes, then watched a short video or cartoon. On their answer sheets they then had to write a paragraph retelling the story.

Grammar: The learners scanned the QR code and were then sent to an online grammar quiz. After finishing this, the results were emailed to the teacher.

Dictionary work: The learners used a dictionary app to complete one of the worksheets.

Treasure hunt: The learners scanned another QR code, which led to a question and clue to a place in the school where they would find the next question. There was another QR code there, which had another question and clue and which led to a different location. This continued, with the learners running around the building and outside in the garden in order to answer all the questions.

Two teachers decided to each be a guest in the other teacher’s class and let the class interview them using Skype. Skype is a synchronous web tool which allows real-time live discussion and it extends the walls of the traditional classroom and it engages students to communicate with an authentic audience, and having an authentic atmosphere in class.

Anders (2013) studied on “Computer games can improve teaching in schools” and identified the real causes for the lethargy shown by the teachers, parents and the governments for permitting their students to play computer games. In the classroom, they never bothered to look up words, but when they came across new words in the games, they simply couldn’t progress if they didn’t understand what was being said.” There is a great educational potential in computer games, provided that schools get better at recognising the skills that the pupils have attained outside of the school environment, and get better at putting those skills into active use at school. The serious games do not entertain the children and they are for learning and research based. The serious computer games can act as a highly efficient engine in the teaching because the games add an element of competition and challenge. The teachers try to avoid this competitive element for fear of exposing some of the vulnerable kids. But the kids really like the competition and the challenge in the games. Teachers need to join in the fun if computer games are to be used effectively as educational tools. The use of computer games in teaching is still a novelty, and many teachers do not play computer games in their spare time. Playing the serious game, Global Conflicts, pupils learn about the Middle East conflict by playing the role of journalists reporting from the region. Here, the teacher could easily have been given a role in the game as an editor who could send texts back to the pupils and ask them to make improvements,

Kyle (2015) has expressed his ideas on “ How do we use computer games?” in the website ‘Wikihome’. There should be three stages to using computer games in the classroom - a pre-gaming stage (or orientation activity), a gaming stage and a post-game stage, which is very much in line with TBL. Each of these stages can have their own set of task types and each type of game can lend itself to differing areas of language. Learner task types can be conducted by individuals, pairs or small groups and the language areas covered could be grammar or vocabulary based or alternatively focus on practising a specific skill such as listening, reading, writing or speaking. The primary concern of the teacher is to select, adapt or create games/ tasks for the learner. This should be done with the individual learner's interests and language level in mind. Some useful website sources for free online games include:<http://www.i-am-bored.com/>

<http://www.pointandclickgames.com/> <http://www.gamershood.com/>
<http://www.flash-game.net/> The main aim is to generate language.

3. Objectives

1. To enable the B.Ed teacher trainees listen, see and understand the conversational games in English.
2. To help them pick up the conventional expressions/formulaic expressions for the necessary ‘functions’ and be proficient in using them.
3. To make them aware of the usefulness of the computer games.

4. Hypotheses

1. The level of proficiency of the B.Ed teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations will be high.
2. The level of proficiency of the B.Ed Female - teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations will be high.
3. The level of proficiency of the B.Ed Male-teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations will be above average.
4. There is no statistical significant difference in the proficiency of using the conventional expressions in conversations between the female and male B.Ed teacher trainees.

5. Methods and Materials

Method of the Study

Experimental Study

Design of the study

Single Group Post test only design.

Sample for the Study

A stratified sample of 70 girls and 34 boys excluding visually challenged student –trainees.

Tools for the Study

1. Conversational computer games downloaded from the website: Learn English Conversation: Playing Video Games – You Tube

<http://goo.gl/HnwRe>

2. Pebbles: Indoor & Outdoor games for all ages: www.pebbles-india.com
Spoken English and Group Discussion
3. Orient Black Swan-ELT : Dialogue
4. Curriki: Free Learning Resources for the World.
High School: contributed by Project Gutenberg
5. An achievement test (in the form of dialogues) with 30 items . In every item, the teacher trainees need to fill up the blanks with apt conventional expressions.

6. Procedure

The following conventional expressions for the given ‘functions ’ were typed down and print outs and Xerox copies were given to the B.Ed teacher trainees before they watch the computer games. The study was conducted in the Education Department of the SRM University, Chennai, Tamil Nadu, India. The trainee teachers were asked to note down the conventional expressions and idioms used by the characters in the games. They were suggested to keenly observe the games. All the participants in the study were given opportunities to move the mouse, click and play a game. As most of the trainee-teachers are having Lap-tops distributed free of cost by the State Government, they can buy CDs from the shops and play the games. Some of the teacher trainees are playing games in their smart phones with net connections. At the end of the week, the achievement test (ten dialogues with three blanks in each for the students to fill them up) was conducted. 34 boys and 70 girls participated in the test. The mean scores of the boys and girls were worked out separately. The mean of the whole group and the standard deviation were calculated. The ‘t’ value was calculated.

Function: Saying Goodbye (Parting) S1: Speaker One. S2: Speaker Two.

S1: Goodbye S1: I must go now
S2: Cheerio/Bye S2: I have to go now.

S1: See you later
S2: See you again some time/ Well, it was nice talking to you.

S1: All right. Bye, Sam. See you tomorrow.
S2: Bye!

Function: Introduction

S1: Hello, I'm Sekar
S2: I'm Babu. Pleased to meet you./ I'm Babu. It's nice to meet you.

Some of the expressions used for introducing oneself or someone else are given here:

1. Good Morning. I'm Rajesh from SRM University.
2. Excuse me. I'm Gani from Madras University.
3. This is Mr. Balu/Miss Arasi.
4. Meet my friend/sister/brother.
5. Do you know my friend, Vendhan?
6. Please meet Mr. Kamal
7. May I introduce my friend, Kumar?
8. Let me introduce Dr. Gopu.
9. I'm sure you'd like to meet Mr. Kathir.
10. I'd like to introduce my friend, Mani.

Function: To express an obligation.

- 1: I must go now.
- 2: I need to leave now.
3. I have to support him.
4. I ought to warn him.

Function: Invitation

S1: Would you like another cup of tea?

S2: No thanks. I have to go now.

Some more expressions of invitation are:

<u>Inviting</u>	<u>Accept invitation</u>	<u>Decline Invitation</u>
I'd like you to attend my marriage.	Thank you. I'd be happy to.	I wish I could, but....
Won't you please lend me a hand?	With pleasure.	I'm sorry. I can't
I'd like to invite you to my birthday.	That'd be nice. Thank you.	I'm afraid I won't be able to
Why don't you....	O.K. All right.	I regret I'm unable to accept
How/What about visiting my house?	We'd be delighted to .	I'd be very much like to, but..
We'd be delighted if you could...we'd love to.	Thank you.	I'm really sorry. I don't think I can

Function: Request

Some informal expressions used while talking to friends and equals.

1. Can/Could you please help me?
2. Can/Could you lend me 1000 rupees please?
3. Would you please pay heed to my words?
4. Do you mind my waiting here?
5. Will you please attend the party?

Some formal expressions used when speaking to superiors follow here:

1. Can you do me a favour?
2. I'd be grateful if you could offer some money?
3. Please do me a favour by admitting my friend.
4. Would you be kind enough to lend me your movie-camera?
5. If you don't mind, please accommodate me.
6. I'm sorry to trouble you, but this is my last chance.

Function: Hobbies

- S1: Do you play cricket? / Can you play cricket?
 S2: Yes, I do. Do you? / Yes, I can. Can you? / No, I can't play. Can you?

Function: Greeting

- S1: 1. Hi, Meena! How're you? / How do you do? 2. Hello, Mani! Nice to see you again.
 3. Nice to see you after so long. 4. How nice to see you again! 5. Good Morning
 6. Good afternoon/Evening/Night 7. Hi/Hello, everybody! 8. Good Morning, everybody. 9. How're you getting on
 10. How's life?/How're you?/How do you do?
 11. what's the latest? 12. I hope you're well. 13. I hope things are going well with you.

Function: Congratulating/Wishing

- S1: By the way, did you hear that I've got admission in IIT?
 S2: That's good. Congrats! When are you joining?
 1. Hearty congratulations!/ Congrats on your success! 2. That is a nice thing to hear.
 3. Let me congratulate you on your win. 4. What a wonderful/superb achievement.
 5. Well done! 6. May I congratulate you for your performance. 7. Permit me to offer my hearty congratulations.
 8. If I may say so, you're really wonderful.

The **Pebbles**-list includes indoor and outdoor games for all ages. There are leisure games, skill games, Fun time and physical activities. It is a wide selection of games aimed at all ages and designed to make our times more fun and enjoyable anywhere, anytime. To play a game, the most important thing is the desire to participate and enjoy oneself. Some games do not make one move from chair; other games will make one run as much as one can and some others will demonstrate one's expressions, skill and sense of humour.

The Indoor games consist of the following games:

1. Sprouts Up
2. Pipe layer up
3. Capture up
4. Tic-Tac-Toe
5. Col Game
6. Connect Four
7. Gomoku
8. Stop Gate
9. The Game of Set
10. Othello
11. Nim
12. North Cott's game
13. Dim
14. Domineering
15. Spill and Spell

The Outdoor games consist of Exclusive Games.

1. Hen & Chicks
2. Human Chain
3. Duck duck Grey Duck
4. Four corners
5. Freeze
6. Ball in the air
7. Head or Catch
8. Baby, if you love me smile.
9. Bumble bee, bumble bee
10. King
11. Pussy wants a signal
12. Prisoner
13. Red Rover
14. Sleeping Lions
15. Indian Games.

7. Verification of Hypotheses

H₁ :

Table-1. The Level of Proficiency of the B.Ed Trainee Teachers in using Conventional expressions in conversations.

Gender	N	Mean
Female and Male Teachers	104	54

The mean performance of all the teacher trainees is just above the average.
 So the first hypothesis is rejected.

H₂:

Table-2. The Level of Proficiency of the female B.Ed teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations.

Gender	N	Mean
Female Trainee Teachers	70	58

The second hypothesis that the proficiency level of female teacher trainees will be high is rejected. Level of proficiency of the female teacher trainees is above average.

H₃ :

Table-3. Level of proficiency of the Male B.Ed teacher trainees in using the b Conventional expressions in conversations

Gender	N	Mean
Male Trainee teachers	34	50

Level of proficiency of the B.Ed trainee teachers is just average. So the third hypothesis that the level of proficiency of the B.Ed teacher trainees is high, is rejected.

H₄ :

Table-4. Difference in proficiency of the Female and Male teacher trainees

Gender	N	Mean	σ	t-calculated	t- table value
Female	70	58	11.23	5	2.63
Male	34	50	4.4		S

The null hypothesis is rejected. Female Graduate Teacher trainees have **Higher mean performance.**

8. Results

- The level of proficiency in using the conventional expressions of the B. Ed teacher trainees as a whole is just above the average level.
- The level of proficiency of the Female teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations is above average.
- The level of proficiency of the male teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations is average.
- The level of proficiency of the female teacher trainees in using the conventional expressions in conversations is significantly higher than that of the male teacher trainees.

9. Discussion

Oodles of computer games interspersed with conventional expressions are available on several websites. People can have free access to them. Compact discs containing computer games on pronunciation, vocabulary and conversations are available in the market. The teacher trainees were asked to take note of the expressions used in the games, they brought their own CDs to the class and shared the content with others. Some of them saved the games in their smart phones and began to play them often. For a week the OHP available in the class made use of for the display of games on the screen.

Besides the conventional expressions, the idioms used in games were also pointed out to the teacher trainees. In one small outdoor game in ‘Pebble’, the verb ‘jump’ is used as a phrasal verb adding the prepositions ‘up, over, behind’ to it. For teaching the use of idioms which are rarely used by the Indians, the computer games are very useful.

Audio and Visual effect of CAI lessons make an wonderful impact on the learning a language of the students. As most of the trainees are from villages, they feel shy to say these expressions aloud. Repeated listening to the computer games has made them hopeful and fearless. The teachers in government schools should try to bring these games to their classes by enlisting the support of the parents. They should exploit the loads and loads of games available in CDs and internet to improve the conversational skills of the students. This study has made the author to make a survey on the vast content of conversational material integrated with the computer games.

Rizvan and Bahman (2011) have reported that computer games facilitated children’s cognitive skills. The indoor and outdoor games can hone all the three Bloom’s taxonomic skills such as cognitive, affective and psychomotor skills. The puzzles improve their recall processes and promote problem solving skills.

As Luu and Nguyen (2010) suggested, online grammar teaching has become the order of the day. The governments should bring facilities into schools and train the teachers to use them teaching. Without fulfilling these things, it is meaningless to say that computer games will harm the mental growth of the children. Computer games should be an integral part of the syllabus. Starting from controlled composition, students can be guided towards free composition of writing, speaking and creating their own expressions. Linguistic communicative, information gap and sorting games can supplement teaching activity.

Graham (2013) has suggested ways to develop all the basic skills of language learning besides reference skill and grammatical skills using the computer.

The students who do not assimilate new lexical items in the class, understand more difficult words they come across while playing computer games. So Anders (2013) suggests that computer games have a great educational potential. The serious games add an element of competition and challenge. Teachers should evince interest in playing computer games in their spare time. Otherwise they can’t select, adapt or create games/tasks for the learners. The innumerable websites have the main aim of generating language.

Reinders (2009) has reported that students can be asked to describe their online characters. The computer games are arranged in the order of simple to complex. Screenshots can be used for discussion. The games like 'Toon Town' and 'Scratch' can make the students creative.

The computer games have fun factors. The serious games involve construction of sentences and the recognition of words. While conducting the teaching of games, the teacher has to explain the meaning of the rules given in long sentences. The slow learners spend more time in playing computer games. They learn from games what they fail to learn in the classroom.

10. Recommendations

The Government should create a 'virtual World' in every school for at least 50 students to play games for improving their skills. In Stead of harping on the problem of migration of students from government-run schools to private schools, they should equip the schools with latest electronic gadgets. The Hong Kong government had created full-fledged computer laboratories across the country in all the schools some years before. Concrete buildings alone cannot give quality education. The schools need to be provided good furniture and modern electronic gadgets. The government should not close down the schools under the pretext of fallen strength. If the government equips the schools with latest version of computers and other gadgets, why the students migrate to private schools?. The teachers are selected and appointed after rigorous 'Teacher Eligibility Tests'. But they are not provided with equipments.

11. Conclusion

The governments should equip the schools and the teachers for making their students exploit the full potential of the computer games. The rural students should be educated to move towards using the Skype, Screenshots, M MORPG, Machinima, gamics, Scratch and Mingoville instead of treating the computer as the mere typewriter.

12. Acronyms

- CALL ---- Computer Assisted Language Learning
- CAI ---- Computer Assisted Instruction
- TBL --- Task Based Learning
- TEFL ---- Teaching of English as the Foreign Language
- SPSS ---- Statistical Package for the Social Sciences

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