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INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE OF RESEARCH ON LANGUAGE EDUCATION 2023

EMBRACING CHANGE:

EMANCIPATING THE LANDSCAPE OF RESEARCH IN LINGUISTIC, LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE



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GALAXY TENSE A+: THE EFFECTIVENESS OF ENGLISH TENSES BOARD GAME AMONG TERTIARY STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

Learning through play is an excellent educational strategy for piquing students' interest in a certain subject. English tenses are undeniably one of the most crucial aspects of the English language. To compose a correct phrase or communicate anything to someone, one must convey the thoughts in the correct tenses. A lot of reading may not be sufficient to help students in improving their tenses skills. Therefore, this paper aims to find the effectiveness of an English tenses board game. This study adopts the quantitative approach, in which thirty (30) students from Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kampus Alor Gajah were selected as respondents to play the English tense board game. A before-game questionnaire, which includes a test, was provided to observe the level of English tenses they acquire. Moreover, an after-game questionnaire that also contains a test was employed to observe the improvement of the mistakes and errors made in the before-game questionnaire. The finding revealed that the board game helps to improve the students' English tenses, which supports the idea of commercializing it into a wider market. Many of them answered correctly in the after-game test in comparison to the before-game test. This proves that they could learn effectively while playing the board game. In a nutshell, this study could also be an advantage to English teachers who intend to incorporate English tenses board games into their educational activity. Furthermore, these findings point to the relevance of interactive learning in driving language learners to expand their tenses skills.

Keywords: board game, effectiveness, English tenses, improve, skill

1. INTRODUCTION

English proficiency among Malaysian tertiary students

Although Malaysia recognizes English as the second language and incorporates English-related subjects in universities, not many students apply the language on a daily basis. When the language is occasionally used, the requirement might gradually fade resulting in low proficiency. According to Chan (2012), students who joined tertiary education began to exhibit a considerable lack of English proficiency, especially following the establishment of the National Policy, and it was discovered that Malaysian universities generally offered many remedial courses for the improvement of the English language. This also can be proven by the placement test that UiTM also offers to students to determine their eligibility to be exempted from taking Integrated Language Skills (ELC) subject. However, do students imply what they learn even after taking the course, or do they only learn to pass the examination? One of the important stages after learning something is to do a reflection. Kolb (1984) as cited in Brown (2004),

explains that when individuals reflect on their learning, they can theoretically understand it, apply it to fresh circumstances, and repeat the process. Reflection, which is significant to improve one's knowledge, can come in different forms: make notes, do exercises, and teach others. – to conserve their knowledge.

The usage of board games in learning languages.

One technique to improve language learning is to introduce games for learners with the purpose of reflecting on what they have learned and further developing their language skills. Learning English, particularly English tenses can be difficult, especially if the language is not our mother tongue or daily language. Reading textbooks and doing some exercises may not be sufficient for students to grasp the knowledge and enhance their tenses skills. Some would prefer to learn through playing games because they find doing multiple exercises on paper tedious. After all, it is just a drill and has no fun elements. According to Chitravelu, Sithamparam, and Teh (1995), as cited in Hyginus (2012), games can alleviate boredom without abandoning the repetition required for the successful acquisition of language aspects, particularly grammar.

Significance of board games usage amongst tertiary students.

Not every game suit every student. Choosing the appropriate game must be taken into consideration so that the learning process can become effective. Different age groups necessitate different game topics, supplies, and game types. Young learners, for example, benefit the most from games which are considered a great technique for motivating them to actively participate in the learning process because of their age and qualities (Makrina & Fotini, 2017). However, in this case, tertiary students are the target audience of this board game. Some would believe that people in this age group do not have an interest in playing conventional board games since the emergence of the wide technology that introduces digital games. According to Gonzalo-Iglesia, Lozano-Monterrubio, & Prades-Tena (2018), since face-to-face dialogue is a better approach to representing real-world climate negotiations, it should be a board game rather than a computer game, because face-to-face dialogue is a better approach to represent real-world climate negotiations. Furthermore, Eisenack, (2012) as cited in Gonzalo-Iglesia, Lozano-Monterrubio, & Prades-Tena (2018), claims that a face-to-face game invites debate and questioning; hence, a direct game experience provides a perfect beginning point for debriefing.

1.1 Project Objective / Purpose

- The first objective of this project is to introduce a board game specified in English tenses as a learning and reflection tool for university students.
- In addition, this project aims to help students improve their English tenses by playing while learning through an educational board game.
- Lastly, this project also aims to ensure the players benefit from the provided mini textbook, which acts as a guide in the learning-while-playing process.

1.2 Entrepreneurial Opportunities

This board game is beneficial not only to students as a tool for reflection in strengthening their tenses skills but also to educators who want to create a learning-while-playing environment in the classroom. Teachers, students, and determined English learners are the target prospective buyers. This product has a lot of promise as the number of people who want to improve their English tenses grows. In addition, the relevance of English has never decreased, hence, the significance of acknowledging the foundation of the language can be seen globally.

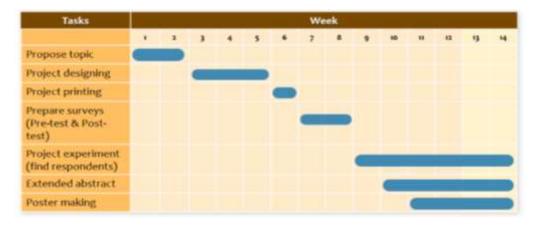


2. METHODOLOGY

The creation of a board game which is named Galaxy Tense A+ is used in this study as an experiment to analyse its effectiveness among university students. This study adopts a quantitative approach. The samples for the current study were chosen from a total of thirty (30) diploma and pre-diploma students at Universiti Teknologi Mara, Kampus Alor Gajah. They were all students who were in their first, second, and third years of study and are taking an English Integrated Skill (ELC) subject at the time the data was collected. Data collection methods consist of survey questionnaires, which are pre-test and post-test. These surveys were to be answered by the players through the Google Form platform before (pre-test) and after (post-test) playing the board game.

Since all the respondents have learned the English tenses in their respective classrooms, the pre-test survey, which includes 12 Multi-choice Questions (MCQ) regarding English tenses is imposed to observe their understanding and comprehension of what they have learned. In addition, to determine the effectiveness of this board game, the post-test survey, which also includes 12 English tenses MCQs, was distributed to the players after they have finished playing the game. The scores from both tests are compared to see if there is a difference in the outcome, whether there is improvement or deterioration.

This project covers 14 weeks of preparation and progress. Below is the Gantt chart showing the whole progress of the development of the Galaxy Tense A+ throughout 14 weeks.



2.1 Cost Impact

RM66 is the cost of making this product (direct cost). After adding 10% of other costs which consist of stationaries, game design, and devices, the markup cost would be RM72.60. However, because the goal profit margin for this product is 20%, the board game is then estimated to be sold for RM87.12 in total. (Source: Financial management for beginners - 4th edition)

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Pre-test questionnaires

3.1.1 Section 1: Students' perception towards using board games in language learning.

Figure 1 shows that all 29 respondents except one like to play board games while Figure 2 shows that only three (10%) respondents do not find educational board games interesting.

Lastly, figure 3 shows that 21 (70%) people believe that this board game will improve their English tenses skills, meanwhile 9 (30%) people do not certain that this board game will improve their English tenses skills.

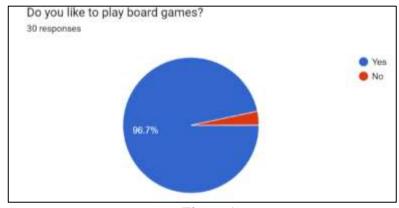


Figure 1

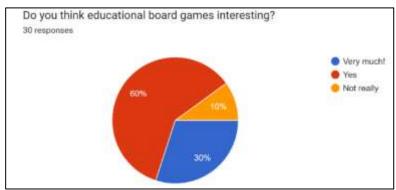


Figure 2

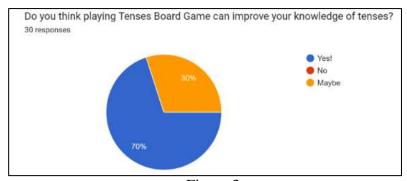


Figure 3

3.1.2 Section 2: Students' scores after answering 12 English tenses MCQ questions.

According to Figure 4, there are six questions with less than a 50% correct response rate, consisting of Simple Present Tense (12/35), Past Continuous Tense (13/30), Past Perfect Tense (9/30), Past Perfect Continuous Tense (10/35), Future Perfect Tense (11/30), and Future Perfect Continuous Tense (15/30). Next, Figure 5 shows that two people received three points, four people received four points, one person received five points, six people received six points, 11 people received seven points, 1 person received eight points, two people received nine points, one person received ten points, one person received 11 points, and one person received full points.



Figure 4

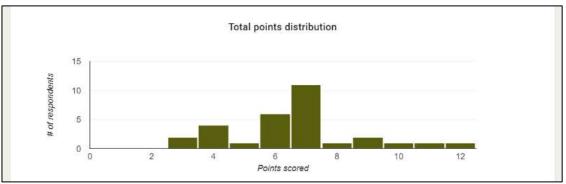


Figure 5

3.2 Post-test questionnaires

3.2.1 Section 1: Students' scores after answering 12 English tenses MCQ questions.

According to Figure 7, there are two questions with less than a 50% correct response rate, consisting of Past Continuous Tense (14/35) and Future Perfect Continuous Tense (12/30). Next, Figure 8 shows that two people received three points, one person received four points, two people received five points, four people received six points, two people received seven points, two people received eight points, six people received nine points, three people received ten points, three people received 11 points, and seven people received full points.



Figure 7

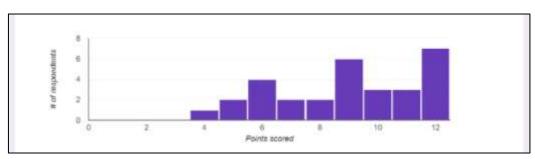


Figure 8

3.2.1 Section 1: Students' perception after playing the board game.

Figure 9 shows that all 28 (80%) respondents except two (20%) people believe that they have improved their tenses skills after playing the board game while Figure 10 shows that only one (10%) respondent does not find the mini textbook helpful in improving English tenses while others (90%) find it helpful.

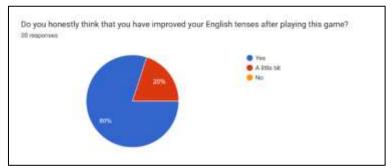


Figure 9

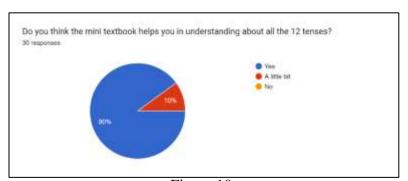


Figure 10

	Pre-test (%)	Post-test (%)	Increment (%)
Simple Present	40%	93.3%	53.3%
Present Cont.	76.7%	86.7%	10%
Present Perfect	83.3%	93.3%	10%
Present Perfect Cont.	60%	80%	20%
Simple Past	86.7%	93.3%	6.6%
Past Cont.	43.3%	46.7%	3.4%
Past Perfect	30%	56.7%	26.7%
Past Perfect Cont.	33.3%	60%	26.7%
Simple Future	90%	93.3%	3.3%

Future Cont.	66.7%	90%	23.3%
Future Perfect	36.7%	63.3%	26.6%
Future Perfect Cont.	16.7%	40%	23.3%

Table 1. (Summary of pre-test and post-test analysis)

According to table 1, the first column shows the correct response rates for each question from the pre-test surveys. The second column, however, shows the correct response rates for each question from the post-test surveys. The third column shows the increment percentage of the correct response rates for every question from the pre and post-test. The results indicate that students' performance in the post-test is significantly higher than in the pre-test. This proves that Galaxy Tense A+ helps to improve students' tenses skills. In other words, the findings indicate that when students play board games like Galaxy Tense A+, their English tenses acquisition improves.

4. CONCLUSION

Galaxy Tense A+ is an innovation that can be utilised as an educational board game that specialises in English tenses. This board game began as the creator's action research project to inject fun and break up the monotony of regular learning activities. According to Cornellà & Estebanell (2017), as cited in Gonzalo-Iglesia, Lozano-Monterrubio, & Prades-Tena (2018), games assist in motivating students and involving them in the teaching and learning process by giving the required instruments to place them at the centre of the teaching action and making them the main protagonists of their learning. Therefore, this board game not only has introduced a fun way of learning while playing but also has proven its effectiveness in improving students' English tenses skills.

Apart from that, the creation of the mini textbook makes the board game more unique as it guides students in understanding the tenses. Players can get explanations for every question from the question card. For instance, if a question is answered incorrectly, the players can refer to the mini textbook to understand the reason for the answer. Therefore, this study shows that most respondents agree that the mini textbook has helped them in understanding the tenses.

There are some suggestions for future improvements to this project. One is to expand the research scale. This study on the effectiveness of Galaxy Tense A+ was conducted on a modest scale at a single university. Thus, more research is needed to establish the success of using Galaxy Tense A+ on a bigger scale so that the effectiveness of this board game can be strengthened by gathering more respondents. Secondly, the question cards can be produced more so that the students could play the board game constantly without encountering the same questions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I would like to express my greatest gratitude to the people who have contributed to this innovation project. First and foremost, I would like to thank my supportive supervisor, Madam Suzzana Binti Othman, who has guided me well throughout this project development. Her opinions and suggestions were always taken into account because they were really beneficial to my project. Secondly, I would like to thank Madam Sumarni Binti Maulan, who generously offered me her pre-diploma students to be the respondents of this project. With her assistance, I could complete my project with ease because I saved time in searching for respondents. Lastly, thank you to all respondents who have played the Galaxy Tense A+. I appreciate their time and cooperation in making this project a success.

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