

## EFFECTIVENESS OF RHYMES IN LEARNING GRAMMAR AT MIDDLE SCHOOL LEVEL

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effectiveness of using rhymes as a pedagogical tool for teaching English grammar (parts of speech) among middle school students. Experimental method was used for the study. The study employed the non-equivalent pre-test post-test design. The total sample consisted of eighty-one students from class six. For Experimental group, Rhymes based package was used to teach parts of speech and for the control group traditional method was used. Achievement test in parts of speech was given to both the groups as pretest. Post test was given after the experimentation. Results indicated that the students in experimental group exhibited higher achievement than the control group. It was found that rhymes-based package enhances the students learning in grammar.

**Keywords:** Rhymes, Vocabulary, Instructions, Package, Strategies, Retention.

### **INTRODUCTION**

In the twenty first century, the entire world shrinks and has become narrow, accessible and familiar for all people's living beneath the sky, by the influence of a powerful commonly spoken English language. English holds a significant position in global communication, education and in research. English is considered as the lingua franca that facilitates international collaboration, Penny (2014) The role of English as a lingua franca is a reminder of the power of language in fostering unity amidst diversity. Proficiency in English correlate positively with academic and professional success. Kofi Annan rightly points that mastering the English language is no longer privilege but a necessity in a world that increasingly speaks the language of commerce, technology and diplomacy.

Teaching and learning grammar have often been perceived as a challenging and vigorous task for the teachers and to the students. Traditional methods of teaching grammar focus on rote memorization and that hinders students' active involvement thereby limiting the language acquisition. The traditional classroom teaching creates a significant stress for students due to the factors like rigid schedules, high stakes testing and strict behavioral expectations. In India in schools, teaching English grammar often encounters several challenges that hinder the effective learning of students.

These challenges underscore the need for innovative teaching methods and contextualized practice to make grammar learning more engaging and effective. Incorporating interactive strategies can transform the boxing grammar instructions into a

lively enjoyable experience. Among the different strategies of teaching English grammar, rhymes emerge as a pedagogical tool which combines rhythm, melody and repetition. The teacher needs to shift the mindset of students from stagnant pools to flowing energies of active learning. Vygotsky's theory of social constructivism focuses that learning inspire in a group by integrating with others. When the students associate with competent peers in singing rhymes, they become proficient learner.

Martinez & Singh (2019) suggested that incorporating rhymes in grammar instruction not only improves learning outcomes but also enhances the overall learning experience. Chen & Wilson (2018) found that rhythm and rhymes create a stronger neural connection for grammar rule retention. Kim & O'Brien (2017) highlights that rhymes serve as effective memory aids for complex grammatical concepts by conducting a study on the effectiveness of rhyming techniques in teaching tenses. Brown & Yamamoto (2020) stated that students remembered grammatical rules 40% longer when presented in rhythm significantly aids in the automatization of grammar rules. Sarah Chen & Michael O'Donnell (2023) assessed that the students who learned grammar by musical mnemonics retained complex grammar rules for longer period. Blackwood and Chem (2023) revealed that 40% learners who learnt grammar by musical mnemonics had better retention after six months and the learners exhibited higher confidence level in language production.

## **NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

Teaching English grammar effectively has always been a challenging task for educators, especially in contexts where English is taught as a second language. Learning parts of speech serves as the foundational knowledge in language acquisition. Parts of speech are fundamental to understand and to construct sentences in English. Traditional methods often rely heavily on rote learning and memorization, which can fail to engage students and hinder their understanding of grammar concepts. Rhymes, as an alternative learning teaching strategy, provide an interactive and enjoyable approach. This study is highly essential to explore whether integrating rhymes into teaching English grammar can address these issues making learning more effective and engaging for students. The power of rhyme lies in its ability to transform complex grammatical structures into memorable patterns, Martinez (2019). Rhymes are an intrinsic part of language learning in early childhood, and is known for its rhythm, repetition and simplicity. To Gardner (1983), rhymes and rhythm have unique ability to achieve brain's auditory and linguistic circuits. This natural engagement enhances the learning process, making it both enjoyable and memorable. Many cognitive theories also support that repeated exposure to rhythmic patterns strengthen neural connections, making it easier to recall information.

Children often use and move their whole bodies to enact the nursery rhymes that they learn (Mullen, 2017). The act of singing rhymes requires cognitive processing. Rhymes find a unique place in teaching learning process due to its ability to captivate the attention. Conesa and Rubio (2015) states that rhymes are a good way to introduce the sounds of a language and practice speaking in a fun and motivational way. This study can provide

language teachers with an alternative method to traditional grammar teaching, contributing to innovation in English language pedagogy and will generate empirical data on the effectiveness of rhymes, providing a foundation for their integration into language teaching.

## **OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY**

To find out the effectiveness of Rhymes-based learning package in learning English grammar of sixth standard students.

### **Hypotheses of the study**

- There exists significant difference in the mean pre-test scores of experimental group and control group.
- There exists significant difference in the mean post-test scores on achievement in parts of speech of experimental and control group.
- There exists significant difference in the mean pre-test and post-test scores on achievement in parts of speech of experimental group.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Sample**

The study was conducted on a sample of 81 students from two divisions of class six students of Yettacode Higher Secondary School, Kanyakumari district. The experimental group division A consisted of forty-four students, 24 girls and 20 boys, and the control group division B consisted of thirty-seven students, 17 girls and 20 boys.

### **Topics selected**

Parts of speech was selected as the content for the study.

### **Tools used**

#### **1. A package on rhymes for teaching parts of speech**

Rhymes based package includes recorded rhymes and Audio and Video presentation. The teacher sings the rhymes framed for teaching eight parts of speech and recorded it. Visual slides in PowerPoint with relevant pictures highlighting the rhymes, were prepared for all the parts of speech.

#### **2. Achievement test in parts of speech**

The achievement test was conducted for 20 marks. Twenty multiple choice-based questions were used to assess the learners understanding and application of parts of speech.

## Experimental Procedure

Two intact groups were selected for the study. Before experimentation, both the groups were given pretest. The control group was taught using traditional method and experimental group was taught using rhymes-based package.

### • Administration of pretest

The study used experimental method with control and experimental groups. Non-equivalent pre-test post-test experimental design was used for the study. Two intact groups, two divisions of class six were selected as experimental group and control group. An achievement test in Parts of speech was given as pretest for both the experimental and control groups before the experimentation.

### • Experimentation

The experimentation spanned for three weeks. The experimental group was taught parts of speech using rhyme-based package including listening to recorded rhymes, visual presentations, recitation and recreation of rhymes. The experimental procedure was as follows

#### i) Playing recorded rhymes

The recorded rhymes sung by the teacher incorporates the various parts of speech like noun, verb, adverb, adjective, pronoun, preposition, conjunction and interjections. The teacher played the records in the class and encouraged the students to listen actively. The students focused on how each part of speech was used in the rhymes

#### ii) Recitation and recreation of rhymes

After listening to the recorded rhyme of the teacher, the students recite the rhymes. As they recite, they got familiarized with the pronunciation of the words used in the rhymes. Then the teacher splits the students into groups to recreate the rhymes by replacing the examples in the recorded rhymes with their own words of the targeted parts of speech, there by fostering creativity.

For example,

Recorded rhymes	Students' recreation
Nouns are names like <b>cat or tree</b> , Places like <b>Delhi, Bangalore</b> Prepositions tell the exact place <b>Under</b> the table or <b>over</b> the chair. Adjectives are words that describe Like <b>tall, small, thin or wide</b>	Nouns are name like <b>lion or lamp</b> , Places like <b>Mysore, Bombay</b> Prepositions tell the exact place <b>Above</b> the table or <b>on</b> the chair. Adjectives are words that describe Like <b>big, bright, thick or cold</b>

The recitation and recreation of rhymes not only reinforces the grammatical concepts but also enhances linguistic confidence.

### iii) Visual presentation

The teacher displayed the visual presentation of parts of speech like noun, verb, adjectives, adverb, pronoun, preposition, conjunction and interjection. When the students visualize the presentation of parts of speech, the recorded rhymes which were played. This visual clue, with the recorded rhymes helped the students to connect the grammatical function of each word with its placement in the rhymes.

- **Administration of post test**

The same content was transacted to the control group by using traditional method of teaching English grammar

#### **Statistical Techniques used**

The statistical techniques used for analyzing the data were t-test and ANCOVA.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Comparison of mean pretest scores of Experimental group and Control group**

The mean and standard deviation of pretest scores of both the groups were found out and tested for significance of difference between these two groups. The data and results of analysis are given in table 1.

#### **Data and results of test of significance of the difference between the mean pretest scores of experimental and control groups**

**Table - 1**

Group	Mean	SD	N	Mean difference	t	p	Level of Significance
Experimental group	10.52	2.81	44	0.57	0.941	0.350	NS
Control group	9.95	2.68	37				

From the above table, it is inferred that the 't' value (0.941,  $P > 0.05$ ) is not significant at any level. Since the calculated t value is not significant, the null hypothesis, "there exists no significant difference in the mean pretest scores of experimental and control groups" is accepted. This shows that there is no significant difference in the mean pretest scores of achievement in grammar of sixth standard students in experimental and control group. It means that both the experimental and control group do not differ significantly in their achievement in grammar. So it is inferred that both the experimental and control group are having almost similar achievement in grammar before giving the treatment.

### **Comparison of mean scores of experimental and control groups at post-test level**

After the experiment, the students were subjected to a post-test. The data was tested for the significance of difference between these two means. The data and test of significance of difference in mean posttest scores of achievements in grammar is given in table 2.

**Data and results of test of significance of the difference between the mean post test scores of experimental and control groups**

**Table - 2**

Group	Mean	SD	N	Mean difference	t	p	Level of Significance
Experimental group	19.61	2.27	44	9.23	16.742	0.000	0.01
Control group	10.38	2.69	37				

From the table 2, it is clear that the t value obtained ( $t=16.742$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) is significant at 0.01 level. Since the calculated t value ( $t= 16.742$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) is significant at 0.01 level, the null hypothesis, 'there exists no significant difference in the mean post-test scores of experimental group and control group' is not accepted. This shows that there is significant difference in the mean post-test scores of experimental and control groups. This shows that after the experiment, the mean scores of experimental group is higher than that of control group. So it can be interpreted that rhymes are effective in teaching grammar for sixth standard students.

**Comparison of mean pretest and post test achievement scores of Experimental groups**

**Table - 3**

Test	Mean	SD	N	Mean Difference	Paired t	P	Level of Significance
Pretest	10.52	2.81	44	9.09	26.80	0.000	0.01
Posttest	19.61	2.27	44				

From the table 3, it is clear that the t value ( $26.80$ ,  $P < 0.01$ ) obtained for achievement test scores in grammar, is significant at 0.01 level. Since the calculated t value is significant at 0.01 level, the null hypothesis 'there exists no significant difference in the means of pretest and post test scores of experimental group' is not accepted. The rhymes have positive impact in learning English grammar of sixth standard students.

**Genuiness of the difference in performance of Experimental and Control groups**

The analysis of post test scores revealed that there is significant difference between the means of the posttest achievement scores of experimental and control groups. There was an increase in the post test achievement scores of middle school students who underwent experimental treatment compared to the control group.

Since the experimental and control group selected for the study were intact class groups having a slight difference in the mean of the pretest scores, it is difficult to ascertain that whether the difference between the pretest and post test scores are resulted from the experimental factors or other factors. Hence it is necessary to analyse the data using statistical technique Analysis of Covariance, by which the initial differences of two groups can be removed statistically and initial status can be equated.

## Comparison of Achievement scores of Experimental and control groups at posttest level for the total sample

Table - 4

Sources of Variance	df	SSx	SSy	MSx	MSy	Fx	Fy
Among group	1	6.69	1714.22	6.69	1714.22	0.885	280.302
Within group	79	596.87	483.13	7.56	6.12		

The obtained Fx and Fy ratios were tested for significance. The obtained Fx( $F_x=0.885$ ;  $P>0.05$ ) is not significant at any level. This indicates that there is no significant difference between the pretest scores of both experimental and control group. The obtained Fy( $F_y=280.302$ ) is significant at 0.01 level. So, it can be interpreted that there is significant difference between the post test scores of both the groups. Both the experimental and control groups differ significantly in their posttest achievement scores.

## Summary of ANCOVA of pre-test and post-test achievement scores in the experimental and control group

Table - 5

Source of Variance	df	SSx	SSy	SS y.x	MS y.x	F y.x	P	level
Among group	1	6.69	1714.22	1572.44	1572.44	446.348	0.000	0.01
Within group	79	596.87	483.13	274.79	3.52			

The calculated value of Fy.x was tested for significance. The calculated value of Fy.x( $F_{y.x}=446.348$ ) is significant 0.05 level. This indicates that the final mean scores of achievements in grammar of sixth standard students in experimental and control group differs significantly after they have been adjusted for initial difference in the pretest scores. So, it can be concluded that the rhymes intervention package is more effective than the traditional method for teaching grammar for sixth standard.

## CONCLUSION

Based on the results of study conducted, it can be concluded that the use of rhymes for teaching increased the student's achievement in English grammar. The result of the study indicates that learning English grammar using rhymes resulted in a significant increase in understanding and use of parts of speech. This result is in tune with the findings of the study conducted by Brown & Yamamoto (2020), Smith and Kumar (2021), Johnson and Ahmed (2021, Davis and Ibrahim (2021) which also highlighted that rhyming techniques enhance both understanding and application of grammar rules.

The present study indicated that the rhymes have impacted positively the students academic achievement in learning parts of speech. The teachers can use innovative and engaging methods to teach grammar, using rhymes moving away from traditional, monotonous approaches. Rhymes can create a lively and enjoyable classroom atmosphere, encouraging active participation and reducing the fear associated with grammar learning. Rhymes can provide a holistic approach to language learning. Curriculum developers can incorporate rhymes as an effective tool for teaching grammar.

Textbooks and learning materials can be designed to integrate rhymes for specific grammar topics. Rhymes can particularly benefit students from non-English speaking backgrounds, as they simplify grammar concepts and make learning enjoyable. Training program on rhymes-based teaching methodologies can be organized for teachers. By making grammar learning more effective and engaging, students are likely to perform better in language assessments and demonstrate improved communication skills.

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