



**THE EFFECTS OF GAMES ON LEARNING
ENGLISH GRAMMAR OF TENTH GRADERS AT DIEN HAI
HIGH SCHOOL, BAC LIEU PROVINCE, VIETNAM**

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Abstract:

This study attempts to investigate the effect of games on students' learning English grammar and to give suggestions for applying games. An experiment was conducted with two tenth classes at Dien Hai Highschool, Bac Lieu Province, Vietnam. In one class, grammar was taught with the grammar games at the practice stage while the other was taught as normal. The study proved that games had positive effects on students' learning English grammar at Dien Hai High school. Data from the questionnaire revealed that games brought about an amusing atmosphere, games created the learning environment and games provided students with opportunities and challenges to practice English grammar. Besides, by means of tests, the data collections showed that students could get better results when they learnt English grammar with games. The students in the experiment class achieved better results than those of the control at the end of the experiment. Particularly, the number of good students in the experimental group increased considerably from 4.9% in Test 1 to 17.1% in Test 4. From the study findings, I suggested that teachers should choose proper games, manage time and class, give a reward to encourage students to learn better and give proper feedback to make grammar practice with games more effective in class.

Keywords: game, effect, English grammar, atmosphere, learning environment, experimental class, management, learning time, encouragement, feedback

1. Background of the problem

English is an international language. It is a means of communication that is used to transfer information, ideas, and feelings from one person to another. It is used to communicate both in written and spoken form. Considering the importance of English,

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our government has drawn up English as one of the foreign languages that should be mastered by the students. According to the current English curriculum used for high school, English teaching aims to help students master four basic skills of language, which include listening, speaking, reading, and writing skills, to be able to use English communicatively. The aim of the curriculum will not be successfully achieved if the language teaching does not consider the language components such as grammatical structure, vocabulary, spelling, and pronunciation. Therefore, grammar needs to be mastered by the students since it is the basic rule of language.

As an English learner and teacher, the researcher believes that it is important to study English grammar, since it is one of the elements that link the four skills of listening, speaking, reading and writing all together. However, teaching English grammar to students is challenging. Despite my efforts over many years, I have not been entirely happy with the ways in which I have taught English grammar to my students.

At Dien Hải Highschool, the students are often bored with learning grammar because they are in the habit of learning by heart its rules, most of which they have gotten passively through the teacher's explanations and quickly forget some days later. Although all students at Dien Hải High school are aware that grammar plays an important role in many tests such as: 15-minute tests, one-period tests, final tests, graduation tests, and entrance university tests, they tend to be too lazy to prepare their lesson or do the homework. There are, of course, a lot of causes for these problems, but the way teachers teach grammar in class may be sometimes one of the main causes that should be mentioned. Due to the pressure of examinations, limitation of time and some teachers' traditional point of view, grammar in class is mostly taught by the Grammar Translation Method.

With Grammar Translation Method, there are usually few interactions between the teacher and the students, or between the students themselves. Teachers are active speakers; while students are passive listeners or repeaters. When students are asked to do some oral exercises relevant to the learned grammar, they feel anxious and uncomfortable. They prefer to keep silent because they are not used to speaking English in front of the whole class. Thus, it is hard to find out whether students have understood what teachers have taught them. Gradually, they can easily lose interest and motivation to learn English grammar.

These experiences have led me to reflect on English grammar teaching, and to search for a teaching technique that could enhance English grammar learning. For many years, I have been nurturing the dream of how to make my students learn English grammar effectively without feeling bored during the grammar lessons. If students are interested in the lesson, they feel comfortable and learn more easily. Since motivation is "one of the key factors determining success in foreign or second language learning" (Cheng & Dörnyei, 2007, p.153).

I agree with Rinvolucri (1984, p.3) that "grammar is perhaps so serious and central in learning another language that all ways should be searched for which will focus student energy on the task of mastering and internalizing it. One way of focusing this energy is through the release

offered by games." In fact, games in general and grammar games, in particular, are useful in teaching and learning English grammar because it not only encourages, but improves and teaches students' ability to use English fluently as well. Therefore, I want to explore further the possibility of using games in learning grammar.

1.2. Objective of the study

The main objective of the study is to examine the effects of using games on English grammar learning. The effects are reflected by whether game-based grammar practice could increase Dien Hai Higschool tenth graders' attitude and motivation toward grammar learning, and by whether students could improve their academic performance.

1.3. Research questions

In order to reach the above objective, I conducted a study in an attempt to work out the answer to the following two research questions:

- 1) What are students' attitudes to learning grammar with games?
- 2) How does learning grammar with games affect students' performance?

2. Literature review

2.1. Grammar

2.1.1. Definitions of grammar

There have been different definitions and conceptualizations of grammar for a long time. Cobbett (1984) writes:

"Grammar ... teaches us how to make use of words; that is to say, it teaches us how to make use of them in the proper manner to be able to choose the words which ought to be placed, we must be acquainted with certain principles and rules, and these principles and rules constitute what is called Grammar." (p.1)

According to Ur (1996, p.75) *"grammar is defined as the way words are put together to make correct sentences"*. Particularly, *"grammar is a set of rules that define how words (or parts of words) are combined or changed to form acceptable units of meaning within a language"* (p.87).

From Thornbury's viewpoint,

"Grammar is partly the study of what forms or structures are possible in a language. Traditionally, grammar has been concerned almost exclusively with analysis at the level of the sentence. Thus, a grammar is a description of the rules that govern how a language's sentences are formed" (1999, p.1).

Besides, Richards and Schmidt give a definition of grammar in the Dictionary of the Language Teaching and Applied linguistics have mentioned:

“Grammar is a description of the structure of a language and the way in which linguistic units such as words and phrases are combined to produce sentences in the language. It usually takes into account the meanings and the functions these sentences have in the overall system of the language. It may or may not include the description of the sounds of language (2002, p.230).

From this definition, it seems that grammar plays an important role in combining units of language to form sentences. The sentences are acceptable or grammatical if they follow the rules of grammar.

2.1.2. The role of grammar in teaching and learning English

English grammar plays an important role in teaching and learning English. *“There is no doubt that knowledge – implicit or explicit – of grammatical rules is essential for the mastery of a language”* (Ur, 2002, p.122). Grammar has played an important role to teachers who teach English with Grammar Translation Method since knowing a language means knowing its grammar. Most of them took grammar as the starting point for instructions. Grammar-Translation courses followed a grammar syllabus and lessons typically began with an explicit statement of rules, followed by exercises involving translation into and out of the mother tongue. Even today when the communicative approach is preferred, grammar still helps, for *“it is taught consistently as a means to improving mastery of the language, not as an end in itself”* (Ur, 1996, p. 77-78).

In fact, the role of grammar cannot be denied in English classes. It is quite reasonable to see the importance of grammar according to Harmer’s viewpoint (1987, p. 12). *“Without some understanding of Grammar, students would not be able to do anything more than utter separate items of language for separate functions. The expression of functional language is only possible through the use of the Grammar of the language”*. Learning grammar helps students understand how the language works. Apart from vocabulary, students need to know grammar to understand how it is written or how words are combined together to understand the proper meaning. Without grammar or with poor knowledge of grammar, they may get confused with a complicated expression. Moreover, to produce a correct sentence, students must be aware of the structures which regularly shape its nuances of meaning. A number of structures can be introduced so that students can understand the language in general and that is the way to master it. As a consequence, grammar needs to be taught to learners of basic level especially school students. In Vietnam, while most high school tests are of grammar focus, grammatical mastery could help students pass all the tests more easily.

2.1.3. Approaches to teach English grammar

In teaching English grammar, there are many theoretical approaches that have been developed to promote the learners’ success in learning new information. In the context of English teaching in most secondary and high schools in Vietnam, Grammar can be taught inductively or deductively (Thornbury, 1999). A deductive approach, with which

learners are taught rules and given specific information about a language, then apply these rules when they use the language, may be found in the Grammar Translation Method. When students study grammar in this way, it is important for them to learn about the form of the target language. The later is the inductive approach. Learners are presented with examples and they figure out the rule or generalization from the examples. An explicit grammar rule may never be given.

2.1.4. Stages in teaching grammar

As we know, there are many ways of teaching grammar, because different grammar points, students' age, level, learning styles, purposes and abilities affect our teaching style as teachers. Ur (1988) therefore suggests the organization below with four stages only as a general framework into which a very wide variety of teaching techniques will fit.

The first stage is Presentation. The aim of this stage is to get the learners to perceive the structures – its form and meaning – in both speech and writing and to take them into short-term memory.

The next one is Isolation and Explanation. At this stage, we move from the context, and focus, temporarily, on the grammatical items themselves: what they sound and look like, what they mean, how they function – in short, what rules govern them. The objective is that the learners should understand these various aspects of the structure.

The third stage in teaching grammar is Practice. This stage consists of a series of exercises done both in the classroom and for home assignments, whose aim is to cause the learners to absorb the structures thoroughly or to transfer what they know from short-term to long-term memory. Some common categories of exercises used in this stage are: slot-fillers, transformation, translation, slot-filling, multiple-choice and matching. Before doing exercises, the rules should be clearly explained so that the students could understand them. After doing exercises, the students could remember the structures deeply.

The last stage is Test. At this stage, learners have to do some tests in order to demonstrate how well they have mastered the material they have been learning. The main objective of tests in a taught course is to provide feedback. In addition, the purpose of the test is to determine the English language proficiency level of students. This helps the teachers to understand how their students are progressing. Through the results of the students, students, educators, and parents have information about student strengths and areas for improvement and the teachers can work out ways of helping the students as well as adjust their teaching.

2.1.5. How to learn grammar effectively

In order to learn grammar effectively, students need practice. They need to be provided with chances to use English in a variety of realistic situations to learn to communicate effectively. Suitable grammar techniques are embedded in communicative, meaningful contexts and then promote positively communicative aims and they also contribute to accuracy in fluent communication language use.

In favour of the effect of learning grammar, Larsen – Freeman (1986) also affirms that learning grammar takes practice. It is regarded as a skill rather than an area of knowledge. Students do not simply get knowledge about the language and its use; they need to develop an ability to do something. They must have an opportunity to learn situations to overcome the knowledge problem. It is clear to say that grammar is the fifth skill among four skills listening, speaking, reading and writing. Skill development as well as learning grammar takes practice.

To have an effective grammar practice, according to Ur (1988), first, students have to find the practice interesting. He has pointed out that a well-designed practice procedure may fail to produce successful learning simply because it is boring. Learners who are bored find it difficult to concentrate, their attention wanders, and they may spend much time thinking of things other than the learning task at hand. However, learners who enjoy the learning will find it pleasant to do the exercises and of course will do the test better. Generally speaking, if students are interested in what it is done, they may not only learn more efficiently, but they are also likely to want to continue learning and make the learning of English grammar more enjoyable.

Second, students need opportunities to interact in the classroom. Through classroom interaction, learners may have chances to use English grammar to practice the language in specific situations, especially in a variety of contexts. In the classroom, the teacher and students are seen as members of the contexts in which spoken language has social and pedagogical functions (Consolo, 2000). Context should “*provide the background for a lot of language use so that students can use the information not only for the repetition of model sentences but also for making their own sentences*” (Ur, 1999, p.57). In other words, if students are provided with opportunities to use English grammar in a variety of situations or contexts, they will learn a language more quickly and more efficiently. With such conditions, games could be one of the suitable options.

2.2. Games

2.2.1. Game definitions

There are various definitions of games. Wright, Betteridge and Buckby (2006, p.1) define the game as “*an activity which is entertaining and engaging, often challenging, and an activity in which the learners play and usually interact with others*”. In another way, Haldfield (1999, p.8) asserts “*a game is an activity with rules, a goal and an element of fun... Games should be regarded as an integral part of the language syllabus, not as an amusing activity for Friday afternoon or for the end of the term.*” This definition appreciates the importance of games in teaching and learning. Games serve not only as an ‘amusing activity’, but as a technique to conduct tasks for learners amusingly as well. Haldfield (1999) adds:

“Games can be used at all stages of the progression from controlled to free practice, serving at one end of the range as a memory aid and repetition drill, at the other as a chance to use the language freely and as a means to an end rather than an end in itself. They can also

serve as a diagnostic tool for teacher, who can note areas of difficulty and take appropriate remedial action. (p.8)

Haldfield further emphasizes the effective use of games. Learners are always lazy to do the tasks. Therefore, games are used suitably in the way in which learners are led to take part in the games so that learners can have an opportunity to practice or use the new language items they have just learned eagerly and willingly instead of forcing them to do the tasks unwillingly. It is an effective way that students can play and learn at the same time. As in the case of learning grammar, students need practice and students will voluntarily practice grammar only in case they find it interesting. Games could help to provide stimuli and opportunities to practice grammar.

2.2.2. Game categorization

Classifying games into categories can be difficult because categories often overlap. Hadfield (1999) bases the characteristics of games to divide games into two types: linguistic games and communicative games. Linguistic games focus on accuracy, such as supplying the correct antonym. Sorting, ordering, or arranging games are also considered as some common kinds of linguistic games. Communicative games, on the other hand, focus on the successful exchange of information and ideas, such as two people identifying the differences between their two pictures which are similar to one another but not exactly alike. Some games that are considered as communicative games such as information gap games, guessing games, search games, matching games, board games, or role-play games, etc.

Another classification of games by McCallum (1980), based on the objective development of skills and sub-skills of language, and language knowledge, consists of seven kinds. To practice reading or grammar, there are structure games or grammar games. Vocabulary games and spelling games are used to practice using vocabulary. To practice speaking and listening, there are conversation games, or role play and dramatics. Besides, there are writing games and pronunciation games that can be used to practice writing and pronouncing words.

McCallum (1980) also claims clearly that grammar games means games played on structures or rules, games played on prepositions and games played on the expression. In fact, when teaching language, there are a number of different kinds of grammar games that can be played to help to improve or practice students' grammar skills. There are five popular ones as follows:

The first type consists of Searching games or Guessing games. These kinds of games involve the whole class and are able to help students practice a real language because students have to make their own sentences by asking and answering a certain number of questions in order to get the information they want to know when playing games.

The second type is games using boards called Board games that students can play in groups or teams to force them to communicate with one another. Students can discuss

proper grammar with each other constantly during the game. The discussion and repetition of these rules may help students remember them more effectively than rote memorization. These kinds of grammar games can also be played with special sets of game pieces, such as lettered tiles or dice. These games are often won by those who are able to build words from individual letters, build sentences from individual words or have the same meaning sentences from the other ones, etc.

The third type is Chess games. With such kinds of games, students collect, give away, exchange, sort and match cards following a set of rules that is nearly the same as the rules of playing chess. Cards may have meaning value in a game or simply serve as symbols for objects, people or actions. Cards are often components of other game types as well. The fourth type, Matching games, involves matching corresponding pairs of cards or pictures and it also involves the whole class. Students circulate until they find a partner with a corresponding card or picture. As a pair work or small group activity, where players must choose pictures or cards from a selection or match those chosen by their partner of the same selection.

The fifth type, Problem-solving games, is based on the tasks that the students have to do in class. It is a more complicated game than the others. In this game, students have to solve a problem or mystery in a real or an imaginary situation. They are also expected to find solutions to various types of a problem so they are led to a discussion of several ways of solving the problem. The grammar points needed for problem-solving games are mainly focused on the aim of the lesson students learn in class. Students practice structures again and again which helps them in memorization.

In fact, there are different teaching stages in teaching grammar. It consists of presentation, explanation, practice and test. In this study, three kinds of grammar games such as chess games, guessing games and searching games are used to apply in activities at the practice stage in the experiment because they are simple and easy to apply in learning English grammar and they are further introduced in Chapter Three.

2.2.3. The advantages of games in language learning

Games in language learning have proved their four prominent advantages. They bring about an amusing atmosphere (Hadfield, 2000; Byrne, 1991), create a learning environment (Hadfield, 2000; Carrier, 1985), provide students with opportunities and challenges to practice English, and help students get better results.

2.2.3.1. Games bring about an amusing atmosphere

The first benefit is that games bring about an amusing atmosphere. In conventional classrooms, there is a lot of stress put on students trying to master the target language because of its entire theory and exercises. Stress is always a major hindrance in the language learning process (Schultz & Fisher, 1988). There is a high level of stress in the classroom because learners have to face unknown or unfamiliar grammatical structures, texts, words and so on. Therefore, students usually feel uninterested and insecure in class, which inevitably affects their ability to learn. However, an amusing atmosphere from

games leads to an interesting learning of English and so the students usually benefit a lot from it. *“Games offer students a fun-filled and relaxing learning atmosphere. After learning and practicing new vocabulary, students have the opportunity to use language in a non-stressful way”* (Uberman, 1998, p.117)

In fact, games can help students feel comfortable and want to learn more. It is believed that when learners play games, they felt relaxed and have fun. Because students know that they are playing games and want to communicate efficiently they do not worry much about making mistakes and do not try to correct themselves in every single sentence. When students do not feel worried and stressed, their minds might be more attentive and receptive. Generally speaking, playing games is not only for pleasure but also for learning, the games that the students are interested in making the learning of English grammar more enjoyable.

2.2.3.2. Games create a learning environment

The second benefit is that games create a learning environment as games are a contest with rules, they spur motivation and students get very absorbed in the competitive aspects of the games; moreover, they try harder at games than in other courses (Avedon & Sutton-Smith, 1971). Naturally, when playing games, students are trying to beat or win against other teams for themselves or on the behalf of their team. Most students try to score points. At the same time, they are naturally motivated to revise or to acquire previous or new knowledge with pleasure. Furthermore, to win a game or to solve a problem, students have to share their knowledge, and ideas that are contributed by each player. It can be clearly seen that games can easily capture students' attention and participation when learning. The task of the teacher is to encourage all students to enjoy games fully. That is to say, through games played in the classroom can motivate students to want to learn more and naturally create a real learning environment by transforming a boring class into a challenging one.

2.2.3.3. Games provide students with opportunities and challenges to practice English

The third benefit is that students are provided with opportunities and challenges to practice English through games. When games are played, students have to compete with each other so there is a challenge of using new words or new structures. Carrier (1985, p.6) used to say that *“Games and activities are invaluable to the teacher of a foreign language because they provide an opportunity for students to use their language skills in a less formal situation.”*

Sharing the same idea with Carrier, Hadfield (1999, p.2) also said that,

“The inclusion of games as an integral part of any language syllabus provides an opportunity for intensive language practice, offers a context in which language is used meaningfully and as a means to an end, and acts as a diagnostic tool for the teacher, highlighting areas of difficulty.”

In games, students are also simulated to give out words or sentences that they have learnt. The challenge of explaining new words or structures to other members in teams can help them memorize. In addition, when students have a chance to play games in groups or teams, they can help each other in the learning process, the faster students can help the lower ones in certain ways. Therefore, it is also a good opportunity for students to practice the language.

Moreover, using games can convert a teacher-centered class into a student-centered one, which is important because students learn in individual ways; that is to say, teacher can move students from passive learning to active learning. To reach the objective of the game, there is an interaction between individuals. Learners will manage and discuss until they achieve their objectives. In this way, learners have to speak or write in order to express their own point of view or give information. That is to say, games bring learners chances to practice English with each other freely, even inhibited learners are drawn into this kind of class activity. Therefore, games are part of a general movement away from a teacher-dominated classroom and promote active learner-centred learning.

2.2.3.4. Games help students get better results

The fourth benefit is that learning English through games can help students in getting better results. Shelley (2006), who studied about “Why Children Learn Faster with English Language Games”, says “*games are effective and are guaranteed to obtain better results than traditional teaching methods.*” In fact, better results are considered as higher marks in test results. As we know, students are just able to get high scores when they are successful in making their learning meaningful. According to Wright, Buckby & Betteridge (2005), if they are amused, angered, intrigued or surprised, the content is clearly meaningful to them. Thus, the meaning of the language they listen to, read, speak and write will be more vividly experienced and, therefore, better remembered. The justification for using games in the classroom has been well demonstrated as benefiting students in a variety of ways. When benefiting from games, as a result, students will be able to do their exercises or their tests more correctly than usual, and their scores will be higher day by day.

In reality, the games help to make learning English grammar enjoyable. It is boring for students to keep repeating sentences after the teacher and then they will start to feel like parrots. It is useful to play games with structures such as phrases or sentences that are related to a certain topic on the blackboard; filling the blanks or making sentences that included a new word or structure. The teacher also uses pictures for creating words or phrases that students bear in their minds. It is better for students to remember and use vocabulary and expression at a time. Games also prove helpful in the classroom. Accordingly, Wright et al. (2006) emphasizes the advantages of using games in class that they allow the students to practise and interiorise vocabulary, grammar and structures extensively due to their motivation of playing games outside desk work. Plus, fun learning games “*give learners the opportunity to experience the language in use in contexts that are meaningful and enjoyable, and to practise using them over and over again. This helps the*

learners to understand, remember and, later, to re-use the language” (Wright et al., 2006, p.120). Besides, games can allow the teacher to engage the whole class in activities which require practical use. When learners get this meaningful and contextual practice, the language becomes more vivid in their minds and they are better able to remember what they have learned and used.

In brief, games prove to be a useful tool employed regularly in language teaching. Games do not merely offer learners a highly motivating, relaxing class atmosphere, but most importantly meaningful practice opportunities for all language skills. Consequently, games bring about an amusing atmosphere; games create a learning environment; games provide students with opportunities and challenges to practice English and, as a consequence, the games help students get better results.

2.2.4. Disadvantages of games in language learning

Despite those advantages, there are some disadvantages of using games in teaching grammar. The first disadvantage of applying games is that the class may be noisy. Sometimes students move around too much or speak loudly, which disturbs other neighbouring classes. That condition makes it difficult for the teacher to control them. The second disadvantage of applying games is that games are time-consuming. The teacher has to prepare many things before starting playing games in class. For example, the teacher has to prepare flashcards, pictures and so on for the upcoming games to be applied. The teacher has to explain the instructions for students to play games. So, there was no longer time for the teacher to explain more and help them to memorize new grammatical points. The third issue related to using games for language teaching is while playing games, students usually speak in their mother tongue to discuss instead of the language they are learning. From my own experience, it is hard to control the use of the first language in classrooms when we use games to stimulate students' practice.

2.2.5. How to apply games in language teaching and learning

In order to maximize the learning process with games, in class, teachers should be very careful about applying games if they want to make them profitable for the learning process. First of all, the appropriate class organization increases the success of a game. Many games require the class to be divided into groups or pairs. This gives the teacher an opportunity to monitor the activity of the students while they are playing the game. McCallum (1980, p. xii) asserts that learners should be in the same team during the year because it both saves the teacher's time and helps students develop a team spirit that promotes the exchange of ideas among themselves. Pair work is also beneficial as it develops learners' communication skills.

Second, teachers should explain all necessary procedures and rules clearly and slowly. Make sure everyone is listening and understands. Especially for weak learners, it may be necessary to use the mother tongue because if these learners cannot understand how to play the game, there is no educational purpose in playing it. Therefore, demonstrations may be effective because they can help weak learners understand the

rules clearly and easily. Third, teachers should be consistent. If necessary, they use a timer to make sure that everyone has the same amount of time to answer. Teachers start another round only if all the teams will not have a chance to go before class ends. Teachers decide if only the first answer will be accepted because sometimes students say things incorrectly, realize it after students say it and then fix it.

Fourth, teachers are not recommended to interrupt a game to correct the mistakes of young learners. According to Celce-Murcia (1979, p.54), *"interruptions should be as infrequent as possible so as not to detract from the student's interest in the game. An alternative to immediate correction is to make note of errors and discuss them when the game is over"*. In other words, such sudden interruptions may neglect learners' attention, it is wiser to wait until the game is over to discuss and correct students' mistakes.

In conclusion, teachers should consider all these factors while applying a game because a game which seems to be most suitable may turn into a complete failure in the end.

2.3. Prior studies on using of games in teaching and learning English

There have been many studies on using games in teaching and learning English. In the study "Fun Games and Activities for Pronunciation and Phonetics Classes at University" conducted by Makarova (1997), Makarova used games such as crosswords, hangman or bingo for pronunciation practice. His experiment was carried out with the involvement of students at the university. At the end of the study, he proved that games or activities could be used effectively in his pronunciation and phonetics classes.

Pillai (2002), carried out her study to solve her students' problems with vocabulary. She aimed at improving the students' vocabulary and helping them remember the English words better. In her study, she thought that the use of mnemonics can enhance the ability of the students to organize and retrieve information easily and visual mnemonics could be exploited to bridge the boundaries between words and their meanings. Although no games could be found in her list of mnemonics, games were considered as a kind of mnemonics and should be applied in English classes. A lot of mnemonics were suggested by Pillai in her study to help students enhance their memorization of word meaning.

In Vietnam, so far, there have been some studies on the use of games in grammar teaching. In "How to Teach Grammar Communicatively", Nguyễn (2005) applied grammar games to present and practice new grammatical rules communicatively. Her study was carried out at Nong Lam University, Vietnam with the involvement of 94 students and 10 teachers. The results show that games are a vital part of a teacher's equipment because they provide not only practice but also an amusing and challenging recipe for classroom activities.

Nguyen (2010), in her study with the title "Teaching and Learning Grammar through Games in the Tenth Grade at Hung Vuong High School", used some communicative and linguistic games with 102 tenth graders of Hung Vuong High School in Binh Duong Province, Vietnam the study indicated the necessity of games for easing

the difficulties, exciting the atmosphere in teaching and learning grammar. The results emphasized that the teachers who just follow the tasks given in the textbook and do not create any games activities may lead a grammar lesson to a boring, hard-digesting experience for their students and surely, do not meet the need for more interesting and effective grammar classes.

Huynh (2008) also carried out the study “The Use of Language Games to Teach English Grammar to Non-English Majored Students at An Giang University, Vietnam”. This study involved 19 teachers and 420 non-English majored students of the first and second year selected randomly to investigate what benefits language games in general and grammar games in specific bring to non-English majored learners at An Giang University and how games should be used effectively in English grammar classes at An Giang University. At the end of the study, he found out that language games really affect his students’ learning positively if they were used suitably in class.

Though different in the institution types: universities or high schools, all of them above aimed at showing difficulties in teaching and learning grammar with the traditional method and suggesting games as solutions for teaching and learning grammar to Vietnamese learners. There is a research related to the high school learners, i.e. the study of Nguyen (2010), which also involves the tenth graders, but it focuses on the grammar points in the second semester of Tieng Anh 10 textbook. There have never been any studies to examine the effects of games on learning English grammar at Dien Hai Highschool. Therefore, all these studies give rise to my confidence in investigating the effects of games on learning English grammar of tenth graders at *Điền Hải High School* – a remote area of *Bạc Liêu* city.

3. Methodology

3.1. Research question

The purpose of the study is to investigate the effects of learning grammar with games on the tenth graders at *Dien Hai Highschool*. For this purpose, this study was guided by two research questions:

- 1) What are students’ attitudes to learning grammar with games?
- 2) How does learning grammar with games affect students’ performance?

The first research question, as a consequence, centers around the students’ attitude towards learning English grammar with games and the second research question focuses on students’ academic performance when they learn English grammar with games.

3.2. The experiment

3.2.1. The study background

Dien Hai Highschool, which is 10 kilometers far from *Dong Hai District*, locates in the far-off rural area of *Bac Lieu Province*. *Dien Hai Highschool* has 15 classrooms including 5 twelve-grade classroom, 5 eleven-grade classroom and 5 ten-grade classroom equipped with blackboards, lights, electric fans, without projectors. There are from 40 to 45 students

in a classroom. The students in this school come from farmer families, most of whom are very poor, often busy with their work and rely completely on the teachers to educate their children. Students study a lot at school with many subjects including Mathematics, Physics, Chemistry... They have no chance to speak English with foreigners during their school-years. The number of English teachers is four, aged from 33 to 35. Most of them are young, enthusiastic and responsible. English is one of the major subjects that students are obligated to learn with the Standard English textbook set by The Ministry of Education and Training within three periods a week and 37 weeks a school year. Students are supposed to learn and practise four skills as listening, speaking, reading and writing, in addition to pronunciation and grammar. However, as they must take the national high school graduation examination which consists of mainly grammar points, pronunciation and reading, with no listening, speaking and writing. Consequently, the teacher and students tend to teach and learn English for exams, which is too boring for both students and teachers

3.2.2. Research setting

To investigate the effects of learning grammar with games of the tenth graders, an experiment was conducted with two Grade 10 classes in the first semester of 2019-2020 at Dien Hai Highschool. Class 10C4 was chosen randomly as the experiment group, and Class 10C3 as the control group. In the first term, Grade 10 students had to learn eight units (from Units 1 to Unit 8) in an English textbook. Each unit includes four skills as listening, speaking, reading, writing and the language focus. Each unit was supposed to be taught in five periods, three periods a week and each period lasted forty-five minutes. Besides, the students did a period of Test Yourself after every three units. Language Focus taught in one period included two parts: pronunciation (25%) and grammar (75%). In this study, only grammar was focused on.

The English grammar points taught in Tieng Anh 10 textbook, from Units 1 to Unit 8, as follows:

Unit 1: The present simple; adverbs of frequency; the past simple

Unit 2: *Wh*-questions; Gerund and *to* + infinitive

Unit 3: The past perfect; the past perfect vs. the past simple

Unit 4: *The* + adjective; *used to* + infinitive; *which* as a connector

Unit 5: The present perfect; the present perfect passive; *who*, *which*, *that*

Unit 6: The present progressive (with a future meaning); *be going to*

Unit 7: The present perfect; *because of* and *in spite of*

Unit 8: Reported speech: statements; conditional sentence type 1

The present simple, adverbs of frequency, the past simple, *Wh*-questions, Gerund and *to* + infinitive, *Used to* + infinitive, the present perfect, the present perfect passive, *who*, *which*, *that*, the present progressive (with a future meaning), *be going to*, the present perfect, reported speech: statements, conditional sentence type 1 had been taught in Grade 6, 7, 8, 9. The tenth graders just spent time consolidating these grammar points whereas *the past perfect*, *the* + adjective, *which as a connector*, *because of* and *in spite of* were

taught the first time. In order to study the interference of games, the application of games on new grammar points might be better illustrated. Therefore, I decided to include them in the list of grammar points to be taught with games in the experiment of this study.

To sum up, the target for this experiment just included 5 main grammar points shown in the table below.

Table 3.1: Grammar points taught with games in the experiment

Unit	Title	Grammar points
3	People's Background	-The past perfect
4	Special Education	-The + adjective -Which as a connector
7	The Mass Media	-Because of -In spite of

3.2.2. Participants

The participants were students of Grade 10, Class 10C3 and Class 10C4 at Dien Hai High school including forty-one students in each class. Those classes were selected conveniently. The reasons for this sample choice may be explained in several ways. First, all students of grades 11 and 12 were quite used to learning with the traditional method of English teaching applied in this school up to then; thus, it might be hard to get their support for the implementation of new activities of teaching English to them. Second, the tenth graders of these two classes were somehow equivalent in several aspects: learning environment, learning conditions, learning chance, and learning aptitude. They were classified according to their learning capacity ranging within four levels between poor and excellent based on their results of the entrance examination into grade 10 in the 2013-2014 school-year; then randomly assigned to new classes. Therefore, all classes at the beginning of each school-year were equal in sharing the number of students of each level. For more details on this aspect, a summary of participants' characteristics is displayed in Table 3.2. In addition, I am in charge of teaching English to these two classes. For these reasons, the decision to choose the two classes of Grade 10 as the participants of the study was the best choice.

Table 3.2: A summary of participants' characteristics

Class / Group	Level No of Students	Weak		Average		Fairly good		Good	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Class 10C4 (Experimental Group)	41	40	97.6	1	2.4				
Class 10C3 (Control group)	41	39	95.1	2	4.9				

3.2.3. The experiment

The objective of this study is to investigate the effects of learning grammar with games on the tenth graders at Dien Hai Highschool. Among the two classes chosen in the

experiment, Class 10C3, randomly picked up as the control group, was taught in a normal way and class 10C4, as the experimental group, was taught with games. In the experiment, three grammar game kinds were chosen to use as additional teaching activities to teach the grammar points mentioned in Table 3.1 to students. They are Searching games used for *Past perfect tense*, Guessing games used for *The + adjective* and Chess games used for *Which as a connector; Because of and In spite of*.

Table 3.3 below is the review of the units including titles, grammar points, and kinds of games used for each grammar item in this thesis. Games were played at the end of each unit in the Language Focus after students were taught all of the grammar points that were needed for playing games. The tenth graders in two classes were tested after each unit. There were three tests for three units and one test at the end of the first semester.

Table 3.3: Games applied for the grammar points

Units	Titles	Grammar points	Games
3	People's Background	-The past perfect	-Searching game (Appendix A)
4	Special Education	-Which as a connector -The + adjective	-Chess game (Appendix B) -Guessing game (Appendix C)
7	The Mass Media	-Because of -In spite of	-Chess game (Appendix D) -Chess game (Appendix D)

As mentioned above, in the experiment, games were used to supply activities as reinforcement in the Practice stage of teaching grammar. The procedure of teaching grammar points in both classes, Class 10C3 and Class 10C4, was the same. The formations of grammar points were drawn from the sentences the tenth graders learnt in the textbook by themselves before being explained more by the teacher. Then the tenth graders gave their own examples using these grammar points and did the exercises in the textbook. However, in Class 10C3, after doing some more exercises as reinforcement activities, no games were applied in this class. In Class 10C4, students were introduced to games after being learnt the grammar points. The procedure of introducing each game to the tenth graders was nearly the same. First, the way how to play the games was presented by giving the tenth graders some examples, then I set the rules of playing games and reminded the tenth graders that the grammar points should be focused on when playing games. The tenth graders had about twenty minutes to play while I was observing the playing process. After that, I gave the tenth graders comments or awards as a mean of encouragement. Each game will be described more clearly as follows:

3.2.3.1. The searching game

The searching game was chosen for practicing *Past perfect tense* because of the following reasons. First, students could practice this tense not only with both to be verb and ordinary verbs but also in all three forms: affirmative, negative, and interrogative.

Second, it was not easy for students to make a complete sentence with this tense, especially for weak ones in class. Therefore, this kind of game was suitable to play in groups. While playing, students could be helped a lot in supporting each other. Third, this kind of game could make students more curious and want to make the questions because they wanted to know what was and this was also a factor that could make the game more exciting.

To conduct a Searching game to practice *Past perfect tense*, I prepared flashcards with one item, which can be easily described by shape, size, and material, printed on each card (it can be done by hand or use the computer), for example: a fridge, a bike, an umbrella, or a pen... Items can be in plural form. When playing, I divided the class into two groups: Group A and Group B, and then mixed the cards in front of the class. I put cards in a box and invited a representative of each group to pick a card in turn (Group A first, then Group B). I instructed this tenth grader not to show the card to anyone and allowed him/ her a few seconds to think up where the item on the card can be found. This tenth grader was only allowed to give only one clue to get the game started. The members of this group could only ask from one to seven Yes – No questions that used *Past perfect tense* and the tenth grader holding the card had to answer the Yes – No questions in full sentences in *the Past perfect tense*.

If the tenth graders made questions and answers in the incorrect form of *Past perfect tense*, they would have to correct them themselves or the teacher would help them immediately. Based on the initial clue and the answers from the representative, the rest of this group had to guess what was printed on the card their friend was holding and they had only two opportunities to guess each one. If they could not guess the item at the end, their turn would over without any points and the next group would continue the game. After 3 turns of each group, the game ended. The group with more correct items guessed was the winner. The intended result after playing games was that the tenth graders could make sentences in the correct form of *Past perfect tense* and do exercises more correctly.

3.2.3.2. The chess game

Chess games were chosen to practice *Which as a connector; Because of and in spite of*. The rules of playing Chess games are nearly the same as the rules of playing Domino game – a very famous and interesting game that most of the tenth graders like it. To conduct a Chess game for *Which as a connector*, I prepared 32 flashcards. 16 of them showed the first clause and the rest showed the other clause containing *Which as a connector*. When playing, I divided the class into four groups. Each group had 4 sets of the same cards. I mixed the cards of each group. Each tenth grader of each group picked 8 cards (any cards he/she wanted). In each group, one tenth grader gave out a card that had any first clause, the second one matched it with a suitable another clause that could make the sentence meaningful. If the second tenth grader did not have any suitable cards, his/ her turn would be passed to the next one. If no one had had the suitable card for the given card, it must have belonged to the first one who had given this card so the turn would be his/

her. Then another turn came on. All complete sentences would be shown on the board to check after that. The tenth graders who could put all his/ her cards down first were the winners.

The rules of playing a Chess game with *Because of and In spite of* were the same as playing with *Which as a connector*. The intended result of this game was that the tenth graders could remember how to use *Which as a connector*, make correct sentences after that, and they could use *Because of and In spite of* in a suitable situations.

3.2.3.3. The guessing game

Guessing games were used for *The + Adjective*. I used this game because it made students more curious and they wanted to know what was and this was a factor that could make the game more exciting. To begin this game, I prepared a box holding some flashcards which I used the structure *The + Adjective*, I introduced the game to students, and I divided the class into Team A and B. Team A sat in a group on one side of the classroom. Team B sat on the other side. Two chairs were brought to the front of the classroom so that when seated, a student would face his or her respective team and their back would be to the blackboard. One member from each team sat in their team's chair (the hot seat). I picked out a card from the box and wrote the words on the board. The game started when I yelled "go". The teams could use definition, body language or other ways to describe so that they were not allowed to say the item written on the board in full or part. The first student in the hot seat to utter the word scored a point for their team. I deducted points for team representatives turning round to look at the board.

They had only two opportunities to guess each one. When the round was over, a new player from two teams was rotated into the hot seat and a new item was written up. After 3 turns of each group, the game ended. The group with more correct words guessed was the winner. The intended result after playing games was that the tenth graders could remember how to use the structure *the + Adjective* in a suitable situation and they could make correct sentences after that, especially in doing exercises.

3.3. Data collection instruments

A questionnaire and four tests were used in this study to collect data. Data collected from the questionnaire gave the answer for the first research question and data collected from the four tests gave the answers for the second research question. Each of these was described as follows:

3.3.1. Tests

As mentioned above, Class 10C3 was taught in a normal way, but Class 10C4 was taught with games. However, all of the tenth graders of the two classes had to do the same tests after learning new grammar points to testify to the theories in Chapter 2 that games would help students get better scores. In addition, tests were chosen because tests were the familiar type of assessment the tenth graders do at schools. The results of tests from the experiment would give clear and quantitative data so it might be more convincing.

Four tests were applied to measure students' scores which included three fifteen-minute tests and a semester test. The content of the test covered the grammatical items that they had learnt including three units: 3, 4 and 7. Test 1, 2 and 3 consisted of ten questions and lasted fifteen minutes. These tests were done in the next period after they had learnt grammar points in the experiment without any prior notice to avoid the other external factors that might have affected the experiment. These tests were given to two classes and asked students to do them. The purpose of these tests was to assess students' progress.

Test 1 was to check *past perfect tense* consisting of three parts. The first part had 4 sentences in that students had to supply the correct verb forms for the verbs in parentheses. The second part had 4 sentences with choices that students had to choose the most suitable answer for each sentence. The third part had 2 sentences that students had to rewrite but not change the meaning. This test was done after students had learnt Unit 3.

Test 2 was about *the + adjective* and *which as a connector* consisting of two parts. The first part had 5 sentences in that students had to match column A with column B using *the + Adjective*. The second part had 5 sentences that students had to complete sentences using *which as a connector*. This test was done after students had learnt Unit 4.

Test 3 tested *in spite of and because of*. There were 10 sentences that students had to complete using *in spite of* or *because of*. This test was done after students had learnt Unit 7.

Test 4 - the first semester test tested grammar points used in the experiment. There were four items related to the grammar points applied with games in the experiment. This test was done after students had learnt from Unit 1 to Unit 8.

3.3.2. Questionnaire

The questionnaire is commonly used in research because they have quite a lot of advantages. They can "*help collect a large quantity of data in a relatively short period of time*" and that "*when multiple-choice items are used, it is easy to classify answers and calculate their frequencies*" (Thomas, 2003, p.69). The purpose of using them in this research was to examine the tenth graders' evaluation of learning English grammar through games after the treatment. I gave out the questionnaire to find out the effects of games on helping the tenth graders learn English grammar, or in other words, to find out if games could really create an amusing atmosphere, the learning environment and the opportunities and challenges for students to practice English grammar or not.

The questions in the questionnaire were arranged into two main parts: learning English grammar prior to the time using games (Question 1 & 2) and learning English grammar with games (from Question 3 to 12). In the first part of the questionnaire, Question 1 was asked to find out the tenth graders' ideas about the importance of learning English grammar. Question 2 aimed at finding out the tenth graders' interest in learning English grammar before being taught with games.

In the second part of the questionnaire, the tenth graders had to give their opinion based on the Likert 5-scale: totally agree, agree, not sure, disagree and totally disagree. In order to know whether games brought about an amusing atmosphere in a grammar class or not, Question 3 aimed at finding out, with games, if the tenth graders feel less stressed and relaxed in a grammar class. Question 4 was to find out if the tenth graders felt more interested in learning English grammar with games, and Question 5 explored if the tenth graders were not afraid of making mistakes when using English with games. Next, to be sure games could create a learning environment, Question 6 found if games could create the learning motivation, Question 10 was asked to find out if the tenth graders became more active in learning English grammar and Question 8 was to discover if games could help the students remember English grammar items longer.

Then, to investigate whether games could provide students with opportunities and challenges to practice English, Question 9 was asked to find out whether the tenth graders had chances to practice English with games. Question 10 investigated whether the tenth graders were able to help the others or be helped by the others in using English when they played games in groups or teams. Last, Question 11 was a Yes-No question which was used to ask the tenth graders to explore whether students liked playing games in English grammar classes or not. The last question, Question 12, was about how often they liked studying English grammar with games.

At the end of the experiment, handed it out to Class 10C4 and asked them to fill in the questionnaire. It was written in Vietnamese to avoid participants' misunderstanding and to collect precise information. It took tenth graders about twenty minutes to finish the questionnaire and return it to the teacher.

4. Findings and Discussions

After being collected, the data were computerized and analyzed with the assistance of the software SPSS 16.0 so that the results of the research were revealed. In this chapter, the results of the research and its discussion are going to be laid out in tables, graphs, and prose in response to two research questions.

- 1) What are students' attitudes to learning grammar with games?
- 2) How does learning grammar with games affect students' performance?

4.1. Data analysis methodology

The data for the research came mainly from two sources: questionnaires and tests. First, the questionnaire was answered by 41 students of Class 10C4 who learnt grammar with the application of games. Second, the tests were taken by students from the two classes: 10C4 and 10C3 who learnt grammar in the normal way in the first semester of the school year 2013-2014 at Diên Hải High School. There was a total of four tests used in the experiment. The students' test papers were collected, marked and evaluated according to the ten-mark scale. It was divided into four levels: good level (from 9 to 10 marks), fairly good level (from 7 to 8 marks), average level (from 5 to 6 marks), and weak level (from 0

to under 5 marks). There were 10 items from Test 1 to Test 3; each item was equivalent to 1 mark except Test 4. In Test 4 I used the results of the first final semester test. There were many items in the first final semester test. However, I just selected four items which related to the grammar points applied with games in the experiment and remarked them a totally 10. Because of the ten-mark scale, each item was equivalent to 2.5 marks. Thus, the final test marks had to be rounded (for example: the test mark was 2.5 would be rounded 3.0)

With the assistance of SPSS, the students' questionnaire data were analyzed from Question 1 to Question 12 via the percentage and mean. The data in the questionnaire were presented in two themes (1) learning English grammar prior to the time using games with the data from Question 1 and 2 and (2) learning English grammar with games with the data from Question 3 to 12. Question 3 to 10 had the five scales to rank the evaluation of students with 1 coded for the level of totally disagree and 5 for totally agree. The level of students' acceptance was roughly divided as follows:

- 4.5 - 5 : very high
- 3.5 - 4.4 : high
- 2.5 - 3.4 : average
- 1.5 - 2.4 : low
- 0 - 1.4 : weak

Then, the independent-sample t-tests were applied to explore whether there were any statistical differences among the mean scores of the four tests between two different groups. The results of 4 tests were used to compare to each other, i.e. the result of Test 1 in Class 10C4 (or the experimental group, EG) was used to compare with the result of Test 1 in Class 10C3 (or the control group, CG), and the same for Test 2, Test 3 and Test 4. Besides, the comparison was also presented among students' scores of each class from Test 1 to Test 4 to demonstrate the possible improvement in students' performance.

4.2. Questionnaire analysis and discussion

4.2.1. Theme 1: Learning English grammar prior to the time using games

4.2.1.1. Question 1

The results from Question 1 showed how important grammar was in English learning to students' perceptions. Obviously, if students considered grammar as an important aspect in learning English, they of course would pay more attention to it. This result can be seen in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1: Question 1's results

Question	N = 41						Mean
	Very important (3)		Important (2)		Not important at all (1)		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
1. What do you think of learning English grammar?	30	73,2	11	26.8	0	0	2.7

As shown in Table 4.1, most of the participants (73.2%) supposed that English was very important, and 26.8% of them thought that English grammar was important in learning English. A high mean score of 2.7 reflected that the majority of students believed that English grammar was very important to their learning because most of the tests students did in class or in an exam were mainly focused on grammar. Possibly, this finding was due to the fact that the mastery of grammar would help students get high marks to pass conventional grammar-based tests such as the semester test, high school graduation test or university entrance examination.

4.2.1.2. Question 2

The result of Question 2 revealed whether participants had been interested in learning English grammar without games during the past school year. This result can be summarized in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2: Question 2's results

Question	N = 41						Mean
	Very interested (3)		Interested (2)		Not interested at all (1)		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	
2. Last school year, were you interested in learning English grammar without games?	5	12.2	4	9.8	32	78.0	1.3

As shown in Table 4.2, only 12.2% of students felt very interested in grammar that they had learnt before; there were 9.8% of students who felt interested, and 78% of them agreed with the idea that learning English grammar without games was not interesting at all. These percentages resulted in a low mean score of 1.3; that is, although most students thought English grammar was important in their learning, the majority of them found it uninteresting to learn grammar without games. So far students had been learning English grammar to please their parents, and teachers or to pass the exams, not for their interests. That practicing grammar by only doing grammar exercises was quite tedious and unexciting to them.

4.2.2. Theme 2: Learning English grammar with games

4.2.2.1. Questions 3, 4 and 5

Whether games brought about an exciting and relaxed atmosphere was investigated in Questions 3, 4, and 5. Question 3 aimed at finding out if students were less stressful and felt relaxed in a grammar class. Question 4 investigated if students were more interested in a grammar class when learning English grammar with games. Question 5 examined whether students were not afraid of making mistakes when using English in games. The results were displayed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3: Question 3', 4' and 5' results

Question	N = 41										M
	Totally agree (5)		Agree (4)		Not sure (3)		Disagree (2)		Totally disagree (1)		
	N	%	N	%			N	%	N	%	
3. Learning English grammar with games is less stressful and relaxed.	33	80.5	2	4.9	4	9.8	1	2.4	1	2.4	4.6
4. Learning English grammar with games is more interesting in the classroom	33	80.5	2	4.9	5	14.6	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.7
5. Learning English grammar with games you have opportunities to use words or structures that you have learnt without being afraid of making mistakes.	26	63.4	4	9.8	6	14.6	3	7.3	2	4.9	4.2

As can be seen from Table 4.3, the results from the Questions of 3 and 4 indicated that most of the students (85.4%) totally agreed and agreed that learning English grammar with games is less stressful and makes the grammar class more interesting. This high agreement led to a very high mean scores (4.6 for Question 3, and 4.7 for Question 4). The results proved that most the students might enjoy learning grammar with games as they found it interesting and not stressful. With Question 5, 73.2% of students totally agreed and agreed that, with games, they could have opportunities to use words or structures they learnt without being afraid of making mistakes, which led to a high mean score of 4.2. As stated above, students felt really relaxed when learning English grammar with games; and when they felt relaxed in studying, they could practice English using the forms without being afraid of making mistakes; hence, they could make much progress in their learning process.

However, there was still a minority of students who totally disagreed or disagreed with these ideas. For Question 3, 2.4% of students disagreed and the same number totally disagreed. With Question 4, 14.6% of students showed their uncertainty. This finding may be explained by the fact that, in students' belief, using games was too noisy and took a lot of class time. Towards Question 5, there were still 12.2% of students expressing their disagreement and total disagreement. This unsatisfying result may be explained by the fact that communicating in English was still unfamiliar to some students; they seemed to be shy and did not want to talk to their friends.

All the data from Question 3 to Question 5 indicated that games brought about an amusing atmosphere in learning. Most of the students who had learnt English grammar with games almost agreed that games brought an exciting and relaxed atmosphere in class. The interesting and joyful atmosphere in games might keep students motivated. It was clear that the way students acquired the new knowledge did not necessarily depend on the teachers but depended on the students who made it different by their comfort,

happiness and willingness to study in the learning lessons. Students learning with fun and encouragement would find it worthy and helpful to be involved in the learning process.

4.2.2.2. Questions 6, 7 and 8

As mentioned in Chapter 3, the Questions 6, 7, and 8 were developed to investigate whether games could create a learning supportive environment or not. A learning environment was good when it could make students active and motivated in learning and helped them understand or remember what they learnt longer. The analyzed results were displayed in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Question 6', 7' and 8' results

Question	N = 41										M
	Totally agree (5)		Agree (4)		Not sure (3)		Disagree (2)		Totally disagree (1)		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
6. Learning English grammar with games creates the learning motivation in class.	26	63.4	4	9.8	9	22.0	1	2.4	1	2.4	4.3
7. Learning English grammar with games makes you more active	34	82.9	2	4.9	3	7.3	1	2.4	1	2.4	4.6
8. Learning English grammar with games can help you remember English grammar items longer.	26	63.4	5	12.2	8	19.5	1	2.4	1	2.4	4.3

With Question 6, most of the students totally agreed that games created learning motivation in class. Learning motivation was created when games were played. The total number of students who strongly agreed or agreed was the highest, 73.2% students; whereas, the total number of students who disagreed or totally disagreed was just a little (4.8%). The pattern of answers resulted in a high mean score of 4.3. It indicated that through games, students could not only have a chance to play with their friends but also to explore and practice new structures instead of learning by heart.

For Question 7, 36 students totally agreed or agreed that learning grammar with games made them more active (accounting for 87.8%). Meanwhile, just 4.8% of students did not really agree. The answers resulted in a very high mean score of 4.6. This finding may be explained by the following detailed discussion. With all kinds of games, the majority of students really played them while still few did not want to take part in them because of the two common reasons: (1) their health or their mood at that time, (2) large-sized teams. Of course, when students did not feel healthy or were not ready to play games, they were not active enough in learning; besides, the team might be so crowded that some of the members did nothing.

The summarized data of Question 8 reflected in Table 4.4 also showed that 75.6% of students agreed that learning by playing games was much more effective because they could remember structures or rules longer, 19.5% of students chose unsure answers while 4.8% of students did not support this idea. The majority of students approved of this statement resulting in a high mean score of 4.3. Clearly, with the help of games, the students could remember what they had learnt longer and apply rules to their exercises more easily. Although some students did not support this statement, this small number of students did not cause real concern to teachers who applied games in English classes.

Broadly, all the data of the Questions 6, 7, and 8 revealed that most of the students who had learnt English grammar with games totally agreed that games could create a learning environment. In other words, students might be able to realize that the aim of learning was achieved when games were applied. Through games, students could have opportunities to play with their friends and practice new structures instead of just learning by heart. Such meaningful activities could help students acquire the new knowledge easier and remember what they had learned longer.

4.2.2.3. Question 9 and Question 10

Question 9 was used to testify the idea that games could provide students with opportunities and challenges to practice English and Question 10 was developed to investigate whether learning English grammar with games could make their learning more effective when working in groups or teams. The results were summarized in Table 4.5.

Table 4.5: Question 9' and 10' results

Question	N = 41										M
	Totally agree (5)		Agree (4)		Not sure (3)		Disagree (2)		Totally disagree (1)		
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
9. Learning English grammar with games provides you with opportunities and challenges to practice English grammar.	25	61.0	6	14.6	10	24.4	0	0.0	0	0.0	4.4
10. Learning English grammar with games helps your work in groups or teams more effectively.	23	56.1	6	14.6	10	24.4	1	2.4	1	2.4	4.2

As can be seen in Table 4.5, a large number of students (75.6%) totally agreed or agreed that games could provide them with opportunities and challenges to practice English grammar with their friends; and 70.7% of students totally agreed or agreed with the idea that games could make their learning English more effective because when playing games in groups or teams they could help each other a lot. The positive responses led to a high mean score of 4.4 for Question 9 and 4.2 for Question 10. That is, these numbers of

students acknowledged the benefits of games and enjoyed playing grammar games in class because when playing games, they could tackle the structures given. Moreover, they could compete with their friends in teams or groups for the highest marks to get winning. However, there were still a minority of students who disagreed or totally disagreed with these ideas. In Question 9, there were 10 students, occupying 24.4% who were not sure; and in Question 10 there were just 2 students with 4.8% who disagreed or totally disagreed. Maybe because of their shyness or timidity, they did not see the benefits in practicing English with peers and communication was a rather vague target in learning English. In learning English in high schools so far, they hardly practiced English structures orally.

4.2.2.4. Question 11

Question 11 was developed to inquire about the students' opinion about the usefulness of learning grammar with games. Dealing with this question, the students were asked to simply select one of the two options (yes/no). The result was summarized in Table 4.6.

Table 4.6: Question 11' results

Question	N = 41			
	Yes		No	
	N	%	N	%
11. Do you think games are useful for learning English grammar?	39	95.1	2	4.9

As shown in Table 4.6, a large number of students had positive answers, 95.1%, which surpassed the negative ones – 4.9%. 4.9% of students might not want to learn English with games. They might think that games were not useful for their learning because playing games did not give them a chance to learn. However, the benefits of learning English with games were confirmed by the strong agreement of 39 students in class. These students thought that games were useful for their learning English grammar maybe because they realized that their results were improved better day by day. They could remember English structures which helped them in doing exercises and games really made them happy and relaxed during grammar periods.

4.2.2.5. Question 12

Question 12 was designed to examine how often the participants would like to study English grammar with games. Dealing with this question, students had to choose one of the four option levels: always – frequently – sometimes – never. The collected data could be summarized in Table 4.7.

Table 4.7: Question 12' results

Question	Always (every period)		Frequently (once a week)		Sometimes (once a month)		Never	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
12. How often do you like studying English grammar with games?	11	26.8	25	61.0	3	7.3	2	4.9

As can be seen in Table 4.7, only 4.9% of students did not want to have games in their lessons. This coincidence with 4.9% of students who found that games were not useful to them. 7.3% of students wanted to play games once a month. 26.8% of students wanted to play games every period; maybe this group of students were really excited when learning with games, so they wanted to have more chances to practice English with games. Whereas, 61.0% of students preferred to study English grammar with games once a week. This great number showed that, in some ways, games could attract students' interest and were useful to them; but this strength of games could not subdue their high awareness of the necessity of doing grammar exercises. In other words, students did not completely believe in the whole replacement of games for written exercises they got used to doing in class. Studying English grammar with games once a week might be the best frequency in class; and besides games, teachers could rely on other activities to enhance students learning of grammar.

4.2.3. Conclusion

The questionnaire was used to supply the answers to Research question 1: What are the effects of games on students' learning English grammar?

Most of the students asserted that English grammar was very important to their learning, as all students in the class (100%) thought that English games were important in learning English. Anyhow, the majority of students (78%) confessed that learning English grammar without games was not interesting at all in the previous semesters.

These findings from the questionnaire once again confirmed the reviewed literature which discussed the major benefits of games in Part II. First, students very strongly believed games could bring about an amusing atmosphere in a grammar class. Besides, games made a grammar class more interesting and less stressful and with games, students could have opportunities to use words or structures they learnt without being afraid of making mistakes. Schultz and Fisher (1988) state stress is always a major hindrance in the language learning process; therefore, it is necessary to create an amusing atmosphere in class to make students feel more eager in learning a new language and games could help do that. These findings also matched the idea of Byrne (1991) and Hadfield (2000), who argued that using games in English classrooms always brings about a joyful and relaxing atmosphere. Games were considered as playing, which meant relaxing and enjoyable activities for all kinds of students. When students feel more comfortable and relaxed, their minds might be more attentive and receptive, and then

they acquire new knowledge of language more easily. In other words, an exciting and relaxed atmosphere from games leads to interesting learning.

Second, games could create a learning environment. With a high level of agreement, students believed that learning English grammar with games created learning motivation in class, that the learning environment created by playing games made them more active and that games could help them remember English grammar items longer. In this case, games could be considered an effective tool in grammar teaching and learning. As far as known, games can make a difference in any learning environment.

Third, with a high level of agreement, students confirmed that games could create more opportunities for students to practice English with friends and games could make their learning English more effective because when playing games in groups or teams, they could help each other a lot. This result seemed to be consistent with those of Carrier (1985) and Hadfield (1999), who stated that games and activities are invaluable to the teacher of a foreign language. Games, according to them, provide an opportunity for students to use their language skills in a less formal situation. Also, the inclusion of games as an integral part of any language syllabus provides an opportunity for intensive language practice, offers a context in which language is used meaningfully and as a means to an end, and acts as a diagnostic tool for the teacher, highlighting areas of difficulty.

Last but not least, when students were asked to give opinions about the usefulness of learning grammar with games, in general, almost all students agreed that learning grammar with games was useful, but most of them preferred learning with games once a week.

Among the questions students answered when they learnt English grammar with games from Question 3 to Question 10, it could be seen that the benefit that students agreed on the most was that learning English grammar with games was more interesting in the classroom. This agreement led to the highest mean score of 4.7. Next was that learning grammar with games made students more active with a mean score = 4.6. Of the same rank was that learning English grammar with games was less stressful with a mean score = 4.6. Such the number of students' answers about learning English grammar with games, we could infer that students felt interested in grammar lessons. They would be free to talk, play and share their idea. They were no longer forced to learn English grammar the previous time. With games, students had chances to take part in the activities. While they were playing games, they did not think that they were learning English grammar. They tried their best to win the games. They used different ways so that they could finish their task. In addition, most students were active to play games because games made them feel happy and relaxed, and they were willing to join the activities in the grammar lesson thanks to the attraction of games. However, there were few students who were not interested in working in groups or teams with games. They did not believe games could help work in the group more effectively. Ranked the last was that learning English grammar with games helps learners' working in groups or teams more effective with a mean score = 4.2. Maybe they thought that they had a few chances

to show their ability because some good students in groups or teams gave the answer more quickly or their group had few good students but many weak students, so their group did not work effectively. Therefore, in playing games teachers should mix fast and low students together in groups and try to give every member in groups or teams opportunities equally. Also, students still were anxious about making mistakes even with games as they ranked the last with a mean score = 4.2.

4.3. Test data analysis and discussion

4.3.1. Test 1's results

This section will give information about the results of Test 1 between the two groups after learning *past perfect tense* of Unit 3 in Tieng Anh 10 textbook. The collected data were calculated and summarized in Table 4.8 and Figure 4.1.

Table 4.8: Test 1's results

Group \ Level	Weak		Average		Fairly good		Good		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Experimental	15	36.6	18	43.9	6	14.6	2	4.9	5.6
Control	19	46.3	17	41.5	4	9.8	1	2.4	4.0

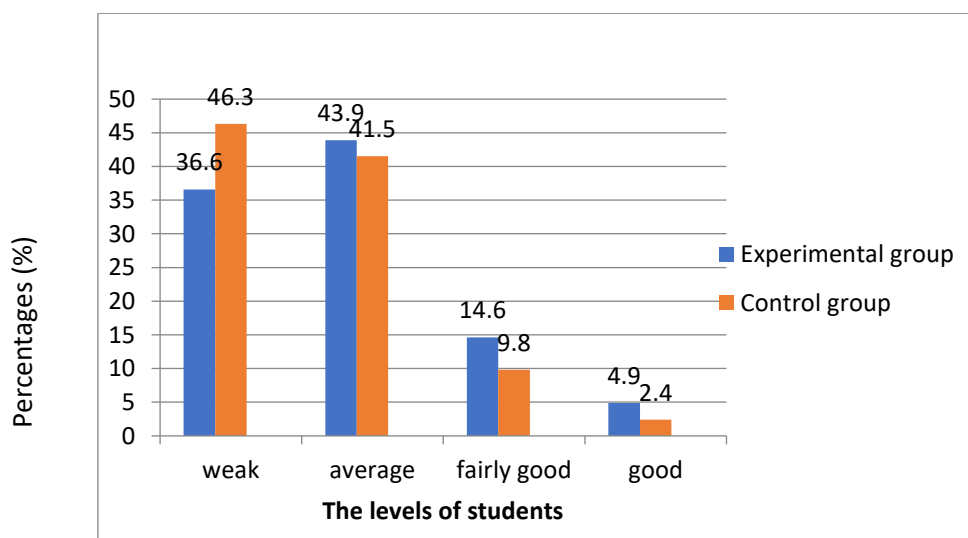


Figure 4.1: Test 1's results of two groups

In reference to the score of Test 1 between the two groups shown in Table 4.8 and Figure 4.1, the number of students getting weak marks in the experimental group was much lower than that of the control group (36.6% versus 46.3%). This meant that learning English grammar with games may be more useful for weak students to improve their knowledge; thus, they tended to make more progress than those in the control group did. Conversely, also revealed in Test 1, the numbers of average, fairly good and good students in the experimental group were higher than those in the control group. Particularly, the percentages for these three levels within the two groups respectively were 43.9% versus 41.5% for the average level, 14.6% versus 9.8% for the fairly good level,

and 4.9% versus 2.4% for the good level. Maybe the students in the experimental group who had more grammar practice with games could grasp the usage of *past perfect tense* better; therefore, they could perform the test better.

In addition, to explore whether there were any significant differences between the mean scores of the two groups, the Independence-samples T-test was applied and the results were summarized in Table 4.9.

Table 4.9: Summary of the T-Test result for Test 1

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Test 1	Equal variances assumed	4.738	.032	-3.786	80	.000	-1.60976	.42519	-2.45591	-.76360
	Equal variances not assumed			-3.786	74.384	.000	-1.60976	.42519	-2.45689	-.76262
Mean	Control group	4.0244								
	Experimental group	5.6341								

As observed in Table 4.9, Test 1 mean score for the experimental group was 5.6 while the mean for the control group was only 4.0. With *p-value* = .000 < .05, these figures demonstrated that students who learnt English grammar with games got significantly better scores than those who just did exercises and learnt grammar without games.

4.3.2. Test 2's results

This section will give information about the results of Test 2 between the two groups after learning *the + adjective; which as a connector* of Unit 4 in Tieng Anh 10 textbook. The collected data were calculated and summarized in Table 4.10 and Figure 4.2.

Table 4.10: Test 2's results

Group \ Level	Weak		Average		Fairly good		Good		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Experimental	14	34.1	16	39.0	7	17.1	4	9.8	5.7
Control	15	36.6	19	46.3	5	12.2	2	4.9	4.8

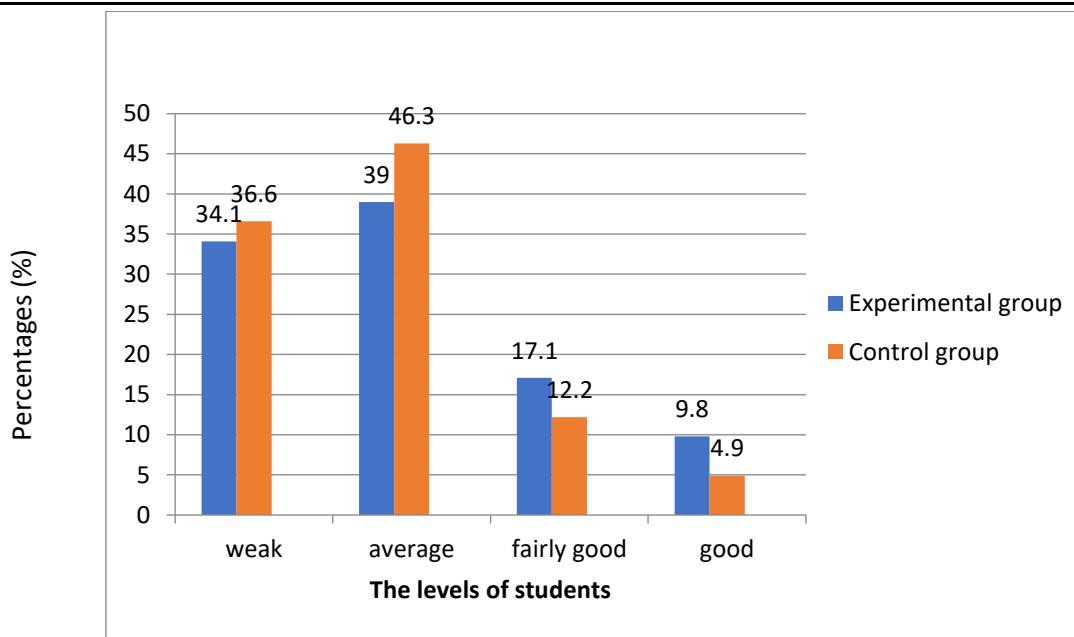


Figure 4.2: Test 2's results of two groups

The results of Test 2 reflected in Table 4.10 and Figure 4.2 showed that the percentage of students getting weak marks in the experimental group was 34.1%; meanwhile that in the control one was 36.6%. Although the number of students having average marks in the experimental group was 39.0%, lower than that in the control one 46.3%, the percentage of students getting fairly good marks and good marks in the experimental group was sequenced from 17.1% and 9.8% which were much higher than those in the control group 12.2% and 4.9%. This proved that the experimental group was far better than the control group after learning *the + adjective* and *which as a connector* with games.

In comparison with Test 1, the weak students, accounting for 36.6% in Test 1 scores in the experimental group slightly decreased to 34.1% in Test 2. This fact was the same in the control group (46.3% of Test 2 compared with 36.6% of Test 1). Although the number of average students in the experimental group decreased from 43.9% in Test 1 to 39% in Test 2, that of the control one increased from 41.5% in Test 1 to 46.3% in Test 2.

On the other hand, for the fairly good level in both groups, the number of students really increased in Test 2 (for the experimental group: 17.1% versus 14.6%; for the control one: 12.2% versus 9.8%). The percentage of good students in the experimental group changed a lot, 4.9% in Test 1 and 9.8% in Test 2. Meanwhile, that of the control group changed a little, 2.4% in Test 1 and 4.9% in Test 2. It is visible from the test results after two weeks, that students in both groups had a tendency to be better in learning grammar even though they learnt English grammar with games or without games.

Table 4.11: Summary of the T-Test result for Test 2

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Test 2	Equal variances assumed	1.319	.254	-2.040	80	.045	-.90244	.44226	-1.78257	-.02230
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.040	77.496	.045	-.90244	.44226	-1.78301	-.02187
Mean	Control group	4.7561								
	Experimental group	5.6585								

The results of Test 2 displayed in Table 4.11 showed that the *p-value* = .045 confirmed that there was a difference between students in the experimental group and the control group. The experimental group with the intervention of games in learning grammar, with an average mark of students 5.7, significantly higher than that of the control group which was 4.8, made much more progress than students in the control one did.

4.3.3. Test 3's results

This section will give information about the results of Test 3 between the two groups after learning *because of* and *in spite of* of Unit 7 in Tieng Anh 10 textbook. The collected data were calculated and summarized in Table 4.12 and Figure 4.3.

Table 4.12: Test 3's results

Group \ Level	Weak		Average		Fairly good		Good		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Experimental	10	24.4	13	31.7	13	31.7	5	12.2	6.2
Control	13	31.7	17	41.5	8	19.5	3	7.3	5.2

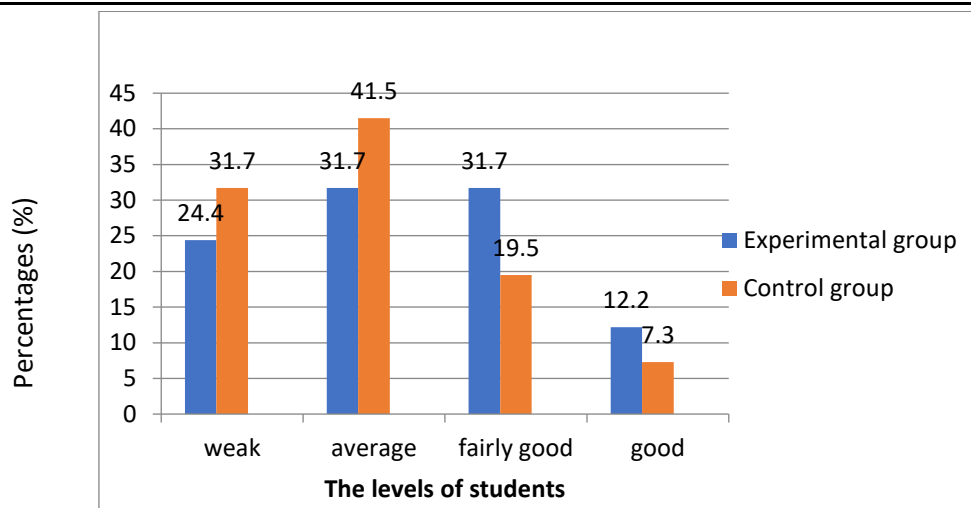


Figure 4.3: Test 3's results of two groups

Test 3 results reflected in Table 4.12 and Figure 4.3 showed that the number of students getting weak marks in the control group was higher than that in the experimental group, 31.7% versus 24.4% of the experimental group. For the average marks, the percentage was 41.5% for the control group, much higher than that of the experimental, 31.7%. On the contrary, the number of fairly good students in the experimental group was higher than that of the control group, 31.7% versus 19.5%. Similarly, for good students, the experimental group was 12.2%, higher than that of the control group which was 7.3%. Maybe students in the experimental group who learnt English grammar with games could use *because of* and *in spite of* better because they got higher marks than those students in the control group.

In comparison with Test 2, the number of weak and average students in both groups decreased considerably in Test 3 (for the experimental group: 24.4% weak students versus 34.1%, and 31.7% average students versus 39%; for the control group: 31.7% weak students versus 36.6%, 41.5% average students versus 46.3%). The number of students in the experimental group getting fairly good marks and good marks in Test 3 in the experimental group was much higher than those in Test 2 (31.7% versus 17.1% for fairly good students, and 12.2% versus 9.8% for good students). The number of students getting fairly good marks increased from 12.2% in Test 2 to 19.5% in Test 3 and good marks increased from 4.9% in Test 2 to 7.3% in Test 3 in the control group. It could be seen very clearly that students in both groups made progress through time namely from Test 2 to Test 3, but students of the experimental group had better performance than those of the control group.

Table 4.13: Summary of the T-Test result for Test 3

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Test 3	Equal variances assumed	1.030	.313	-2.411	80	.018	-1.00000	.41471	-1.82529	-.17471
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.411	79.855	.018	-1.00000	.41471	-1.82531	-.17469
Mean	Control group	5.2195								
	Experimental group	6.2195								

The results of Test 3 reported in Table 4.13 confirmed that the result of the experimental group ($M = 6.2$) was significantly higher than that of the control group ($M = 5.2$) with $p\text{-value} = .018 < .05$.

4.3.4. Test 4 results

This section will give information about the results of Test 4 between the two groups. The result of Test 4 was done from 4 items of grammar points related to the experiment in the first-semester test. The collected data were calculated and summarized in Table 4.14 and Figure 4.4.

Table 4.14: Test 4's results

Group \ Level	Weak		Average		Fairly good		Good		Mean
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	
Experimental	6	14.7	14	34.1	14	34.1	7	17.1	6.6
Control	11	26.8	17	41.4	9	22.0	4	9.8	5.5

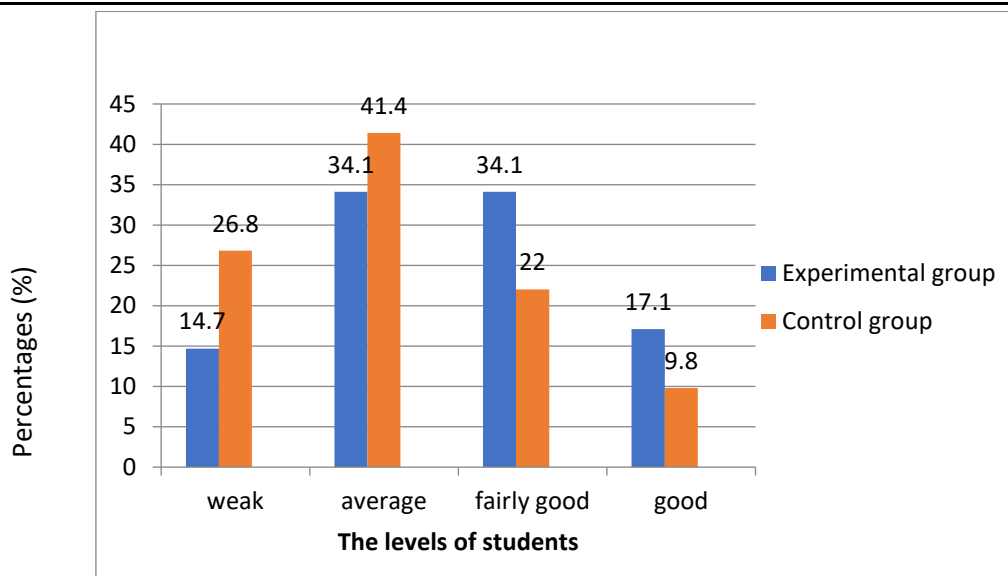


Figure 4.4: Test 4's results of two groups

As reflected in Table 4.14 and Figure 4.4, the trend was repeated as in Test 2 and 3. The number of students getting weak marks in the experimental group was 14.7%; meanwhile that in the control group was nearly double, 26.8%. The number of students having average marks in both groups was 31.4% in the experimental group and 41.4% in the control group. The experimental group had a smaller number of weak and average students than those of the control group. Conversely, the experimental had a larger number of fairly good and good students. It could be seen very clearly that in Test 4, the numbers of students getting fairly good marks and good marks in the experimental group were considerably higher than those in the control group (for fairly good students: 34.1% versus 22%; for good students: 17.1% versus 9.8%).

In comparison with Test 3, the number of weak students in both groups decreased considerably (for the experimental group: 24.4% in Test 3 versus 14.7% in Test 4; for the control one: 31.7% in Test 3 versus 26.8% in Test 4). For the fairly good and good students in both groups, the number of students really increased in Test 4 (for fairly good students, Test 3, 31.7% versus Test 4, 34.1% in the experimental group; and Test 3, 19.5% versus Test 4, 22% in the control group; For good students, Test 3, 12.2% versus Test 4, 17.1% in the experimental group; and Test 3, 7.3% versus Test 4, 9.8% in the control group). It can be seen very clearly that in Test 4, the test result was stronger and stronger with the time via Test 3 and 4 results.

The results of Test 4 as indicated in Table 4.15 showed that the score of the experimental group ($M = 6.6$) was significantly higher than that of the control group ($M = 5.5$) with $p\text{-value} = .041 < .05$. This showed that the students of the experimental group made better progress than the students of the control group did.

Table 4.15: Summary of the T-Test result for Test 4

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	T	Df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
									Lower	Upper
Test 4	Equal variances assumed	.224	.637	-2.074	80	.041	-1.12195	.54108	-2.19874	-.04516
	Equal variances not assumed			-2.074	79.547	.041	-1.12195	.54108	-2.19884	-.04507
Mean	Control group	5.4634								
	Experimental group	6.5854								

4.3.5. Comparison among the four tests

Graphs 4.5 and 4.6 below will present more clearly the changes in the number of weak and good students from Test 1 to Test 4 within both groups. Both groups had fewer and fewer weak students, but the experimental group had much fewer weak students. The control group had 46.3% weak students in Test 1 but the number decreased to 26.8% in Test 4. Similarly, the experimental group had 36.6% in Test 1, and the number went down to 34.1% in Test 2, 24.4% in Test 3 and finally 14.7% in Test 4. In addition, there were great changes in good students in the experimental group; particularly, the number of good students increased from 4.9% in Test 1 to 17.1% in Test 4. Meanwhile, the number of good students in the control group tended to increase but was still lower than that of the experimental group. Clearly, the students of the experimental group made greater progress than the students of the control group.

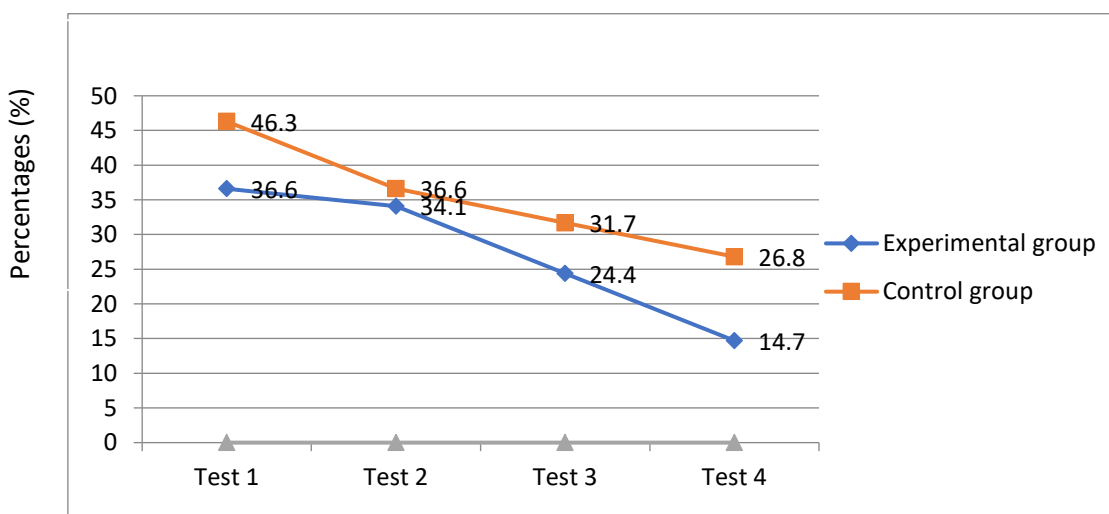


Figure 4.5: The percentages of weak students on four tests

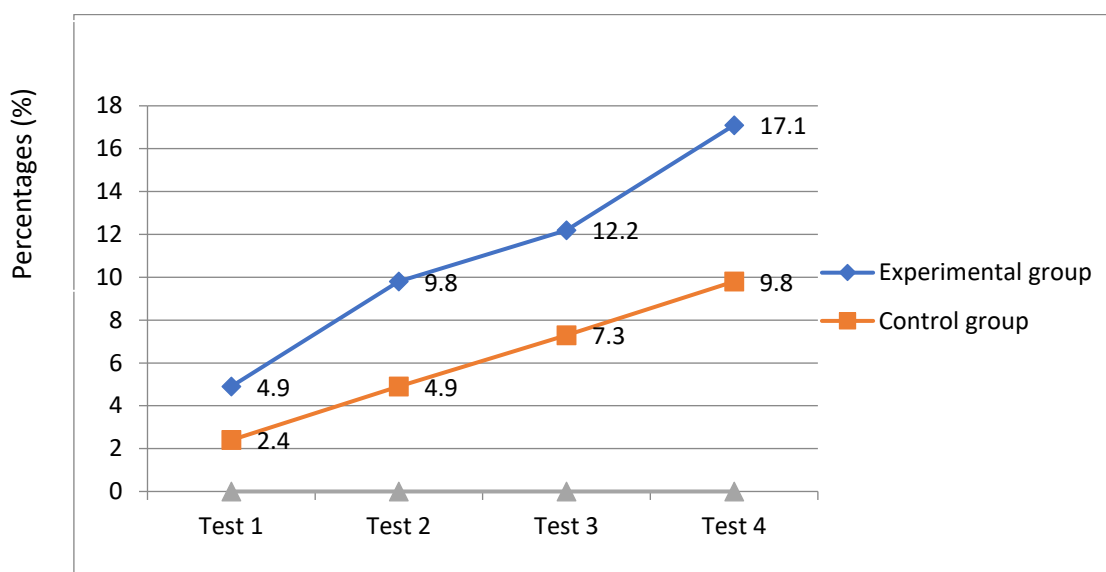


Figure 4.6: The percentages of good students on four tests

For more evidence of the progress, both group students got from Test 1 to Test 4, Table 4.16 below will show all of the mean scores of each test.

Table 4.16: The mean scores of each test in both groups

Group \ Test	Test 1	Test 2	Test 3	Test 4
Experimental	5.6	5.7	6.2	6.6
Control	4.0	4.8	5.2	5.5

As we can see in Table 4.16, students made progress from Test 1 to Test 4. In the experimental group, the mean score increased from 5.6 in Test 1 to 6.6 in Test 4. Similarly, the mean score went up from 4.0 in Test 1 to 5.5 in Test 4 in the control group. Moreover, there was an increase in each test in the experimental group through time namely 5.6 in Test 1, 5.7 in Test 2, 6.2 in Test 3 and 6.6 in Test 4, and the result also went on increasing in the control group 4.0 in Test 1, 4.8 in Test 2, 5.2 in Test 3 and 5.5 in Test 4. This result once confirmed that the mean score of both groups was higher and higher over time. However, the mean of marks of students in the experimental group was significantly higher than that of their counterparts in the control one on every test.

Briefly, the effects of games besides those reflected in the questionnaire results were also reflected via Điền Hải tenth graders' scores in the four tests. The results of these four tests showed that in general the students of the experimental group could learn English grammar better than the students of the control group did because, in the experimental group, the number of good students in four tests was much higher than that in the control group. The number of fairly good students in the experimental group was higher as well. Conversely, the number of weak and average students in the experimental group decreased considerably from Test 1 to Test 4 and they were less than that in the control group. In other words, there was a positive change in the proportion

of weak and average students in the experimental group. In general, the experimental group tended to have fewer weak and average students and more fairly good and good students than the control group did. Although both groups had better results over time in learning English grammar, it was likely that the experimental students who learnt grammar with games could learn grammar better than the control ones did and they had higher scores on tests.

With the high mean score of Test 3, it can be included that students learned English grammar the most effectively with Chess game in comparison with the mean score of Test 1 and Test 2 in the experimental group. Besides, among the three kinds of games, students might like Chess game the most because the rules of playing Chess game were nearly the same as the rules of playing Domino game – a very famous and interesting game that most the tenth graders like. In addition, the Chess game was very simple to carry out in class. During the process of playing the game, I could see that students played the game with enthusiasm even though they were weak students.

Nguyen's study and this study all investigated the effects of games on the tenth graders in a high school in a rural area. In comparison with the study of Nguyen (2010), she used questionnaires, observation and an experimental project in her study. The questionnaires for teachers and students just focused on the difficulties in learning English grammar and she used linguistic games for all grammar points in the second semester of Tieng Anh 10 textbook at Hung Vuong Highschool; whereas I used a questionnaire to find out the attitude of students towards learning English grammar with games and I just applied grammar games for some new grammar points in the first semester of Tieng Anh textbook at Dien Hai Highschool.

The findings obtained from the study of Nguyen (2010) revealed that using games in grammar class could stimulate tenth graders' interest and enhance their retention when they learnt any grammar points; while the findings from my study discovered the benefits of games as that games could create amusing atmosphere, the learning environment and the opportunities for students to practice, especially games could also promote students' academic performance.

5. Conclusions and Recommendations

5.1. Conclusion

The study was conducted with the purpose to investigate the feasibility and the merits of the implementation of learning grammar with games for the students of Dien Hai Highschool. It was successful in seeking evidence for the effects of this application based on the following research questions:

- 1) What are students' attitudes to learning grammar with games?
- 2) How does learning grammar with games affect students' performance?

In general, the findings discussed in the previous chapter are confirmed by the literature in chapter 2. They showed that learning grammar with games appealed to the students' interest in grammar lessons, and gave them a learning atmosphere and chances

to practice. In addition, this implementation indeed helped the students improve their grammar performance. Specifically, the two major conclusions which could be drawn from the findings on the research question of the present study are going to be summarized as follows.

First, the finding on the research question confirmed Hadfield (1999) and Carrier (1985) ideas on games' benefits even in a rural learning condition at Dien Hai Highschool. Learning English grammar with games enhanced the positive attitude of the students. The effects were that: (1) More than two-thirds of students believed games could bring about an amusing atmosphere in a grammar class. Besides, games made a grammar class more interesting and less stressful and with games, students could have opportunities to use words or structures they learnt without being afraid of making mistakes. With the benefits of games above, we could see that an amusing atmosphere from games leads to interesting learning. (2) Games could create a learning environment. With a very high level of agreement, students believed that learning English grammar with games created learning motivation in class, that the learning environment created by playing games made them more active and that games could help them remember English grammar items longer. In this case, games could be considered an effective tool in grammar teaching and learning and (3) games could create more opportunities for students to practice English with friends and games could make their learning English more effective because when playing games in groups or teams, they could help each other a lot. With a very high level of agreement, Games really helped students a lot in their learning English grammar. During the procedure of the experiment, the students' interest and involvement in the training process maintained from the first to the last lesson. When games started, students were naturally involved in activities. Therefore, they had to try to think, to act, to speak, to demonstrate things on the blackboard. All of these led to the improvements of the students in their English grammar learning.

The findings derived from the questionnaire showed the participants' high evaluation of learning English grammar with games. Anyhow, not all students found games suitable for their learning although the benefits of games were that games could create an amusing atmosphere, the learning environment and the opportunities and challenges for students to practice English grammar which was the requirement for how to learn grammar well. Maybe some good students thought that games would take a lot of time instead of using them for doing exercises. Some good students had high motivation in learning. They learnt English grammar well without applying games. However, most students wanted to learn English grammar with games. When they had a chance to learn English grammar with games, they felt relaxed and comfortable. They were not under a lot of study pressure as they used to. Besides, to learn English grammar more effectively, two-thirds of students preferred to study with games once a week. They did not want to learn English grammar with games every period because they had exercises to do and did not get enough time to play several times a week. With a very high level of agreement about the benefits of applying games in learning English grammar, this enhanced the constructive view on learning English grammar with games

to the teachers of English in Dien Hai Highschool and fostered them thoroughly in applying it to boost their students' learning.

Second, the finding in Research question 2 revealed that the students who learned grammar with games got significantly higher scores than the control did. By cooperative in games, students practiced English structures again and again which helped them a lot in memorization and their interest was built while playing games. This could help students a lot in doing exercises as well as taking tests. Clearly, the results of the students who learnt grammar with games far outweighed those of the students who learned grammar without games. Via four tests, the difference in the result of the two groups was proved to be statistically significant. Therefore, the finding revealed that learning English grammar with games did benefit the students in their academic performance.

In sum, it was entirely safe to conclude that the implementation of learning English grammar with games could enhance the students' interest in learning English grammar, games could create a learning atmosphere and provide chances for practice, and really promoted the students' performance. Additionally, the success of the experiment yielded a strong belief in the great merits and the feasibility of applying games in learning English grammar at *Điền Hải High School* within certain constraints of facility conditions. However, for a game to achieve its purpose, it is necessary that teachers should consider some factors such as deciding on which game to use, the time to use the game in their classrooms and how to give feedback and reward. Hence, for a game to become pedagogically successful, it is important that teachers should be aware of the factors affecting the success of a game.

5.2. Recommendations

In order to make grammar practice with games more effective in class, I would like to raise three suggestions to the English teachers at Dien Hai Highschool or any high schools of similar conditions: choosing proper games, managing time and class and giving rewards and proper feedback.

5.2.1. Choosing proper games

Teachers should be careful about choosing games if they want to make them advantageous. First of all, teachers should decide on the purpose of a game. There are many kinds of grammar games. Depending on the objective of grammar points, the teacher can choose suitable games for that grammar point. For instance, searching games might be suitable for teaching *the past perfect tense*, chess games for teaching *which as a connector*, *in spite of* and *because of* and guessing games for teaching *the + adjective*.

In addition, games should be suitable for the level of the students. Teachers should select the relevant games at an appropriate level so that the learning objectives can be achieved. If games are too difficult for students to play, the students will not receive the new knowledge and they will turn to be neglectful of their studies. In the searching game, for example, weak students cannot describe the item on the card but the good ones can. Therefore, in a weak class, teachers should prepare some sentences describing the item

and add them to the card or avoid using this kind of game in a weak class. Moreover, teachers should give clear instructions so as to help students to master the game rule.

Besides, teachers should keep in mind that games must enable interaction and participation. Learners learn better when they interact with their peers. In searching games, for instance, students have opportunities to make questions and answers in *the past perfect tense* during the process of playing game. They try to make questions, listen to the questions, and give the answers. All activities are to give the correct answer. In this case, students have many chances to interact within a group.

5.2.2. Managing time and class

Applying games might cause difficulties in time and class management. Games may fail in the end because of the following reason. The teacher does not prepare the lesson plans carefully. The teacher does not divide the time budget reasonably among the activities or stages of the lessons and does not anticipate the problems arising so that she/he cannot solve them suitably. The solution to the above problem is that the teacher has to plan the lesson carefully in which time is allocated logically for each task. Besides, to prevent the game from lasting longer than expected, which makes the students bored, teachers should limit the time for activities, and stop the students whether they have finished or not.

5.2.3. Giving a reward and proper feedback

A reward is often a present that teachers give to students when they are winners in a game. Teachers should give students rewards to encourage them to participate in groups. Giving rewards can reinforce the need for students to complete their tasks and create competition between them. Students are encouraged to perform better when there is the prospect of a reward. From my experience, I prepared and gave the present to the winners after the game was finished. The present was, usually, candies. Students who were given the presents were very happy. Maybe they thought that they played and performed better than their other counterparts in the game. Thus, they were proud of themselves. They hoped to win in the next games. On the contrary, students who were not given the present certainly tried to win the next time. Therefore, there will be interesting games in the next grammar lesson because every student thinks that they will have a chance to win

In addition, no one can deny that teacher feedback is a necessary stage in teaching and learning English. Thanks to this stage, we can know our learners' level in a certain learning stage. Moreover, this stage also helps learners recognize their problems in learning a language so that learners make a plan to overcome them to better in the language learning process. Teacher's giving feedback contributes to the successes and failures of learners. It is inappropriate to correct all the mistakes learners make, and it can make learners lose motivation. In guessing games, for example, to give the correct answer, students use many ways to help their team give the right answer. Students make a lot of mistakes while playing games. Teachers should pick out their mistakes and

correct them when the game is over. It is likely to get students to be motivated to learn and participate in class.

5.3. Suggestions for further study

For the purpose of discovering the effects of learning grammar with games on Dien Hai tenth graders, this thesis has achieved some initial insight. However, there still remains much to do before games are officially used to teach English grammar to students.

First of all, the experiment in the thesis was for the scope of students in Class 10C4 at Dien Hai Highschool. It did not survey any other students from other classes or grades in high schools. To make the study results more general to English grammar learners, further experimental investigations are needed to be conducted on different types of learners at various levels, such as the application of games in learning English grammar with Tieng Anh 11 and Tieng Anh 12.

Besides grammar, it needs to do further research concerning the other aspects of learning a language such as listening, speaking, reading and writing. Whether the benefits of games meet any requirements of these language skills, especially speaking and listening which play an important part in communicative competence – the key to teaching and learning language nowadays.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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