

ENHANCING PRIMARY TEACHERS' SKILL OF FRAMING QUESTIONS, USING M -LEARNING.

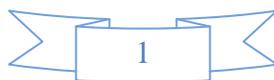
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An Action Research Report

Submitted to

THE STATE COUNCIL OF EDUCATIONAL, RESEARCH AND
TRAINING, Chennai-600 006 .

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Thoothukudi District.



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I thank the Almighty God, for the providence and guidance provided to me in my profession as a teacher educator .

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Place: Vanaramutti

Date:

(G.Anto Boopalarayan)

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1. Background of the study

The action researcher is working as a senior lecturer in the IFIC branch of District Institute of Education and Training, Vanaramutti, Thoothukudi District.

In his teaching career spanning over fifteen years, the researcher has been involved in the noble assignment of moulding the future elementary school teachers. In the sphere of research, his areas of interest are: English Language Teaching and Teacher Education. The researcher so far in various leading journals has published twenty articles. Further he has also presented sixteen research papers at various zonal, state and international seminars.

Four projects, related to elementary education, have been completed in collaboration with the co-researchers in DIETs. A monograph on action research has been published by the researcher with the endeavours of the DIET editorial board in which the researcher plays a vital part. He has also gained experience as the member of the Zonal Action Research Committee for the southern region and has monitored action research works that has been carried by various researchers at DIETs in the southern region.

Though the primary school teachers, in general, are experienced teaching English, the researcher happen to come across some teachers still find it difficult in framing questions orally and also for the given sentences in the primary school level. Hence, this action research has been undertaken.

2. Perception of the problem

In our country, there are thousands of teachers teaching subjects other than English in Government, private and Aided schools, who aspire to speak, read and write English for career enhancement or status. Primary teacher with other necessary qualifications and subject proficiency are often at a disadvantage in the area of English language proficiency. Most teachers teaching in State Board Primary schools are required to teach English along with other subjects. They have very few opportunities for capacity building in English language content or pedagogy. Most of these teachers have learnt English at the school level. Despite this exposure to the language, their language skills are minimal and replete with errors. Confidence levels of these primary teachers are also very low, especially in framing questions orally or in written form. Acquisition of proficiency requires provisioning time and practice.

3. Analysis of the Problem

The target group of teachers under consideration for the present action research is teachers who spend seven to eight hours per day working. They have very little opportunity to practice their English language skills at their homes or in a professional space. These teachers have attended several capacity building trainings and workshops conducted by various agencies such as, DIET, SSA, RMSA, and British Counsel, but have not been able to carry over their language ability to everyday usage.

Framing questions is a skill which requires the learner to understand certain grammatical points. In order to ask orally or frame a question for the given statement, the learner should have the prior knowledge in the types of verbs - be -verbs, do verbs and helping verbs. The learner should have the ability to change the position of the verb and the subject to make questions for the 'Be' verbs, change the subjective pronouns into objective pronouns, and insert the subject in between the helping verb and the main verb. They should also have the ability to make questions for the 'do' verbs, by dividing the main verb into two parts and write the subject in between them. Moreover they should have the ability to divide the auxiliary verbs like the 'do' verbs and add the extra words at the end. In order to frame Wh-questions they should have the prior understanding of the usage of interrogative pronouns such as -what, who, why, where which, when, whose, how, how many, how much, how for, and how long.

Yet, hardly ever the teachers follow the above mentioned points in their mind while framing questions. Most of them may be aware of rules and regulation regarding framing questions. Even though they know all these points, they find it difficult to put in to practice. Their ability to frame questions is not as effective as they should be. Consequently the students also have an aversion towards learning English in general and answering questions in particular. The researcher finds these problems as a common one among the primary school teachers and the subjects of the present action research are no exemption.

At this stage the researcher and the target group felt that they needed daily monitoring. The researcher then thought of using SMS as a tool for providing opportunities for language use daily. Thus ensuring alive learning laboratory for moving forward in the continuum from their language to target language.

The pedagogical reasons for using SMS through mobile are that it provides language on the move, task on time and a medium which can relate to the real life concerns of the target learners. It also increases motivation and self esteem with the novelty of using technology. Moreover, the communication over a distance provides the privacy needed for an adult learner whose self esteem is very fragile. SMS also allows for breaking up the learning task into small chunks leading to easy access of materials for making assumptions about language structure. It provides opportunity for self learning through feedback.

The mobile phones used by target learners in this study are low-end mobile phones. The language input was sent thorough SMS which is the cheapest mode of communication in India. Learners on the move find suitable time for learning to happen.

4. Probable Causes

Among various reasons, the researcher has made out the following as the probable causes for the problem under study.

It may be due to

- ❖ Lack of English language proficiency, in general,
- ❖ Lack of motivation in learning English, with regard to language proficiency,
- ❖ Very little opportunity to practice English language skills at home or in a professional space,
- ❖ Very few opportunities for capacity building in English language content or pedagogy,
- ❖ Lack of exposure to other resources other than the traditional method in learning grammar.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in using modern technologies for learning grammar items.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in availability of the ICT resources
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in the use of mobile learning facilities
- ❖ Lack of practice in using the mobile for learning to frame questions. .
- ❖ Lack of confidence in framing questions orally or in written form,
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in the different types of verbs such as , 'Be' –verbs, 'Do' verbs and 'Auxiliary' verbs.

- ❖ Lack of knowledge in changing the position of the 'Verb' and the 'Subject' to make questions for the 'Be' verbs ,
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in changing the 'Subjective Pronouns' into 'Objective Pronouns' ,
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in inserting the 'Subject' in between the 'Auxiliary verb' and the 'Main verb'.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in making questions for the 'Do' verbs, by dividing the main verb into two parts and write the subject in between them.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in dividing the auxiliary verbs in the same way as the 'Do' verbs and add the extra words at the end.
- ❖ Lack of knowledge in the usage of interrogative pronouns such as - what, who, why, where which, when, whose, how, how many, how much, how for, and how long, so as to frame 'Wh'-questions.

This is not an exhaustive list of causes and these are causes presumed by the researcher that may contribute to the problem in their own way.

5. Development of Propositions

Despite the fact that the researcher has classified the probable causes, he is aware that various facts are operating together in enhancing the skill framing questions among the primary teachers.

Hence the following approaches are proposed:

1. Adequate motivation shall be given to the teachers in learning to frame questions.
2. Sufficient exposure to other resources other than the traditional method in learning the grammar item considered for the study shall be given.
3. Requisite motivation shall be given to the primary school teachers in learning to frame questions, through SMS.
4. Sufficient training shall be given in using mobile for leaning to frame questions.
5. Fair opportunities shall be given to the primary school teachers to use the mobile for interactive way of learning.
6. Sufficient training shall be given in improving the proposed grammar competency using mobile lessons and feedback.

7. Sufficient orientation shall be given to the teachers so that they are able to replicate the same method of using mobile for teaching other language skills.

Among the various causes, the researcher has identified Lack of knowledge in the different types of verbs such as, 'Be' -verbs, 'Do' verbs and 'Auxiliary' verbs as the priority issue in the problem. As a Practitioner, the researcher feels that he can attempt to teach the criteria of changing the position of the 'Verb' and the 'Subject' to make questions for the 'Be' verbs, changing 'Subjective Pronouns' into 'Objective Pronouns', inserting the 'Subject' in between the 'Auxiliary verb' and the 'Main verb', dividing the main verb into two parts and write the subject in between them, dividing the auxiliary verbs in the same way as the 'Do' verbs and add the extra words at the end and using interrogative pronouns so as to frame 'Wh'-questions. The researcher felt that all the above said skills of primary teachers in framing questions can easily be enhanced through Mobile learning.

6. Action Hypothesis

If mobile learning is used, the primary teachers' skill of framing questions will be enhanced.

7. Planning For Intervention

The prime aim of doing any action research in the field of education is improving the school practices. Having this view in mind, the researcher had opted for the teachers of four primary schools in Thoothukudi, rural block.

For the purpose of the present study, the targeted adult learners of English are a group of primary teachers whose mother tongue is Tamil. They are secondary grade teachers and have learnt English at the secondary level of schooling. Their higher studies have been completed in small towns where the language of instruction or medium of instruction is Tamil. They teach English along with all other main subjects to the children. These teachers have less opportunity to speak, read or write English beyond their professional life. Thus the opportunities for practicing English language skills are minimal. But they all felt that English Language proficiency would enhance their status, self esteem and confidence.

Since this action research is to enhance the skill of primary school teachers themselves it was decided to have a motivation session.

Though many teachers had the problem of not framing the questions effectively, teachers working in primary school have been selected for the present action

research for the reason that it was present mostly among the teachers at the primary level. The researcher thought that quality improvement at this stage would be helpful not only to the teachers but also to the system itself.

The idea of 'simple to complex' has been kept in mind so that the teachers understand the concepts easily and get rid of the problem gradually.

Unlike the usual way of testing the subjects before and after the interventions using questionnaires, observations were made before and after the interventions. In order to have the real effect, the subjects were not informed of the pre-test.

8. Execution of Intervention

8.1. Stages Involved

The following stages have been involved in the action research

1. Meeting the Headmaster and the teachers of the select school.
2. Preparation of the assessment items
3. Assessing the entry behaviour (pre-test)
4. Identifying the problem in framing questions.
5. Planning of intervention.
6. Execution of intervention
7. Assessing the exit behaviour (post test)
8. Comparing the performance of the pre-test and post-test scorings and
9. Finding the improvement in framing questions.

8.2. Target Group

Eleven teachers working in Government and aided Primary schools of Thoothukudi Rural block constitute the target group for the present study. The target group includes 1 male and 10 female teacher.

8.3. Tools Used

In order to mark out the improvement of the target group under study in the skill of framing questions an pre-test was prepared and administered at the entry

and exit behaviour of the time of solving the problem (i.e) before and after interventions. The test consisted of five elements that are needed for testing the skill of framing questions.

The first item was meant for testing the knowledge of framing yes or no questions for the 'Be' verbs.

The second item was designed to test their knowledge of framing yes or no questions for the statements other than Be' verbs,

The third item was included to test their knowledge in framing yes or no questions for the 'Do' verbs.

The fourth item was to test their knowledge in framing yes or no questions for the auxiliary verbs.

The fifth item was to test their knowledge in framing 'Wh' questions for the given statements.

Five marks each was allotted to the five items totaling twenty five marks for the test.

Similar test was used in the post-test with a minor change in the sentences.

8.4 Statistical Techniques Applied

The following statistical techniques were used for analyzing the collected data in the form of Pre-tests and Post-tests.

8.4.1 Percentage Analysis

In order to find out the percentage of students having low, average and high level of achievement, the percentage analysis has been made use of in this action research.

8.4.2 Arithmetic mean

The researcher has used the following formula for calculating arithmetic mean.

$$\bar{X} = \frac{\sum X}{n}$$

Where \bar{X} = Arithmetic mean

Σ = Sum of

X = Scores of distribution

N = Number of scores

8.5 Procedure of Interventions

INTERVENTION 1

Change the position of the verb and the **subject** to make questions for the 'Be' verbs (am,is,was,are,were),

e.g.1. He is a dancer.

He- subject

Is- verb

Answer: Is he a dancer?

e.g.2. They are ready.

They- subject

are- verb

Answer: Are they ready?

Note: Start with the **capital letter**.

End with a **question mark**.

Remember to change the pronouns

I-You

We-you etc.

e.g

We are busy.

Answer: Are **you** busy?

Exception: the 'be' verb 'am' may have two answers.

I am the winner

Ans1: Am I the winner? (asking questions to yourself)

Ans2: Are you the winner? (asking questions to others)

Exercise:

1.He is a music teacher.

2.Karthik was a player

3. They were ready for the test

INTERVENTION 2

Insert the subject in between the helping verb and the main verb for the followings

e.g.1. Varun is going to Chennai.

Varun- Subject

Is - helping verb

Going – main verb

Answer: Is Varun going to Chennai?

e.g.2. Sumathi has finished the work.

Sumathi- Subject

Has - helping verb

Finished – main verb

Answer: Has Sumathi finished the work?

Exercise:

1. He was learning music last year.
2. Mahesh and Ramesh had arrived in the evening.
3. Suresh was going to the office regularly.

INTERVENTION-3

Learn to divide the 'do' verbs

E.g.1

Play = do+play

Plays = does +play

Played = did+play

E.g.2

Teach= do+teach

Teaches=does+teach

Taught= did + teach

E.g.3

(Sometimes Have is used as the main verb

e.g. I have a car)

Have =do+have

Has=does+have

Had =did +have

To make questions for the 'do' verbs, divide the verb into two parts and write the subject in between them.

E.g.1

They play cricket.

Do they play cricket?

E.g.2

He plays cricket.

Does he play cricket?

E.g.3

They played cricket.

Did they play cricket?

E.g.4

Mr.Rex taught them English.

Did Mr. Rex teach them English?

E.g.5

The boys have pens and books.

Do the boys have pens and books?

E.g.6

Sheela has a new car.

Does Sheela have a new car?

E.g.7

Roshan had a headache.

Did Roshan have a headache?

Note: Divide the verbs like this and add the extra words at the end.

E.g 1.

He plays cricket every day.

Does he play cricket every day?

E.g 2.

Sheela has a new car recently.

Does Sheela have a car recently?

E.g 3.

Roshan had a headache yesterday.

Did Roshan have a headache yesterday?

Exercise:

1. The girls play throw ball
2. She writes letters every day.
3. The students finished the home work.

INTERVENTION 4

Remember the following auxiliary verbs:

Can, could,

may, might,

will, would,

shall, should,

have, has, had,

must, had to,

ought to

Change the position of the verb and the subject to make questions for the 'auxiliary' verbs

e.g.1. He can swim .

Subject - He

Auxiliary verb - can

Main verb - swim.

Answer: Can he swim?

e.g.2. Rahul will come .

Subject - Rahul

Auxiliary verb - will

Main verb - come

Answer: Will Rahul come?

Note: Divide the verbs like this and add the extra words at the end.

e.g.3

He must work hard (like this to get the first prize.)

Answer: Must he work hard (like this to get the first prize?)

Exercise: Change these sentences into questions.

1. They will do the work excellently.
2. Radha must answer in English.
3. Mr. Paul could understand the new plan.

INTERVENTION 5

Framing questions for the under lined /BOLD words. (“Wh” questions)

E.g.1 I am going TO SCHOOL.

Answer: Where are you going?

E.g.2 They came AT 11 .P.M.

Answer: When did they come?

E.g.3. My native place is THOOTHUKUDI.

Answer: What is your native place?

Remember the followings:

1.1. Start with a “question word.”

What - is used for persons and things.

Who - for person in general

Why - for reason

Where - for place

Which - for limited choice (this or that)

When -for time

Whose -for possessive pronouns (mine, yours, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs.)

How - for 'What way?'(manner)

How many - for countable nouns.

How much - for uncountable nouns.

How Far - for distance

How long - for duration.

1.2 Do not write the answer words (underlined words) in the questions.

e.g. They play CRICKET.

Answer: What do they play?

1.3 Remember to change the pronouns

I - You

We - you

You - I

Me,Us- You

Your - My etc.,

1.4 Divide the 'DO' verbs into two parts and write the subject in between them. (Refer- Lesson -3)

Eg. Play = Do+play

(When) do you play(football)?

Plays- Does+play

(Where)does he play.....?

Played= Did+Play

(When)did he play.....?

1.5 for BE verbs

Question word + subject +be verb + Demonstrative pronouns

(This,That,These,Those)

E.g.1

This book is MINE.

Ans: Whose book is this?

E.g.2

These students are OURS.

Ans: Whose students are these?

Exercise: Make questions for the underlined words.

1. He went to Madurai YESTERDAY .
2. The students saw THE PRIME MINISTER last week.
3. They want TO GO OUT
4. He comes from SRILANKA.
5. That pen is HIS.

8.6 Duration of Interventions

Since this action research is a method of solving the problems of the primary school teachers , five weeks were given for enhancing the skill of framing questions using mobile learning/SMS.. Enough time was provided to strengthen each component of improving the target competencies.

8.7 Evidences Collected

The researcher could observe the development of the teachers in improving the skill of framing questions with the help of SMS through Mobile. . In order to collect and record their improvement their scores were recorded in the form of two tests- Pre-test and Post-test.

9. Data collection and analysis

The collected data were processed and analyzed with the help of percentage, frequency, mean, and graphical representation in order to find out the meaningful interpretation of the raw scores. They are presented systematically in the following pages.

Table 9.1. Classification of levels of achievement.

Subject Classification	Test	Levels of Achievement					
		Below average		Average		Above Average	
		Frequency	%	Frequency	%	Frequency	%
Total target group	Pre	3	27.3	5	45.5	3	27.3
	Post	2	18.2	0	0	9	81.8

It is inferred from table no.1 that 27.3 percent of the teachers are under below average category, 45.5 percent of the teachers are under average category and 27.3 percent of the teachers are under above average category in Pre test.

On the contrary 18.2 percent of the teachers are under below average category, 0 percent of the teachers are under average category and 81.8 percent of the teachers are under above average category in Post test.

CLASSIFICATION OF LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

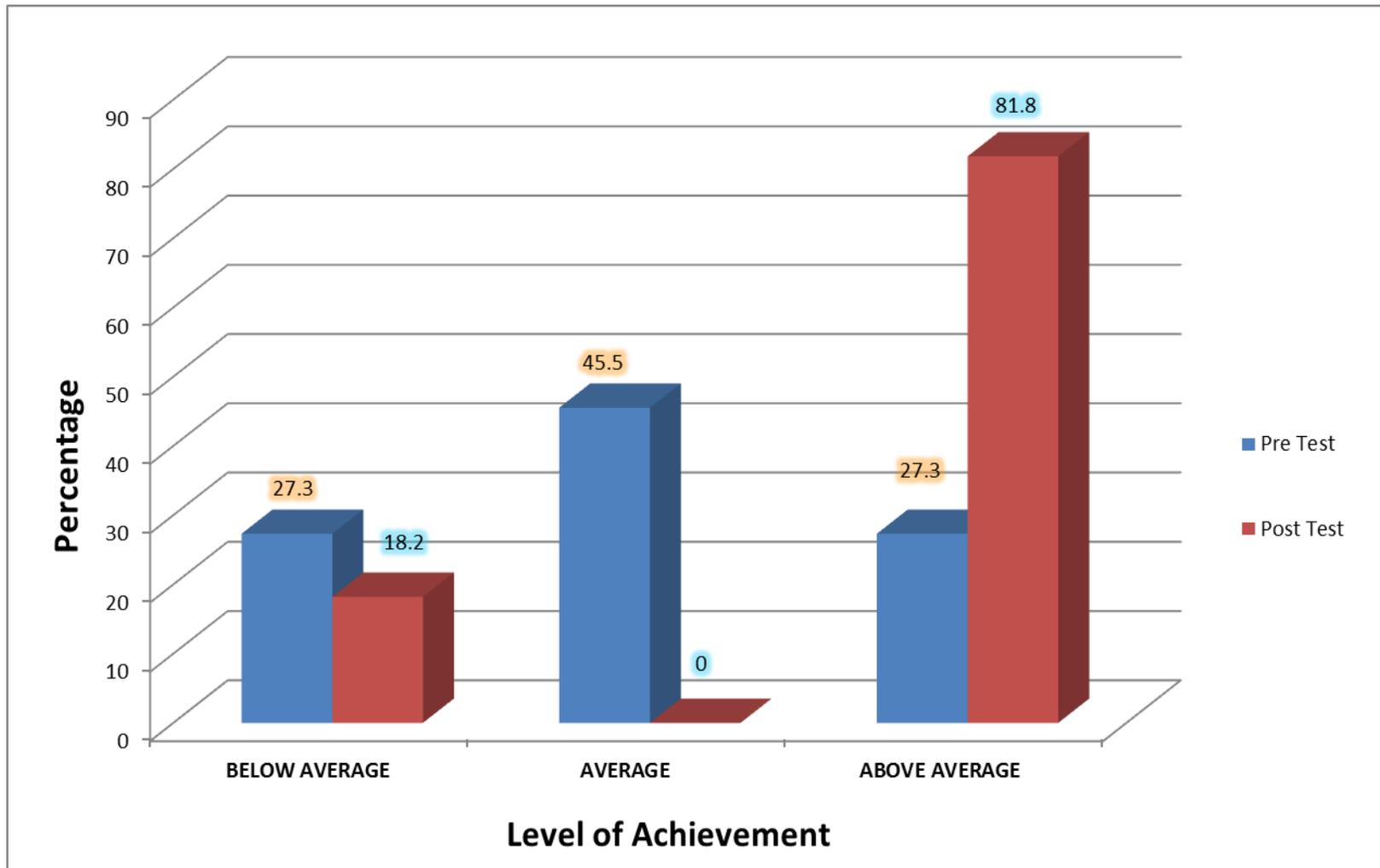


Table 9.2. Error analysis.

Subject Classification	Test	Number of Errors/ Proportion	Error Classification				
			I	II	III	IV	V
Total target group	Pre	Errors	28	55	32	39	35
		Proportion	51	100	58	71	64
	Post	Errors	0	0	2	1	4
		Proportion	0	0	4	2	7

It is inferred from table no. 2 that 28 errors (51 percent) in Section I, 55 errors (100 percent) in Section II, 32 errors (58 8percent) in Section III, 39 errors (71 percent) in Section IV, 35errors (64 percent) in Section V have been made by the total number of teachers in the pre test.

But no errors (0 percent) in Section I, no errors (0 percent) in Section II, 2 errors (4 percent) in Section III, 1 error (2 percent) in Section IV, 4 errors (7 percent) in Section V have been made by the total number of teachers in the post test.

ERROR ANALYSIS

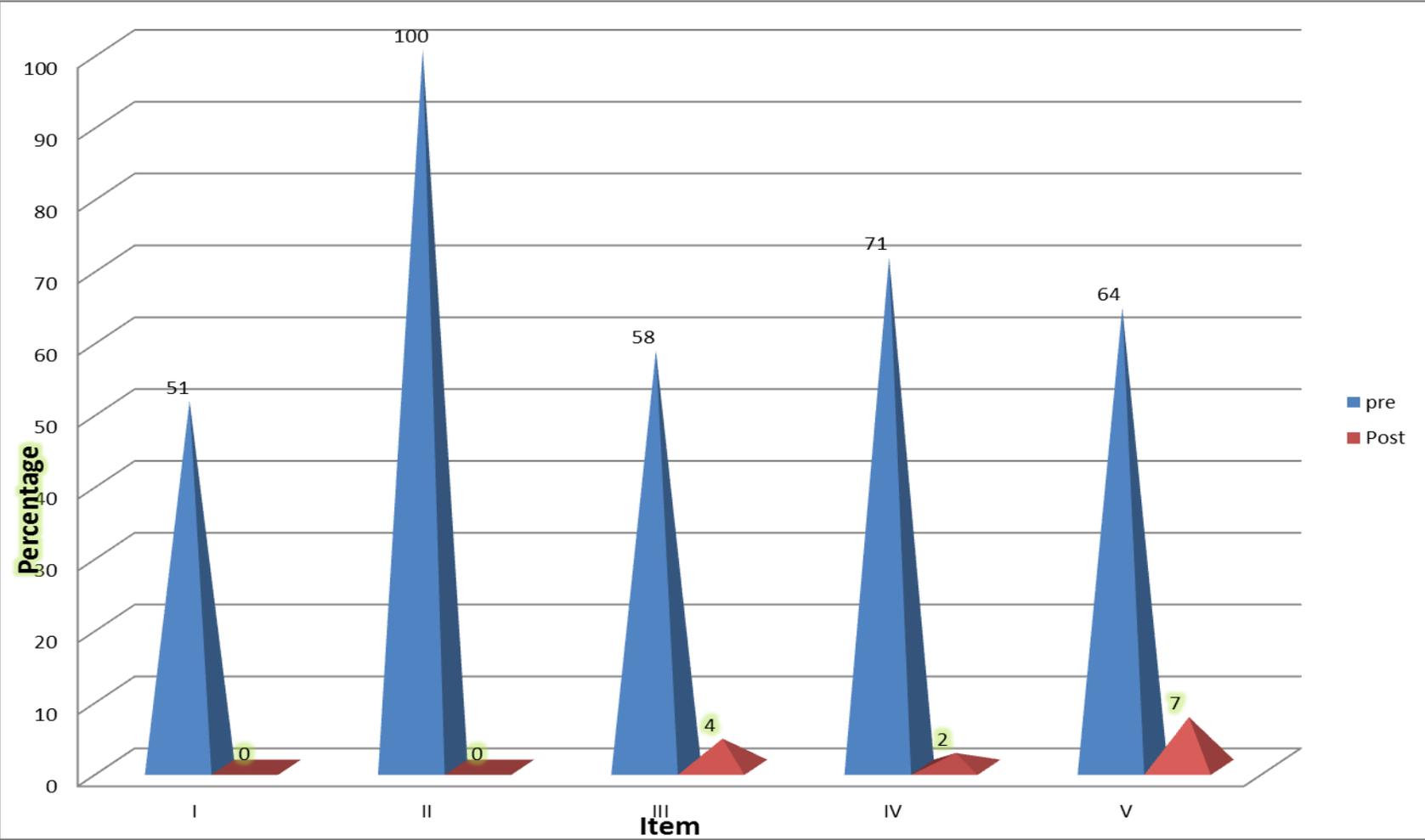
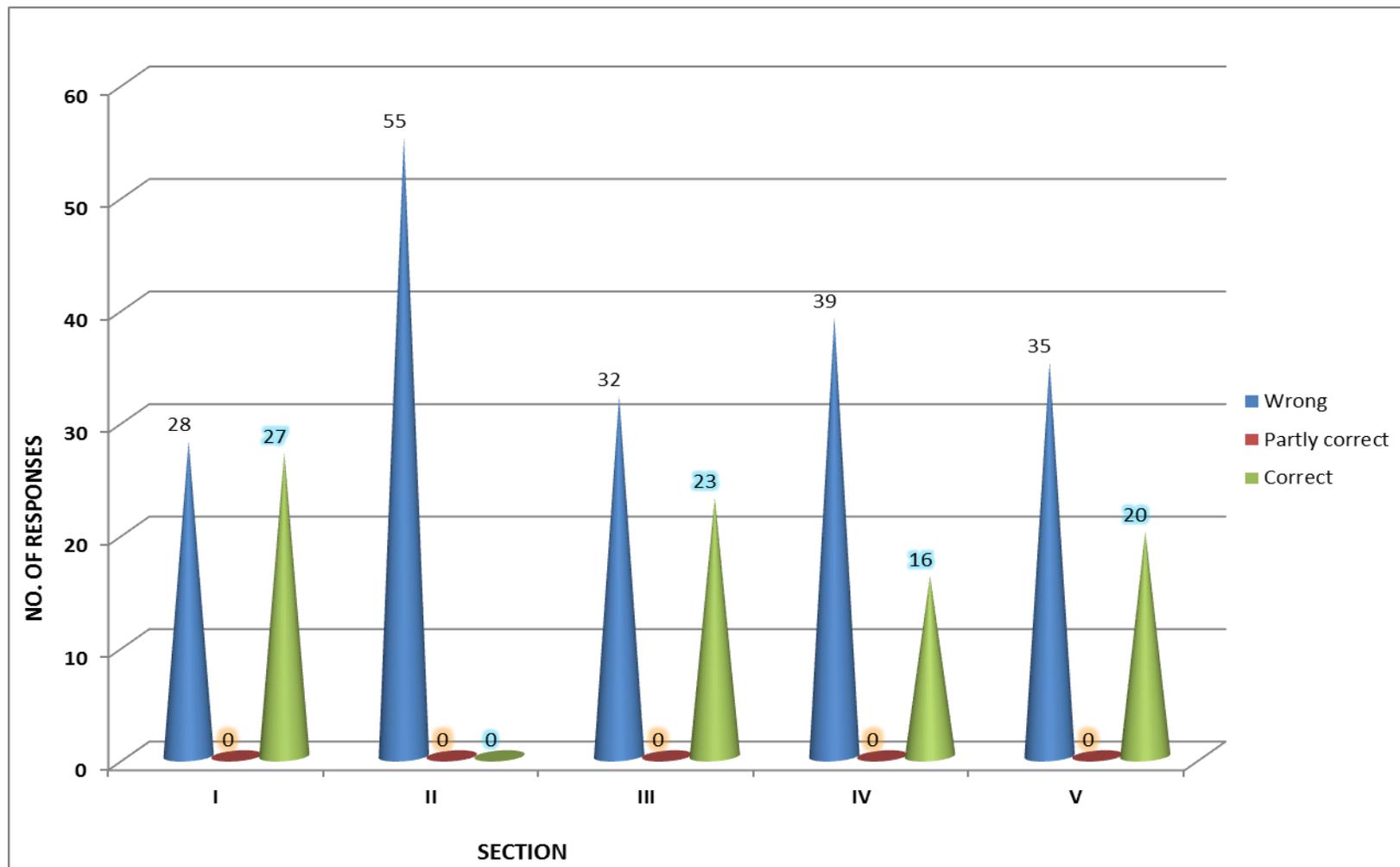


Table 9.3. Analysis of Responses

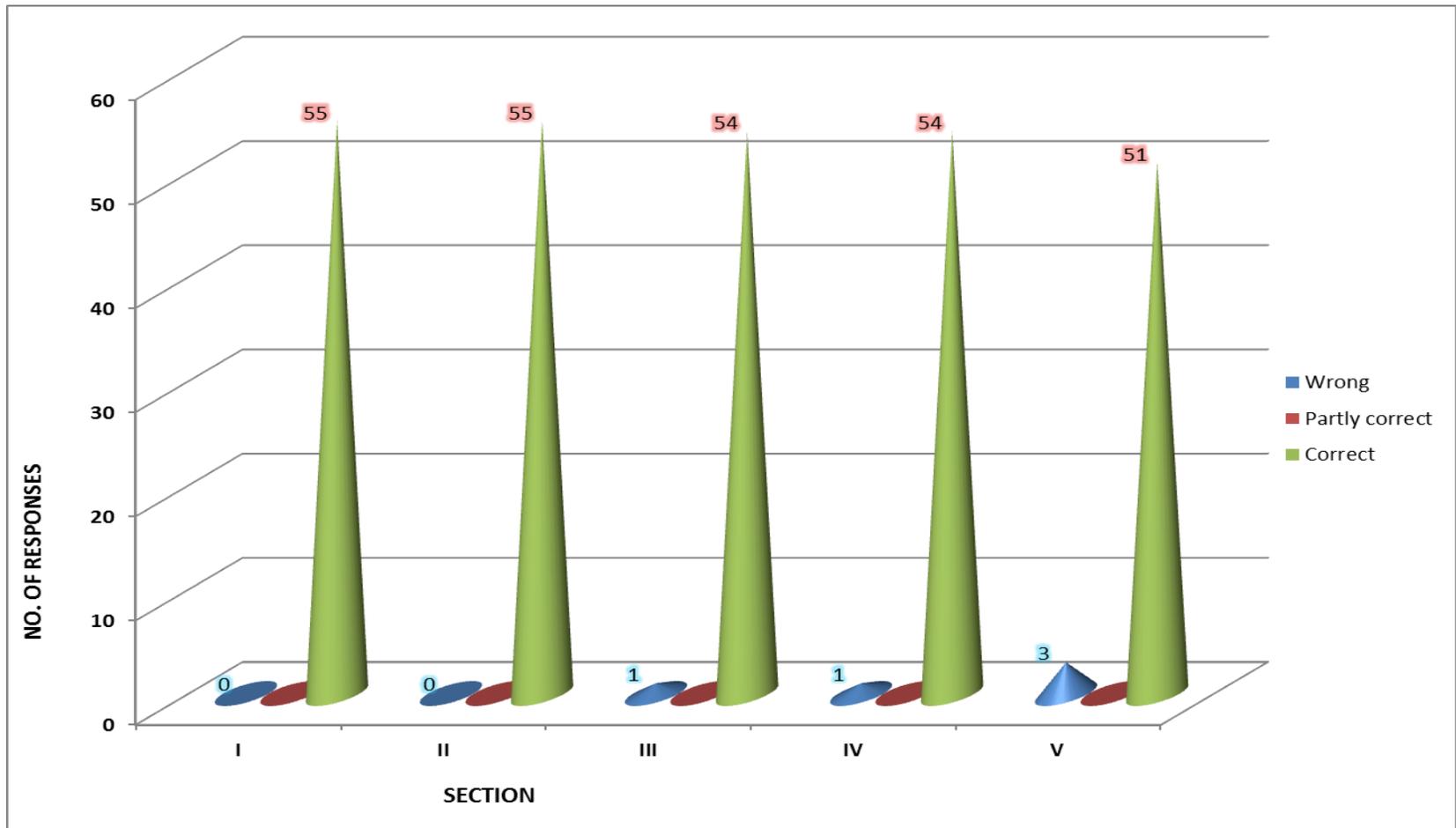
Total target group	Test	Response	Section				
			I	II	III	IV	V
II	Pre	Wrong	28	55	32	39	35
		Partly correct	0	0	0	0	0
		Correct	27	0	23	16	20
	Post	Wrong	0	0	1	1	3
		Partly correct	0	0	0	0	0
		Correct	55	55	54	54	51

It is inferred from table no. 3 that 28 wrong responses in Section I, 55 wrong responses in Section II, 32 errors in Section III, 39 errors in Section IV, 35 errors in Section V have been made by the total number of teachers in the pre test.

ANALYSIS OF PRE TEST RESPONSES



ANALYSIS OF POST TEST RESPONSES



No partly correct responses by the total number of teachers were identified in the pre test.

Relatively, 27 correct responses in Section I, no correct responses in Section II, 23 correct in Section III, 16 correct in Section IV, 20 correct in Section V have been made by the total number of teachers in the pre test.

It is also inferred from table no. 3 that no wrong responses in Section I, no wrong responses in Section II, one error in Section III, one error in Section IV, 3 errors in Section V have been made by the total number of teachers in the post test.

No partly correct responses by the total number of teachers were identified in the post test.

Relatively, 55 correct responses in Section I, 55 correct responses in Section II, 54 correct in Section III, 54 correct in Section IV, 51 correct in Section V have been made by the total number of teachers in the post test.

10. Decision making and reflection

It is evident from the data analysis that the teachers of Thoothukudi who were taken as the target group for the study have improved their skill of framing questions effectively. The interventions have brought about improvement to a maximum level. As the researcher has preplanned, the interventions have gradually yielded the expected out come among the target group. Every thing went on well as expected. Their achievement level of developing the skill has almost tripled. Hence the researcher has decided to end the action research and not to proceed further to the next spiral.

All the teachers who underwent the treatments have enhanced the skill of framing questions effectively and continue to practice the skill in their regular classroom practice.

11. Termination

In the beginning of the action research, the researcher felt the dissatisfaction with the way the teachers used to frame questions where there was problem in identifying the different types of verbs, dividing the verb and adding question words or placing the verb in front of the subject so as to frame a correct interrogative sentence. The researcher thought that if mobile learning is used effectively, the primary teachers' skill of framing questions will certainly be enhanced.

Accordingly, the intervention were planned and executed giving enough time and the result was fully satisfactory, hence, the researcher decided to terminate the action research and the net result becomes the end of interventions

12. Net gains.

The researcher has listed out the following as the net gain of the present effort in terms of

- i. People who have benefited,
 - ii. Materials that were developed,
 - iii. Situations that have improved and
 - iv. Certain strategies tested which can be shared among well meant people.
- The chief beneficiaries of this action research are the primary teachers of Thoothukudi rural and urban blocks; they have enhanced the skill of framing questions more effectively than their previous experience.
 - In general, they have learnt the criteria for framing questions correctly.
 - Particularly, they have learnt to identify the types of verbs- be – verbs, do verbs and helping verbs.
 - Besides, they have learnt to change the position of the verb and the subject to make questions for the ‘Be’ verbs, change the subjective pronouns into objective pronouns, and insert the subject in between the helping verb and the main verb.

- Moreover, they have developed the ability to make questions for the 'do' verbs, by dividing the main verb into two parts and write the subject in between them.
- They have developed yet another important ability to divide the auxiliary verbs like the 'do' verbs and add the extra words at the end.
- In order to frame wh-questions they have enhanced the ability to use interrogative pronouns such as -what, who, why, where which, when, whose, how, how many, how much, how for, and how long.
- The teachers have developed an aware of rules and regulation regarding framing questions and put them in to practice.
- The subjects under study also have gained confidence in framing questions exactly.
- The net gain of this action research to the school is that it has contributed to the total quality of elementary education.

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Pre Test

Name of the school:

Name of the teacher:

I. Read the following sentences and frame yes /no questions.

1. I am a teacher.

.....

2. He is a soldier.

.....

3. We are players.

.....

4. Mr. Murali was a policeman.

.....

5. They were present for the meeting.

.....

II. Change these sentences into questions.

1. Vivek is playing football.

.....

2. Swathi has gone to school.

.....

3. Rathi and Lucy had already left the place.

.....

4. Jaya and her brother are staying in a hostel.

.....

5. Rahul was learning to speak English.

.....

III. Read the following sentences and frame yes /no questions.

1. The boys love to play cricket.

.....
2. Aravind lives in Mumbai.
.....

3. Mr. Arya went to the library yesterday.
.....

4. Mrs. Vimala taught us English.
.....

5. The girls' team won the cricket match.
.....

IV. Change these sentences into questions.

1. Nalini can paint well.
.....

2. I shall help you in this matter.
.....

3. We won't forget the meeting.
.....

4. They must do it at once.
.....

5. You may use my telephone.
.....

V. Make questions for the underlined words.

1. My birthday is in **November**
.....

2. I like to wear **cotton sarees**.
.....

3. This book is **mine**.
.....

4. I am going to **Goa** for the summer holidays.
.....

5. The girls returned **at 10 P.M.**
.....

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Post Test

Name of the school:

Name of the teacher:

I. Read the following sentences and frame yes /no questions.

I am a scout master.

.....

Jeyakumar is a traffic police.

.....

We are college students.

.....

Mr. Santhanam was an M.L.A.

.....

All the members were present for the meeting.

.....

II. Change these sentences into questions.

Vanitha was studying in Chennai last year.

.....

Kavitha has gone to college.

.....

Rajesh and Mathan had already left the station.

.....

The teachers and students are staying in a hostel.

.....

Sundar is learning to play the keyboard.

.....

III. Read the following sentences and frame yes /no questions.

The boys love to watch cricket match.

.....

Anand likes travelling.

.....

Mr. Rajasekar met the minister yesterday.

.....

The police caught the thief.

.....

The H.M. bought the new books.

.....

IV. Change these sentences into questions.

Mr.Elango can teach Mathematics well.

.....

You shall come next month.

.....

They will forget the formula.

.....

The leader must meet the Principal.

.....

The servants may work here till. 6.p.m.

.....

V. Make questions for the underlined words.

His birthday is in March.

.....

She likes to prepare cakes.

.....

This glass is his.

.....

I am going to Mumbai for the Pooja holidays.

.....

I will bring three

pictures.....