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IMPROVING EFL PUNCTUATION OF SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT

In this research paper about improving the English punctuation of secondary school students, the main purpose will be to improve the punctuation skills of students by giving them exercises and taking the test of different types of punctuation types like colon, semicolon, full stop, exclamation marks hyphen, dash, question mark, brackets, apostrophe, quotation marks, etc. main focus will be on improving semicolon, colon types of punctuation because students find it quite difficult. Students will be given written dialogues they will be shown movies with subtitles. So that they can perform excellently in essays, letters, applications, etc. if the students become excellent in punctuation, they will be able to perform excellently in later life, like after graduation, they will be able to write superb articles, books, and plays, research paper that can produce an excellent effect on the reader's mind.

INTRODUCTION

Aristarchus (310-320) suggested certain punctuation marks in Alexandria; many proofreaders used punctuation marks. A historian named Suetonius (70-130) suggested about 21 punctuation marks that he wrote in his manuscripts in BC. Kane (1998) says that punctuation has the power that can provide beautiful meaning and absurd meaning to a sentence. Punctuation marks contain full stops, question marks, exclamation marks, a colon, a semicolon, a hyphen, and a dash. Punctuation marks provide meaning to the Sentence and can change the meaning of sentences. Without punctuation, whatever Sentence is written does not make sense. Punctuation marks are an important part of our lives; for example, we need punctuation marks in writing essays, letters, applications, research papers, books, etc. Full stops, question marks, and exclamation marks

are the easiest of punctuation types, but hyphens, colons, and semicolons are difficult for secondary school students and are complex and require even more practice to understand. There are also many rules of punctuation. Colon is a punctuation mark that comes after a clause. The full stop will appear when the Sentence is complete. Semicolons will appear after the conjunction verb, the question mark will appear after the interrogative clause, and a simple exclamation mark will appear when there is a sudden expression like hurrah, or alas. That one example will give us an excellent example of why punctuation marks are important in our lives. This example is very famous on the internet and is also a meme let's eat grandma. Now look, this Sentence looks absurd and hilarious, as if her grandchildren are going to eat their grandma, but when punctuation marks are put like let's eat, grandma, this will make sense. Students have been excellent in tenses since childhood but are extremely weak in punctuation. The only ones that can improve their punctuation marks are daily articles, newspapers, movies, or punctuation-rich books. It can help them to perform better in English punctuation. Indeed, punctuation is not a piece of cake, and much effort is required to improve punctuation. When the students know punctuation better, they cannot only perform better in writing essays, but they can also become excellent dialogue writers in which their dialogue can make more sense to the reader hence, improving their creativity. Punctuation marks affect the tone like hurrah will tell us about a sudden exclamation. As most people know the importance of punctuation, it is now necessary for the teacher to improve the English punctuation of secondary school students, like tenses.

When we researched past manuscripts, we came to know that these manuscripts lacked phenomena of stopping, raising tone, or lowering the tone, which altered the meanings of the words in the manuscripts .people wanted to overcome this problem, so they invented various marks. Punctuation marks have existed since the beginning but have yet to be in the current sense. Latin adopted some punctuation marks from the Greek punctuation system: *distinct finals*, *subdistricts*, and *distinct media*. In ancient times when punctuation marks were used, no one knew that function marks should also have some rules that should be the purpose of these punctuation rules. Punctuation was used in western culture in the sixth century. Punctuation and how we should read the texts correctly is a matter of interest for Westerners and Muslims. They invented letters, so the Holy Quran should be read correctly by the literate and the illiterate. At one-time, punctuation marks were used in England to produce pauses in Latin manuscripts. So they began to change in 18th century, and these punctuation marks continued to change till 20th century.

Statement of the problem

Improving punctuation problems at the secondary level.

In secondary school, students know much about English grammar but only a little about punctuation and always fail at punctuating sentences or using punctuation marks in sentences; dialogue in play and movies with subtitles play an important role in improving the student's punctuation.

Research questions

Question 1 How do secondary school students find punctuation marks difficult in essays, letters, etc.?

Question no 2 how can dialogues improve the English of secondary school students?

Significance of research

Harmer (2004) punctuation is necessary for writing as water is necessary for humans because it provides quality to written things. In this Research, firstly, after improving my English. The main focus will be on improving English as a foreign language so that they can easily perform in the punctuation of English. There are full stops, question marks, semicolons, and exclamation marks that are important in essays, especially essays and are mostly used in writing essays; dialogue from plays and movies with subtitles shown below will be seen, and after that, research of students will be taken by giving them some sentences to punctuate like that include commas, semicolons, colon, a hyphen, apostrophe, exclamation mark, full stop, etc. because students make mistakes in this type of punctuation mark improving the punctuation of students after that they will be able to learn how much punctuation is important in their lives and how it can affect their lives and punctuation also affects the tone. Students in 5 to 10 grades are excellent in English grammar but fail in punctuation because they do not work hard in English punctuation and think as if punctuation is only limited to a full stop, question mark, or exclamation mark, which they find quite easy. Students will not only improve their punctuation but also know that punctuation also produces a huge amount of influence on the sentences and can change the meaning of a sentence and the sentence flow. The punctuation in subtitles also shows the melody and rhythm of a spoken word. At first, the student might think that seeing movies to improve pronunciation, punctuation, reading, and writing is tiresome, but after some tests, students found it quite easy to talk in English. Their English becomes improved in such a nice manner. Punctuation helps the students write the Sentence correctly, like traffic signs help the cars to move in the right direction.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Punctuation uses signs and spacing to the Sentence and provides meaning when someone reads silently or aloud. Punctuation plays an important role in giving correct understanding and providing meaning to the Sentence; for example, eating bananas, apples, and mango, the meaning reader comes to know that subject eats all the food at once. If we correct this Sentence, it will become after putting commas eat, apple, banana, and mangoes; now the meaning becomes that the subject eats first apple, then banana, then mango.

Farrah (2016) says he did his work on those elf students who make several mistakes in elf punctuation and its tools and capital errors. This paper consists of students' errors they make while using capital letters. How students write the capital letter in the research paper, descriptive writing, etc

Ginting (2018) says his work consists of the punctuation mistakes made by students in descriptive writing. In descriptive writing, students write detail of something using the five senses.

Khan (2013) says this research paper is done on 7th-grade students on how much they have grammar information about one language and two languages. And one of the greatest things she does is that she does a brief analysis of how English punctuation affects the first language.

Byrne, D (1998) says in one of her special papers made by her was that was researched commas on how many problems students face while putting or using a comma. He tried his best to remove the problems of punctuation students face in punctuation while using different types of punctuation tools and also came to know which punctuation is more difficult for students.

Awad (2012) says that his research was on one of the most common mistakes in punctuation made by students of English and TEFL students in also Najah university. And in his research, all the teachers tried their best to improve punctuation and English.

Khaleq(2019) says one of the major punctuation marks and their errors and analyzes how students use these punctuation marks. And mistakes they face while using it. Major punctuation mistakes like putting commas, colon semicolon, etc., are how students find these tools difficult.

Mann(2003). Says how punctuation evolved and how students use the apostrophe. Evolution of different types of punctuation and students how to use apostrophes, and major problems of an apostrophes and how students face them and how to solve them.

McCaskill (1998) says that his research paper was on Ghanaian ESL students' use of punctuation in an essay and the punctuation problem they face. Ghanaian is a place in Africa where research is done on how students use English punctuation in English writing.

Moore(2016) says how punctuation provides realization to the English language in a detailed study. Punctuation has been an important tool in English writing since 1900, and it is an amazing thing that provides meaning to a structure of a sentence. With punctuation, everything written becomes invaluable and meaningful.

Tabari (2001)

In his research paper, he investigates the difficulties students face in punctuation and contains exercises on how students can improve their punctuation skills. Seanger (1997) Pointed out that Punctuation marks were used to identify the points where the reader needed to pause.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

As from the above paper we came to know about the importance of punctuation and how much it is necessary for people and children how it produces a effect on tone in secondary schools students excel in English grammar english speaking skills etc but they dont know much about punctuation to improve the punctuation of children especially one thing a person should keep in mind is that firstly, when their english as foreign language is good then they can easily perform better in improving their english punctuation . As discussed earlier secondary school students when asked from them which when full stop, exclamation mark, question mark is put they can tell briefly that these marks are put for that purpose etc . But when it comes to colon, semi colon etc students find it quite hard to use them or put them at proper places in a sentence and no doubt students do find these difficult the methods to improve their english punctuation is also written dialogue that people see in play, movies . For example movies will be shown with subtitles given below in this way they can not only can easily understand the punctuation but also can be able to understand the tone and came to know that punctuation also effect the tones and after that they will be given play having dialogues they will read them and then test will be taken mostly test will be in the form of Sentence given which students have to find where colon and semicolon etc and other difficult punctuation mark should be put etc.

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research paper is written after getting inspiration from research paper of a moore (2016) . Mandelson with his fellow classmates at Sudan university conducted a research in which he investigated the problem of punctuation that mostly secondary school students face . Moore (2016) says punctuation not only improves our writing skills in articles , newspapers etc it also improves the stylistic . He told briefly on every type of punctuation comma its example semicolons with examples question mark, the colon , exclamation mark, hyphen, dashes , capitalization, apostrophe, brackets, parenthesis, slash , italics , period , ellipsis, fullstop and gave their examples for better understanding. After that he conducted the research by giving them several sentences and divided the students into different groups and the mistakes and difficulties the students mostly face in his research is that the comma related question and colon related question . Crystal (2003) says that the definition of comma is present everywhere and is not compulsory and is difficult to find . Moore(2016) further told about other people who conducted the same research as him like Mccakill (1998) did research on grammar capitalization and of words, punctuation of sentences. His findings showed that esl learners have problems in using punctuation marks in sentences. Their research work helped the secondary school students to find their mistakes and that research proved to be beneficial for them. Now I will try my best to conduct a research on secondary school students and will investigate the problem they face and try my best to solve the problem .

Data collection

Punctuating the sentences in essays letters , application, seems to be a quite complicated task for the students especially mostly for 8 and also 9 and 10 th

class students . Students find some punctuation quite similar, so that's why they make the same mistakes they found some punctuation tools to be quite easy . So, because of that lazy behaviour and easy mindset the students make blunders in punctuation the sentences so, a research was conducted in a secondary school to improve their punctuation . 1st test was conducted known as post test after giving basic lecture about punctuation its tools and after that test was conducted in which sentences with already having punctuation marks were given to them there were three groups 9 , 10 ,8 class divided as A,B,C group in the test C group got maximum fair percent marks and A section got about excellent percent and B got also excellent marks and grade . Then after that 2nd test with new procedure was taken in which for giving them information about punctuation movies were shown to them with english subtitles given below so that the students also came to know how different dialogues are spoken in different tones different plays were shown to them and told them to read those plays and after that test was taken from A,B,C section all sections secured about not excellent but good marks . These tests improved their reading and writing skills . They can talk confidently .

Data analysis

The question in pre-test that were given were as follows

This is unbelievable

How beautiful these mountains are

Help me quickly

What a great surprise

I am going to home and after that I will go to sleep

My little brother is going to park he loves park especially swings in the park

I like pineapple apple avocados

He is going to buy a watch a beautiful crystal shape perfume and a dollar pen

She was saying don't be a bad guy

I was telling him tomorrow we will read a spooky novel

My parents teach me a lesson that don't be selfish greedy person in adulthood

Don't be a greedy person if you will do greed everyone will hate you to me

greed is one of the biggest crimes

It is Abdulla's chillie flakes

Anna's daughter is a covid patient

They aren't going to deceive me

He lived in Sahiwal from 2007 to 2015

Date today is 1 11 1998

Asad is twenty year old

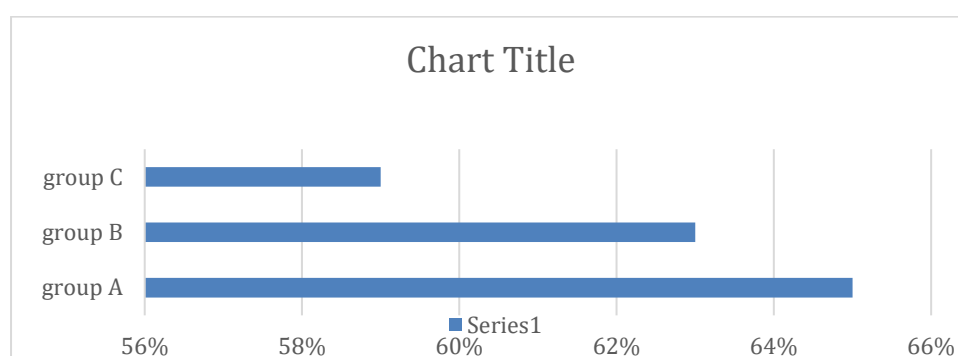
Now this is the table of all the students in group A,BC and their performance in percentage in the table no of students appeared and no of students absent are also written.

Pre-test	
Total Students	30
Total appeared	23
Total Questions	20
Test marks	40

Students percentage of group A	65 %
Students percentage of group B	63 %
Students percentage obtained in group C	59 %

So this was the test that was conducted in pre test students performed fairly not excellent as I was thinking group A secured 65 percent and group B 63 and group C 59 percent and 23 students appeared and 7 students were absent.

This is the graphical representation of students of group A,B,C and their performance The graph is shown so that one person could easily analyze the percentage of the performance of students of group A,B,C.

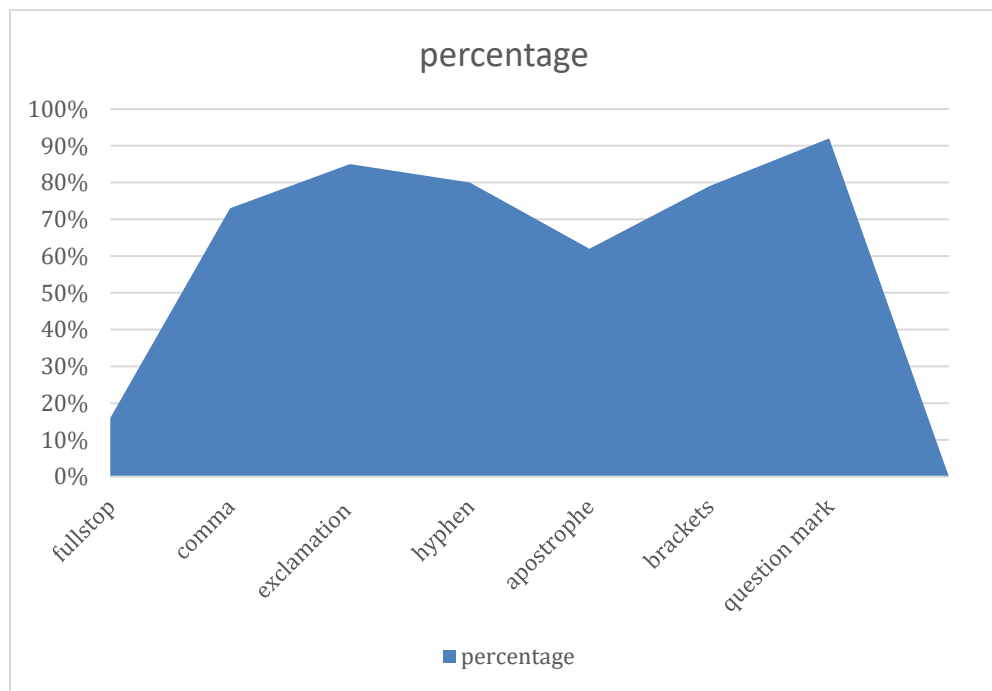


Post-test

Now come the post-test in post-test new procedure is adopted in which lecture are given and students learned punctuation by seeing movies movie dialogues with subtitles were shown to show them how punctuation and tone are related and some plays students also read for improving punctuation and after that test was taken in which like pre-test different questions are asked and result are as follows

Punctuation marks	Correct answers	Incorrect answer	Percentage
Full stop	3	10	16%
Comma	15	9	72%
Colon	21	9	73%
Exclamation mark	25	5	85%
Hyphen	22	8	80%
Apostrophe	18	12	62%
Brackets	20	10	79%
Questions mark	26	4	92%

This is the graphical representation of students of group A



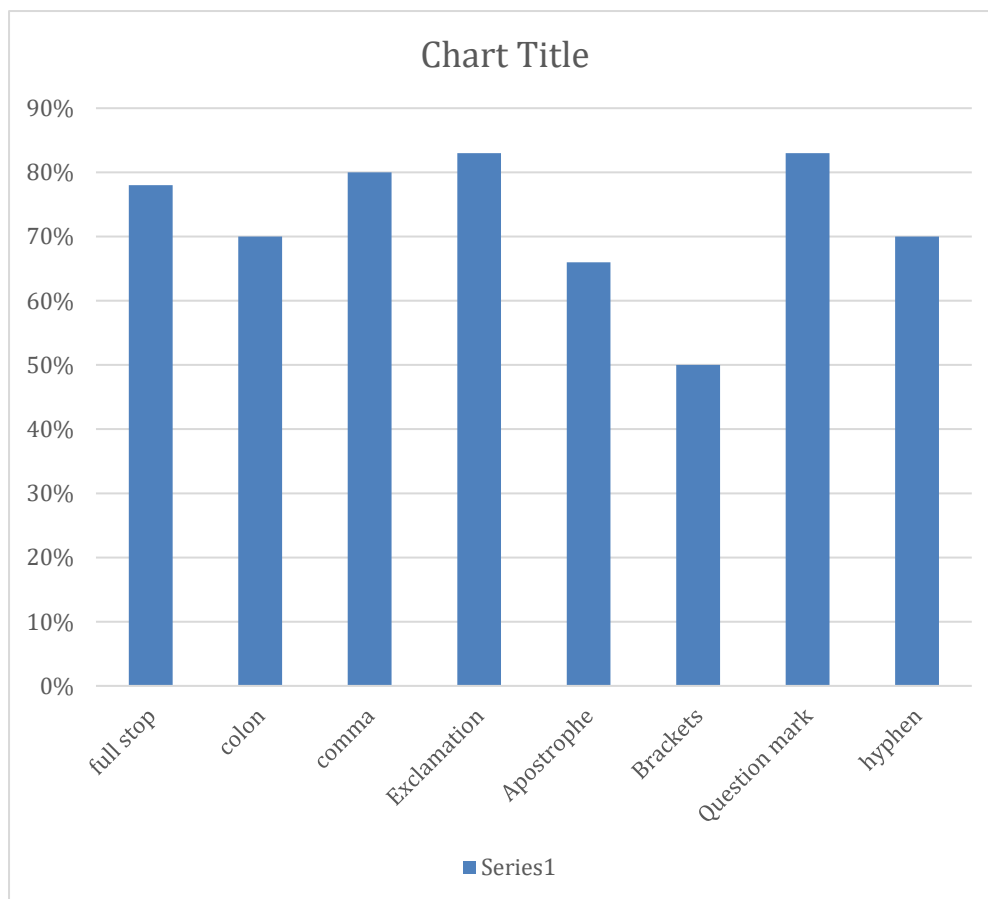
In the graph above, one can easily analyze the students performance as it is given in the table .

Now in that post test total students appeared are 26 and 4 are absent out of 30 group A B C all performed very well and got excellent to good results and got highest in exclamation and they make mistakes in full stop and apostrophe and got in between 70 80 90 percent in other punctuation tools .

Now, group B result are going to be analyzed in the following table below how group B students performed and what is their percentage in all punctuation marks.

Punctuation marks	Correct answers	Incorrect answer	Percentage
Full stop	23	7	78%
Comma	24	6	80%
Exclamation	25	5	83%
Hyphen	21	9	70%
Apostrophe	20	8	66%
Brackets	15	15	50%
Question mark	25	5	83%

In the above table student got highest in question mark and exclamation students were able to perform well in exclamation is because of the fact that movies were shown with subtitles Now this is the graphical presentation of the group B



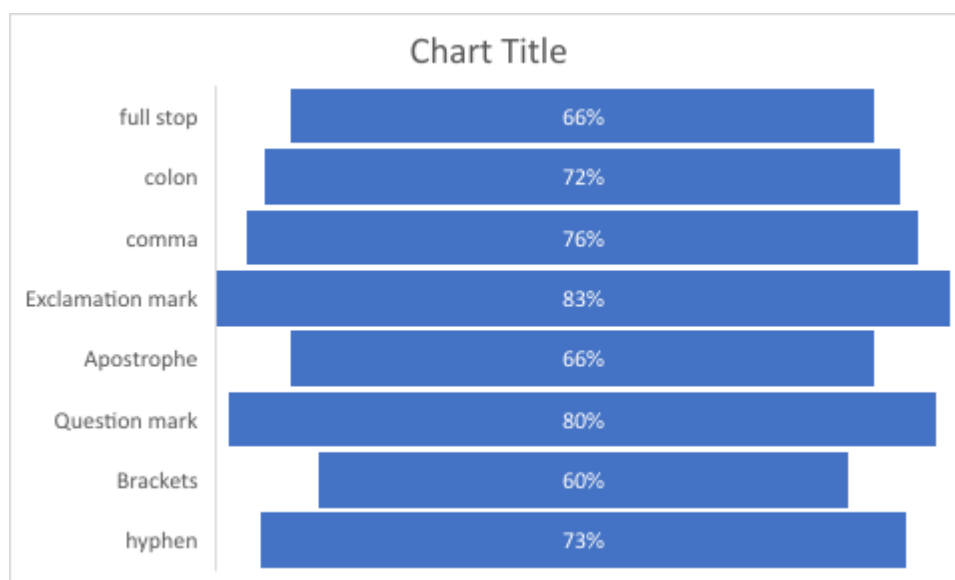
Now everyone can easily analyze the students performance in the graph in which columns are shown in higher and lower positions.

Group C table

Punctuation marks	Correct answers	Incorrect answer	Percentage
Fullstop	20	10	66%
Colon	22	8	72%
Comma	23	7	76%
Exclamation mark	25	5	83%
Apostrophe	20	10	66%
Question mark	24	6	80%
Brackets	18	12	60%
Hyphen	22	8	73%

In the table above students performed well but not more than group A and B but improved their knowledge in punctuation and using its tool

This is the graphical representation of students of group C like the students of group A and B they performed very well and improved their punctuation quite well. Students not only improved punctuation but also English communication skills because they read dialogues as Moss(1998) says writing is important for the effective communication and it attracts students to perform well in difficult and technical matters.



Now this is the graphical representation of group C as that of group A and B a graphical representation is given in the research so that teacher can easily analyze the performance of the students.

Findings The findings is that students performed very well in post test as compared to pre test because in pre test students not performed well because of traditional methods of teaching punctuation because in 5th grade when teachers start to pay attention to English grammar they firstly pay attention to teaching tenses and students of 11 grade came to know what is punctuation so late students come to know about punctuation and in 11 , 12 classes examinations punctuation questions are given as compared to matric level class in pre test students performed well because lectures are given in a creative ways and students read different types of interesting plays that increased their interest in English language as well as in punctuation . Students by seeing movies with subtitles also came to know how punctuation provides meaning to the sentences. If the students perform well in school level, they will easily perform well in universities. One of the major reasons students also don't perform well in

CONCLUSION

The main conclusion made was that instead of giving so much attention to improving English tenses in childhood teachers should also pay attention to punctuation because its also important.Punctuation is important because its make meaning of Sentence clearer in given paragraph .It also make us clearer in which tone other person is talking the second test students performed very well because they were taught in different creative manner in which different movies, plays were shown like harry potter,narnia,hotel transylvania with english subtitles .These entertainment things not only improved their english speaking skills but also their punctuation skills .Teachers should teach their students in creative manner this is necessary

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