



THE EFFECT OF USING GRAMMAR-TRANSLATION METHOD ON ACQUIRING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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ABSTRACT

The goal of this research is to investigate the effect of using Grammar-Translation method on acquiring English as a foreign language. This is an experimental research. The sample of this study comprises 20 students from Grade 10th in which all of them were females from Al-Mazar governmental school. The researcher used random sampling process to conduct this study. The finding of this research indicated that there is a positive effect of using Grammar-Translation method on English as a foreign language acquisition by female students. This research concluded that female students who were taught by using Grammar-Translation method progressed notably in grammar in which they achieved greater self confidence. This study recommends that further future research be conducted in this area to overcome problems with second language acquisition especially in grammar.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Second language acquisition is a global phenomena. It's concern is to find appropriate methods to facilitate learning process. The question that creates an obvious disagreement between EFL researchers is that; shall the teachers use only second language or both native language and second language (i.e. translation) within classrooms' setting? and a lot of studies have been conducted in which they showed different results as to whether translation helps second language (L2) students improve their language skills or not. Some teachers consider using first language (L1) within L2 classroom setting causes a huge harm on acquiring L2 while others recommend teachers to use it. These debates do not conclude to one conclusive decision yet.

Translation process in foreign language or second language acquisition is not only the process of conveying meaning from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL), the benefit of

translation go further. It is a pedagogic method that facilitates learning of four language skills and make a foreign language more comprehended to English language learners, especially in their first levels of learning, particularly those who struggle to express themselves by using a totally new system of verbal or written communication. Schöffner (2002) lists the following benefits of translation: “(a) improve verbal agility, (b) expand the students’ vocabulary in L2, (c) develop their style, (d) improve their understanding of how languages work, (e) consolidate L2 structures for active use, and (f) monitor and improve the comprehension of L2” (p. 125).

In Jordan, recently English teacher's manuals recommended by the ministry of education advised teachers to use translation if it is necessary when facing some difficulties or confusion of using grammar such as "If clause" (since EFL students in Jordan have serious problems to understand and use "If clause" appropriately). That is, this research investigates the suitability of Grammar-Translation method and find out the impact of this method on acquiring grammatical rules by EFL Jordanian students at governmental schools.

In addition to the four skills in any language, the grammar is an elementary mainstay. Hedge (2000) states that teaching English grammar provides explicit framework to guarantee producing correct structures and expedite the learning process. So teaching grammar should have a tremendous concern with regard to any second language teaching process. EFL researchers and teachers should investigate the most appropriate method to enable students to understand the rules easily and to present accurate forms.

In Jordan, English language curricula are taught in schools and universities containing a reasonable materials that focus on teaching grammar. Unfortunately, due to the considerable lack of adequate teaching methodology, students achievement in grammar always indicates low level despite of the great efforts provided by the teachers but the progress is still not satisfying. This situation requires any good contribution to solve this obvious problem.

A grammar-translation is one of the most effective methods that focuses on reading and translating the sentences which demonstrates grammatical rules to acquire English as second language. This method was used long time ago to teach Latin and Greek as a second language, then it was not recommended for a while until it has been revived in the 19th century by German to be preferable method again.

Prator and Celce-Murcia (1979) outlined the important aspects of the Grammar Translation Method as follows: (1) the native language is used to teach second language which emerges by some exercises (2) the meanings of difficult words are given in the list form (3) the teacher explicates grammar points and exceptions that students might face (4) the rules present the right forms and their influences in words (5) starting with reading literary texts (6) then, the students apply the grammatical rules on the read texts (7) translation a variety of sentences to the first language (8) a little concentration on communication activities. The main attention is placed on reading, translation, and grammatical rules with a notable ignoring to the pronunciation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Many studies have been conducted on the area of using translation and Grammar-Translation method in language teaching as a foreign language. These studies have contributed a lot to the

development of the discipline of language teaching. Various study try to prove that translation is one of the most effective pedagogies applicable to the L2 teachers. Like, [Dagilienè \(2012\)](#) conducted a survey in Kaunas to investigate the role of translation as a learning method in English language teaching. The sample included of 78 third year students from the faculty of Design and Technologies at Kaunas University of Technology (KTU), the study found out that translation is a useful tool in English language course which intensify the skills of second language students.

[Al Refaai \(2013\)](#) conducted a research about suggested guidelines for using translation in foreign language and teaching. The study was carried in the English language center (ELC) in King Khalid university, Saudi Arabia. The sample consisted 19 teachers who are native speakers of Arabic and who teaching English at basic level. The findings show that the translation enhance the competence and right performance of language, it is a preferable method for both teachers and students, and using the L1 alongside the L2 fulfills the needs of the students.

[Chang \(2011\)](#) conducted a contrastive study of Grammar-Translation method and Communicative Approach in teaching English grammar, to compare between these approaches, the study conducted in Taiwan, 86 students from Applied Foreign Language Department participated in the study is founded out that the Grammar-Translation method is better than the Communicative Approach in accuracy but the later is better than in fluency, so he conclude that the ideal approach can be produced by emerging the two methods in teaching. Also [Mondal \(2012\)](#) agree with Chang (2011) after conducting his study in Bangladesh, he concluded that the grammar translation method is an appropriate method although the combination with Communicative Approach will create a new fruitful methodology fill the gaps of each previous method.

The researcher proposes that none of these studies have investigated about the real impacts of using Grammar-Translation method on acquiring English as a foreign language especially in elementary stages at governmental school in Al-Mazar director, Al-Karak, Jordan.

3. STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

In Jordan, the big concern of language teachers and researchers is to improve the students' achievement in learning English as a second language, especially grammar, the low level of students in grammar points the existence of such problem. This study attempts to figure out if the Grammar-Translation method can help students to move forward in learning process, explore the students' attitude toward this method. And distinguish the benefits are gained from monolingual or bilingual EFL classrooms ([Al Khotaba and Ahmad, 2012](#)).

4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research attempts to achieve the following objectives:

1. To investigate whether 10th grade students respond to Grammar-Translation method when acquiring EFL.
2. To examine whether students comprehend grammar rules easily?
3. To analyze whether Grammar-Translation method affects acquiring EFL.

5. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

This research addresses the following questions:

1. How do 10th grade students responds to Grammar-Translation method when acquiring EFL?
2. Do students comprehend grammar rules easily when acquiring EFL?
3. Does Grammar-Translation method affect acquiring EFL?

6. RESEARCH METHODS

The sample of the study consisted of twenty 10th grade EFL students from Al-Mazar public school in Al-Mazar directorate of Al-Karak in Jordan in the academic year 2013-2014, all students were 15 years old, and their first language is Arabic. They learn English in the school as a fundamental course and it focuses on four language skills in addition to the great attention is paid for teaching grammar. The sample is distributed equally into two groups: one group was assigned randomly to comprise group (A) as an experimental group, while the other group was assigned randomly to comprise group (B) as a control group.

6.1. The Instrument

This researcher developed two-research instruments: 1. Grammar achievement test, an achievement tests was prepared by the researcher. Students were pre- tested to see if there are any differences in their achievement in grammar. The main subject of the test was If-clause conditions and negation. After conducting the experiment, students were post tested on If-clause conditions and negation, which they have been taught. 2. Questionnaire, an attitudes questionnaire was applied by the researcher to measure the attitudes of the students towards using Grammar-Translation method or using only the second language (English) without any use of native language (Arabic) in teaching English grammar for 10th grade EFL Jordanian students.

6.2. Procedures

The goal of this research is to investigate the effect of using Grammar-Translation method on acquiring English grammar and learning attitudes of elementary stage of EFL Jordanian students. The study was applied the following steps in gathering the data :
The Pre-test was prepared to measure potential differences in students` achievement in grammar. The sample was randomly grouped into two classes; these classes were randomly selected as follows: one class for group A , which is the experimental group, and the other class for group B, which is the control group. The two methods of instructions were randomly assigned to the two groups. The researcher met each group of the class under study three times each time for 50 minutes within the same week and they were taught If Clause conditions one, two, and three. also the negation of If Clause was included. The researcher taught group A by using Grammar-Translation method and followed the following steps:

- i. The form and meaning of every condition was demonstrated.
 - a. exhibited three sentences as examples.
- ii. Then the students were requested to answer some questions showing their understanding.

- a. thereafter form some sentences correctly.
- iii. The negation was explained in the same way and at the end of the class contrastive questions and discussions were clearing the differences between three conditions.

The first language (i.e. Arabic) was used in the following situations:

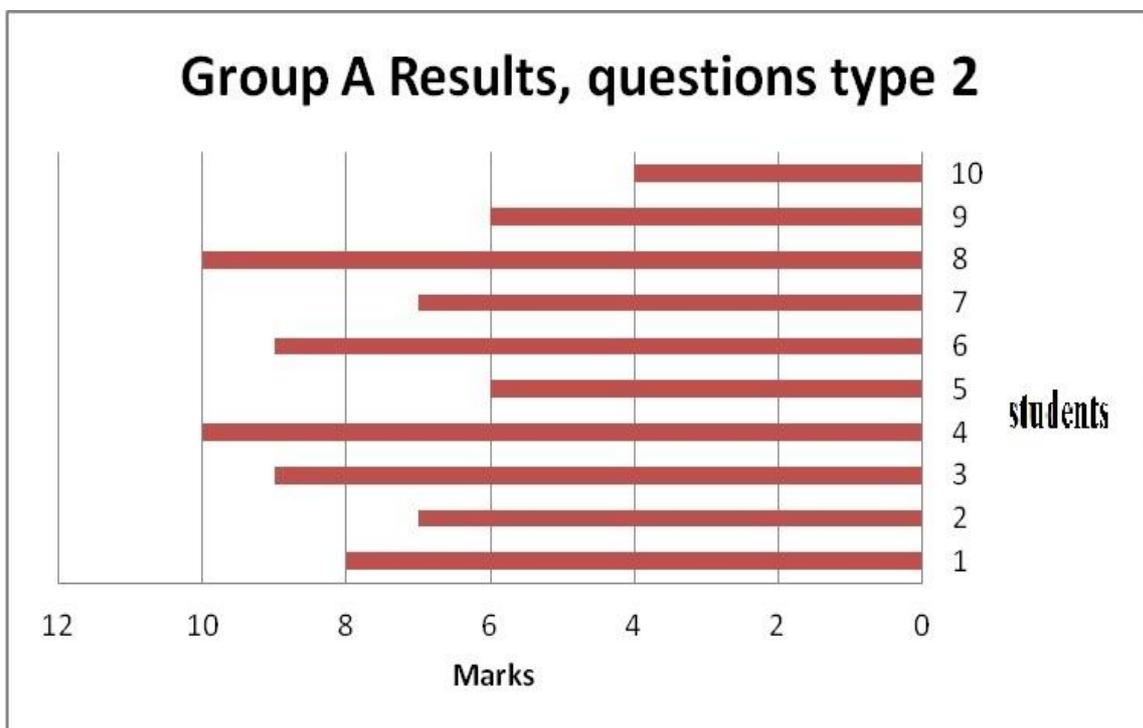
- Forming each condition of If-clause especially when students were unable to perform the correct order.
- Translation the meaning of the examples which were provided to clarify the conditions' form and use.
- Distinguishing between the three conditions' forms and their meaning.
- Explaining the negation structure and the examples that were given to the students.
- Checking understanding of negation function simultaneously with positive function.
- Allowing students express themselves in Arabic when they cannot in English.

The same material was also taught to group B for three lessons but by using second language (i.e., English) only during the class either by the teacher or by the students. The assessment of the students was by applying the post test for both groups which consist two type questions: the oral questions about the form and the meaning of "If Clause" during the class, and written questions immediately after the end of the last class. The written exam was included two types of questions, type one was multiple choices questions and the other was writing sentences showing their understanding of the needed form in a particular situation. The purpose of the post test was to measure the differences in students' achievement in both groups. The researcher provided students in both groups with the attitudes questionnaires to measure the attitudes towards Grammar-Translation method or the target language (English) only in learning English language as a foreign language.

7. DISCUSSION AND FINDINGS

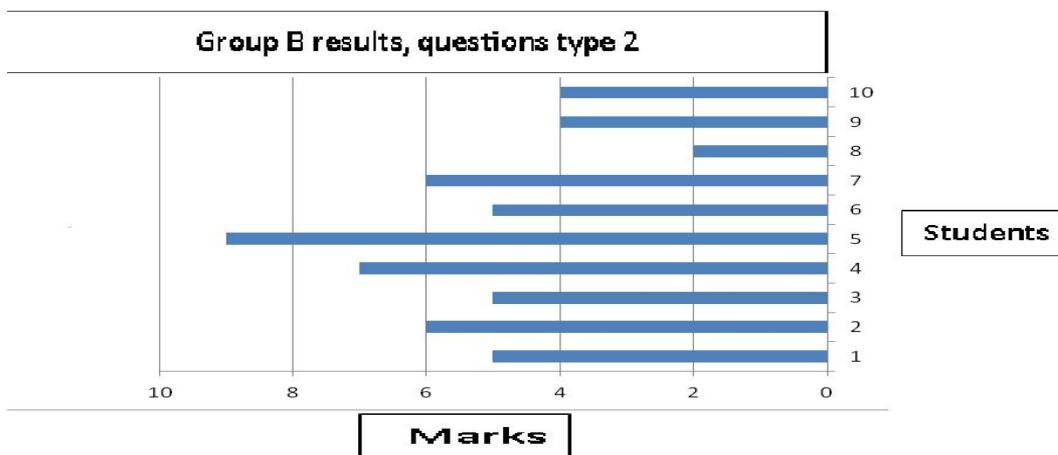
The purpose of conducting the pre test is figure out any difference in the achievement of the two groups which certainly is caused by the effect of applying the stated procedures. The study revealed that during the lessons, for group A there was a notably excellent participation through the class by the majority of students and they were completely comprehend the rules in no time. Also in the oral questions they answered correctly in English language. They sure outperformed group B, which was taught only by using second language, by more participating and answering correctly the oral questions. Furthermore, group B needed longer time, more examples, and explanations to really understand the rules. The results of written exam type one (multiple choice questions) for both groups were too close, there was no remarkably different between two groups. But as diagrams show the results of type two questions were totally different where group A had the higher marks and formed most of the sentences correctly and guessed the needed form for required meaning. (figure 1)

Figure-1.



While group B answers were ranged from mild to bad performs (See Figure 2) and they have a couple of problems: first, they didn't know the needed form. secondly, for who realized the needed form they didn't know how to express themselves.

Figure-2.



The errors were made by the two groups, but the ratio of correct results showed that the superiority was for group A.

The present study investigated the extent of which the Grammar-translation method can help L2 students to comprehend and use of the correct and suitable grammatical rules inside the

classroom according to their understanding of the meaning of these rules. It was found that the using of the Grammar-translation method as a teaching method made the grammatical rules easier, the learning process was faster, and increased the students' capability to answer correctly in both oral and written exams, and effected on their confidence positively. One of the fascinating results of using grammar translation method and because of using the translation appropriately; the students expressed themselves correctly in English language not in Arabic as their first language. So limited and correct use of translation is never have the bad impact on acquiring second language in general especially grammar rules which estimated and exaggerated by a lot of EFL researchers. It is just a matter of increasing the student's comprehend of second language.

8. CONCLUSION

The research findings indicate that Grammar-Translation method is an important kind of teaching methodology that the teachers should adapt it to teach English as a second language and the researchers should highlight the advantage or disadvantage of this method. Many reasons are behind that, first, because it is an applicable method and easy to conduct. Second, the first intellectual act the learner can use when feel unable to express by the target language is interpreting by native language and that exactly the core of this method. Third, the great benefit of join the knowledge of both languages which free the learner from the ambiguity of the target language. After all, the researcher recommend that after the exhibiting of the language skills and the grammatical rules, the usefulness of translation is decreasing. Therefore, the applying of grammatical structure or the practicing of the language skills in general should be in the target language to confirm the needed forms that the learners must develop to achieve the best results they are looking for.

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