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## Using Translation to Boost Understanding amongst MA Students

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### ABSTRACT

The main objective of this study is to investigate the role of translation as an effective learning tool to improve EFL learners' skills communicative competence. The study applied the experimental method in order to find out the impact of practicing translation on the development of these skills. To analyze the data, the researcher used (SPSS) program. The main findings of the research clearly showed that the majority of the students are unable to use mono-lingual dictionaries let alone bi-lingual ones. Translation can be used as one of the subjects that contribute significantly to the development of students' productive skills. Translation students must be trained a lot on how to use monolingual and bi-lingual dictionaries and electronic dictionaries as well. Teachers, at first, should concentrate on fluency more than accuracy in English classes; however, as these are students of translation or are expected to opt for translation, accuracy should be given its due importance across the teaching /learning course. The study also recommended the use of translation as part of the English curriculum in and English programs at universities, in general.

**Keywords:** Vocabulary acquisition, Literal translation, Paraphrase, Language proficiency

### Introduction

Despite the fact that language learning or acquisition is an apparent requirement for translation, the role that translation might play in language learning and acquisition has been considered one of the most hotly debated issue in both Translation Studies and language pedagogy in the West as well as Arab world. Thus, translation studies have been taught in translation classes without being seen in normal foreign or second language (FL) classrooms. In spite of the claims in opposition to make use of translation in English language classroom, recent studies regard highly that far from being counter-productive and fruitless, translation can be an effective boost in (FL) learning and teaching. In most of Arabic countries, the mother tongue, Arabic, is the formal language of

education. All students do their primary education in their mother tongue. If these students have an early exposure to the English language, it would make a big difference to them. Therefore, ignoring the use of learners' first language in English language classes could naturally lead to the students' de-motivation. The purpose of the present study is to deal with translation as a fruitful material in language classes and get rid of its reputation from what considered badly in GTM. Therefore, the challenging problem is to consider that whether translation use in EFL learning and EFL teaching is as facilitating or deteriorating matter. This study also is an attempt to help teachers to solve some of the problems of learning English language through utilizing authentic exercises of translation skills at university level. Some studies have been conducted on the area of

using translation method in language teaching as a foreign language. Al Refaai (2013), for instance, 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 of 19 teachers who are native speakers of Arabic and who teaching English at basic level. The findings show that the translation enhances 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 latter is better than in fluency, so he conclude that the ideal approach can be produced by emerging the two methods in teaching.

#### **Definitions of Translation**

Translation is the process of replacing the meaning from one language into another. One of the famed definitions is that expressed by Nida and Taber (1969: 12)

*Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style..*

Bell (1991: 5-6), on the other hand, has emphasis on meaning and style when he translates the definition given by the French theorist, Dubois (1974): *Translation is the expression in another language (or the target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences.*

#### **Translation and second Language learning**

The role that translation might play in language learning and acquisition has been the subject of debate in both Translation Studies and language pedagogy. Despite the fact that language learning or acquisition is an obvious prerequisite for

translation, very few experts in language pedagogy have felt inclined to recommend translation as a fruitful technique or assistance in language pedagogy, principally at beginner levels of the education system – even though many teachers have continued to find it beneficial. Harvey (1996: 46), for instance, clarifies the circumstances in France as in following statement:

*Until a few years ago, the use of L1, whether for the purposes of translation or grammar explanations, was officially outlawed in the classroom, although a number of teachers continued to engage in “undercover” translation .... The fact that the ban on translation was condemned back in 1987 by the APLV (Association des Professeurs de Langues Vivantes) in a special issue of Les langues modernes points to ... [a] gap ... between teachers faced with the day-to-day reality of the classroom, and official policy makers.*

#### **Translation as a practical language-learning tool**

During the latter half of the 20th century, translation has been employed a relatively debated role in second language teaching and learning. It was well thought-out as vital part of the grammar-translation method, besides the role which plays in the context of communicatively oriented approaches. In recent years, however, an increasing number of requests (e.g. Carreres 2007, Cook 2010, Howatt and Widdowson 2004) have been made for a more balanced theory test of the use of translation in FLT.

In line with the above observations, this idea eventually provide a great support to the statement that the time has come to reconsider translation as a practical language-learning tool which it can be used in the FLT classroom for future linguists and translators, particularly at an advanced level.

On the other hand, translation has been suffered the reputation of being an ill-suited aid in foreign language teaching and methodology. For most scholars, this deprived status was derived from the pre-eminent position of monolingual and communicatively oriented approaches in English language teaching (ELT), such as the audio-lingual

method or communicative language teaching, within which translation found no application or was even considered harmful.

The audio-lingual method and situational language teaching, which originated in the USA and UK in the 1960s, broaden the idea of foreign language learning as a process of - as Richards and Rodgers (2003:50f) put it - "mechanical habit formation", maintaining that language skills (listening, writing, speaking and reading) were developed more efficiently in case the articles to be covered in second language (L2) were indicated in spoken form and with no resort to first language (L1). In this respect, the methods obviously excluded translation, and instead rested heavily on utilizing L2 exclusively, both within and beyond the language classroom.

One of language teaching approach is the communicative method, which leaned on the audio-lingual method and situational language teaching, gathered increasing attention in the 1970s and has occupied center stage in foreign language teaching to the present day. The main argument this teaching assumes is that learners need to be trained mainly for communicative states where second language (L2) will be only way to communicate, thus no alternative to first language (L1) (or translation) is necessary. In teaching communicative language, a native speaker of L2, occasionally with no lively awareness of the first language (L1), was also considered to be the best teacher and the ideal narrator. The communicative method was established basically on encouraging the use of non-contrived texts and examples, together with educational conditions which imitate real life.

The spread of international language schools, such as Berlitz (Cook 2010:7), as well as the worldwide marketing of course materials and textbooks by major international publishers including, amongst others, Oxford University Press (OUP) and Cambridge University Press (CUP), has made translation a dispensable and undesirable element because it does not necessarily contribute to their bottom line.

Translation as used by the grammar-translation method, which were designed primarily to improve students' skills (reading and writing),

and, at afterward stages, besides testing their knowledge. Cook (2010:10) indicates a prime example of what later came to be called a "synthetic syllabus" in which items to be learnt are formulated, graded and presented to students in an ordered and cumulative way.

Since such translation is impossible without knowing vocabulary items, a few words were chosen by the instructor for the learners in each lesson with their meaning in second language. Therefore, the grammar-translation method indirectly permitted using one to one equivalence of the vocabulary items.

### **Brief history of translation in EFL teaching**

There is a rapidly growing literature on the didactic role of translation in FLT. Recently, the method of using translation in English classrooms has been considered one of the most hotly debated issues —whether explicitly or implicitly— to different linguistic, psychological and pedagogical assumptions. Accordingly, a historical overview is crucial to reach rational conclusions about the role of translation in FLT and FLL; therefore, this may provide a general assistance to understand its current role in the Communicative approach as well as in the common framework of languages. Consequently, several schools of thought and methodologies have appeared such for instance, the Audio-lingual methods, the Direct Method, the Grammar-Translation as well as the Communicative approach.

### **The Grammar-Translation method**

The Grammar-Translation method was originally established by German scholars (Howatt 2000: 131) and later on promoted by the American linguists, who make significant efforts to the usage of translation in FLT. Vermes (2010: 85), reports that the above mentioned method inherited the viewpoints of other traditional approaches, nevertheless at that time (19th century) it took place to be used along with modern languages. Vermes (2010: 86), also puts forward the view that the deficiencies of this approach are doubtlessly responsible for the general misapplication of translation in general and using translation in FLT in particular. Linguistics in 19th-century held the view that languages were subject to rules, which

acceptable for communication between speakers. This is also one of the implicit beliefs in the Grammar-Translation method, that is grammar rules has been created a formal code, of which proficiency in a language was assessed in terms of the lexical and grammatical accuracy (Enríquez Aranda 2003: 120). One of the basic techniques, he adds, in this method is to memorize the grammar rules and lists of vocabulary which support to promote deduction in general and translation and contrastive analysis in particular.

Some scholars have criticized this method for disregarding oral skills or interaction, due to the concentration on form and on written texts. In addition to be hardly motivating (Martín Sánchez 2010: 145). Bloomfield, who belongs to structuralism, stated that *"translation into the native language is bound to mislead the learner, because the semantic units of different languages do not match, and because the student, under the practiced stimulus of the native form, is almost certain to forget the foreign one"* (1933: 505). Because of all these criticisms, and others, this method has been ignored to be implemented as an educational tool in English classes.

#### **The Reform movement and the Direct Method**

The Reform Movement appeared as a response to modify misuse of the Grammar-Translation method and showed a clear preference for speech and communication instead of grammar rules and writing, as well as for connected texts as the center of the learning and teaching process (Howatt 2000: 171). Changing the techniques of teaching, the Direct method emerged as part of the so-called Natural approach, which is essentially based on the principle that best way to learn languages is to follow the path of nature; that is, to learn a second language learners should resemble the same way they follow when acquiring mother tongue as much as possible (Sánchez 2009: 51), although these two processes (i.e. acquiring one's L1 and learning a FL) are completely different. According to the spirit of the Reform Movement, the Direct Method focused basically on oral communication and disregard written texts, assuming that learners cannot master written language until they had a good command of the oral

language. Sánchez (2009: 58) believes that, this method was based on a set of expectations arising from the manner in which children acquire their L1, but not on any linguistic theory.

There are numerous reasons why translation was banned in this method. First, it was connected with written language, and neglect focusing on the oral one. Second, it was supposed to interfere in the direct association between concepts and word (see also Howatt 2000: 173). Finally, most teachers were native speakers of the language they were teaching and probably unable to translate into the students' L1.

However, this method is not applicable in higher secondary education, since there were mismatches between learning L1 naturally and FLL classroom, (Richards and Rodgers 2001: 12-13). Additional shortcoming of the method is that the dialogues and situations represented in the classroom were not very likely to be encountered by students outside this environment. Besides, there was no correction, which might eventually lead to the fossilization of errors.

#### **The Communicative approach**

The term Communicative approach is a flexible term which can be applied to various approaches of FLT that concentrates on communication as means to learn a new language. This method is basically associated with the Functional-Notional approach, which emphasis on functions, for instance time, location, travel, etc. The key point of this method is the process itself, but not the outcome of the learning process (Cuéllar Lázaro 2004: 2). The most significant aspect of this method is to recreate real-life, social and functional situations, in the classroom in order to guide students towards communicative competence (Martín Sánchez 2010: 148-149). There are three main consequence activities in the Communicative approach : a) be grounded on the transmission of relevant content for the speakers; b) subordinate form to content; and c) be participative and interactive (Sánchez 2009: 111).

Disagreeing with the general belief that translation has little to contribute, scholars like Tudor (1987) and Duff (1989) believe that translation plays a great role in the communicative

language classroom. Tudor maintains that “translation, as the process of conveying messages across linguistic and cultural barriers, is an eminently communicative activity, one whose use could well be considered in a wider range of teaching situations than may currently be the case”. In turn, Duff (1989: 7) expresses that “translation develops three qualities essential to all language learning: accuracy, clarity, and flexibility”.

### Pedagogical Translation

Translation may possibly be comprehends only as a transferring tool, with which written texts in one language is substitute with equivalent texts in another language (Catford 1974: 20), so that readers may access a final product. However, recent researches show that translation will be simply analyzed as a potential tool for the EFL classroom; a long with its role in training translators. This distinction, according to Holmes (1994: 77), seems to come into view from the necessitate to set two forms (or applications) apart: translation in translator training courses and translation as a general activity in any foreign language teaching (FLT) and learning (FLL) environment. In the same line, Vermes (2010: 83-85), has recently argued that a crucial prerequisite to consider translation a suitable educational means is to distinguish pedagogical from real translation in terms of their function, the item being dealt with and the addressee.

Therefore, pedagogical translation is mainly considered as tool to improve students' second language (L2) proficiency. Correlated highly, translation competence cannot be attained without a translator already possesses respectable awareness of both SL and TL. This meaning may include: linguistic knowledge, socio-linguistic, pragmatic and (inter-)cultural knowledge. The following figure will express clearly the connection of the two competences containing the above mentioned elements.

According to Vermes (2010: 84), a further distinction must be made between the two types of pedagogical translation: In the first place, translation used as a way to teach and learn FL; in the second place, the kind of translation that is used in translator training courses.

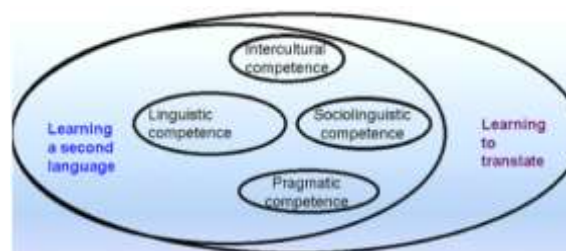


Figure 1: Second language learning vs. learning to translate

From a different point of view, Martínez expresses that what she termed ‘pedagogical macro function of translation’ depended basically on two factors: the learners’ level of competence and the linguistic feature to be taught (1997:156). She follows Duff (1989:7), who argues that:

*Depending on the students’ needs, and on the syllabus, the teacher can select the material to illustrate particular aspects of language and structure with which the students have difficulty in English (for instance, prepositions, articles, if-clauses, the passive). By working through these difficulties in their mother tongue, the students come to see the link between language (grammar) and usage.*

In the same line, Newmark, states: “translation is important as an exercise in accuracy, economy and elegance in manipulating a variety of L2 registers in a first degree” (1991: 62). According to the result of the survey he was conducted, Newmark (1991: 62), finds out the sort of translation appropriate to each level. Accordingly, it is a brief time-saver in preliminary stages; a means of control and consolidation of essential grammar and vocabulary in elementary stages; a method to deal with errors and to enlarge vocabulary in intermediate stages; and a fifth skill and the fundamental skill to promote communication in advanced stages. Lado, on the other hand, considers in view of the fact that translation is a psychologically complex skill, it has to be taught after the L2 is mastered, “as a separate skill, if that is considered desirable” (1964: 54). Duff, also proposes using translation as a “language learning activity” (1989: 8). In turn, Malmkjaer believes that translation was not possible without the four skills, as it was “dependent on and inclusive of them” (1998: 8).



### The role of translation and mother tongue in English Language Learning:

Our starting-point is to differentiate between two fundamental aspects, that is, the teaching of translation as a professional skill and the utilizing of the first language in English classes as supportive means in language learning.

In the last few decades, most methods in English language pedagogy dictate that L1 should be banned in English classrooms. Communicative approaches, in the past few decades, used to look at utilizing mother tongue or translation in English classrooms as destructive factor for learning process. Nevertheless, in recent times the mindset towards using translation and mother tongue in language classes has undergone a constructive alteration.

Some recent linguistics every now and then identify translation as the fifth language skill along with the other four basic skills, that is reading, listening, writing and speaking. Other linguistics have classified them as input skills and output skills as shown in Figure.2



Figure 2. Classification of English language skills

Another supporter of this concept is Ross (2000:63), who states that:

*'Translation holds a special importance at an intermediate and advanced level: in the advanced or final stage of language teaching, translation from L1 to L2 and L2 to L1 is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding between strangers'.*

Nonetheless, greater numbers of students hold onto intellectually translating from second language (L2) into first language (L1) and vice versa when trying to comprehend authentic reading or listening materials. Therefore, teachers of foreign languages usually give more attention to the significance of

using translation in language classrooms. According to J. Harmer (2001:131), the principal cause of using the mother tongue in class is that the L1 use is required by the activity, if students are linguistically unable to activate vocabulary for a chosen task. Additional reason is that code-switching between languages is considered as logically progressive ability; hence, translation is a normal interactive talent to do in language learning.

Another key factor to remember is that, the real value of translation in English classes is to utilize it in order to make a practical comparison between languages in terms of grammar, word order, sentence structure, vocabulary and other language items in English as well as the student's mother tongue. N. J. Rose (2000) has also found that, language interference and intervention are likely to be reduced in case that the students are aware of the differences between languages, namely, Arabic and English. The most interesting approach to this issue has been proposed by Mahmoud (2006:29) who explains, many teachers recognize that most of second language learners will always think more often in their mother tongue when dealing with new vocabularies, even at the advanced levels. Furthermore, Mahmoud (2006:30) specifies that, using translation in L2 classes gives learners a chance to draw special interest on similarities and differences between L1 and L2 forms. Thus, translation is a very effective method for L2 acquisition because it is interactive method which uses authentic materials and consequently promotes the learners independence.

C. Schweers (1999:7) has carried out a research into this concern and comes across that considerable proportion (88.7%) of the participants prefer to use their mother tongue in their English classes. In addition, if learners of a second language are encouraged to pay no attention to their native language, they may consider that their identity is threatened. The result of the research into the use of native language has shown that 86% out of 110 respondents think that it is essential to use native language in classroom, whereas (90%) believe that it must be used when giving explanation to complex concepts; introducing new material (57%); defining new vocabulary (74%). It is worth mentioning that in

teaching and learning English there has been a long-felt dissatisfaction, essentially on the students' part, about not including or minimize the usage of translation in mastering new foreign language. Thus, is a natural feeling that learners frequently feel like to check the precise meanings of the terms they are dealing with in their native language by consulting bilingual dictionaries or simply request the teacher's explanations. Nevertheless, overusing native language in the classroom may lead students to think that vocabulary and structures in English always have a L1 correspondence, which does not always exist. Therefore, to get rid of such circumstance, students' must learn to raise consciousness of the non-parallel nature of language which is likely to allow learners to think comparatively. The vital issue is how to reach a sense of balance of the L1 use in learning. It is recommended that four factors should be considered, namely, the students' preceding knowledge, the students' level, the stage of the course, and the stage of the individual lesson (Harmer, 2001:132). One of the most significance outcomes and major ideas of the IATEFL Conference which held in Manchester from 18 to 20 of April 2007, has been presented by a well-known British linguist, G. Cook (Cook, 2007):

*'The most important statement was the fact that English teachers tend to take a monolingual approach thus neglecting the importance of translation in the process of teaching English. The ESL classroom cannot follow the motto "One nation, one people, one language", a somewhat overrated statement since it implies that a classroom is a state. Quite contrary to that, the L1, i.e. the mother tongue of the students, should by all means be acknowledged. The importance is highlighted even more by the fact that the students' culture is part of their language and by neglecting their language, the teacher, in a monolingual classroom, neglects their culture which leads to the danger of neglecting their identity as well. What is more, there is no valid database that could confirm the standpoint that the monolingual approach*

*in teaching is the best one. The disregard of the students' mother tongue can in fact demotivate the students and be Counter-productive.'*

Considering, what has been mentioned, it is essential to bring up to date information and conduct more researches concerning the use of mother tongue and utilizing of translation in English classrooms. The results of teachers' voting on the use of mother tongue in the English classroom are presented on the BBC Teaching English website. There were 641 respondents in this research. The findings reveal the following: 21% of respondents use only English, 58% of respondents sometimes use mother tongue, 8% - frequently, 7% - most of the time, 6% - about half the time.

On another side, the implicit upshot of this research shows the idea of sharing the experiences of using translation in class activities. Besides, the students' perceptions of mental translation they employ in learning English for Specific Purposes. There are a number of different aspects that should be taken into account when dealing with translation as a teaching tool, such as grammar, syntax, collocation and connotation.

#### **Culture as Barrier to the Acquisition of Language and Translation Skills**

One of the strategic goals of teaching English as a foreign language, then, is to free the learners from their culture – based assumptions and to develop an intercultural identity that facilitates the acquisition of the skills of a second language that belongs to an additional culture. The borders between self and other are explored to face the problems attending this relationship and to redraw it in a positive way. Concentrating on this intercultural perspective in English language teaching and learning involves more than developing the knowledge of other places and people. It means accepting that human beings are shaped by their cultures and that communicating across cultures involves a possible confrontation of one's own culturally conditioned nature and that of others.

In view of this immense and bulky presence of culture in the learning situation of a foreign language, those interested in planning and teaching

of translation from or into a second language have to realize that the cultural background features are not as much of significant than the linguistic ones. Regardless this concept, a vital part will be misplaced and therefore, a factual agreeable ends will be considered as a false impression. If we accept that the acquisition of a second language is the acquisition of a second culture, we should think of how this second culture is acquired in the presence of the deeply- rooted beliefs and mechanisms of the culture of the mother tongue. On the other hand, studying the link between language and culture with its all aspects, is the most fundamental step towards the acquisition of the skills of translation Hence, it expresses the extremely nature of culture as a multipart and varied component. In The United States of America, for example , different groups of American people maintain a widespread roots such as: Irish – Americans, Arab – Americans, Afro-Americans and German - Americans. Although all these groups identify themselves as Americans first, they remain to some extent parts of some other cultural mainstream. Manifestations of this sub-cultural categorization find their way to the food habits, the costumes, the language and other traditions of each group. Culture, in this sense, is a hidden force that provides meaning, direction and mobilization. Creating a positive culture is of a great importance to the success of teaching a foreign language and a good translator. Actually, the learners of a second / foreign language may experience what is called “cultural shock”. John Macionis and Linda Gerber define the cultural shock as “the personal disorientation a person may feel when experiencing an unfamiliar way of life due to immigration or a visit to a new country , or to move between social environments”.(2010 , p.54 ) . The cultural shock may create the feeling of helplessness, irritability, anger, stress reaction, a deep sense of hostility towards language and the instructor and boredom .The cultural barrier, in this respect, does not only affect the students’ acquisition of language but even their lifestyle and attitude to the instructors of the new language and accordingly to into or from this language.

Cultural difference may occur because of ideological variation and it is practical to have a

considerable awareness about cultural differences alongside traditions and customs of the target languages. Aaron Pun, a Canadian correspondent, wrote: "In studying cross cultural differences, we are not looking at individuals but a comparison of one ethnic group against others. Hence, we are comparing two bell curves and generalization cannot be avoided."

### **Methodology of the Research**

This study primarily involved a survey, comprised of two sets of questionnaires (one for learners and other for lecturers) concerning translation and language learning. Moreover, in order to discover more deeply the relationships and among learners’ beliefs about translation, strategy use, and individual demographic variables, interviews were conducted with students as well. Sampling, tools for collecting and analyzing data will be described and discus in details.

### **Study design**

The researcher adopts two study designs. Initially, a questionnaire has been designed for both learners and lecturers-besides, assessing Test. An attitudes questionnaire was implemented by the researcher to measure the students’ opinion towards using English language supported with Arabic if necessary or using English language without any usage of Arabic (only English language) in teaching English language. Besides, pre- and post-test which is designed to find out the impact of the experimental factor (translation) on enhancing students’ comprehension of English language Skills (Reading, Writing, listening and speaking). As a final point, the researcher compares the pre- and post-tests results to see if there is a progress in the students’ performance.

### **Sample**

The subjects are EFL students, fourth year at Majmaah University. A number of 30 of EFL students (males) have been selected randomly out of 40 students who represent the target population. The subject’s ages range between (19 - 22) years.

### **Materials**

A special course for extensive reading and writing skills was taught. The materials for reading are extracted from ‘*Basic Reading Power1*’, Third Edition, by Linda Jeffries, and Beatrice S. Mikulecky.



It has four separate parts that correspond to four important aspects of proficient reading: part 1: extensive reading; part 2: vocabulary building; part 3: comprehension skills; part 4: thinking skills. During this course the students are provided with carefully selected materials which enable them to practice reading and writing skills as a preface to translation study. Different modern techniques are used in the class such as audio-visual aids such as projectors, smart board and CDs to enhance the students' performance. On the other hand, the materials for writing course are extracted from 'Keep Writing1', A writing course for Arab students, written by Richard Harrison. The course draws the students' attention to handwriting, beside language items are pointed out and briefly explained where necessary. In addition to, train the students on how to use dictionaries effectively and how to select the appropriate words when translating.

To evaluate the students' performance in communicative skills, pre- and post-tests were used. The pre-test measure the students' previous knowledge, whereas post-test evaluates the change that takes place after the course.

#### Analysis and Discussion of Results:

The researcher uses the descriptive analyses method which considered as practical technique to identify the overall patterns of students' beliefs about using translation as a learning strategy in order to address the research questions. Participants responded to questionnaire's items, indicating the degree to which they agreed or disagreed with statements concerning their beliefs about translation.

How useful is translation as a means of learning English?

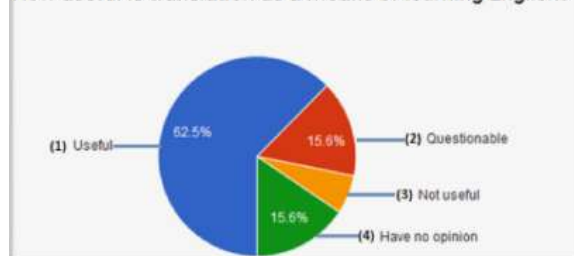


Chart (1): translation as useful means for learning

The pie chart (1) shows the percentage split of the students' opinions on using translation as a means of learning English. These percentages display that (62.5%) of the learners believe that using translation in English classrooms is useful

activity. Sharing the same percentage of (15.6%), one group of learners have no certain idea about the role that translation might play in English classrooms, while the same number of (15.6%) have no opinion. Only (6.3%) consider that translation activity is not useful.

What are the effects of using translation activities to learn English?

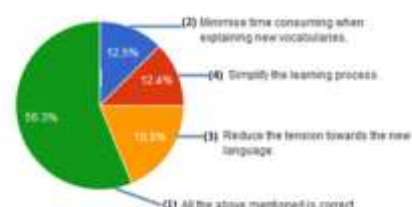


Chart (2): The effect of using translation activities in learning English

The biggest slice of the above pie chart (2), approximately 56.3%, illustrates the students' attitudes who think that translation simplifies the learning process, reduces the tension towards the new language and minimizes time consuming when explaining new vocabularies. Whereas, 12.5% consider that translation skills only minimizes time consuming when explaining new vocabularies. Roughly the same number, that is 12.4%, reflects the idea that translation simplifies the learning process. About 18.8% indicate the learners' viewpoints that translation plays a great role in reducing the tension towards the new language.

Table 1: Questionnaire's items (pre- and post-test)

No	Version	Means	S.D	T. value	Difference
1	Pre-test	10.9	9.5	6.5	Significance
2	Post-test	23.2	6.9	19.38	

The researcher calculated the means of pre- and post-test results (10.9 and 23.2) from a full mark (100) respectively and the standard deviation (9.5 and 6.9) respectively. The calculation shows that there is a significant difference in the students' performance.

#### Reliability of the test

The reliability of the test is calculated using the following ranks:

$$\text{Reliability} = 1 - \frac{6\sum D^2}{N(N-1)^2} = 0.98$$

The calculation resulted in (1.3) for the reliability of linguistic knowledge element test. Thus, (1.3) emphasizes that the test is reliable. The calculation resulted in (1.2) for the reliability of translating skills test, and also emphasizes that the test is reliable.

#### Validity of the test

The test is valid and reasonable. The researcher has consulted four judges, and it has been corrected according to their suggestions. The translating skill and language competence test has been made to measure students' performance after being exposed to course material.

#### Tools of data collection

The tools that have been used in the experimental study are pre- and post- test. The later was given after teaching the programme.

The pre-test "diagnostic" is designed to find out the students' ability to translate English to Arabic and vice versa. The course aims at investigating how to use translation as a means to develop the students' competence and comprehension in English language. The course items included how to introduce yourself, describing peoples, places<sup>1</sup> (countries, cities, towns, etc.), places<sup>2</sup> (streets and houses), describing a day and describing a scene.

The subjects are exposed to a pre-test to measure the candidates' previous knowledge, then a post-test takes place after teaching course in which the researcher uses the translation techniques and activities to teach language course, extended for three weeks during which three lectures per week were taught (15 hours). In the end, the researcher co-relates the pre- and post-tests results to see whether there is a difference in students' performance or not. If the scores of the post-test are higher than that of the pre-test then progress has taken place.

The test has been designed in a way that suits the teaching and testing purposes. The aim of this test is to help the researcher to find out the weakness and strength of the candidates; and to evaluate their performance. The researcher also uses what is so called "dicto – comp" methodology which uses dictation as means of testing students skills in translation and interpretation. Dictation is

quite useful in a translation classroom to test the receptive skills of listening and recognition and use of terminology. After students are familiar to the text to be translated or read parallel texts, they can benefit from dictation taken from one or more of the texts.

#### Data analysis

For calculation of data analysis, the researcher uses the following procedures:

$$A\text{-Mean} = \frac{\sum Xf}{N}$$

For the standard deviation:

$$S.D = \frac{\sqrt{\sum d^2}}{N}$$

For the testing significance:

$$t \text{ Value} = \frac{x_1 - x_2}{\sqrt{\frac{\delta_1^2}{n_1} + \frac{\delta_2^2}{n_2}}}$$

$\delta$  = population standard deviation

$\delta^2$  = population variance

$\sum$  = the sum of

X = the random variable X

f = function of

d = standard deviation

#### Conclusion

This study has investigated the area of the role that translation might play in English language learning process. Translation in general, was and is still serves as a bridge from which the cultures cross to the rest of communities around the world, in other words, cultural exchanges are a way of building bridges between countries. Translation in particular, also acts as a tool for the progress and development of EFL students' performance. Consequently, there have been some dispositions of using a mother tongue as a source to encourage EFL learners, since it is considered as one of the supporting factors in language pedagogy in order to improve learners' capability in learning a new language. Translation method, on other hand, plays an important role in boosting the three crucial qualities of any language learning, that is, accuracy, clarity, and flexibility. Hence, translation can be provided not only as a tool for developing language skills, but also as a resource for the progression of second language acquisition.

### Recommendations

1. In translation classes, students should be trained basically on how to guess the meaning from context first and then how to use dictionaries to get the appropriate equivalent words.
2. EFL Students should be trained exclusively on the differences between English and Arabic language in terms of sentence structure and phonology in order to overcome the grammatical mistakes.
3. The laboratories at universities should contain technological tools such as computer devices and educational videos prepared on CDs to help students to get the most of English courses they have learnt at different university levels.
4. Teachers should encourage fluency and not accuracy in English classes in general and in interpretation classes in particular.

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### Electronic Resources

- Oxford English Dictionary Online: [www.oed.com](http://www.oed.com)
- <http://www.echoroukonline.com/ara/index.php?news=35535?print>.
- Translation at the European Commission – a history. [http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/index\\_en.htm](http://ec.europa.eu/dgs/translation/index_en.htm)
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