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РОЛЬ ВЛИЯНИЯ ДИСЦИПЛИНЫ ПЕРЕВОДА НА ОБУЧЕНИЕ АНГЛИЙСКОМУ ЯЗЫКУ: ПРИМЕР В СРЕДНЕЙ ШКОЛЕ «САМИ ФРАШЕРИ» ПРИШТИНА

Научная статья

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Аннотация

В данной работе изучено введение дисциплины перевода в качестве инструмента изучения Английского языка, а также то, как данная дисциплина влияет на процесс изучения. Цель исследования состоит в определении различий в классах, занимающихся по стандартному учебнику и классах, где представлена дисциплина перевода. Эмпирическое исследование было проведено в двух группах старших классов средней школы с использованием качественного подхода к сбору данных. Виллиген-Синемус [14] делит студентов, изучающих дисциплину перевода на основные группы, одна из которых обучает переводу в качестве профессиональной практики, а другая группа — студенты, практикующие перевод в классе второго языка. В данном исследовании рассмотрена последняя группа, та, в которой студенты не являются профессиональными пользователями Английского языка. Было выявлено, что привязка заданий по переводу к общему учебному плану, определяемому государством, возможна и ведет к повышению результативности изучения языка для большинства учащихся.

Результаты показывают увеличение знаний и использования языка в «экспериментальном» классе по сравнению с «предметным» классом.

Ключевые слова: перевод, экспериментальные классы, классы тематических книг, второй язык.

THE IMPACT OF TRANSLATION IN ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING: A CASE STUDY IN THE UPPER HIGH SCHOOL "SAMI FRASHËRI" PRISHTINA

Research article

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Abstract

Introducing students to translation as a tool for learning the English language, and defining how the implementation of this tool affects the learning process within the classroom, comprises the significance of this paper. The goal of the study was to define the differences of a course-book based classroom and an experimental translation classroom. This empirical research was conducted with two upper high school classrooms using the qualitative approach of collecting data. Willigen-Sinemus [14] divides translation students into two major groups, one being students who learn translation as a professional practice and the other group, students who practice translation in a second-language classroom. The students of this study belong to the latter group and are not professional users of English. Relating translation tasks with the general syllabus defined by the state is possible and resulted in a higher productivity for the majority of students.

The results show an increase of knowledge and language use in the “experimental” classroom when compared to the “course-book” based classroom.

Keywords: translation, experimental classroom, course book classroom, second language.

Problem formulation

The central research problem presented here is whether students will acquire more English language knowledge if they are faced with translation techniques compared to the students who are presented only with the syllabus assigned by the education system, comprising no translation techniques. Based on Islami's [8] research, the majority of respondents, when asked how they would like to change their classrooms, answered that they want to incorporate new practice-based activities always trying to move away from the usual form of theoretical classes. Practically, Kosovan classes are still more theory based. This paper aims to introduce students to translation as a learning tool for English, enable students to practice and try translation, define the main differences the introduction of translation makes in learning English within the classroom.

The relevance of the topic

The results aspired to be obtained after this research will mirror the development, if any, of skills with students learning English as a second language. The study is conducted in an upper high school for eight weeks. Students at this stage are proficient users of English; therefore translation and its methods are not hard to grasp. On the contrary they are a tool for reaching higher levels of language skills.

The importance of this research lies in proving the benefits of using translation in every English classroom. Djelloul and Neddar [2017, P. 16] have presented a new wave of thought stating that their "*findings confirmed the effectiveness of translation in explaining new vocabulary, developing students' cognitive skills and extending students' background knowledge as well as their linguistic competence*" [2]. This, among other reasons, is the root of the impersonal initiative to dig deeper into the field of translation and its effectiveness in student learning.

This diploma paper focuses on the benefits of implementing translation in the English classroom as a way of learning and acquiring better language skills. This research will have to answer the following questions:

- Do students' English Language skills develop through learning translation?
- How can teachers define the student's level of learning when translation comes into play?

Research hypothesis

This paper has three hypotheses:

- Introducing translation in the regular English classroom would prepare students better for their future professional careers.
- Students' learning process will be more effective if they are challenged with translation tasks.
- Students will gain individual and group work skills and they will be able to deal with different materials.

Corpus of the study

This study has used books on translation and online scientific papers as its basic corpus.

Methodology and procedures

The methodology section of this paper consist of a detailed explanation of how the research was done. An explanation of the participants and how they were selected will be presented along with the methods and activities used during the research.

Participants

The research aimed two groups of upper high school students. After the Upper-High School "Sami Frashëri" Prishtina was chosen, a permission from the Department of Education of the Municipality of Prishtina had to be taken. After the positive answer the research procedures started. The level of the students was decided to be twelve graders. The reason this group was chosen was because their level of English was upper-intermediate and they, according to their age and grade, were provided with enough knowledge to comprehend the material that was chosen to be present. Two classes were chosen randomly, one becoming the "*course-book based class*" and the second the "*experimental class*". The research was conducted in April and May (2019), meeting each class once a week for forty-five minutes.

Fifty-six students participated in this research, age seventeen to eighteen. The "*course-book based class*" had twenty-six students in total and the "*experimental class*" thirty. These students attended the same upper high School for three years, they all come from Kosova and live in Prishtina. Based on their grades, most of the students were high achievers.

Research instruments

Test was utilized as research tool in both groups of students. Pre-test was used to have a clear vision of the language level of students whereas a post-test was administered in order to see the changes, if any, of the language level of students.

Method and Procedure

This research was carried out by the empirical method by employing the researcher in the teaching process in order to then examine the results of the action research and present it as a case study with upper high school students. Action research is the type of research in which the teacher, through disciplines, aims to make changes resolving around a posed problem [6].

The reason why the study was experimental was that it was considered as the most suitable way of examining whether translation affects the process of learning. With the "*course-book based class*", nothing besides the prescribed syllabus was practiced. The lessons were mostly a combination of grammar and vocabulary exercises. The classes were taught and mentored by a professional teacher with twenty years of experience. During this period of the research the classes were a combination of the researcher's and the teacher's teaching.

The "*experimental class*" had to translate different pieces of texts which were chosen by the researcher and always differed in style. A brief presentation of translation and its types was done in the second class, by drawing a table of the division of translation into human and machine and their subtypes, taken from Gërmizaj's "Translation Theory in the Classroom" (2005). Texts for translation were taken from the textbook (Headway, upper-intermediate) and by other sources provided by the researcher. Texts differed in style and the reason was to present students to different constructions of sentences and thus getting them exposed to a variety of vocabulary. The types of texts used were: sentences using particular grammar tenses, poems, news reports, and letters to friends.

In the first class the students were given a placement test to assess their English language proficiency level. The first part of the test was reading comprehension. The text comprised a text and ten questions related to it. Part two of the test was writing task with ten questions with four alternatives, where only one option was correct. This procedure was the same for the two classes. Since at times identifying only the level of the students' knowledge is not sufficient, the "experimental class" was given a short translation text additionally. The purpose of this extra test was to check how students can translate in order to decide regarding the materials to precede in the future.

The following classes with the "*course-book based class*" were taught by the researcher and the teacher, always based on the syllabus, using only the textbook. The class was always willing to participate in discussions, debates and activities. The time distribution between the teacher and the researcher has chronologically changed. With each class, the researcher took more minutes to teach which ended up with teaching the last class completely without the teacher. The last class was a test to check whether the knowledge of students has risen or remained the same. The test results and their comparison are presented in the data analysis section.

The "*experimental class*" was a distribution of the teacher teaching little of her intended syllabus, and the researcher taking up most of the class with translation tasks. The students showed seriousness and curiosity while translating, especially in the ways of constructing sentences, certain phrases and when dealing with poetry on rhymes. The classes became each time more interesting and students seemed to enjoy them. The way the translation tasks were performed was that after giving a short text to translate, the students were asked to read their versions aloud. After each translation task, a discussion followed, mentioning the differences between versions and the struggles the students faced, if there were any. Most of the times, the translated texts were taken by the researcher for further analysis. The last class was the same as the "*course-book based class*", but again just

like in the first test, this class was given a text to translate to check the student's level of progress. The results are shown in the data analysis section.

Outcomes

The goal of making one's students learn and understand everything they need to know in order to use the language as a tool for the future is quite a challenging task for teachers. To make this task easier and more practical, teachers can introduce translation in the classroom, this way students will be independent learners and will develop more. The introduction of translation during this empirical research has shown that the experimental class has increased in language proficiency compared with the course book based classroom. Due to time constraints this increase was small but significant in proving that translation impacts language learning.

Literature review

There will always be struggles in translation, be it done by professionals or students, however it is more significant for students. When translating from the second language into the mother tongue, students face difficulties of making the correct lexical choice [14]. Besides struggles, students gain different skills. Owen [12] states that besides increase in learner awareness, students acquire pragmatic skills and understand the effects language devices have. This among other things, increases language learning and understanding. Duff [4] claims that benefits of translation include being more accurate, flexible and clear in the language. All those being skills one needs in language communication.

The teachers' aim is to always make the classroom comprehensible, and it is possible even while using translation. If the translation class is a combination of learning and fun activities for the target students, and is related to life experiences, there is no difficulty in teaching it [9]. One should never forget that translation has a purpose and a target audience [11]. Through this reminder, the teacher and its students will always be aware of the changes happening in the society, as the translators should be constantly knowledgeable of the social issues around them. Not only do students learn translation as a practice, they learn multiple things at the same time, one of them being quite significant: culture. Linguistic and cultural awareness is risen during translation teaching [13].

There exist controversy research that translation should not be used in classrooms. When students try to distinguish languages in their brain, there is the possibility of mixing them. Translation is not the best method for testing language skills since it makes students keep the native language in mind [10]. Since students, who learn English as a L2, are not native thinkers of that language, they will constantly be supported by their mother tongue thoughts and this, according to some researchers, is bad for language learning. Elmgrab [5] claims that students' mistakes are a source for the teacher on identifying the gaps in the used teaching methodology. This identification is a "must have" in every classroom, as teaching is a profession which always has to upgrade. Djelloul and Neddar [3] state that translation does not involve all four language skills, them being speaking, listening, reading and writing. Every English teacher is concerned about teaching all skills within the classroom, however translation does not include speaking and listening. It could be argued that translation does not have to be involved in every classroom but still be part of the curricula, this way translation could be used for its benefits, and excluded for its drawbacks.

This research was conducted using action research as its method of gaining data. Action research is a practice where the organizers and participants have almost equal weight of solving the stated problem [1, P. 4]. This is mostly done through stating and analyzing the problem and then constructing a stable plan to solve it. The reason why even participants affect the result is that through observing the process, the researcher detects what works and what does not. Action research has the potential of teaching theory and practice at the same time [2, P. 220]. In the case of translation, explanations of what translation is and how it should be done are automatically transferred and can be observed through the translated text. If students are taught how to translate a poem, they can use that knowledge in practice. Iliev, Dimov and Atanasoska [7] state that "pupils as action researchers" affect the involvement of all the participants. This way, the teacher is aware of the students' perception and can easily change the teaching methodology in the benefit of the lesson.

Research

Teaching English as a second language is important and can be difficult for teachers. Translating involves a lot of individual thought, work and practice but besides being individual it can include group work and discussions. The revision process can be done individually or in group, either way the students learn how to work in both scenarios. During eight weeks, a class of students preceded with the intended syllabus, while the other class will be introduced with translation methods. Students were given a test at first just to check on their level of understanding and comprehension and one at the end of the study to see the effects of each methodology. Challenges of the students were documented and analyzed. The translation tasks were different each time always keeping the level of students in mind. As a way of not making the classroom boring, the students were presented with discussions, listening tasks and they were not aware that everything was focused on translation.

Findings

This empirical research has brought up some data, which will be presented below.

The data for this research were collected using two tests, one at the beginning of the research and one at the end. The test comprised from two parts in the course-book based classroom, them being: reading-comprehension and writing, and one more section for the experimental class, that being translation. The reason of adding translation to the experimental class was on the first test to check their language level, and at the second test, to check whether they have upgraded or not. Below, five Figures are to be found. Each figure will be discussed, and outstanding features will be pointed out.

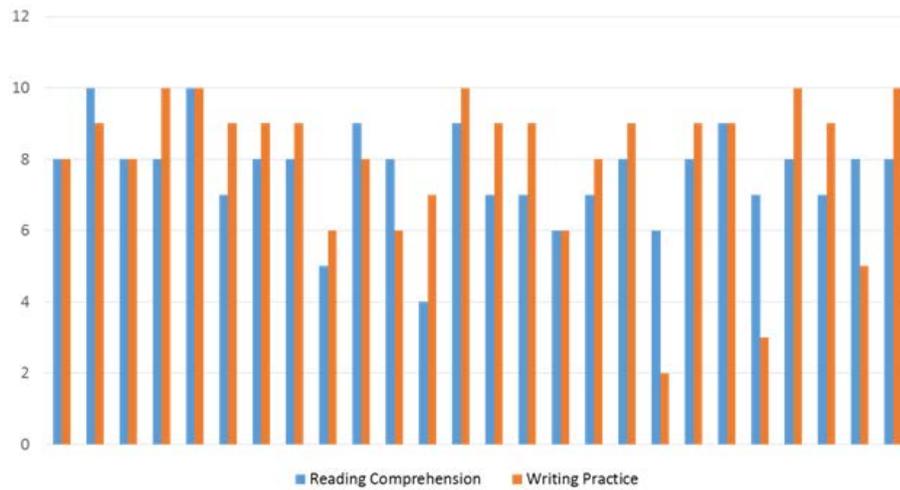


Figure 1 – Test results of the first Reading Comprehension and Writing Practice Test in the "course-book based" classroom

As can be seen in Figure 1, overall students’ score in the reading comprehension test in the course-book based classroom was high. Only one student scored 40%, and two students the maximum of 100%. Other students stayed in the average lines where a percentage of 80 has been scored among eleven students. As far as writing practice is concerned, the percentages are higher. Five students scored the maximum while only one student scored 20%, this being the lowest of them. Approximately, the same students who scored high in one test, did so in the other too, marking themselves as "good students". This result has given me a clear vision of the students’ language level, as it helped me to plan the following classes.

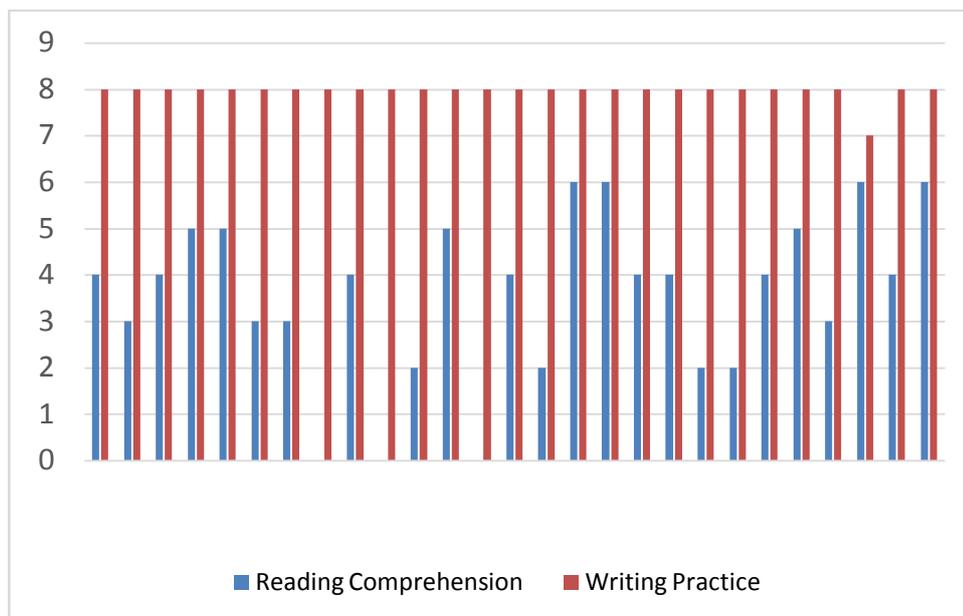


Figure 2 – Test results of the second Reading Comprehension and Writing Practice Test in the "course-book based" classroom

When looking at Figure 2 a noteworthy result becomes apparent. The students have scored the maximum points of the writing test leading to a total percentage of 99.5. However, the reading comprehension test has decreased (66.6%) when compared to the first test (76.1%).

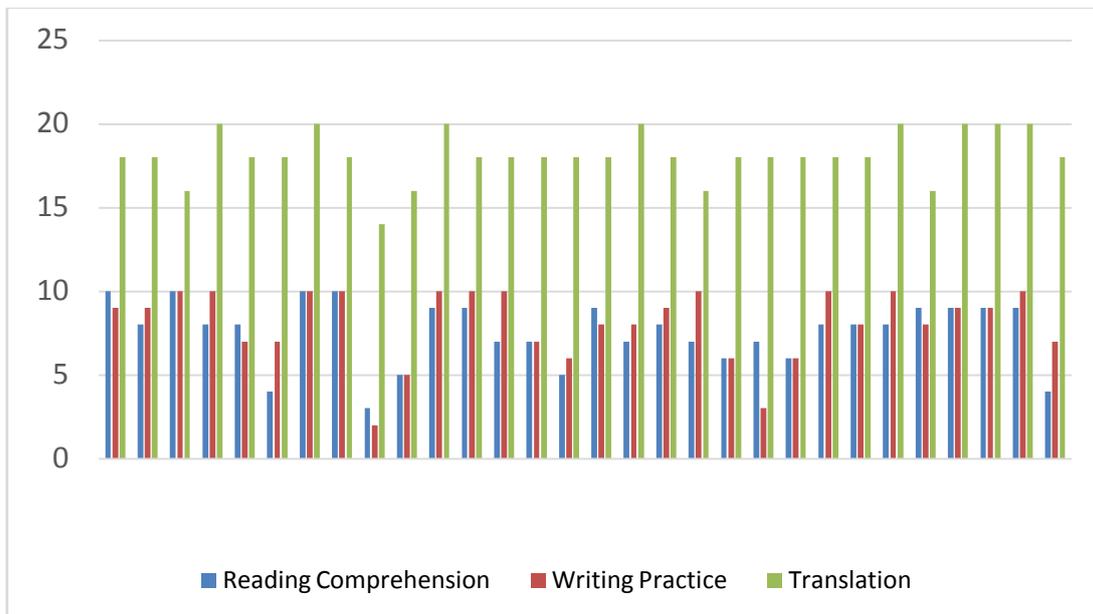


Figure 3 – Test results of the first Reading Comprehension, Writing Practice and Translation Test in the "experimental" classroom

As can be seen in Figure 3, there are three sections of evaluation. The first two, the same as in the course-book based classroom and the third one a translation test. The translation evaluation was done by using a self-made rubric (shown in the Appendix), with which the first and the second translation test was checked. Interestingly, the reading comprehension test has the same results in the course book based classroom and the experimental classroom that being a 76%. However, they slightly differ in the writing test with only a difference of 2% higher in the experimental classroom.

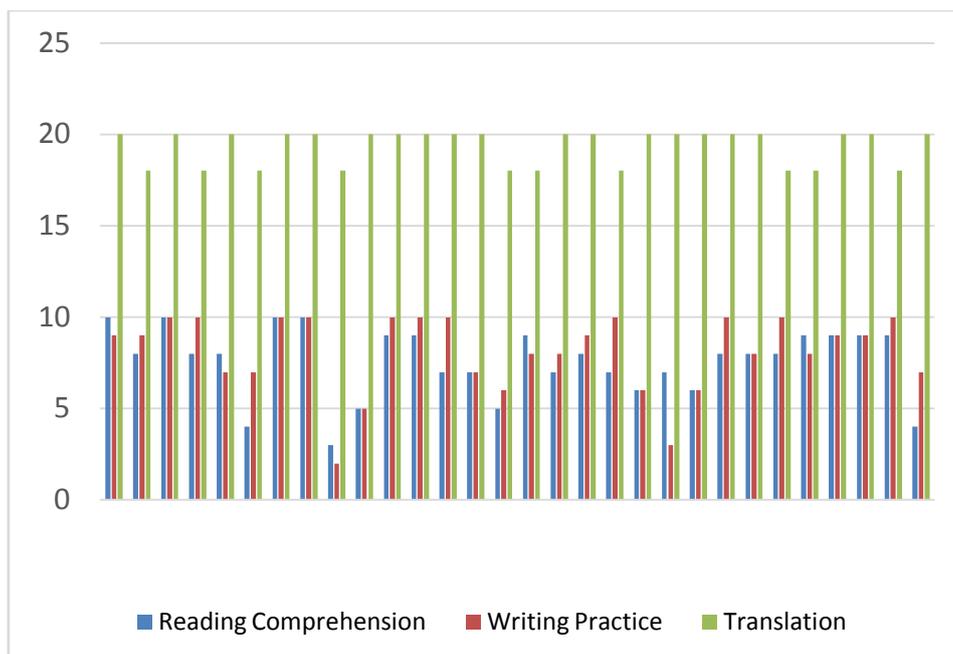


Figure 4 – Test results of the second Reading Comprehension, Writing Practice and Translation Test in the "experimental" classroom

As shown in Figure 4, a huge increase has been scored compared to the first test, especially in the writing and translation section. Taking under consideration that students have been faced with different translation texts during the lessons, and a new one in the test, a considerable number of students have scored the maximum points. 33% have scored 90%, and no lower percentage was present. The writing test scores have identically the same percentage as the first test, that being 81%. The reading comprehension test has the almost the same results as in the first one.

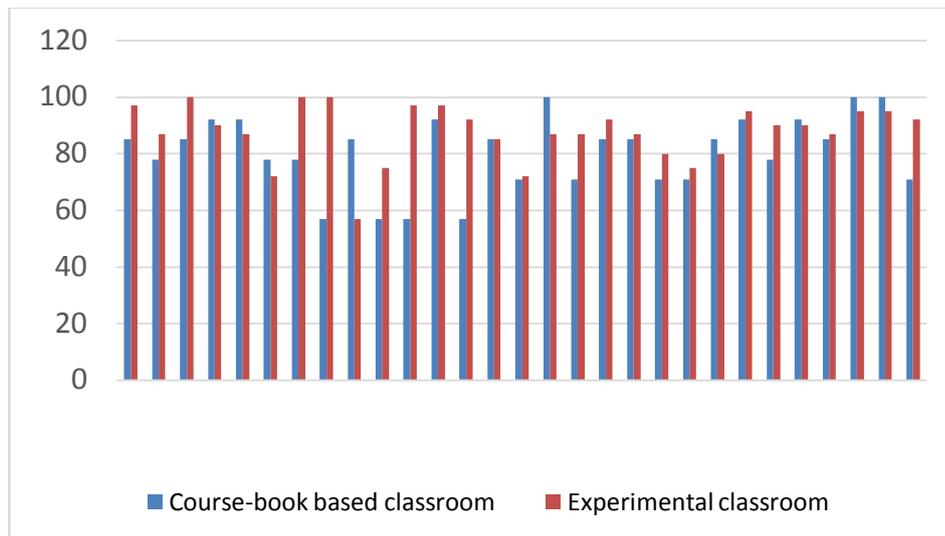


Figure 5 – Comparison of the end test results of the course-book based classroom and the experimental classroom

To sum up, students' language knowledge has increased during these two months. The course-book based classroom has a total percentage of 81.74% correct answers, while the experimental classroom scored 87.23%. However, the course-book based classroom scored higher in the writing test when compared to the experimental class. Not only did the experimental class outscore the course-book based classroom in the reading comprehension test, it also gained new knowledge regarding translation and its methods.

Discussion

As stated above, this diploma paper revolves around two major questions, whether students develop their language skills through learning translation and how can teachers define the student's level of learning when translation comes into play. These two questions have been answered successfully and are presented below. This discussion section contains the students' language development and defining the students' level of learning.

Language development

Overall, the experimental class has advanced in skills when compared to the course-book based classroom. The results state this, and I as the researcher herself state it as well. Besides the test done at the beginning and at the end of this study, a lot of translation materials have been translated by the students. These texts were in alignment with the students' English level and were mostly quite productive. The texts were mostly short and taken from the internet. Short news reports, letters to friends and a poem were translated during this experiment. Students were quite excited and did all their required classwork. The first news report took the students twenty minutes of their time as they were not used to translating. With the same text length, the last news report took only twelve minutes of the students' time. First sign of development: speed.

Even though there is never a one to one match of words while translating, the closest possible meaning can be attained. Judging from the first translated texts, the students were not confident in choosing the words they thought were the correct counterpart of the source text. The process took them longer, and they asked more questions. After some weeks, the time needed for the texts gradually dropped and the questions were less frequent.

Defining the student's level of learning

When this question was first stated, the researcher was curious to know how this would be possible. According to the students' level of participation, their speed and correctness in translation, it can be stated that they have evolved in their translation skills. The results speak for themselves, the experimental class has scored higher than the course-book based class in the last test. The course-book based classroom has dealt only with the syllabus, in which grammar was one of the main components. This is the reason why the course-book based classroom has scored more in the writing practice test than the experimental classroom since the writing practice test was grammar centered. However, even when comparing the reading comprehension tests of the two classes, the experimental class has scored higher.

Week after week, the translation tasks seemed easier for the students, since they got used to translating texts and it became a task of pleasure. The presentation of the translation table with the subdivisions and types of translation affected the students' knowledge and curiosity. Students were not aware that different types of translation exist, and that there are rules one has to follow in order to produce a good translation. After this explanation, students had a clearer sight of what is translation and could easily distinguish the text types I presented to them.

Conclusion

This eight week experiment has brought out a lot of results. The empirical research was conducted in the "Sami Frashëri" Prishtina upper high school and the sample was 57 students. The two classes, one called the course-book based classroom and the other the experimental classroom, were part of my diploma paper research for eight weeks and have proved all my hypothesis. The process of the translation class was mostly like this: the researcher distributing the texts for translation and the students translating. In the meantime, I constantly checked the students and their translations. The results state that the experimental class has leveled up the students' language skills. This is proved by the test results as well as the speed of translation during the classes. The course-book based classroom has developed in their writing practice. During the period of the experiment, the syllabus contained a lot of grammar explanations and practices. This has strengthened the students' grammar level and is the reason of the high results in the writing practice test.

Limitations

Even though this research has fulfilled its goals and answered its questions, there were some blockages and struggles. The intended time period of the held classes was eight weeks, however because of some state holidays, not all the classes were held. All in all, approximately six weeks were the total of the classes held during this empirical research. The total number of the classes would have been higher, however I had to get an allowance from the Educational Department to do this research. This document delayed the process for two weeks. As a form of lasting this research, I asked the director of the school to allow me to have extra classes with the experimental class and the textbook based class, but this request was declined. Besides these, the process was quite pleasing and I encountered no problems.

Appendix

Table 1 – Translation rubric

Criteria	Ratings	Points	
Lexical choice	4 points The lexical choice of words in the translation is correct.	2 points The lexical choice of words is not always correct, however the text makes sense.	4
Grammatical structure	4 points The text is translated good using correct English grammar.	2 points The text is translated using Albanian grammar.	4
Cohesion	4 points The text is cohesive and makes sense.	2 points The text has flaws and creates confusion to the reader.	4
Coherence	4 points The text 'flows'.	2 points The text has flaws and creates confusion to the reader.	4
Naturalness	4 points The text is not recognized as a translated text, but sounds English.	2 points The text has flaws and does not sound English.	4
Total points: 20			

Конфликт интересов

Не указан.

Conflict of Interest

None declared.

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