Grammar- Translation Method vs. Role-Playing Teaching: A study of Effects on College Students' Positive Attitudes Toward English Learning

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Contents:

Abstract

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Many researchers devote themselves to teaching materials that make students more interested in English class, while students' positive attitudes in English classroom where different approaches are applied to teach the same materials are ignored most of the

time. This research, therefore, is to investigate the relationship between such teaching methods as the grammar-translation method and role-playing teaching activity as a technique of communicative approach, of students' positive attitudes toward English learning on the basis of 50 students at the department of English College of Education Al-Asmaee as subjects.

The findings indicate that in English classrooms the grammar translation method and role-playing teaching separately affect College students' positive attitudes significantly with regard to the interest in English, expectation of attending English class, courage to speak English. Learners' positive attitudes, which are based on their interests in English, their expectations of attending English class, their courage to speak English are defined as their feelings of English learning regarding achievement motivation and evaluated through comparing the two methods. When learners are taught in classrooms with role-playing teaching and the grammar-translation approach alternatively for the purpose of exploring the differences of learners' motivation increasing when a teaching material is taught in classrooms with quite different teaching approaches to prove that role-playing teaching does a much better job in increasing learners' motivation than the grammar-translation method and other questions related to students' positive attitudes toward English class.

1. Introduction :

For a long time, grammar-translation method has been applied in most language classrooms where students learn a foreign or second language by reading readers. While role-play scripts were among instructors' favorites in language class, many researchers neglected differences between students' attitudes in classrooms where distinct teaching methods were used in teaching the same role-play scripts.

The purpose of this research, therefore, is to explore if role-playing teaching helps with students' positive attitudes in English

course and what different teaching effects role-playing teaching and the grammar-translation approach cause.

The research questions with regard to learners' positive attitudes toward English learning that role-playing teaching and the grammar-translation method respectively can be shown as follows:-

1. Does teaching through role-playing help students to feel interested in English more than teaching through the grammar translation method?

2. Does role-playing teaching help to raise learners' expectations of attending English class more than the grammar-translation approach?

3. Does teaching through role-playing help students to have the courage to speak English more than teaching through the grammar-translation approach?

4. Does role-playing teaching lead to significantly different positive attitudes among learners from those in the grammar-translation class in comprehending and understanding their material?

All these questions mark the problem of the research.

2. Definition of the Basic terms :

Larsen-Freeman (2000:11) indicates that in grammar-translation method the authority in such a class is the instructor not the students, who learned by "studying the grammar of the target language and translating from the target language to their native language". Also Cook and Linder (2002:39-41) confirm the importance and effectiveness of this teaching approach, which is applied in an instructor-centered class.

In the blast of making changes of language teaching, Holmes (1991) and others, recommended that "a secure environment" where learners were involved, using the target language more freely; story-telling, game playing, songs, poems and role-playing.

Among them, role-playing , which was defined as " drama- like classroom activities in which students take the roles of different participants in a situation and act out what might typically happen in that situation".(Richards and Plat, 1992: 397).

According to Edge(1993:20) role- playing is regarded as " a simple practice activity in information exchange" in which students " play- act" to pretend what they say instead of saying what they mean. In role- playing, a language is not studied but used, when the class was student- centered and students learned by way of speaking and role- playing (Freeman, 2000: 14). Moreover, some researchers recognized the benefit of role- playing to increasing learners' motivation and imagination development (Doff 1988:17, Starvi, 2000:45, Robertson and Good, 2003: 5). As to learners' positive attitudes toward English learning, it was investigated that the significance of being relaxed and independent to language learners, while many other researchers regarded interest increasing as learners' positive attitude in language learning (Thomas, 1987: 126, Boscolo and Mason, 2003: 5).

Therefore, the present research is to compare the grammar-translation method and role- playing teaching in order to examine the teaching effects of the two teaching approaches, of which the former results in an instructor- centered class where students study English learning by way of listening and reading, while the latter leads to a student- centered class where students use the English language learning by way of speaking and role- playing. In the former class, the instructor is the only actor in the classroom where students learn passively and forcedly, i.e., input- learning. In the latter one, students involve themselves in the class by learning actively and freely, i.e., output- learning.

3. Limits of the study :

This study is limited to the sample that is randomly drawn from the first year, English foreign language students of the College of

Education Al-Assma'ee University of Diyala, for the academic year 2009-2010.

4. Procedures :

The subjects of the current research were (50) students at a first- year college of Education, Department of English language who took English as a required course for a school year. Question-naires were filled out by the subjects as a test, and then a role-play script was assigned to them for preview. In order to teach the role-play script in the following week, the grammar- translation method was used in one class the control group , while role-playing teaching the experimental group was applied in the other class. In the class with the grammar -translation method, the instructor taught the role- play script in English most of the time, explaining phrases, idioms and sentence patterns, the instructor is the authority of this class. The students of the other class, however, are divided into several three person teams, meeting the three- character role- play script, and then asked to make the script into a role- play show by team work in twenty minutes. Their roles are random-sampled; at stage the script was allowed, but the students have to work hard at action, emotion, tone and whatever expression an actor should give. Some students are requested to judge the role- play shows, choosing the best team and the best actor in the role- play contest. Thus, all students are involved, and the instructor does not teach the script but instructed the students to learn directly from role- playing. The class is student-centered, not instructor- centered at all. After class teaching, the students in the alternative class filled out the same questionnaires as they did before as a test, after which a quiz that is based on the role- play script assigned for the next week. The quiz is consisting of three subtests:

1. Story comprehension,
2. Phrases to read and check , and

3. Vocabulary perception, each one of these including ten choice-type items that scored 3.3 points for each. This quiz is specifically designed to evaluate the students' acquisition in classrooms with distinct teaching approaches. (This activities are taken from English File 2, Clive, 1997).

The results of this research were analyzed by way of T-Test, comparing the test in the two classes with different teaching methods respectively. The independent variables in T-Test contained:

a. Role-playing: test.

b. Grammar- translation: test.

Whereas the dependent variable is students' positive attitudes toward English learning on the basis of four items:

1. Interest in English,
2. Expectation of attending English class,
3. Courage to speak English, and
4. Self- confidence in English class.

For the students to examine themselves in English classrooms, each of the two tests consisted of the same statements about the four items, and each statements was followed by five options for the subjects to express their approval of the statements:

a. Extreme disapproval,

b. Disapproval,

c. No comment,

d. Approval, and

e. Extreme approval.

4. Results and Discussion:

The results of this research were presented and discussed in two parts. First, the subjects' approval of the four statements was analyzed separately by comparing the grammar- translation method and role- playing teaching. In order to explore the effects of teaching approaches, the tests were then compared in the two classes respectively through T-Test on the basis of the subjects' mean scores, which learning.

4.1 Interest in English:

The students' attitudes toward language learning in the two classes individually on their interests in English were shown in Table (1). The students' positive reflections increased by(0.96) in the role- playing class, while it decreased a bit instead of increasing in the grammar- translation class, which gives question one a positive answer.

Table 1. Students' attitudes toward English learning on interest in English

teaching	Ext. disapproval	disapproval	No comment	approval	Ext. approval
Role-playing	2	2	-	11	35
Grammar-translation	1	1	-	15	33

4.2 Expectation of attending English class:

The students' attitudes toward English in the two classes on their expectations of attending English class were presented in Table (2). The results verified that distinct student attitudes on expectation of attending English class. The finding is a positive reply to question two.

Table (2) students' attitudes toward English learning on expectation of attending English class

teaching	Ext.disapproval	disapproval	No comment	approval	Ext. approval
Role-playing	-	-	6	15	29
Grammar-translation	-	8	10	12	20

4.3 Courage to speak English:

The students' attitudes toward English learning in the two classes on their courage to speak English were displayed in Table (3). The results reported that different teaching caused different student attitudes on courage to speak English. The participants' positive reflections in the role- playing class promoted by (34) than those in the class with the grammar- translation method; it offers a positive key to question three.

Table 3. Students' attitudes toward English learning on courage to speak English.

teaching	Ext.disapproval	disapproval	No comment	approval	Ext. approval
Role-playing	2	2	3	27	16
Grammar-translation	1	1	1	30	17

4- students' positive attitudes toward English learning :

Table (4) represents the subjects' positive attitudes toward English learning by comparing the pre-test and the post-test to show the effects of the two teaching approaches alternatively.

Table 4. students' positive attitudes toward English learning on the two tests:

factor	number	Mean score	Standard deviation	T. value
Role-playing	50	25.74	3.692	49.31
Grammar-translation	50	18.22	18.20	7.08

The results revealed that the two tests caused extremely different positive attitudes among the subjects in the class with role-playing teaching. The subjects had more positive attitudes toward English learning, and the reason seemed to be the teaching method as well as the role- play script. Whereas, in the class with the grammar- translation method, the test also les to quite different positive attitudes among the participants.

The findings showed that the participants' positive attitudes in the role- playing class grew twice as many as those in the other class; it answers the question five positively. In addition the participants had really distinct positive attitudes by the two tests in either of the two classrooms; the participants in the role- playing class had more significantly positive attitudes toward English learning than those in the class with the grammar- translation method.

It was interesting that the students' English proficiency was not the reason why the students in the role- playing class had more positive attitudes than those in the other class, as in Table (5) below which is presenting, the students in the role- playing class did not have better performance on the quiz after class teaching than those in the other class; instead, they performed worse by up to 8 points or so. It was proved that the students' **test performance did** not

have positive relation to their positive attitudes in language class-rooms.

Table 5. students' performance on the quiz affected by different teaching on different subtests :

Teaching	Story comprehension	Vocabulary perception	Phrases to read and check	Mean score
Role- Playing	85.46	80.07	65.38	76.96
Grammar-translation	90.29	92.13	72.35	84.35

6- Conclusions :

The results of the current research lead to the following findings:

1. Teaching through role- playing helps the students to feel interested in English more than teaching with the grammar- translation method.
2. Role- playing teaching helps to raise the learners' expectations of attending English class more than the grammar- translation approach.
3. Teaching through role- playing helps the students to have the courage to speak English more than the grammar- translation method.
4. In both of the two tests applied, the students in the role- playing class give more positive reflections on their interests, expectations, courage and self- confidence than those in the grammar-translation class.
5. Grammar-translation students tend to use rather narrow range of language with problems to integrate it within context, whereas communicative approach prepares students for real communication, they are anxious about experiments with language and they are able to respond the context well.

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1. I am interested in English.
 a. Extreme disapproval
 b. Disapproval
 c. No comment
 d. Approval
 e. Extreme approval

2. I have expectation of attending English class.
a. Extreme disapproval
b. Disapproval
c. No comment
d. Approval
e. Extreme approval

3. I have the courage to speak English
a. Extreme disapproval
b. Disapproval
c. No comment
d. Approval

e. Extreme approval

4. I have self- confidence in English class
a. Extreme disapproval
b. Disapproval
c. No comment
d. Approval
e. Extreme approval

5. I have the ability to understand the vocabulary of the passages
a. Extreme disapproval
b. Disapproval
c. No comment
d. Approval
e. Extreme approval

6. I have the ability to comprehend the passages
a. Extreme disapproval
b. Disapproval
c. No comment
d. Approval
e. Extreme approval

English Language Dept. Lesson Plan for The Grammar-Translation Method

First Class\ A

English Comprehension\ Thirteen Equals One

Firstly: Behavioral Objects

To make students able to:-

1.Read the passage carefully.

2.Translating in both directions from the second language into the first language and the other way round.

3.Justify the importance of the Clock in the passage.

4.Define: the vicar, and Bill Wilkins.

5. Express his\ her own opinion concerning in ' what woke the vicar up?'.

Secondly: Teaching Technique

I will use the reading method in conjunction with interrogation.

Thirdly: Educational Technology

A work sheet of paper can be used as a teaching aid in explaining this subject.

Fourthly: Prelude (5 minutes)

I start the lecture saying that we talked previously about 'Puma At Large' as a reading comprehension passage, it is considered with a report talking about the large animals like Puma. Today however, we are going to deal with Thirteen Equals One.

Fifthly: The Body (40 minutes)

   I start lecturing the student explaining this passage by reading it and translate the difficult words in the native language, then I give them a general idea that we have two characters, the vicar and the grocer Bill Wilkins. The passage is talking about the damaged clock of the church during the war and has been silent ever seen. I asked them the following questions:

The teacher: who is the vicar?

The student: he is a clergyman working in the church.

The teacher: yes, very good.

After that I will ask them to show me the importance of the clock of the church? One student may answer that it is used to woke everyone in the village by striking the bell of it. I gave him a reward by saying excellent.

Then I gave them some important vocabulary lists to memorize them just like: damaged, with a start, caught sight of, etc.

The teacher: what woke the vicar up? What was the time? Write a paragraph about 50 words describe what happened from the moment the vicar woke up.

The students will answer the question by memorizing what happened with the vicar.

Sixthly: Evaluation (5 minutes)

I will ask the students two or three questions:

1.what woke the vicar up?

2.How many times did the clock strike?

3.Whom did the vicar see in the clock tower? And what he is doing?

Seventhly: Homework

For the next lecture students will be told to prepare the present continuous tense.

English Language Dept. Lesson Plan for The Role-Playing Teaching

First Class\ A

English Comprehension\ Thirteen Equals One

Firstly: Behavioral Objects

To make students able to:-

1.Recognize, describe the roles in the passage' Thirteen Equals One'

2.Create a group visual art piece displaying 'Thirteen Equals One'

3.Discus and review how to read other people role, and to think about their own role might be communicating with others.

4.Have practiced using reading comprehension to communicate different emotions.

Secondly: Teaching Technique

I will use the interaction and communication method .

Thirdly: Educational Technology

Work sheet of paper, clock and light for acting.

Fourthly: Prelude (5 minutes)

I start the lecture saying that we talked previously about 'Puma At Large' as a reading comprehension passage, it is considered with a report talking about the large animals like Puma. Today however, we are going to deal with Thirteen Equals One.

Fifthly: The Body (40 minutes)

I start the lecture by dividing the students into groups, they will work in group of four. Students can choose their own group. I will ask two volunteers from the class to read out the role play. Roles to identify are the vicar and the grocer. One group must listen to the facts in the role-play, what has been happening to the vicar? How has the vicar feeling? When he make a conversation with the grocer Bill. The other two people in the group are the observers, they take notes of the passage and must guess the emotions that the listener and the speaker are trying to convey.

During the group work, I will be walking around the classroom so that I can surprise the groups as well as facilitate any group discussion. In this time I will also be taking anecdotal notes, tracking completion, monitoring behaviours, writing down which students may be contributing more than others, which students work well in a group together. I will answer any questions that students may have along the way. If they ask a good question I will repeat it to the rest of the class.

Sixthly: Evaluation (5 minutes)

I will ask the students two or three questions:

1.what woke the vicar up?

2.How many times did the clock strike?

3.Whom did the vicar see in the clock tower? And what he is doing?

Seventhly: Homework

For the next lecture students will be told to prepare the present continuous tense.

Work Sheet

The vicar and the grocer Role play:

The vicar: is the clergy man

The grocer: Bill Wilkins

The vicar: whatever are you doing up here Bill?

Bill: " I'm trying to repair the bell of the clock I've been coming up, here night after night for weeks now. You see I was hoping to give you a surprise".

The vicar: you certainly did give me a surprise! You've probably woken up everyone in the village as well. Still, I'm glad that bell is working again.

Bill: That's the trouble, vicar. It's working all right, but I'm afraid that at one o'clock it will strike thirteen times there's nothing I can do about it.

The vicar: We'll get used to that Bill. Thirteen is not as good as one, but it's better than nothing. Now lets go downstairs and have a cup of tea.

الخلاصة العربية

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وقد دلت نتائج البحث الى وجود فرق ذات دلالة احصائية لصالح الطريقة الاتصالية عبر تقنية لعب الدور، وبمعنى ادق بما ان القيمة الجدولية المحسوبة اقل من الجدولية فان هناك فرق بين الطريقتين. و حيث ان وجهات النظر الثابتة للمتعلمين و التي أسست على اهتماماتهم في اللغة الأنكليزية ، توقعاتهم لحضور صف اللغة الأنكليزية ، و تشجيعهم للتحدث باللغة الأنكليزية في الصف كلها محددة لمشاعرهم لتعلم اللغة الأنكليزية مع الأخذ بنظر الأعتبار دافعية التحصيل و تقييمه خلال مقارنة الطريقتين . لهذا السبب وضعت الباحثة خطة عمل تدريسية توضح التدريس في الطريقتين المذكورتين آنفاً .