Original Paper

The Effect of Using English-Only and English-Arabic on the Grammar Achievement of EFL Undergraduates at Hashemite University in Jordan

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Abstract

Second language (L2) teaching and learning and the use of first language (L1) in the EFL classroom are debatable issues among educationists, specialists, and researchers. Some of them argue that L2 should be taught through L2 and others contend that L1 should be used as a support for L2. As a result of this controversy, the researchers have decided to conduct this study to investigate the impact of using English-only and English-Arabic on the grammar achievement of undergraduate EFL students. The research instrument used was a pre-post-test developed by the researchers. Two groups were randomly chosen: The experimental group was taught by using English-only whereas the control group was taught through English-Arabic. The variables used and may affect the findings of the study are: school-type, study-year, and Grade Point Average (GPA). Results of the study showed statistical difference in the means of students' scores, in favor of the control group, private-school students and higher achievers. However, they revealed no statistical difference according to study-year.

Keywords

English-only, English-Arabic, undergraduates, grammar achievement, Jordan

1. Introduction

The use of first language (L1) in the classroom is regarded as a controversial issue among English as a second language (L2) specialists and researchers. Some of them say that English language should be taught by using English-only and others argue that L1 should be used with L2 in the teaching-learning context. However, deciding whether it is necessary for the teacher to use L1 with L2 or only L2 is

important because it can influence the way the students learn (Ejim, 2020).

This debatable issue has been discussed over the course of years. The natural approach to language acquisition, which was suggested by Steven Krashen, argues that students normally learn L2 in the same way that they learn L1, and that L2 is best learned through immense exposure to the language (Tang, 2002). (Koucka, 2007) states that the use of L1 in L2 teaching has been debatable and controversial. Kayaoglu (2012) argues that this issue has been discussed broadly to decide upon whether the use of L1 in (EFL) classes should be avoided or welcomed and whether the use of L1 facilitates or hinders learning. The researcher adds that there is a lack of empirical evidence which favors or hinders the use of L1.

In recent years, focus has been shifting towards inclusion of L1 in the L2 classroom. Research has shown that the use of L1 by both students and teachers increases L2 comprehension and learning (Cook, 2001). Koucka (2007) and Paker and Karaagac (2015) claim that the use of L1 in foreign language classrooms can be regarded as the base for successful learning and it is unavoidable. Abadi (2015) states the skills and knowledge learned in L1 normally transfer to L2. Therefore, the use of L1 is necessary and the teacher should not forget his roots. He should play a big role in exposing students to the local culture of his people. He should also spark in his students a love for learning the language, and help them diverse opportunity and pathways in the world (Ministry of Education in Singapore, 2020).

In general, using L2 is important for the following reasons: First, it increases the students' exposure to this language. The goal is to make the context as close to its context as possible in order to give students maximum insinuation to language. Second, students receive more understandable input which leads to more complex language structures. Third, the target language can provide a source of modeling for the students both in regard to the production of the target language and the attitude toward the language (Best of Bilash, 2011).

Most teachers feel that they should lessen the use of L1 and they normally blame themselves when they use it a lot in the classroom. Contrary to the use of L1, there is a general assumption that English should be learned through English (Yadav, 2014). Garcia and Sylvan (2011) describe monolingual education as old-fashioned. They discourage the practice of imposing the language. They suggest that teachers should develop students' awareness of L1 as well as L2.

Educators have identified arguments for using English-only in the classroom. They regard it as a policy which should be followed in any education system. This policy should allow students to think in English and could help them speak English internally. It should also give them the chance to negotiate the learning process in English and to help them become fluent in the language (Beare, 2018). Ward (2020) points out that using only English keeps the learner's brain active and sharp. It also helps him make more money because it is a global language, to learn for travel, to apply for the best schools, and

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to become a better writer. In addition, using only English improves the learner's focus, makes him enjoy classic literature and films in native language, helps him immigrate for work, and equip him with English slang words and dialectical language as a whole. Reuben (2018) states that there are three main advantages of teaching L2 in English-only: (1) It maximizes exposure to English. (2) It keeps the native language from dominating and puts more emphasis on the language learnt. (3) It helps students become more confident in expressing themselves.

1.1 Study Aims

This study aims to investigate the impact of using English-only and English-Arabic on the grammar achievement of EFL undergraduates in Jordan. Overall, the study attempts to answer four research questions:

1) To what extent does the use of English-only have an impact on EFL undergraduates' grammar achievement compared to the use of English-Arabic?

2) Are there any statistically significant differences at (α= 0.05) between the means of students' achievement scores according to study-year (first and second years)?

3) Are there any statistically significant differences at (α= 0.05) between the means of students' achievement scores according to the type of school they graduated from (public and private)?

4) Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) between the means of students' achievement scores according to (TGA)?

2. Review of Related Studies

Many studies were conducted on the effectiveness of the use of English-only and the use of L1 in EFL teaching. Some researchers found that the use of English-only was effective and others found that the use of both English-only and L1 was necessary in their contexts. For example, Damra and Al Qudah (2012) carried out a study which explored the effect of using Arabic language on EFL Jordanian students' grammar achievement. The study also explored their attitudes towards learning English grammar. The sample of the study consisted of 80 students. They were divided into two groups. Whereas the experimental group was taught by using Arabic language and the second group was taught by using only English. Findings revealed that there were significant differences between the two groups, in favor of the experimental group. That is, the bilingual group achieved better in grammar than those who were taught by using only English in the classroom. The results also revealed students' positive attitudes towards using the bilingual method of teaching.

Gandara (2012) summarized all the research conducted in the U.S.A. with regard to the outcomes of bilingual and English-only programs carried out in the teaching-learning process. The researcher indicated that all the studies conducted in this respect found that there was no significant difference in the academic outcomes of the students taught through English-only before and after the passage of the

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laws. The researcher concluded that the gaps between English learner and English speaker achievement were large.

Kelsen and Yi liang (2012) carried out a study to find out the indicators of success in student achievement in university EFL courses in Taiwan. To achieve this, the researchers collected the required data from two secondary-cycle classes and various student assessment aspects served as dependent variables. The independent variables used were: years of English study, gender, first language ability, English language aptitude, the language used, and intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. The findings of the study showed that first language ability, participation in the English taught, and attendance hours were the most significant indicators of success in the EFL courses. These findings also revealed that gender, years of English study, the language used and English language aptitude, had statistically significant moderate to strong impact on students' success in the EFL courses.

Aqel (2013) explored the effect of using Grammar-Translation Method on acquiring English as a foreign language. The sample of the study comprised twenty female students chosen randomly from Al-Mazar School for Girls. Finding of this study showed a positive effect of using Grammar-Translation method on English as a foreign language acquisition. They also showed that the students who were taught by using Grammar-Translation method progressed remarkably in grammar. The study recommended that further future research should be conducted in this area to overcome problems with second language acquisition especially in grammar.

Dmour (2015) investigated the effect of using Arabic language in the English language classes at Al-Karak Directorate of Education in Jordan. This investigation was carried out as a result of the intention of English language teachers to use only English in their classes. Thirty students participated in the study. The researcher used a questionnaire survey and a test to elicit data from the students. The findings of the research indicated that using Arabic language as a facilitating tool in English classes affected negatively and positively teaching English as a foreign language in the Jordanian context. That is, using Arabic intensively affected negatively the process of language teaching as a whole, but it enhanced teaching grammar and the four language skills.

In an attempt to find out the negative effects of Arabic language interference to learning English, Alja'arat and Hasan (2017) reviewed previous studies in this regard. They identified and explained the types of syntactic, lexical, and morphological errors made by the Arab students of English as quoted from these studies. A mistake in forming tenses, relative clauses, adverbs, adjective, nouns, and articles were listed. On the whole, the researchers indicated how much Arabic Language influenced negatively learning English as an L2.

Awad, Mubarak and Saleh (2020) explored the effect of using Arabic, as an L1, on the EFL students' exam achievement. They first reviewed the role of L1 under some major language teaching methods. Then, they presented the rationale for using L1 in English language teaching classrooms. Their study

was experimental in which a comparison between two groups was made: one group was taught by using Arabic with English, and the other group was taught through only English. Results showed a positive effect of using Arabic in EFL classrooms on the learners' answers in the post-tests.

The literature above showed that the majority of studies conducted on the use of L1 in the EFL classroom and its effectiveness showed little significant negative effect on students' academic outcomes. These studies indicated that using L1 while teaching L2 enhanced students' retention of language, caused them to achieve better in grammar, and helped them progress in L2 in general. It is noteworthy in this regard that most of these studies were conducted at the school level. A few of them were carried out at the university level. Therefore, the researchers have found it necessary to carry out this study to explore the effect of using English-only and English-Arabic on undergraduate EFL students' achievement in grammar.

3. Methods

The researchers used a quantitative case study approach in the present study. The aim was to explore the effect of using English-only and English-Arabic on the grammar achievement of EFL undergraduates. To achieve this aim, the researchers used two-group pre- and post-test research. Due to the problems of teaching English in higher education in Jordan and in the teacher's insistence on using Arabic in the EFL classroom, this study could be regarded as an opportunity to explore mainly the extent to which using English-only affects EFL students' achievement in grammar. The study could also be considered as a chance for EFL teachers and researchers to gain insight into the approach which best suits the students' level of achievement.

3.1 Participants of the Study

The participants of the study consisted of sixty-five EFL undergraduate students, studying grammar 1 in two sections. The students, who were taught by using only English and were regarded as the experimental group, comprised 33 students in the first section, whereas those taught through English-Arabic comprised 32 students. 43 of the students graduated from public schools and 22 from private ones. In addition, 34 of them were second-year students and 31 were third-year ones. In terms of GPA, 13 of the students were with GPA 2-2.49/Fair, 20 with GPA 2.50-2.99/Good, 19 with GPA 3-3.49/Very good, 13 with GPA 3.5-4/Excellent. These GPAs were collected from the archive in the Department of Registration.

3.2 Teaching Material

The teaching material was chosen from the grammatical topics included in the book adopted by the Department of English and Literature Studies, entitled "Understanding and Using English Grammar, Fourth Edition". These topics included were: Overview of verb tenses, present and past: simple and progressive, perfect and perfect progressive tenses, and future time.

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3.3 Instrument of the Study

The researchers developed a pre- post-test to achieve the aim of the study. The test included 25 questions, which were divided into two sections. Whereas the first section requires the students to correct the words between brackets, the second section requests them to choose the correct answer. In order to guarantee the validity of the test, the researchers handed it to two EFL teachers in the Department of English and Literature and to a TEFL teacher in the Department of Curricula and Instruction. As soon as the copies of the test were received, they modified the original copy according to the teachers' comments. To establish the reliability of the test, the researchers used the test-retest technique. Then, they conducted a pilot study by giving the test to 22 third- and fourth-year EFL students registered in the two sections. Four weeks later, the researchers distributed the same test to the pilot group. By using Pearson's formula, the researchers calculated the reliability coefficient of the test, finding it to be 0.82.

3.4 Data Collection and Analysis

The researchers distributed the pre- and post-tests and they then collected and marked them by themselves. It is noteworthy in this respect that the post-test was administered to the participants after four 4 weeks of implementing the experiment. However, the researchers used two descriptive statistical techniques in the data analysis: means and standard deviations. They also used the t-test and One-way ANOVA to examine if there were any statistical differences at between the means of students' scores in the pre- and post-tests.

The achievement test developed for the purpose of the present study:

Achievement test

Grammar 1

Name ……………………………. Section ………………………….

Study-year …………………………

The school you graduated from: a. Public   b. Private

A. Correct the words between brackets.   (10 marks)

1. My sister (sleep) ………. when I arrived.

2. I (study) ……………… for three hours because I will set for the final exam.

3. She (sit, be) ……………… here for 10 minutes before class started.

4. The sun (revolve) ………….. around the earth all the time.

5. Laila can't answer the phone because she (wash) ………… her hair.

6. These flowers (smell) ………… good.

7. Salma (stand) ………… under the tree when it began to rain.

8. She (be) …………… awake for 12 hours.

9. Last January, I (see) ………… my father's close friend for the first time in my life.

10. How long (have) ………..you been in this university?

B. Put a circle round the correct answer (15 marks)

1. We … for Nancy for the last two hours, but she still hasn't arrived.

a. waited   b. have waited   c. have been waiting   d. are waiting

2. I looked across the street. Mohammed … at me.

a. waves   b. was waving   c. had been waving   d. waved

3. My mother … some meat and rice for dinner tonight.

a. has cooked   b. will cook   c. is cooking   d. has been cooking

4. According to the weather report, it … shiny this week.

a. is going to be   b. will be   c. has to be   d. would be

5. She doesn't like her job. She … quit when she gets back from vacation.

a. will   b. has to   c. is going to   d. may

6. Right now my roommate in the kitchen … breakfast.

a. eating   b. to eat   c. eat   d. has been eating

7. It … to rain while I was walking down the street.

a. has begun   b. begins   c. began   d. begun

8. My brother … our father, but I resemble my mother.

a. is look like   b. looks like   c. is looking like   d. looked like

9. I … my first English class at the university last semester.

a. have taken   b. took   c. was taking   d. take

10. I … in this class for two month. My English is getting better and better.

a. am   b. have been   c. was   d. had been

11. Please be quiet. I … to concentrate.

a. am trying   b. try   c. will try   d. tried

12. I … about my family right now.

a. think   b. was thinking   c. am thinking   d. have thought

13. We haven't seen our teacher … last week.

a. since   b. for   c. from   d. as

14. When students …. they receive a bachelor degree.

a. have graduated   b. graduate   c. will graduate   d. had graduated

15. After I leave this class, I … do my homework.

a. will   b. am going to   c. have done   d. have to

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4. Results

Prior the execution of the experiment, the researchers administered the achievement test to the target groups to know the students' actual level in the grammar of the target language. For analyzing the results of this test, means, standard deviations and the t-test results with 2-tailed significance were used, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. Means (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and T-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Pre-test

	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Pre-test	**English-only**	33	9	3	.8	63	.4
	Arabic-English	32	10	3			

Results in the table above show that the two groups are grammatically equal before implementing the experiment. That is, the means of students' scores for both groups in the test were almost equivalent in the pre-test and there is no statistically significant differences between them.

4.1 Results Related to the First Research Question

In order to answer the first research question: "To what extent does the use of English-only have an impact on EFL undergraduates' grammar achievement compared to the use of English-Arabic?", the means of students' scores, standard deviations, and the t-test results with 2-tailed significance were used in the data analysis, as illustrated in the table below:

Table 2. Means (M), Standard Deviation (SD) and T-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups on the Post-test

	Group	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Post-test	**English-only**	33	16	3	3	63	.004
	English-Arabic	32	18	3			

Results of the t-test in the table above show that there are statistically significant differences between the means of students' scores in the two groups, in favor of the control group. This indicates that the students who were taught by using Arabic with English achieved higher than those who were taught by using only English.

4.2 Results Related to the Second Research Question

For answering the research question: "Are there any statistically significant differences ($\alpha= 0.05$) between the means of students' achievement scores according to study-year (first and second years)?",

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means, standard deviations, and the t-test results with 2-tailed significance were used in the data analysis, as shown in the table below:

Table 3. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and T-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups according to Study-year

	Year	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
English-only	Year 1	16	15	3	-2	31	.069
	Year 2	16	17	3			
English-Arabic	Year 1	15	19	3	1	30	.4
	Year 2	18	18	3			
Both	Year 1	31	17	3	-1	63	.4
	Year 2	34	17	4			

Results of the t-test in Table 3 show that there are no statistically significant differences in the means of students' scores according to study-year. That is, study-year has had no impact on students' achievement in the grammar of target language.

4.3 Results Related to the Third Research Question

To answer the third research question: "Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) between the means of students' achievement scores according to the type of school they graduated form (public and private)? means, standard deviation, and the t-test results with 2-tailed significance were used in the data analysis. As presented in the table below:

Table 4. Means (M), Standard Deviations (SD), and T-test Results of the Experimental and Control Groups according to the Type of School Students' Graduated from

	School	N	M	SD	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
English-only	public	28	15	3	2	31	.5
	private	9	17	3			
English-Arabic	public	15	18	3	.6	30	.031
	private	13	16	3			
Both	public and private	43	18	3	-2	63	.023
		22		3			

Results in the table above show that there are statistically significant differences between the means of students' scores, in favor of private school students. That is, the students who graduated from private schools achieved higher in the grammar of the target language than those who graduated from public

schools.

4.4 Results Related to the Fourth Research question

In order to answer the fourth research question: ''Are there any statistically significant differences (α= 0.05) between the means of students' achievement scores in both the experimental and control groups according to (GPA)? means, standard deviations, and One-way ANOVA were used in the data analysis, as shown in the table below:

Table 5. Means (M), Standard deviations (SD), and One-way ANOVA Results and the Four Achievement Levels

	N	M	SD	F	Sig.
fair	13	13	1	16	.000
good	20	17	3		
very good	19	18	3		
Excellent	13	20	3		
Total	65	17	3		

Results in the Table 5 show that there are statistically significant differences between the means of students' scores in grammar according to GPA. Multiple comparisons by means of Post Hoc Tests were made in order to find out any significant differences between each GPA group and another, as presented in the table below:

Table 6. Mean Differences (MD) and the Significance (Sig.) Value of each GPA Group

Achievement level	Achievement levels	MD	Std. Error	Sig.
fair	good	-3(*)	.9	.001
	very good	-5(*)	.9	.000
	Excellent	-7(*)	1	.000
good	fair	3(*)	.9	.001
	very good	-1	.8	.111
	Excellent	-4(*)	.9	.000
very good	fair	5(*)	.9	.000
	good	1	.8	.111
	Excellent	-2(*)	.9	.020
Excellent	fair	7(*)	1	.000
	good	4(*)	.9	.000
	very good	2(*)	.9	.020

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Results in the table above show that there are statistically significant differences between the means of good and fair students' scores in grammar, in favor good students. Results also show statistically significant differences between the means of very good and fair students' scores, in favor very good. In addition, results reveal statistically significant differences between the means of excellent, fair, good, and very good students' scores, in favor of the excellent ones.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to investigate the effect of using English-only and English-Arabic on English majoring students' grammar achievement in Jordan. In order to achieve this aim, the study attempted to answer four research questions through the results presented above. However, this section will discuss the results of each question.

Analysis of quantitative results showed that there were significant differences between the means of students' scores in the grammar of the target language, in favor of the control group. That is, the students who were taught grammar though English-Arabic achieved higher than those who were taught through English-only. This result agrees with the results obtained by Damra and Al Qudah (2012), Dmour (2015), and Awad, Mubarak and Saleh (2020). For example, Damra and Al Qudah found in their study that the bilingual students achieved better in grammar than those who were taught by using English-only. Dmour found that using Arabic language in the classroom enhanced teaching grammar and the four language skills. Awad, Mubarak and Saleh found positive effects of using Arabic in EFL classrooms on students' exam achievement. However, the result of the present does not agree with what Alja'arah and Hasan (2017) obtained in their study. They found that using Arabic negatively influenced learning English as an L2 in general. Many researchers, such as Cook (2001), Kouka (2007) and Paker and Karaagac (2015), support using L1 in L2 classrooms. Cook states that the use of L1 increases both comprehension and learning. Kouka and Paker and Karaagac argue that the L1 use in L2 classrooms can be regarded as the base for successful English learning.

Results also showed that there were no significant differences in the means of students' scores according to study-year. This denotes that study-year did not have a considerable impact upon students' achievement in grammar. These results do not relatively agree with what Kelsen and Yi liang (2012) obtained in their study. They found that year of English study showed moderate to strong explanatory power in students' achievement. In this respect, it was anticipated from second-year students to achieve higher in grammar than first-year students. The reason lies in the fact that they were exposed to more English and to more EFL courses, which might have enriched their linguistic and paralinguistic repertoire. Snow (2019) argues that as long as language learners are exposed to the target language, they will be given ample opportunities to hear, see, use and handle the language better (Snow, 2019).

Regarding school branch, results revealed significant differences between the means of public- and

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private-school students' scores, in favor of the private-school students. That is, the student who graduated from private schools achieved higher in grammar than those who graduated from public schools. This result was expected since private schools normally teach the majority of subjects in English. They normally compete each other in adopting contemporary methods of teaching. They also try hard to employ competent teachers in English for the purpose of reputation and for graduating students who are empowered with this language from the very beginning.

Concerning students' GPA, results indicated that there were significant differences between the means of their scores in grammar. More specifically, results of Post Hoc Tests revealed significant differences between the means of good and fair students, in favor of good students. They also revealed significant differences in the means of very good students and fair students, in favor of very good students. In addition, these results indicated significant differences between the means of fair, good, very good, and excellent students, in favor of excellent students. It was anticipated in this regard that higher achievers in general would get higher grades in grammar. In other words, the student GPA could be regarded as a strong indication of competition in any subject area, including grammar.

6. Conclusion

The controversy which takes place among educationists, EFL specialists, and policy-makers with regard to l2 teaching and L1 use in the EFL classroom has pushed us forward to conduct the present study at the university level. The reason is that the majority of the studies conducted in this area were carried out at the school level. In addition, the variables used, such as school type and GPA, added somewhat renewal to the national and international literature. Therefore, EFL researchers are requested to conduct other research studies in this area, taking into consideration the same variables or other ones in their teaching-learning contexts. In addition, EFL departments and policy-makers should cooperate and develop in-service courses for university EFL teachers to enrich them with contemporary methods of teaching, such as the eclectic way of teaching. These courses may create a feature in the teacher, which is 'flexibility' in his or her orientation and practice in the teaching-learning context. On the whole, the present study may help university EFL teachers choose one alternative or two with regard to the language used in the classroom. It seems that logic in methodology of teaching says: use the two alternatives, L1 and L2.

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