THE EFFECTS OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF GRAMMAR

ON

TRANSLATION STUDENTS' WRITING:

ACTION RESEARCH

A Thesis
Submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for the degree of
Master of Arts in
Applied Linguistics and Teaching English as a Foreign Language

by

Shaké Majarian

Faculty of Humanities, Department of English and Translation
Notre Dame University – Louaize
Lebanon

Fall 2016

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A Thesis for

Master of Arts in Applied Linguistics & TEFL

By

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Department of English and Translation

Notre Dame University – Louaize

Lebanon

Fall 2016

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Abstract

This study describes the effects and effectiveness of explicit instruction of grammar on first year translation students' writing skills enhancing transfer and hedging interference. First year translation students in a French-medium university in Lebanon study English, the target language, as both a means and an end. While communicative teaching methodologies look down upon and heavily criticize explicit instruction, students with French as their L2 have always felt safe given grammar rules, hoping to apply them right away. In order to increase students' metacognitive awareness, explicit learning plays a positive role in improving students' writing, making their essays more direct and linear than before, ridding them of errors resulting from interference, improving their ability to apply recently acquired knowledge about grammar notions in their essays. In this Action Research study, the collected data, rubrics attached, and students' essays lead to data analysis. Results are analyzed, students' essays are studied and conclusions are drawn for further studies. Implications for translations students and L3 training answer the research questions and further corroborate the hypotheses.

Key terms: *action research, explicit instruction, errors, writing process, metacognition.*

THE EFFECTS OF EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION OF GRAMMAR ON TRANSLATION STUDENTS' WRITING

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

Generally speaking, learning a language and writing in the target language can be a dreary, complex and complicated process. Writing is not only a complex cognitive activity in itself, and doing so in a language that is alien to the mother tongue or the second language is equally challenging. Learners will always map the target language onto the languages they are already familiar with. The learning process and outcome give birth to deceptive cognates on the word level, syntactic parallels, inaccurate analogies as well as different thinking styles put into writing (Caponigro & Cecchetto, 2003). The grammar logic the learner is equipped with is addressed. This often leads to language interference leaving little space for language transfer. Language interference and language transfer are often interrelated and interdependent. This is the grey zone between the two phases of second language instruction.

According to Selinker (1972), interlanguage occurs when learners have not yet reached proficiency level, and while still learning their L2, they preserve a few features of their L1. Should those features become permanent even after learners reach proficiency level, fossilization of errors occurs. In the learning process, part of the 'input' the learner is exposed to becomes 'preliminary intake' and ends up in the learner's interlanguage as a 'final intake', along with

interlingual and backsliding errors, which reappear temporarily. Among the many different processes that influence learners' language are the following:

a. borrowing patterns from the mother tongue, as in language transfer;

b. extending patterns from the target language, e.g. by analogy;

c. expressing meanings using the words and grammar which are already known.

(Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p.293)

The result of this interlanguage is called an 'approximative system', a grey zone between both languages, L1 and L2.

Based on my experience in teaching at Université Saint-Joseph (USJ), while writing in the target language, learners have to pay attention to both form and content, the language itself and the ideas. Not only do learners have to pay attention to unity, coherence and cohesion, but also to spelling, diction, punctuation, grammatical accuracy, and mechanics, to name but a few. Learners have different abilities when learning a new language. The same difference applies to the learners' ability to write in the new language by putting their thoughts and ideas into words, phrases and sentences that make sense to the reader. Translation often comes into the scene and either wreaks havoc on the outcome or even when it converts well enough, it does not give the real feel a native language user would give to his/her readers.

Based on my experience of teaching English to translation students, Arabic and French interfere in English in many different ways. For example, Arabic interference makes the English students' writing redundant, extended and elaborate, apart from both punctuation and capitalization which are nonexistent in Arabic. Students' writing becomes equivalent to prevaricating and beating around the bush. The linear, direct and straightforward English

vanishes with Arabic interference, as demonstrated in the repeated use of 'and', instead of one 'and' at the very end of the same category words in English (Al-Said, 2012). According to Al-Zoubi & Abu Eid (2014), "learners seem to have difficulty mastering the use of the third person singular present tense due to the L1 interference. The most frequent error types produced by the learners include omission, phonological similarity, incorrect suffixation, and substitution" (p. 361).

When French comes into play, learners often find themselves challenged with tenses, capitalization, syntax and, subject-verb agreement, and pronoun antecedent. One cannot undermine the big number of words that are of Latin origin that maintain the same meaning in both languages, as manifested through language transfer (Salkoff, 1999). With the pendulum swinging towards student-centered teaching, communicative methods and task-based approaches, direct grammar or explicit instruction of grammar is kept somehow at bay, avoiding parrot teaching and rote learning.

Context and Statement of the Problem

Higher Education in Lebanon is roughly divided in two. While many such institutions have opted for English as their medium of instruction, Universite Saint-Joseph (USJ) has always been known to have selected French as the medium of instruction. But with globalization and similar trends, currents and realities facing French medium institutions, a lot of emphasis has been put on English. English has thus become a necessity, a must especially for translation students. Furthermore, it has become the third language in such institutions. Translation students at USJ study translation and language taking many Arabic/French and French/Arabic

combination courses and a few translation combinations from English into Arabic and French. In other years, very few elective courses are also taught in English. Even though students are quite proficient in English at entry level, they still lack some basic rules to fill all linguistic gaps and remedy the shortcomings in the little time allocated to acquire the language in question. The above mentioned gap students have is particularly due to the weight given to English in French medium schools against the backdrop of other, rather scientific subjects with higher coefficients in the official exams. Different schools would put different focus on English within their curriculum despite the relative extent of awareness of the importance of English as an international language.

Purpose of the Study

This study will investigate the effects of explicit teaching of grammar on first year translation students' essay writing skills at a French-medium university in Lebanon and its outcome. Being aware of certain students' inability to transfer recently acquired grammatical knowledge (i.e., tenses, subject-verb agreement, prepositions of time and place) onto their essay writing of different rhetorical modes, there is a need to carry out a study to engage first-year translation students in explicit grammar instruction and help them build strategies to relocate, incorporate and apply the recently acquired grammar knowledge into their writing. The overall purpose remains is to come out with tangible results that link explicit instruction of grammar to better teaching results and better scores on writing assignments.

Research Questions

The following two research questions will be addressed:

1. How does the explicit instruction of English grammar influence the grammar usage in the English essay writing of First-Year Translation students in a French medium university in Lebanon?
2. How does the explicit instruction of English grammar to First-Year Translation students compare to implicit instruction in terms of the usage of grammar in their essay writing?

Hypotheses

This study tests the following hypotheses:

1. The explicit instruction of English Grammar positively influences Translation students' essay writing skills in their first year of study at a French medium university in Lebanon.
2. Explicit instruction is better than implicit instruction in terms of grammar usage as seen through first year translation students' essays.

Definition of Key Terms

Action Research (AR) a research approach which is an on-the-spot procedure designed to deal with a concrete problem located in an immediate situation. This means that a step-by-step process is constantly monitored over varying periods of time and by a variety of mechanisms so that ensuing feedback may be translated into modifications, adjustments, directional changes, and redefinitions, as necessary, so as to bring about lasting benefit to the ongoing process itself (Tavakoli, 2012).

Error In the speech or writing of a second or foreign language learner, an error is the use of a linguistic item (e.g. a word, a grammatical item, or a speech act) in a way which a fluent or native speaker of the language regards as showing faulty or incomplete learning. A distinction is sometimes made between an error, which results from incomplete knowledge, and a mistake made by a learner when writing or speaking and which is caused by lack of attention, fatigue, carelessness, or some other aspect of performance (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Explicit Instruction versus Implicit Instruction Explicit instruction is systematic, direct, engaging, and success oriented—and has been shown to promote achievement for all students. This highly practical and accessible resource gives special and general education teachers the necessary tools to implement explicit instruction in any grade level or content area. The authors are leading experts who provide clear guidelines for identifying key concepts, strategies, skills, and routines to teach; designing and delivering effective lessons; and giving students opportunities to practice and master new material. In the case of explicit learning, learners are aware that they have learned something and can verbalize what they have learned. In case of implicit instruction, learners remain unaware of the learning that has taken place, although it is evident in the behavioral responses they make. Thus, learners cannot verbalize what they have learned (Ellis et al., 2009).

Metacognitive Knowledge and Metacognitive Instruction are considered as the knowledge of the mental processes which are involved in different kinds of learning. Learners are said to be capable of becoming aware of their own mental processes. This includes recognizing which

kinds of learning tasks cause difficulty, which approaches to remembering information work better than others, and how to solve different kinds of problems. Metacognitive knowledge is thought to influence the kinds of learning strategies learners choose. Metacognitive teaching seeks to help learners take a more active part in their own learning by drawing attention to the cognitive processes learners employ in learning tasks and actively monitoring and regulating these processes in order to facilitate learning. Metacognitive instruction seeks to train learners directly to make use of relevant strategies in carrying out learning tasks as well as help them increase their metacognitive knowledge (Richards & Schmidt, 2010).

Metalanguage A language which is used to talk about another language, the object language. It is very common in linguistics to use a natural language such as English, as a metalanguage to talk about the same natural language as the object language; when this is done, it is essential to distinguish the two clearly to avoid confusion (Trask, 1996).

Writing Processes is composed of three key stages. "The first involves brainstorming, researching the topic and sourcing relevant material; the second involves making notes on what you've read; and the third is the process of taking your ideas and building them into a well-designed plan" (Murray, 2012, p. 72).

SUMMARY OF CHAPTERS

Chapter 1: Introduction

The introductory chapter outlines the major parts of the thesis starting with a brief introduction and ending with the keywords. It also includes the statement of the problem, purpose of the study, rationale, research questions, hypotheses and assumptions.

Chapter 2: Review of Literature

The literature review sheds light on what has been said in favor of and against explicit instruction.

Chapter 3: Methodology

The methodology discusses the steps required and adopted for the methodology of the Action Research carried out on two groups of 30 students each, including the procedures for the pretest, test, and posttests administered by the two instructors.

Chapter 4: Data Analysis

The data analysis studies the data collected from students' essays and the observations made as a result of the SPSS statistics and the concluded findings.

Chapter 5: Essay Analysis

The essay analysis tackles samples from students' essays delving into the errors and mistakes made, exemplifying their errors and the improvement made in the grades scored.

Chapter 6: Discussion and Conclusion

Discussion and conclusion wind up the thesis discussing implications, stating limitations of its findings, and suggesting further research.

CHAPTER TWO

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

An Overview of SLA Approaches

One look at the many Second Language Acquisition approaches, methods and methodologies exposes how trend has been moving in myriad directions to date. For quite a long time, language learning was synonymous with an extensive knowledge of grammar. Language teaching was closely associated with no more than grammar teaching. It was common belief that language comprised grammar rules. Once the knowledge of such rules was attained, this was enough for learners to acquire the language (Nassaji & Fotos, 2011).

One cannot deny the pivotal role Latin and Greek played in language teaching practices in the Middle Ages whereby instructors would teach L2 through direct translation, hence the emphasis on structure. Of the structure-based methods, it is worth noting how both the Grammar Translation and the Audio-Lingual Methods put great to less emphasis on grammar. Hence, attention was given particularly to its instruction in class. The trend then started moving towards focusing more on meaning rather than on form (Archer & Hughes, 2013).

The Seventies marked the onset of the communicative teaching approach with Grammar going out of the teaching scene for it was believed that it was outdated, rigid, and even unwelcome. Some researchers claimed that the instruction of direct grammar was not conducive to language acquisition and that language should be 'acquired' rather than 'learned' (Krashen & Terrell, 1983). The pendulum swung further with some researchers who discouraged its use in

the classroom for they firmly believed that in a task-based project, grammar was not only disobliging, but also detrimental:

> Attempts to systematize input to the learners through a linguistically organized syllabus, or to maximize the practice of particular parts of language structure through activities deliberately planned for that purpose were regarded as being unhelpful and detrimental to the desired preoccupation with meaning in the classroom (Prabhu, 1984, p. 2).

Krashen's Distinction between Language Acquisition and Learning

To differentiate between language acquisition and language learning, it is worth listing Krashen's Five Hypotheses on second language acquisition (Krashen & Terrell, 1983).

1. Acquisition-Learning Hypothesis

It is believed that language learning can be done through one of these two systems, "Acquired System" and "Learned System". The "Acquired System" is implicit and is conducted through meaningful communication whereby communicating meaning outweighs correctness of language. Learners are unaware of linguistic knowledge they are gaining, very similar to how a child learns first language. Thus the learner unintentionally picks up new language. On the other hand, the "Learned System" is explicit and focuses on formal instruction rendering learning a much conscious process, categorizing it from simple to complex. Herein, the focus shifts from communication onto learning correct language and following rules. Hence, knowledge about the language and awareness of this knowledge is primordial. According to Krashen, the latter is less effective and less important.

2. Natural Order Hypothesis

Grammatical Structures are acquired in particular and predictable order (from simple to complex) based on observations of language learners. While being exposed to a certain language,

some grammatical notions tend to be acquired at the beginning of the course while other notions are acequired later on.

3. Monitor Hypothesis

Although language is mostly acquired, we can "self-monitor" our acquired language for accuracy and for the knowledge and understanding of rules. According to Krashen, acquisition initiates utterance, while the learning system plays the role of the 'monitor' or the 'editor'.

4. Input Hypothesis

Krashen's most important hypothesis is that of language acquisition through 'comprehensible input I+1. Input is synonymous with the student's current level of proficiency; +1 is equivalent to input slightly above "I"). The addition of both is equal to New Language.

5. Affective Filter Hypothesis

Feelings and emotional states are primordial to language acquisition. High anxiety, low self-confidence, and low motivation constitute the 'Affective Filter', which once turned on blocks comprehensible input. Good language learning/teaching focuses on lowering anxiety, raising learner confidence, and increasing learner motivation.

Long's Taxonomy and Definition of FonF vs FonFs

More and more grey zones came into effect by incorporating grammar into the communicative methods with Long (1991) who styled a Focus on Form (FonF) approach to integrate and infiltrate grammar into a meaningful communicative setting. Form-focused instruction can be roughly divided into two categories, namely, Focus-on-Forms, and Focus-on-Form.

1. Focus-on-Forms: Learning language is similar to Krashen's "Learned System" Language learning is deliberate and planned while oral activities have specific/explicit structural goals. Both Teacher and Students are aware of purpose/goals of activities. The basic components in this category are exposure, controlled practice, open practice, production, and reflection (Long, 1991).

2. Focus-on-Form can further be divided into two subcategories, planned and incidental. Focus-on-Form is planned. It involves "Enriched Input" that has been specially contrived to provide and highlight target structures. However, learners focus on meaning not structure. So learning is 'incidental' rather than 'intentional' (at least from the learner's perspective). Through "Input Enhancement", the instructor has to draw the learners' attention to target features using "Focused Communicative Tasks" to induce learners into using these same features. This is meant to induce 'noticing' of target forms within the context of meaning-focused activity.

Focus-on-Form is incidental and can be divided into two categories, preemptive and reactive. In the case of preemptive, the teacher and learners take 'time-out' from a communicative task to draw attention to target form, where the teacher anticipates difficult structures and addresses them before task (vocab/grammar). In the case of reactive, the teacher gives corrective (negative) feedback after perceived errors occur. Feedback can be implicit or explicit As such, explicit feedback can be more obtrusive and have affective consequences, while implicit feedback entails recasts, asking for clarification, asking for repetition.

The Last Decade and the Unequivocal Return to Explicit Instruction

Archer & Hughes (2011) emphasized 'explicit instruction' of grammar through illustrating the rule with examples and non- examples, moving explicit learning from the misconstrued "Drill and Kill" to "Drill and Skill", all the way to "Drill and Thrill" (pp. 101-107). Furthermore,

> it has become apparent that explicit grammar instruction (e.g. presentation of rules, exposure to relevant input, metalinguistic awareness, feedback, opportunities for practice) has a positive effect on second language learning and performance. Instruction treatments of as little as one or two classroom hours have been shown to produce a significant advantage compared to non-focused exposure to specific structures or lack of exposure (control) (Norris & Ortega, 2000, p.210).

A deeper look at the content of these research projects sets the scene for this study. Corzo (2013) in "Formal Grammar Instruction: Theoretical Aspects to Contemplate Its Teaching" sheds light on the consequences of grammar instruction being somewhat downgraded in recent years with new trends occupying its place. Despite the fact that learners are now able to produce the foreign language in a fluid form, the outcome, at times, lacks accuracy at the expense of fluency. Consequently, she suggests educators reconsider incorporating teaching formal grammar into the curriculum.

Klapper & Reese (2003) reviewed "the case for explicit grammar instruction in the university foreign language learning context". Speaking of the accelerated acquisition process, they state that "an element of conscious and explicit focus on structures can increase the rate of this acceleration" providing enough "support for the claim that instruction which serves to raise learners' awareness of linguistic structure 'prepares the ground' for subsequent acquisition under the influence of naturalistic exposure" (Klapper & Reese, 2003, p. 307).

While assessing "the impact of explicit grammar instruction on translation into English" Rickets & Ehrensberger-Dow (2007) considered that even short time exposure when focused is better than non-focused exposure to grammatical notions. Additionally, they questioned the possibility of the direct effect of such a mode of instruction on the quality of students' translations into English. This is a situation that resonates with Translation students' linguistic needs both as a means and as an end. They further claimed that the keener the attentiveness to semantics and discourse functions in L1, the higher the students' capacity in making the proper choice of structure in L2, hence grammar.

Subramaniam & Khan (2013) in "Explicit Grammar Instruction in Communicative Language Teaching: A Study of the Use of Quantifiers" encouraged subjecting students to 10 hours of semantic-based explicit contrastive grammar instruction on quantifiers. As a result, the experimental group outperformed the control group attesting that when grammar instruction is semantically based, it proves to be more effective in making students use quantifiers correctly when writing in English.

In a study titled "How Does Explicit Grammar Instruction Affect Students' Writing?" Johnson (2011) analyzed how the explicit and implicit instruction of past unreal conditionals through the use of metalinguistic terms affected not only the number but also and types of errors an adult English language learners made when producing timed writing tasks. Based on the statistical evidence delivered by the pre-tests and post-tests, the type of explicit instruction did not suggestively mark any increase in the learners' test scores. Even though students suggested decreasing the big amount of in-class grammar, the same students stated that "the grammar instruction embedded into the reading and writing class was helpful" (Johnson, 2011, p. 46).

Colina (2002) also maintained "that SLA research is exceedingly relevant to students majoring in translation" (p. 2), bearing in mind that even though findings may be inconsistent, explicit grammar instruction in L2 reduces guessing and resorting to L1 for rules when in doubt, limiting assumptions and overgeneralizations, controlling errors in loan words and literal translation of tenses. This echoes Malone (1988) who differentiated between diachronic and synchronic linguistics. Diachronic linguistics studies language change and development. Synchronic linguistics considers language function and structure away from change that may take place over time. While the former is of relevance to translation students; the latter is crucial to studying translation.

The common denominator among all the above-mentioned studies is that of explicit teaching of grammar and its effects on learners' writing with light shed on translation students' needs. Largely unaddressed in the ESL literature and within USJ's trilingual context to date is this action research study which tries to fill the existing, multi-dimensional gap, one which, to my knowledge, has never been tackled at the School of Translation nor at USJ at large.

The above-mentioned expository review of literature is in favor of explicit instruction. To further reinforce the effect of explicit instruction, Archer and Hughes (2011) demonstrate the underlying principles of The Sixteen Elements of Explicit Instruction, a set of notions that best help both the learner and instructor engaging in explicit instruction (For The Sixteen Elements of Explicit Instruction, see Appendix A). Moreover, Rosenshine and Steven's Six Teaching Functions as well as Ellis and Worthington's Principles of Effective Instruction are ways to optimize instructional time. All of these interact during the teaching process.

Similarly, for a better performance of explicit instruction, Rosenshine and Steven's (1997) suggest Six Teaching Functions. The Six Teaching Functions are:

1. Review
2. Presentation
3. Guided practice
4. Corrections and feedback
5. Independent practice
6. Weekly and monthly reviews

According to these six functions, the teacher is expected to review assigned homework and plan upcoming skills and notions. The guided practice pushes up the success rate due to frequent answers, prompt clues until the target is reached. Corrections and feedback give enough clue to re-teach, if needed. Independent practice might start off to be monitored and then left to be in instructional groups until the response becomes automatically accurate. Finally, the weekly and monthly reviews work towards reinforcing the material covered.

Similarly, to optimize instructional time, Ellis and Worthington's (1994) discussed the Principles of Effective Instruction. These include:

1. Optimize engaged time/time on task
2. Promote high levels of success
3. Increase content coverage
4. Have students spend more time in instructional groups
5. Scaffold instruction
6. Address different forms of knowledge (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 5)

According to these six principles, an active participation is ensured for students establishing a positive correlation between time spent on accuracy and achievement. The more we gear content towards academic material, the students' potential becomes actualized. The more time students spend in teacher-led instructional groups, the higher the learning curve tends to be. Scaffolding is key to the teaching process whereby the experienced instructor knows when to fade in and fade out, supporting here, promoting there, ultimately withdrawing towards the end with the attempt of making students independent learners (Ellis & Worthington, 1994).

These six functions can be roughly categorized under "before" main class, "during" class, and "after" class functions. Table 1 maps out the correspondence between the Six Teaching Functions and the Principles of Effective Instruction

Table 1. The Overall Pre/During/Post Methodology Map

<table>
<tr><td colspan="6"><<<PRE>>> <<<<<<<<<<DURING>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>>> <<<<<<<<<AFTER>>>>>>>>></td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="4">Six Teaching Functions cover:</td><td colspan="2">Principles of Effective Instruction cover:</td></tr>
<tr><td>Review</td><td>Presentation</td><td>Guided Practice</td><td>Corrections and Feedback</td><td>Independent practice</td><td>Weekly and monthly reviews</td></tr>
<tr><td colspan="2">Optimize engaged time
Promote high levels of success</td><td colspan="2">Content coverage
Scaffolding
Instructional groups
Different forms of knowledge</td><td>Different forms of knowledge (conditional level : what / how / when / where</td><td></td></tr>
</table>

Ellis and Worthington's Principles of Effective Instruction start with a key concept that of time, a key concept that Archer & Hughes optimized in eight different ways. To avoid misconceptions, what is meant by the different time-related words, such as engaged time or time on task, available time, allocated time and Academic Learning Time (ALT) are clarified. Engaged time or time on task include both the time spent by the teacher teaching the skill and the time spent by the students learning the skill. The idea that the more time the teacher spends on teaching, the more time students will spend on learning is erroneous. These types of 'times' overlap but are by no means indicative of the quality nor the quantity of the skill learned. Available time can best be described as the net time. In other words, available time is that which we get if we subtract schooling time from the total time. Allocated time is the duration spent on teaching and non-instructional, extracurricular activities.

The Eight Ways of Optimizing Instructional Time include steps to increase Academic Learning Time (ALT) so as to optimize instructional time both in quality and quantity.

1. Increase allocated time
2. Match content taught to students' needs
3. Manage time
4. Teach in groups
5. Be prepared
6. Avoid digressions
7. Decrease transition time
8. Use routines (Archer & Hughes, 2011, p. 7)

To illustrate Explicit Instruction of Grammar rules to learners, the following instructional routine is prescribed.

- Introduce the rule as clearly as possible using pertinent metalanguage.
- Explain the rule with examples and non-examples to spell out the boundaries of the rules along with the exceptions.
- Guide students into analyzing both examples and non-examples, providing the necessary scaffolding and support.

Setting the example makes the learners do it. For better support and practice, the teacher ends with 'we do it' (in groups or with instructor, if necessary). Subsequently, the instructor checks students' understanding.

Explicit Instruction in General Education

A ten year research, from 1973 to 1983 studied the link between the instructor's behavior and the learner's achievement. This process-product research accentuates process as being the teacher's behavior and the product as the students' achievement. Those to top the charts of achievement were the students of the teachers using explicit instruction. Hence, they scored higher than their peers in the control group (Wittrock, 1986). Brophy & Good (1986) summarized their conclusions about students' achievement as being conditional to their instructors' structured input so that the learners can relate to what they already know. Corrective feedback is also given a lot of importance while students drill, recite, practice or apply. Even though for some time, conclusions were restricted to elementary school kids and novice learners,

explicit instruction is believed to play a pivotal role in learning in case of middle school students as well as adult learners.

Criticism of Explicit Education

Quite often and unfortunately so, the English language instructors exhibit, or even boast their power of grammar, upon entering class and starting a premeditated lesson on some grammatical notion to be taught prescriptively, using somehow incomprehensible metalinguistic terms leaving learners bewildered. Hence, it will be remiss to exclude some concerns against explicit instruction.

As such, Archer & Hughes (2011) classify the voiced criticisms into four categories:

a. Guided versus Unguided Instruction

Looking at the continuum, explicit teaching, along with guidance and scaffolding, stands firm at one end, while the discovery method stands strong at the other. Minimal teacher guidance vs. maximal teacher guidance leads to the learner being lost. Because explicit instruction has to do with being bombarded with a heavy load of data, the learners will be unable to process what has been assigned to their short-term memory, resulting in what is called 'cognitive overload', which in turn hinders learning, leading to mistakes, and finally frustration.

Another element which is crucial to consider is the effect explicit instruction has on novice students and their capacity to take in as opposed to those at later stages. The background knowledge advanced students have plays an important role and makes drawing lessons and

discovery more feasible, unlike novice students who lack both, and will hence waste time acquiring the strategy as well as the content.

b. Student-Centered versus Teacher-Centered Teaching

Explicit instruction has been falsely dubbed as teacher-centered teaching based on what the teacher wants, not allowing students to discover knowledge themselves "via exposure to information-rich environments" (p. 19). Proponents of the "discovery method" believe that in explicit learning, the teachers are doing what they deem necessary regardless of the learners' ability, and by doing so, they dim the importance played by the teacher to make the student better learners.

c. Decontextualized versus Contextualized Instruction

When speaking of skills and subskills that are neither related nor linked to the overall skill, explicit instruction leads to a fragmented kind of learning, leaving the student clueless about what to do with the out-of-context bits of information recently learned in isolation. Instead, the learner is expected to amalgamate all the skills and sub-skills, thus resulting in "the so-called 'splinter skill' phenomenon whereby students do not generalize what they are learning" (p.20). For example, teaching capitalization to students without giving them the opportunity to put the learned item to practice is purposeless. Since grammar always remains isolated as a skill, such a learning method further accentuates the grammar skill becoming fossilized itself, never being integrated with the remaining skills.

d. "Drill and Kill"

In addition to routine practice, rote learning, parrot teaching and mere reproductions after having committed the learned grammatical tool to memory, the major concern voiced against explicit instruction in this category is mainly its inability to lead to Higher Order Thinking skills (HOTs) and the much awaited creativity. It is also believed that focusing too much on form blurs the mind and hinders the learners' attempts to acquire higher and more important skills. In other words, pointless, repetitive, drill and practice can indeed become time consuming and frustrating for learners. Even though it can lead to some fluency with beginners, it does not lead to accuracy down the road.

To sum up, Schaffer (2012) believes that for as long as social discourse is not monolithic, teaching grammar in a prescriptive way should be replaced with a descriptive instruction of grammar, revealing and reveling the many discourses brought to class by students inspecting language in its countless manifestations

It is worth discussing how, as part of this AR study, the instructor incorporatea direct grammar instruction as part of explicit instruction of certain grammatical notions. To bridge the gap created by the voiced criticism, the following measures are taken.

1. The 'guided' part of the grammar instruction is minimal as opposed to the interaction that follows after the lecturing about the metalinguistic part is over at the beginning of the session. This ensures a limited teacher-talking-time (TTT) and enhance student-talking-time (STT) when students take over solving the grammar exercise.

2. By doing so, the practitioner moves away from running a teacher-centered class, responsibilizing learners with a student-centered classroom dynamics. A game played at the end

of the task gives a lighter touch as opposed to the heavy, didactic impact grammar leaves on learners.

3. Decontextualized grammar is remedied through tailoring content-based grammar exercises that meet students' needs in their immediate environment, making the grammar exercise look useful and authentic. The further writing or task that is assigned once the correction and feedback are given, consolidates the learned grammar notion through a written précis or an introspective writing.

4. Drill and Kill is replaced with Drill and Skill with more students learning the items studied. Drill and Skill further becomes Drill and Thrill when, after focusing on and mastering the form, students are enabled to make use of correct forms of grammatical notions taught in the beginning of the session.

To exemplify, of the many grammar tasks given to students, three are discussed below.

Grammar Task 1: Word Formation through Mind Mapping

In this exercise, students are taught to pile up derivations. This exercise remedies spelling and morphology errors due to French interference in L3. This exercise is given in a Unit titled Stereotyping. Hence, the activity involved is not out of sync with the choice of words and the targeted grammatical rules that are taught and consolidated. The starting point is that of the word PERSON and through mind mapping and explaining morphological rules (prefix, suffixes, doubling the consonant), the word takes on many forms as in: Person / Personal / Personally / Personalize / Personalization. (For the many word derivations recorded, See Appendix B: Grammar Task 1).

Students are then asked to use the sentences in grammatically correct and meaningful sentences. To further consolidate the mastery, students are asked to write a paragraph about themselves whether they are a morning or an evening person. This best links the newly acquired grammatical knowledge to vocabulary gained and writing done in class.

Grammar Task 2: Subject-Verb Agreement

In this exercise, students are taught to master subject-verb agreement. Examples have been clustered as per grammatical rule. The rule is first explained on the board and then the examples follow along with the exception(s), where applicable. (For more on Subject Verb Agreement, See Appendix C: Grammar Task 2).

Each in this class___ a USJ student.

Every USJ student ____ to have an ID.

Everyone ___ here today.

Nobody ___ exempted from English.

No one ___ allowed to eat in class.

None of the rules and regulations ___ logical.

All students ____ under the law.

Several students ___ not going to pass this test.

Some of these facts___ incorrect.

Some of this information ___ incorrect.

No news ___ good news.

At the end of this exercise, students are divided in two groups and the instructor prompts random subject-verb agreement questions based on the earlier practice. To further consolidate the mastery, students are asked to draw a few examples and talk about their immediate surrounding (friends and hobbies, etc.).

Grammar Task 3: Prepositions of Place and Time

In this exercise, students are taught to master Prepositions of Place and Time, a source of interference from L2 (French). Rules of how and when to use IN, ON, and AT are explained on the board, then students are asked to complete the exercise based on their newly acquired grammatical notion. (For a full version of Prepositions of Place and Time, see Appendix D: Grammar Task 3).

We are ___ the universe

___ the galaxy

___ the world

___ Earth

___ the northern hemisphere

___ the Arab world

___ the Arabian Peninsula

___ the Middle East

___ Lebanon

___ Beirut

___ Tripoli, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, Zahlé

___ Ashrafieh

___ Sodeco

___ Damascus Road

A similar game to that of Subject-Verb Agreement is played in class. To further consolidate this grammatical knowledge, and to link it to their writing, a classwork assignment is given to students inspired from their daily life, linked to their immediate environment, meeting their basic needs. Students are asked to write to their friends briefing them on the change in class schedule and meeting venue. As such, students are asked to use as many prepositions of time and place as possible (a minimum number is assigned).

CHAPTER THREE

METHODOLOGY

Along with the detailed description of participants, Chapter Three describes the instructional syllabus, type of research, data collection, instruments, data analysis, ending with the concepts of reliability and validity as presented in this study. Participants are recruited in three stages of data collection (pre-test, test and post-test essay writing), to investigate the effect of the grammar intervention as a result of explicit instruction. The next two stages involve (i) essay correction, and (ii) data collection along with students' writing analysis.

Participants

The participants in this study are first year university students majoring in Translation at Université Saint-Joseph (USJ). They are in their first semester at university. Students are of mixed gender, aged between 18-19 years old, coming from different backgrounds, most of whom are French educated. They can thus be considered a sample of the Lebanese society. Most students are in their first year of undergraduate studies, except the very few who have changed majors but have not taken any specific English courses prior to taking up Translation Studies. Students have sat for and passed the Lebanese Baccalaureate official exam or its French equivalent (French Baccalaureate). Students have taken and passed the University's English Placement Test with a grade above 70/100. All students' A language is Arabic, their mother tongue. Their B language is French, which is also the language of instruction in their schools since they all come from French-medium educational institutions.

Instructional Syllabus

The English course is a 5-credit obligatory English language course which aims at improving learners' English, introducing them to different rhetorical modes of essay writing. This is a pre-requisite to a Language & Culture course that they are required to take in the second semester. This 10-week course maintains a balance of all four skills with an emphasis on writing. Pre-writing is given a lot of importance to set all students on an equal footing, enabling them to cluster ideas better, outline, and write first draft. Post-writing is also given importance towards making them independent learners, a strategy that helps Translation majors, since Translation is an ongoing process. The second draft follows the first making the journey as important as the destination sought. Students are expected and encouraged to improve their editing and proofreading skills along the way (For USJ English Language Course Specifications, See Appendix E: USJ Course Description). The course, its objectives as well as the rubrics used all pour into one goal – writing. The syllabus and course content focus on both form and content, the process and the product, for a good product is not a haphazard task, but the result of an endless, repetitive, detailed process. As mentioned before, no change has been made to the syllabus assigned by the university. The experimental group's activities go hand in hand with the syllabus of the control group.

As per the syllabus adopted, students are expected to write many types of essays, three of which have been adopted for this study. The three graded essays were of the following rhetorical modes: Free writing, Opinion, and Argumentative. All essays have been written in class by all students in both groups at the same time during the semester (Weeks 1, 5 and 9). All essays had

Type of Research Study

Introducing explicit grammar to learners and arming them with metalinguistic competence raises awareness with students who are motivated to further learn the target language and consequently improve their writing skills, including the grammar used in their writing. Accordingly, Action Research (AR) was used so as to detect the efficacy of introducing a new element (that of explicit instruction of grammar) without altering the initial syllabus, and its subsequent effect on students' essay writing skills.

This study is essentially Action Research whereby the instructor / researcher / practitioner is taking action, introducing a new element, sharing it, testing it, and problematizing ideas. According to Carr & Kemmis (2004), Action Research is "a form of self-reflective enquiry undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own practices, their understanding of these practices, and the situations in which the practices are carried out" (p. 162).

In her article entitled "A Guide to Ethical Issues and Action Research", Zeni (1998) contends that, as opposed to traditional, quantitative research, when action research practitioners are challenged, they choose not to deal with big numbers, but become self-conscious actors. Unlike outsider researchers, action research practitioners are insiders who belong to the classroom and documents their students' learning.

Apart from the main goals of avoiding theorizing and finding solutions in a small-scale project, in a classroom that is "teacher initiated", the aim of AR is that of learning more about one's classrooms and making some enhancements, involving the following steps:

> *a* The teacher (or a group of teachers) selects an aspect of classroom behavior to examine in more detail;
> *b* selects a suitable research technique;
> *c* collects data and analyzes them;
> *d* develops an action plan to help bring about a change in classroom;
> *e* acts to implement the plan;
> *f* observes the effects of the action plan (Richards & Schmidt, 2010, p. 19).

In this study, the researcher, practitioner and instructor teaching Group 1 was me. I also got the help of the second instructor who is from the same institution hence, with the same training in language teaching. I was the self-conscious actor, the instructor who took action and tweaked the material to cater to my students' needs along the course guidelines. Having documented our students' writing and studied their errors, I came up with a few conclusions for a better teaching of grammar to 1st Year Translation students avoiding overgeneralizing the findings of this study, being well aware of its limitations.

To conclude, action research involves systematic processes that instructors use within an academic or educational framework in order to collect quantitative and/or qualitative data from students' work. Afterwards, instructors bring about improvements to the same teaching setting and enhancements to the methods that make learners better learners.

The three essays given in Weeks 1, 5 and 9 selected for this study also reflect a basic action taking, a key element in Action Research. The action taken includes the research done while studying the findings, sharing ideas and devising ways to cater to students' needs of direct grammar instruction.

Risk taking is another factor that characterizes this study where students were exposed to substantially more grammar. The taken risk entailed a minor cut in in-class readings and listening sequences in order to carve out the necessary time for direct grammar instruction. To

make sure the same reading comprehension and listening comprehension strategies were taught, more objectives were pooled into the same reading comprehension text or listening comprehension sequence used. In other words, the same number of strategies the control group students learned through two listening comprehension sequences or more reading comprehension passages, the experimental group students used fewer passages and sequences.

Data was collected from both groups with the results compared and students' performance and progress in grammar notions analyzed throughout the period of time during which they were being taught essay writing in its many rhetorical modes.

Data Collection

The data collected was done over the period of one semester, at exactly the same times from each of the experimental and control groups. Three sets of identical tests were used for this study. Even though the essays were similar in length, yet they were of different rhetorical modes.

a. Pre-Test

At USJ all translation students taking this course are required to write an essay as a diagnostic test. A pre-test is quite indicative as "an experiment measures some attribute or characteristic that is assessed for participants before they receive a treatment" (Creswell, 2011, p.625). One pre-test was administered to both groups, experimental and control, during the first week of classes. The pre-test was a four-paragraph essay about their "likes" and "dislikes". The pretests were later on compared to their tests and post-tests in terms of errors made and overall language improvement.

b. Test

One test was administered to both groups, experimental and control, during the fifth week of classes in order to assess learners' progress. It was a four-paragraph opinion essay on social media. The tests were in turn compared to the pre-tests and the post-tests.

c. Post-test

A post-test is extremely important as "an experiment measures some attribute or characteristic that is assessed for participants after a treatment" (Creswell, 2011, p.625). Once again, students in both groups wrote a four-paragraph argumentative essay on plastic surgery. The post-test was the last of a series of graded essays that students wrote during the course. It was compared to the pre-test and test in order to check students' improvement.

Essays

In-class essay writing has a double purpose, that of, first, making students practice and receive feedback on their writing, and second, using the writing samples as an assessment tool to assess and evaluate learners' performance.

In Week 1, students wrote an in-class essay as a pretest at the onset of the course (hereby referred to as Writing 1). Half way through the course, in Week 5 students sat for their mid-test and wrote a four-paragraph opinion essay (hereby referred to as Writing 2) in first and second draft. The opinion essay paves the way for the argumentative essay. It is also one of the most challenging modes to be written by students who come from French medium schools without falling into the trap of mirroring the French way of argumentation. The French way consists of

writing of a question instead of thesis statement. It also consists of contrasting the thesis with the antithesis before providing the synthesis paragraph. In Week 9, students sat for their in-class post-test, a four-paragraph argumentative essay. All three kinds of writings in both groups were timed 50 minutes. The essay writing modes and topics were the same for both groups. The prompts distributed to both groups were identical. It is worth noting that the prompts given were not, in any way, close to the prompts used for students' placement tests. (For the essay writing guideline, see Appendix F).

Rubrics

USJ students' essays are corrected according to rubrics. This study adopted rubrics formulated through in-service workshops run by senior instructors from Saint Louis University (SLU), Missouri, for English instructors at USJ. Many workshops have been held to fine-tune these rubrics according to the needs of the English Program at USJ as per SLU guidelines. Further workshops and norming sessions have been run so as to ensure the proper implementation of the rubrics. The aim of the rubric as per USJ expectations is to unify the grading system, and make its students independent learners in the long run, enhancing their critical thinking skills, self-editing and proofreading techniques. Another reason behind using these specific rubrics for this study remains to be the fact that both instructors who are to correct and score the participants' writing have not only been trained, but also been using it repeatedly over the past years, a fact that cuts down on fickle points in grading, assessing and scoring students' essays, maintaining validity and reliability. The writing rubric comprises 50% of the grade with 10% for each of (i) introductory paragraph & thesis, (ii) paragraph organization, (iii)

evidence and support, (iv) quality of ideas, and (v) conclusion (For the writing rubric, see Appendix G: USJ English Department Writing Rubric). By the same token, the grammar writing rubric comprises 50% of the grade with 10% for each of (i) sentence structure, (ii) verb usage, (iii) word usage, (iv) mechanics, and (v) format (For the Grammar Rubric, see Appendix H: USJ English Department Grammar Rubric). Both rubrics used are analytic rubrics that focus on main parts in each of writing and grammar. "For most classroom purposes, analytic rubrics are best. Focusing on the criteria one at a time is better for instruction and better for formative assessment because students can see what aspects of their work need what kind of attention" (Brookhart, 2013, p. 6). The analytic rubric is helpful for the study of grammar errors as this study considers the overall improvement of students' writings, as well as the grammar notions as part of the writing progress.

Both rubrics are 5-point rubrics. Considering the 5-point rubrics, Broad argues that "such concise lists of criteria may have adequately served the needs of writing assessment for forty years by making judgments simple, quick, and agreeable. He also adds that their strength lies in what they include; their great weakness is what they leave out" (Broad, 2003, p. 17). Hence, no rubric is foolproof.

Among the features of such rubrics lie two important ones, helping students understand their errors (and try to overcome them) and, at the same time, familiarizing them with the metalanguage used during the explicit instruction of grammar to the experimental group. Formative testing and assessment requires the use of analytical rubrics to avoid the pitfalls holistic grading brings into the grading and evaluation process. The learners' writing skills are

valued more methodically and specifically instead of relying on a rather general approach. Rubrics quantify the grade, leaving a narrower margin for human error. The grades are not mere evaluations; they are the sum total of the 10 subparts of the two rubrics combined. The descriptors under each of the writing and grammar rubrics are developed, presenting critical significance for the validity of our assessment.

The SLU rubric for formative testing was used for consistency. The instructors of both groups corrected students' copies once each on their own and then deliberated the grade(s) soon after. In case of discrepancy, a third scorer was called in to a norming session and asked to grade the copies in question. All three grades were computed to decide the final grade.

The Experiment

The experiment can be best described by showing the number and type(s) of writing assignments that this research studied, stating what students in both groups took as writing tests for that matter. The same number of pre-test, post-test, and mid-test were given to both groups, at the same time throughout the course, while covering the same theme, the same topic of discussion, and responding to the same prompt. The pre-tests and the post-tests were compared within each group and between both groups (For the Experiment, see Appendix I).

There were two groups sharing the same course guidelines, material, rubrics, writing assignments, and tests. Group 1 was taught grammar through explicit instruction, drilling, pattern formation, inductive and deductive methods of rule formation, and application of rules until the grammar notion is well internalized. Group 2 was taught grammar through implicit instruction, lightly covering grammar items that are addressed or tackled in the readings, and assignments,

without drilling, repetition, practice, nor any further reinforcement. After the first draft, errors were pointed at, discussed and corrected. To minimize the risk of help gathered from others, all writings were done in class, with no access to notes, dictionaries, or reference books.

The difference between the two modes of instructions lies in tackling the instruction of grammatical notions. While the experimental group was engaged in active, direct, explicit, drilling, practicing, scaffolding, and reinforcing grammar in an overt and predetermined manner, raising metacognitive awareness along the way, the control group waited until (and if) a certain grammatical notion appeared incidentally in context and was chatted about in an indirect, implicit manner. Meanwhile, a balance of four skills (listening, reading, speaking and writing) was maintained throughout both courses as per the English Language Instruction guidelines at USJ. Hence, the first three skills paved the way to a better essay writing experience. The content used in the theme-based unit was tackled through the three skills (L, R and S) serving as an input and being transferred into their output, the written essay.

The First Phase

The first phase started at the beginning of the Fall Semester whereby students wrote their diagnostic essay (Pre-Test) on their Likes and Dislikes without any initial explanation of any of the elements that make up an essay or any of its kinds. Their essays were collected and graded by two instructors using the above-mentioned rubrics.

The Second Phase

This part consisted of gathering students' Tests (Opinion essay written in class on

Social Media), collected and graded by both instructors.

The Third Phase

This part consisted of gathering students' Post-Test (Argumentative Essay written in class on Plastic Surgery) collected and graded by both instructors. (For the students' essay types used in this research, see Appendix J).

The Fourth Phase

This part consisted of the practitioner collecting data for the SPSS study.

The Fifth Phase

This part consisted of the practitioner analyzing SPSS statistical results.

Procedure

At the onset of the semester, soon after the diagnostic essay writing on their Likes and Dislikes, both groups were taught the basics of essay writing including all components covered in the Writing Rubric. The instructor even shared the metalinguistic components that would be used henceforth while correcting students' copies. The metalinguistic use of grammar terms was, once again, both an end and a means to a better understanding and exploitation of grammar rules. Both groups were given a paragraph to identify its parts and map out the prewriting outline of an academic essay, expanding it to one written in full in class. The experimental group had more direct grammar instruction throughout the semester and more specific intervention before Weeks 5 and 9. The experimental group discussed sentence structure, types of sentences, inversions, verb usage, word usage, mechanics, and format.

Throughout the semester, the experimental group did numerous activities to internalize and games to inculcate grammar rules of tenses, if-conditionals, wish clauses, subject-verb agreement, prepositions of place and time, compiling word derivations, working on word usage, collocations and phrasal verbs, juggling with common language mistakes, attempting ridding oneself of fossilized errors. The experimental group students were provided with a checklist of grammar-related cues to increase their exposure to grammar.

Since essays were part of the course syllabus, all essays were written in class. Once the target genre was taught, a model was used to identify each part. As per instructors' guidelines, the essay had to boast the basic components as dictated by SLU guidelines. In addition to paying close attention to unity, coherence and cohesion, connectors, parallelism and logical sequencing of ideas, an essay was expected to boast the following:

a. A title,
b. An introductory paragraph of 2-3 sentences minimum with a clear thesis statement,
c. Body paragraphs of 4-5 sentences minimum including a topic sentence and several supporting sentences,
d. A concluding paragraph of 2-3 sentences summarizing and recapitulating the ideas stated above and possibly ending with a proposition or even an open ended closing sentence.

The control group, on the other hand, was doing the usual class striking a balance between all four skills, paying no attention to grammar. Consequently, the checklists used as a reminder or reinforcement in the experimental group were not used during essay writing sessions and students were left to their own devices to edit their linguistic errors in the best possible way.

Data Analysis

The Statistical Product and Service Solutions (SPSS) is defined by Tavakoli (2012) as "one of several widely used statistical packages for manipulating and analyzing data. SPSS is an integrated system of computer programs designed for the analysis of social sciences data" (p.613). After data collection, the SPSS software was used for data entry and analysis. To measure the use of grammar before and after explicit instruction, a t-test is used for statistical data analysis.

As mentioned earlier, the gathered data was revised and analyzed before the final feedback was given. Data was entered into the above mentioned software and analyzed to yield the outcome. Of the total 30 participants in each class, four copies were studied in each, including the highest scores (two students), and the lowest scores (two students). The data covered the pre-test, an essay on students' likes and dislikes (Writing 1), the opinion essay on social media as the mid-test (Writing 2), and the argumentative essay on plastic surgery as the post-test (Writing 3) students had written. Samples of errors and mistakes made were analyzed.

In this part of Action Research study, statistical intervention is not only necessary but of utmost indispensability. The quantitative analysis necessitates collecting data and selecting SPSS tools to best analyze the data.

To prove the assumptions made earlier, this study compelled two types of statistics: Descriptive and Inferential. Descriptive Statistics is that which can "indicate general tendencies in the data (mean, mode, median), the spread of scores (variance, standard deviation, and range), or a comparison of how one score relates to all others (*z* scores, percentile rank)" describes

Creswell (p. 182, 2008). As part of the descriptive statistics, the Mean, Mode, ST, CV and Mean % of each of control group and experimental group in Week 1, Week 5, and Week 9 were compared.

Moreover, inferential statistics is needed "in which we analyze data from a sample to draw conclusions [...] We assess whether the differences of groups (their means) or the relationship among variables is much greater or less than what we would expect for the total population" (Creswell, 2008, p, 182). In this section, the difference between weeks for both experimental and control groups with the comparison between the two groups was studied. To study the difference between weeks for the same group the paired sample t-test (student) was used; it's a parametric test used to compare two means of the same group and to study if the difference is significant or not. For the comparison between the experimental and control groups we used the Independent sample t-test (student), it's a parametric test used to compare two means of different groups and to study if the difference is significant or not. Repeated measures ANOVA was used to compare the results between the three weeks. For the interpretation, Sig (Degree of significance) with α (error ratio = 5% i.e. 0.05) is compared. If Sig > α, then the difference is considered insignificant and vice versa.

To enhance accuracy, different sources (essays, rubrics, instructor, and third corrector) were used. The data (collected, compared, contrasted and cross-checked, preceded by a norming session and calibration based on a set of previously deliberated graded essays), and a statistician were used. This enhancement echoes a fundamental constituent in Action Research, Triangulation

> "which is the process of corroborating evidence from different individuals, types of data or methods of data collection in descriptions and themes in qualitative research. This ensures that the study will be accurate because the information draws on multiple sources of information, individuals, or processes." (Creswell, 2008, p. 259).

All of the above helped in compiling enough data to analyze, evidence to build on, a concept to investigate and ultimately a hypothesis to test.

Validity and Reliability

Validity can best be described as measuring the measurable after measuring the measuring tool (Litosseliti, 2010). The tool used was the one prescribed by SLU and put into usage for the last couple of years as the sole rubric(s) adopted for essay writing, to standardize the grading operation at USJ.

Of the types of validity (content, construct and criterion-related), *content validity* which "examines the degree to which an instrument measures the intended content area covered by the measure" (Lodico et al. 2010, p. 96) is addressed through the many detailed descriptors used in the instrument, in this case, the grammar rubric, and the writing rubric which were used repeatedly for the sole purpose of testing grammar improvement. Once copies were corrected and graded, errors in specific grammar notions were taken for error analysis. In order to narrow down the study, the most common errors and recurrent mistakes (such as S-V agreement, pronoun antecedent, syntax /sentence structure, and nouns as modifiers) were carefully studied.

Lodico et al. (2010) discuss construct validity achievement through correlating scores between and among sub-scales (in this case between and among the subparts of the rubrics used). External validity is applicable to the Translation students within the specific university in question, since they can be considered to be a good representation of their discipline given the pivotal role language plays in their major. However, researchers by no means claim that Translation majors are an accurate representation of their university population due to the different linguistic needs and capacities of the USJ students at large.

On the other hand, reliability is the possibility of replication should the same study take place with the same sample under the same conditions (Litosseliti, 2010). Internal Consistency Reliability "refers to consistency within the instrument. The question addressed is whether the measure is consistently measuring the same trait or ability across all items on the test" (Lodico et al. 2010, p. 96). The rubric adopted is the instrument used to assess this type of reliability.

To establish a high rate of inter-rater reliability as well as intra-rater reliability, the researcher made sure the following steps were followed for each of the pre-test, test and post-test writings. The rubrics used were implemented by both practitioner (teaching the experimental group) and the instructor, teaching the control group. Cohen (2007) proposes a training for researchers to "ensure their reliability to use the same operational definitions; record the same observations in the same way; have good concentration, focus on detail; be unobtrusive but attentive; have the necessary experience to make informed judgments from the observational data" (p.11) . To maintain consistency, a norming session preceded the grading of the students' copies, 10-12 copies at a time, to ensure no deviation is recorded. Since both instructors corrected each other's copies, students' copies from both groups, experimental and control, will

be identified by giving numbers in order to avoid instructors having expectations of one's own students and making predictions. Making use of reliable writing samples that have been introduced by the SLU standardizing committee used in previous norming sessions during workshops run by SLU was used before each scoring session. The same steps were used with the suspicious copies that were tackled by the third corrector. The rubrics and their descriptors were used on these essays. Scores were thus compared and once standardized, the correctors moved to the next step, correcting students' copies which were piled at random. In other words, each copy is marked twice by the two instructors independently. Once the scores are compared and should there be a grade point difference between the two scores, a third rater, from the same institution and with the same experience in using these rubrics, scored those copies. The mean of the two closest grades was calculated and adopted. This was a unquestionable way to minimize discrepancy.

Variables

> An independent variable is an input variable, that which causes, in part or in total, a particular outcome; it is a stimulus that influences a response, an antecedent or a factor which may be modified (e.g. under experimental or other conditions) to affect an outcome. A dependent variable, on the other hand, is the outcome variable, that which is caused, in total or in part, by the input, antecedent variable. It is the effect, consequence of, or response to, an independent variable (Cohen et al. 2007, p.504).

In this study, there is one independent variable and one dependent variable. The former is explicit instruction of grammar and the latter is improved essay writing with fewer mistakes in grammar. Teaching grammar explicitly to the experimental group is the independent variable which at the input level, with its contributory characteristics, plays the role of a stimulus to

trigger a response. The improved writing in terms of grammar is the dependent variable. At the output level, it is reliant, partially or totally, on the independent variable. The independent variable is a categorical one since the experimental group instructor is using explicit instruction to teach grammar and the control group instructor is using implicit instruction to teach grammar. T-tests will be used to compare results between and among students after we

> perform an experiment and have obtained mean scores from two independent groups. You have measured both scores yourself, and you only have two of them [...] you might assign students randomly to one of two treatments, and then at the end of the experiment you would test them and have two mean scores. You want to know whether one group performed better or worse than the other group (Cronk, 2008, p. 241).

The t-test will analyze the results and will be used to assess the success rate of the intervention – the explicit instruction of grammar.

CHAPTER FOUR

RESULTS: QUANTITATIVE ANALYSIS

This chapter is mainly about the quantitative analysis resulting from the SPSS program outcome. The chapter is divided into two parts: a descriptive part and an inferential part. In both parts, the grades of the students' essays are discussed along with their interrelatedness. In the descriptive part, results of mean percentages have been computed for both groups, each in a separate table. Results have proved that the groups were rather homogenous and same level at the onset of the study (i.e., at entry level).

I. Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the entry level of the control group students' Pre-Test score with a mean of 59.63, the average of 61.40% for Writing and 57.87% on Grammar (For Control Group Week 1 Essay Statistics, see Appendix K).

Table 3 shows the entry level of the experimental group students' Pre test with a mean of 62.83, the average of 64.53% for Writing and 61.13% for Grammar. (For Experimental Group Week 1 Essay Statistics, see Appendix L).

Tables 2 and 3 show that both groups are at an equal footing at the onset of the course with an overall grade of 53.63 for the control group and 62.83 for the experimental group. The difference is negligible. Both groups are homogenous.

Table 4 shows the control group's Essay 2 mean at 60.67% half way through the course, with the average of 62.73 on Writing and 58.6% for Grammar (For Control Group Week 5 Essay Statistics, see Appendix M).

Table 5 shows the experimental group's Essay 2 results with a mean of 68.63, with an equal distribution for each of Writing (68.53%) and Grammar (68.73). (For Experimental Group Week 5 Essay Statistics, see Appendix N). Half way through the course, the overall grade of the control group increased from 59.63 in Week 1 to 60.67 in Week 5; whereby that of the experimental group increased from 62.83 in Week 1 to 68.63 in Week 5. Hence, there is a visible difference in the experimental group.

Table 6 shows the exit level of the control group students' PostTest score with a mean of 62.63%, the average of 64.87% on Writing and a lower 60.40% for Grammar. (For Control Group Week 9 Essay Statistics, see Appendix O).

Table 7 shows how at the end of the course, the control group scored an overall grade of 62.63 as compared to 59.63 at the onset of the course and 60.67 half way through the course. On the other hand, the experimental group's overall grade zoomed from 62.83 in Week 1 to 72.63 in Week 9, notwithstanding a noticeable 68.63 in Week 5. (For Experimental Group Week 9 Essay Statistics, see Appendix P).

Inferential Statistics

In this section, we are studying the difference(s) between weeks for both experimental and control groups with the comparison between the two groups. To study the difference between weeks for the same group we used the paired sample t-test (student), it's a parametric

test used to compare two means of the same group and to decide if the difference is significant or not. For the comparison between the experimental and control groups we used the Independent sample t-test (student), it's a parametric test used to compare two means of different groups and to study if the difference is significant or not. Also Repeated Measures Anova was used to compare the results between the three weeks. For the interpretation, we compare Sig (Degree of significance) with α (error ratio = 0.05). If Sig > α, we consider the difference insignificant and vice versa.

Table 8 shows the control group's Week 1 & Week 9 Statistics with an improvement of 5.65% on Writing and 4.38% on Grammar, improving the mean from 59.63 in Week 1 to 62.63 in Week 9. (For Control Group: Comparison between Weeks 1 & 9, see Appendix Q). For the interpretation, we compare Sig (Degree of significance) with α (error ratio = 0.05). Hence, the areas of improvement were in the introduction, evidence and support, conclusion, mechanics and format.

Table 9 compares experimental group's Week 1 & Week 9 grades, showing an overall improvement of 15.60% from 62.83 in Week 1 to 72.63 in Week 9.It is worth noting a rather significant improvement in writing at 10.64% and double the significance in Grammar improvement at 20.83% (For Experimental Group: Comparison between Weeks 1 & 9, see Appendix R). For the interpretation, we compare Sig (Degree of significance) with α (error ratio = 0.05).There is a significant difference in all 10 items of the rubric.

Table 10 shows the statistics of the grades of both control and experimental groups at entry Level in Week 1. The former is at 59.63% and the latter at 62.83%. This shows that the

groups are of the same entry level and quite homogenous (For Comparison between Control & Experimental Groups in Week 1, see Appendix S).

Table 11 shows the comparison between the control and experimental groups at the exit level, in Week 9. There is an exact 10 point difference between the control group mean at 62.63 and the experimental group at 72.63 (For Comparison between Control and Experimental Groups: Week 9, See Appendix T). For the interpretation, we compare Sig (Degree of significance) with α (error ratio = 0.05). There has been a significant difference in all parts of the rubric except quality of ideas and conclusion.

In the following graphs, the difference in improvement between the groups as per the different items on the rubric will be demonstrated, starting with the writing with its five subparts, followed by the grammar also with its five subparts. Each subpart will also be followed with the general writing and the general grammar improvement figure.

Figure 1. Writing: Introduction Paragraph and Thesis

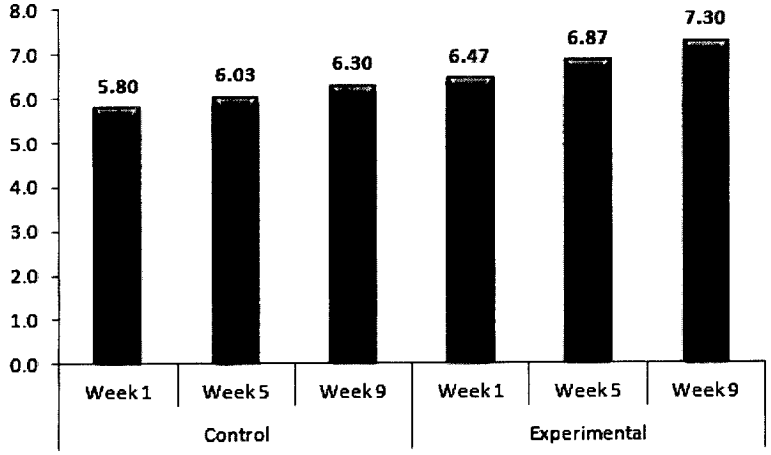

Figure 1 shows a slight improvement in Introduction Paragraph and Writing with 0.5 for the control group and 0.83 for the experimental group. Between weeks 1 and 9, the control group improved 0.5%, while the experimental group improved 0.83%. The difference is 1.6 times.

Figure 2. Writing: Paragraph organization

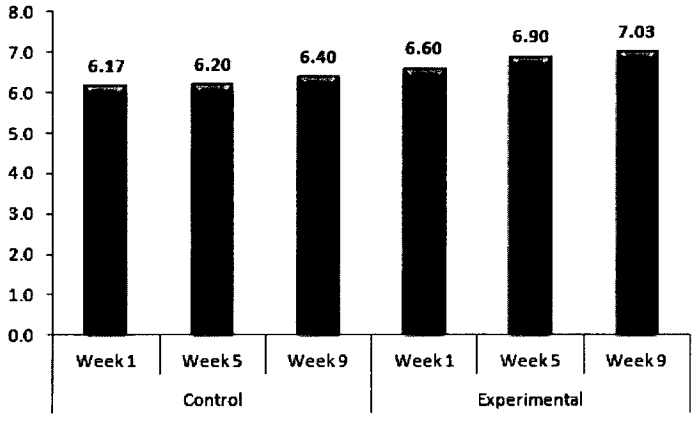

Figure 2 shows slight improvement in paragraph organization with 0.23 for the control group and 0.43 for the experimental group between weeks 1 and 9. The difference is 1.86 times.

Figure 3. Writing: Evidence & Support

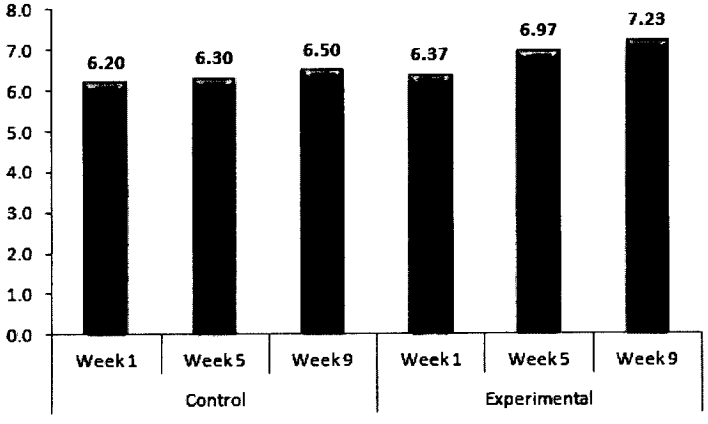

Figure 3 shows the difference in improvement in Evidence & Support between the control group at 0.3 and the experimental group at 0.86. The difference is 2.86 times.

Figure 4. Writing: Quality of ideas

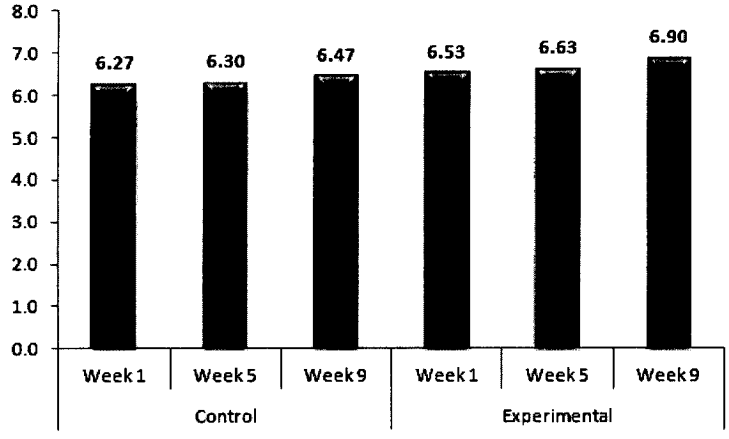

Figure 4 shows the difference in improvement in the quality between the control group at 0.2 and 0.37 for the experimental group. This is one of the two items on the rubric in which the experimental group did not score a significant difference. The difference is 1.85 times.

Figure 5 Writing: Conclusion

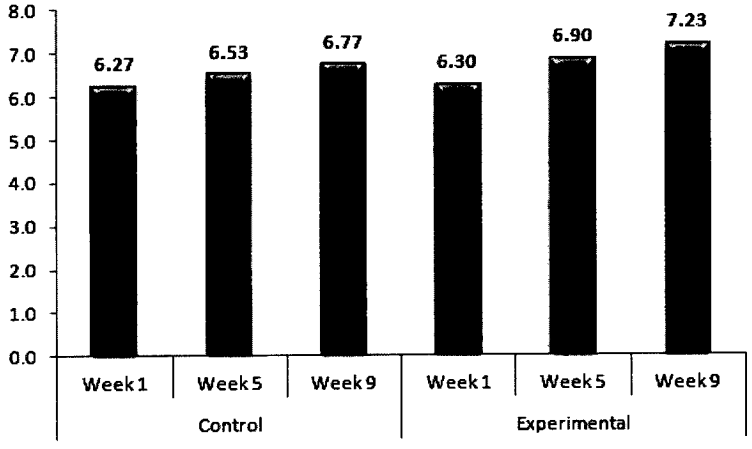

Figure 5 shows the difference in improvement students made in the Concluding paragraph of the essays they wrote in Weeks 1 and 9 with a 0.5 for the control group and 0.93 for the experimental group which failed to improve significantly. The difference is 1.86 times.

Figure 6. Writing: Total

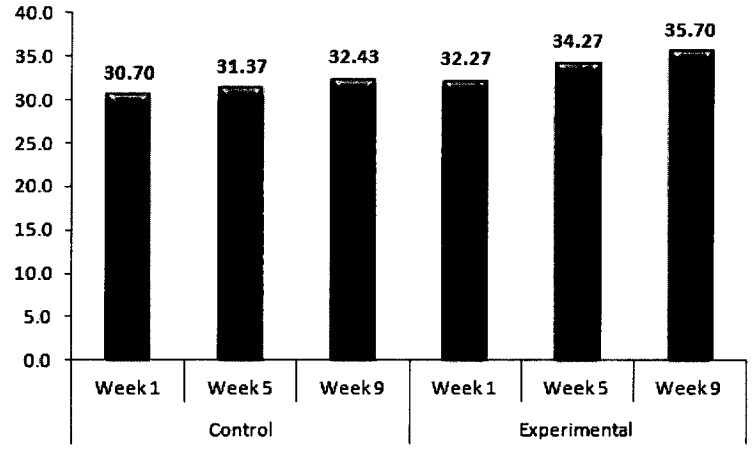

Figure 6 shows the overall improvement on the Writing between the control group and the experimental group. The former's improvement is at 1.73 points and the latter's is at 3.43 points. The improvement is twice as much.

Figure 7. Grammar: Sentence Structure

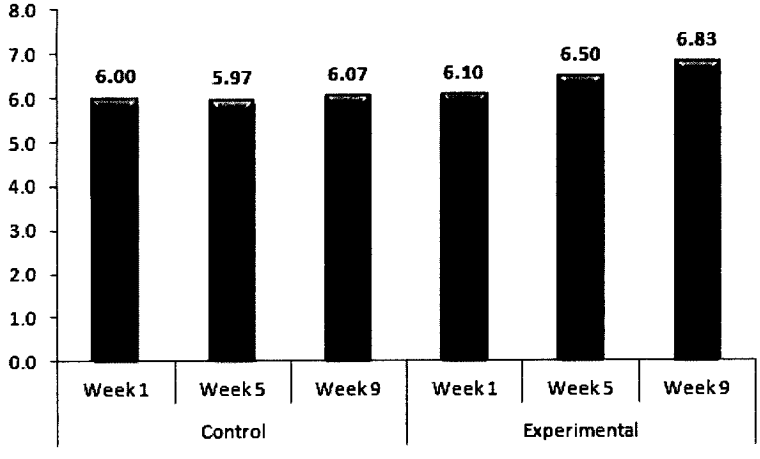

Figure 7 shows the improvement in Sentence Structure between the control group and the experimental group. A negligible 0.07 for the control group from Week 1 to Week 9 and a 0.73 for the experimental group. The difference is 10.42 times.

Figure 8. Grammar: Verb Usage

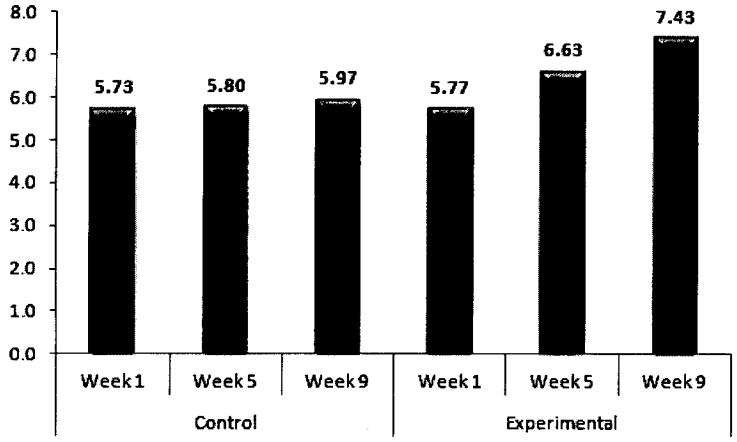

Figure 8 shows the major improvement in Grammar for the experimental group from 5.77 to 7.43 (1.66) as opposed to a minor improvement for the control group from 5.73 to 5.97 (0.24). The difference is 7 times.

Figure 9. Grammar: Word Usage

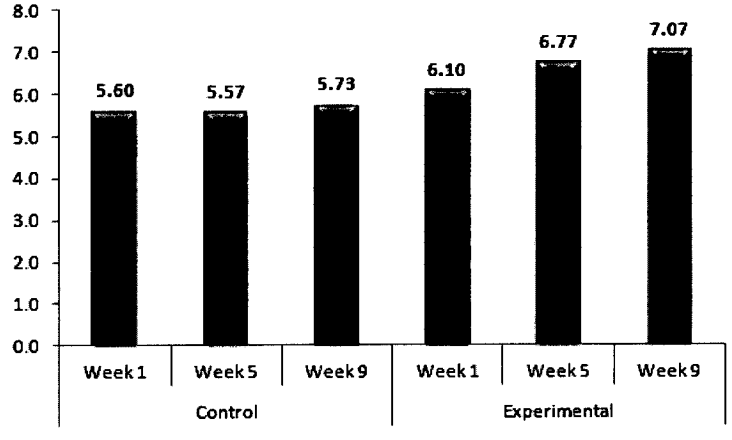

Figure 9 shows the degree of improvement in Word Usage. The control group's improvement is at 0.13 from Week 1 to Week 9 and 0.97 for the experimental group. The difference in improvement is seven times.

Figure 10. Grammar Mechanics

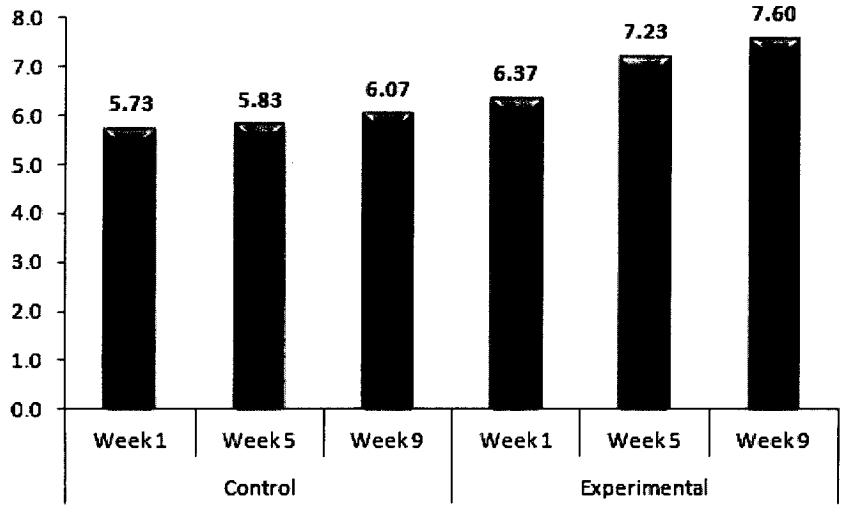

Figure 10 shows the improvement in Mechanics from week 1 to week 9. The control group's improvement is at 0.34 and the experimental group's is at 1.23. The difference in improvement is 3.6 times.

Figure 11. Grammar: Format

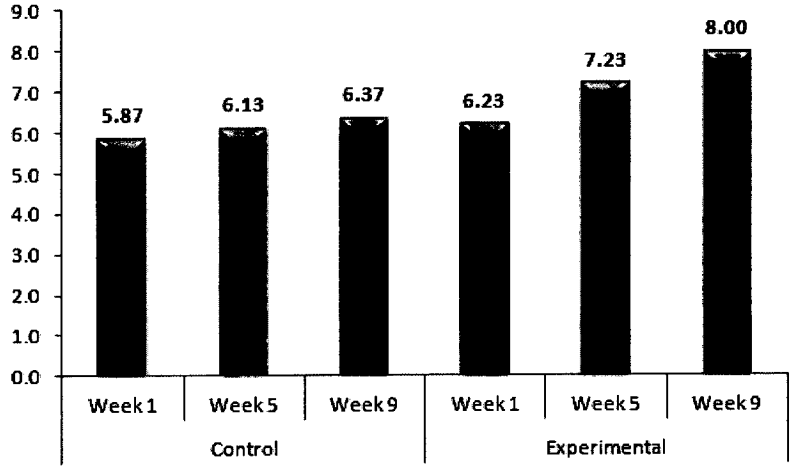

Figure 11 shows the improvement in Format from week 1 to week 9. The improvement for the control group is at 0.5 and that of the experimental group is at 1.77. The difference in improvement is at 3.54 times.

Figure 12. Grammar: Total

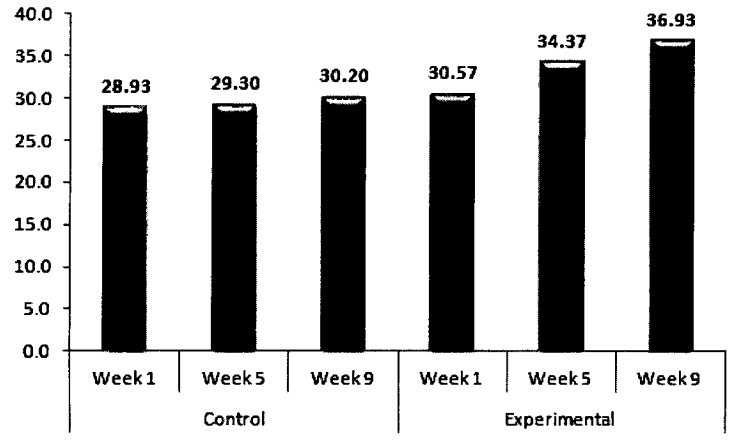

Figure 12 shows the total improvement in Grammar. The minor improvements in all the five subparts resulted in a major improvement on the overall grade. As such, the control group marked a difference of 1.27 while the experimental group marked a difference of 6.36. The difference is 5 times.

Figure 13. General Total

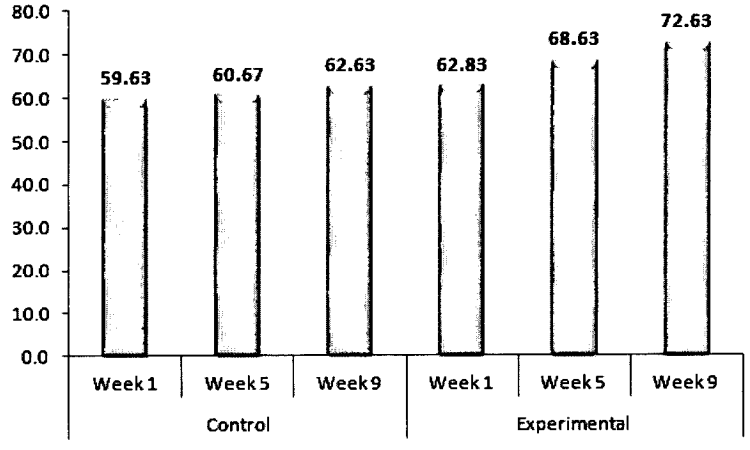

Figure 13 compares the general total of both groups throughout the semester. The mean of the control group improved by 3 points while the mean of the experimental group improved by 9.8 points. The difference is 3.25 times as much.

To conclude, the following table summarizes the overall changes for both groups from Week 1 to Week 9.

	Group	**Week 1**	**Week 9**	**Improve-ment**	**Difference in improvement**
Writing / 50	Control	30.7	32.43	1.73	
	Experimental	*32.27*	*35.70*	*3.43*	2 times
Grammar / 50	Control	28.93	30.20	1.27	
	Experimental	*28.93*	*30.20*	*6.36*	5 times
Overall / 100	Control	59.63	62.63	3	3.25
	Experimental	*62.83*	*72.63*	*9.8*	times

Table 12. Overall Grade Improvement

While the control group improved a mere 3 points in essay writing, the experimental group outperformed the control group by a 10 grade difference between weeks 1 and 9. A relatively higher improvement recorded in grammar rubric as compared to the writing rubric. The difference in improvement in writing between the control group and the experimental group is 2 times. The difference in improvement in grammar between the control group and the experimental group is 5 times. The overall difference improvement between the control group and the experimental group is 3.25 times.

CHAPTER FIVE

STUDENTS' ESSAY ANALYSIS

In this section, the control group students' essays will be studied and concrete examples demonstrating the errors and areas of improvement in each of the ten items wherever applicable will be given. The same procedure will be applied to the experimental group students' essays. Three samples from each group will be discussed written by one low achiever, one average student and one high achiever. It is worth noting that the choice of students fell upon the copies sampled from the first pre-test in both groups. As per the rubrics adopted, writing includes introductory paragraph & thesis, paragraph organization, evidence & support, quality of ideas, and conclusion. Grammar comprises sentence structure, verb usage, word usage, mechanics, and format.

In order to respect students' privacy and anonymity, each copy will be named as such and later referred to by their first name only:

CL1 for the Control Group Low Achiever, Maya (See Appendix U);

CA1 for the Control Group Average student, Corinne (See Appendix V);

CH1 for the Control Group High Achiever, Maria (See Appendix W);

EL1 for the Experimental Group Low Achiever, Yara (See Appendix X);

EA1 for the Experimental Group Average student, Jana (See Appendix U); and

EH1 for the Experimental Group High Achiever, Sarah (See Appendix Z).

The first part will be followed by the discussion of the same students' last in-class essays written towards the end of the course in Week 9.

Control Group Students' Essay Analysis (Pretest in Week 1)

CL1: Control Group Low Student's Week 1 Essay Analysis (Maya)

In Week 1, Maya's pretest essay includes a few introductory sentences instead of a robust paragraph. Introduction is incomplete or inaccurate. The thesis statement is very vague, unclear, and almost nonexistent. Paragraphs include errors in organization; lack coherence and unity; almost no transitions are used. Topic sentences are unclear, inaccurate or missing. The paragraph organization is unclear for she has joined both body paragraphs into one block. Evidence and support of the arguments are rather missing, imprecise and repetitive, with each sentence starting with *I like*. Maya's topic is vague. She has limited information, provides, vague details and writes random thoughts. Connectors, if any, have been erroneously used or translated from French. Quality of ideas is poor, displaying just the minimum of what constitutes a student's random likes and dislikes. Conclusion is roughly present, but not well wound up.

As far as grammar is concerned Sentence Structure is basic, repetitive and rather elementary. No attempt at longer sentences, be it complex, compound or complex compound. Verb usage is basic as the student does not attempt using synonyms of the key word. Tenses chosen show that the student has played it safe by selecting very basic tenses. Resulting errors are repeatedly systematic errors and there is a little to no attempt at higher level of tense usage such as perfect tenses. Vocabulary is also undeveloped, far from the words a student would use

in a graded writing. No extra effort has been made to achieve this goal. Regarding mechanics, there are basic mistakes of punctuation, capitalization, including errors resulting from French interference. Format lacks indenting and paragraph distribution. Last but not least, the resulting 197-word essay does not even have a title.

To exemplify the errors made, Maya uses *'peopol' 'conclued'* and *'cause'* instead of because. French interference mistakes include, *musique classique, arabe, nervosity, collegues,* and *prefere.* Repetitive words such *very very* were common. Subject-Verb agreement mistakes include *everyone have likes and dislikes.* Finally, homonyms also are a problem say, *there, they're* and *their. Too much* instead of *very much* is also listed among the errors. Syntax mistakes contain misplaced adverbs, such as *I dislike too much sports.*

CA1: Control Group Average Student's Week 1 Essay Analysis (Corinne)

In this essay, Corinne has attempted a 4-sentence introductory paragraph. The weakly constructed thesis statement is at the end of the paragraph. The clear-cut four paragraph essay boasts a 6-sentence first body paragraph and an equally long yet a 4-sentence second body paragraph with a shorter conclusion at the end. The student demonstrates emerging sentence variety but short sentences dominate. When attempted, this sentence variety sometimes results in errors. Coherence and cohesion are met roughly. Evidence and support is basic without delving into much detail but enough supporting sentences to validate the claim made in the main idea. Connectors are used sparingly. Excessive use of the first person pronoun in the beginning and ending of the essay is taxing. Quality of ideas is mediocre with the same idea being repeated.

The two-sentence concluding paragraph is the minimum required to wind up the essay, as prescribed by the instructor according to SLU practice.

As for the grammatical analysis of the essay, sentence structure is mediocre, varying between short and somehow long sentences, while not all long sentences are problem free. Verb usage is safe as the student is writing what she has mastered earlier. No attempt at phrasal verbs is made nor any similar attempt at newer verb structures such as perfect or perfect progressive tenses. She demonstrates the use of an emerging range of verb tenses and forms with inaccuracies and errors. Word usage taps into the same safe margin of risk-taking, with a few hints of French interference here and there. In general, word usage, even if not advanced, is rather accurate but basic vocabulary with little variety; she uses accurate word endings and pronouns at times. Word order is mostly controlled with a few systemic errors and has at least one example of direct translation from French. Regarding mechanics, each paragraph starts with a capital letter; the same applies to each and every sentence. No other instances of capitalization issues are found in this essay. As for format, Corinne uses blocs for each paragraph. Even without indenting, the paragraphs are clearly laid out. Finally, at 283 words, the essay still lacks a title, as prescribed by the instructor according to SLU practice. To exemplify, Corinne uses *effet, claustrophobe, humain* and *remede* from French. She then misuses the simple past tense with *Since we were children, my mother was always…* As for connectors, 'on another hand' is another common mistake with students. A notable mistake is also that of pronoun misuse as in *it is about the movie that I read its book.* An informal word use arises with *coz* instead of *because.* The time clauses are also a problem area with *'until I will find the movie in the shops'.*

CH1: Control Group High Achiever Student's Week 1 Essay Analysis (Maria)

In an essay titled *Black and White*, Maria writes 409 words about her likes and dislikes. The essay spans over 4 paragraphs. 3 sentences make up the introductory paragraph including a thesis statement. The body paragraphs vary in length between 5-8 sentences. A three-sentence paragraph concludes the essay.

As far as the writing is concerned, Maria provides a solid framework of form packed with good content. Paragraph organization is very good internally; it is coherent and cohesive. Many sentences serve as support for each of the main ideas in each of the two body paragraphs. Several examples further reinforce the claims made by the student adding more evidence and support wherever necessary. The quality of ideas is remarkable; the student tries to raise the essay to a higher level, adding a poetic touch. Even though the essay is coherent and cohesive, the student can still use a few more linking words or transition signals. The transition is maintained through the ideas rather than the form (i.e., through the use of connectors or linking words). The conclusion is the part in which the student revisits the title, *Black and White*, and wraps up her essay by recapitulating strikingly instead of restating previously mentioned ideas.

Grammar wise, sentence structure is quite healthy with a varied sentence length and noticeable parallel structures throughout the essay. Maria strikes a good balance between form and content. Verb usage is remarkable with an array of tenses used, void of serious errors. Subject verb agreement is respected throughout the essay. Word usage is not striking but what is visible is the extra effort the student has made in providing synonyms instead of using the same words over and over again. Mechanics suffers no drawbacks as the paragraphs stand out, each

starting with a capital letter, keywords capitalized on purpose. Punctuation rules are well-respected. As for the format, the student has made no serious errors. The blocs used and the lines skipped make of the essay a valid writing. To exemplify, Maria's diction includes words like *distastes, aversions, joys, triggered* and *ideology.* In her concluding paragraph, notice the deliberate capitalization of P and C for the keywords she chooses to emphasize: *"To conclude, Politics and Cooking remain to be one example of what I call black and white, to represent my aversions and joys".* She further winds up her essay with "*Just as politics divides people, cooking unites the family and the cousins around a lovely dinner table adding a smile on all the faces of those who are invited to the feast".*

Experimental Group Students' Essay Analysis (Pretest in Week 1)

EL1: Experimental Group Low Achiever Student's Week 1 Essay Analysis (Yara)

At a total of 227 words, this essay with no title is written by Yara in the experimental group. The essay is roughly divided into three parts; an introduction of some sort, a body paragraph joining both likes and dislikes and a few lines written for a conclusion.

Concerning Writing, the introductory paragraph is composed of four repetitive sentences without a proper thesis statement. Paragraph organization is poor. Not a single connector is used in what constitutes the body paragraph. Evidence and support are basic, while examples given are rudimentary. The quality of ideas is basic. The conclusion is a single sentence, which in itself is a mere reproduction of an already existing sentence and idea.

Concerning Grammar, *Every man and every woman have* is a good example of Subject Verb agreement mistake. Sentence structure is very basic, too repetitious, lacks parallelism and suffers run-ons. Verb usage is at a minimum, given the fact that the student chooses to write in the simple present tense; no other attempts have been made. In addition, some verbs are also spelled out in French. The same can be said about the repetitive word usage; no significant effort has been made to find synonyms for the keywords used. Mechanics is fair as far as capitalization is concerned, with a few remarkable spelling mistakes, some of which are the result of French interference, other instances are merely erratic. As for the format, the student divides the page into three parts, dedicating each for each of the introduction, the body and conclusion.

To illustrate, in an essay about Likes and Dislikes, the word *like* is used 11 times and the word *dislike* is used 6 times in a script of less than 15 lines. Errors rooted in French include *essai, olympiques, considere, personne, groupe,* and *sauvage*. Other mistakes include, *weighlifting* instead of *weightlifting, bodys* instead of *bodies*, *very very much* and *too much*, *every body* instead of *everybody*. These mistakes best exemplify the inaccuracies made throughout, the erratic word order heavily influenced by French, direct translations, notwithstanding the basic understanding of grammar rules and writing conventions.

EA1: Experimental Group Average Student's Week 1 Essay Analysis (Jana)

In a 314-word essay with a missing title, Jana is able to deliver a mediocre, average level end product. Quantitatively speaking, the essay has 4 parts; qualitatively speaking, the essay still needs a lot of improvement.

Concerning Writing, the Introductory Paragraph and the Thesis Statement can easily be traced. The introductory paragraph stands out as a 4-sentence entity with medium length sentences. Paragraph Organization is present even though not so accurate. Each of the body paragraphs has a main idea. However, the supporting sentences need much editing and re-write as they are partly conversational and partly vague. Repetition is key in this essay, in which Jana is trying to use synonyms as 'filler', making her writing rather redundant. The quality of ideas is average, displaying the necessary information required. The two-sentence general conclusion remains lopsided like the rest of the paragraphs that are very short.

Concerning Grammar, sentence structure is uncertain. Jana demonstrates an emerging use of sentence variety. Shorter sentences dominate and longer ones result in run-ons or fragments or both. Verb usage is developing with very few attempts at different tenses regardless of the faulty results. Word usage, even though accurate, is still basic; the vocabulary used has very little variety with a few uses of accurate word endings and pronouns at times. Word order is mostly controlled with a few systemic errors and may have few examples of direct translation. Even though mechanics is mostly accurate, the student has made systemic errors of the same fossilized mistake here and there. Punctuation and capitalization have no serious slips. Format is clear enough despite the fact that indenting at the beginning of each paragraph is absent.

To exemplify the few mistakes, it is worth noting that even if these mistakes do not interfere in the message getting across nor do they change the meaning intended by Jana, they remain to be direct translation mistakes from French such as, *poemes, frensh, caractere, environnement, participed, attacqued,* and *humaine.* Capitalization mistakes include *english* and

frensh (also spelling in this case). Some collocations like *lose* and *waste* are also present. A mistake that tackles both subject verb and pronoun is *My friends and me were playing. Afraid from* is a classical mistake instead of *afraid of.* Last but not least, *the humaine face* is what is used to mean *the human aspect.*

EH1: Experimental Group High Achiever Student's Week 1 Essay Analysis (Sarah)

In a 410-word essay titled *Love & Hate Communicate*, Sarah best exemplifies as a high achiever in the experimental group. Her essay has a three-sentence introductory paragraph, two well-balanced body paragraphs of no less than six sentences each, as well as a three-sentence concluding paragraph.

On the writing level, the introductory paragraph funnels down from general to specific, and culminates in the thesis statement. The sentences build up and lead to the body of the essay. Paragraph organization is well-maintained even though there is no significant use of connectors within the paragraphs. The correct use of connectors between paragraphs results in a coherent and cohesive writing that weaves around one single topic, Likes and Dislikes. This helps in maintaining unity. Connectors used include, *so, on the other hand, another (strategy), while* and *in conclusion.* Evidence and support are at their best with the quality of ideas being heightened by the use of parallels drawn and images introduced. For example, *Shelves loaded... beautifully decorate... while staples beautify the pantry shelves.* The conclusion is a synthesis of that which has been discussed with a beautiful twist.

On the grammar level, sentence structure is successfully varied with one extremely long run on sentence. Sentences display inversions and twists. Verb usage is manifold, both in the choice of verbs as well as the tenses. Sarah juggles with tenses as smoothly as possible. Word usage is at its best, with a variety of words, synonyms, and expressions, all resulting in an essay interspersed with straight to the point proverbs and Biblical expressions. Mechanics and format bear no errors.

To explain the few minor mistakes made, one can suggest replacing the *'&'* with and in the title. Excluding the long, run-on sentence, it is worth noting the diction and the imagery used. Words include, *inclination, encapsulate, impeccable, enhance, tarnished* and *aftertaste.* Expressions and collocations include, *object of hatred, object of adoration,* and *wreak havoc on.* Finally, the two proverbs used are "One man's meat is another man's poison" and a biblical proverb "Thou Shalt Not Lie".

Control Group Students' Essay Analysis (Post-Test in Week 9)

CL9: Control Group Low Achiever Student's Week 9 Essay Analysis (Maya)

In this case, Maya has managed to write a 5-paragraph essay with a *Live love your look* for a title that is irrelevant to the content. A general statement can be found in the introductory paragraph with a main idea that does not serve as a Thesis Statement. Furthermore, the stated main idea is not consistent with what is to be stated first and developed later. The first body paragraph starts rather well only to fall weak half way through. A second body paragraph starts

with *For example* as a support to what has been stated in the earlier paragraph. This clearly shows the weak paragraph organization or its lack thereof. Evidence and support are rather redundant, irrelevant and unrelated. The only type of supporting sentences used is exemplification. The student seems to write that which she knows instead of that which she is supposed to write. The quality of ideas is basic; the style is reminiscent of a shallow conversation about plastic surgery. The conclusion is totally random starting with *self image* and ending with *surgery techniques* to mean surgical techniques.

As far as the grammar is concerned, sentence structure is weak, with tenses inconsistently changing from one idea to another. Many run-ons, fragments and incomplete sentences mark this essay. Word usage is repetitive and basic. No effort has been made to find synonyms for the words used. The same exact words have been used over and over again. Mechanics is relatively better than all other parts, but still lacks some basic punctuation mistakes. Capitalization is also problematic. Connectors, if used, are never followed with a comma. As for format, all paragraphs are separate entities and have been indented except for the second body paragraph which starts with *Another example*.

To illustrate the mistakes made, Maya uses the final e at the end of adjectives as a result of French interference. The women she discusses in her essay are referred to as 'she', an instance of pronoun usage errors to be repeated over and over again. The past perfect tense is used in between a simple present and a present continuous tense. Wrong word particles are used as adjectives. The part of speech to be used to modify is expected to be an adjective at a time when the student uses a noun as in *'the leaders of her perfection looks'*. This phrase renders the whole sentence incomprehensible. The student still makes mistakes like *cosmetique, wors/worse,*

than/then, terriable/terrible, severly/severely, successful / successful , he will has/have, developed, for exemple, and redundancies like *was burned in fire or severe case of bad side effects.* Maya has also plagiarized a sentence "Cosmetic surgery is the tool bequeathed upon human kind by science' without mentioning the source or quoting it properly. Another phrase is followed by a colon (:) with a capital letter to follow after a semicolon as in *For example: Beauty is very important.* The student further concludes the sentence with an illogical argument saying *"almost all the companies provid the appearence as a condition in the application for employment".*

Compared to Week 1, Maya is still an underachiever and has a long way to go. Concerning writing, even if the student has been told she has to expand ideas into a well-developed essay. Grammar mistakes that appeared in Week 1 are still there. For example, *there / they're / their* and *very much / too much* are among the recurrent mistakes on this student's copy. No visible difference has been made in 10 weeks.

Maya's grade evolution is marked by a slight change from 28/100 on her first essay to 38/100 on her third essay. The 10-point improvement is at +1 point on each subsection in the rubric. Maya improves in Writing more than in grammar. She boosts her Writing grade from 14 to 20 out of 50; and her Grammar grade from 14 to 18 out of 50.

CA9: Control Group Average Student's Week 9 Essay Analysis (Corinne)

In this essay Corinne has written a three body paragraph essay. The introductory paragraph consists of three sentences. The body paragraph is divided into two parts and the concluding paragraph is no more than one long sentence.

Concerning writing, the introductory paragraph starts off with a general statement in the simple present tense but the thesis statement has to be re-written to achieve clarity. Evidence and support are detected; however, repetition is what makes it weaker. The quality of ideas is mediocre, with a sentence plagiarized that reads as *'altering one's appearance provides the ability to exude self confidence'*. The concluding paragraph sounds like a statement handed downright to the reader, instead of it being a recapitulation, restatement and/or summary.

Grammatically speaking, the attempt at longer sentences is neither successful nor accurate. Longer sentences resulted in more run-ons and fragments could be found in every paragraph. Verb usage revolves around the simple and continuous tenses. Subject-verb agreement mistakes have resurfaced in this essay. Word usage is unexceptional, with a few attempts as using words that end up misplaced or out of context. There is an attempt at using comparative forms but the end result is not always a success. Mechanics is still an issue as a result of run-ons and fragments with so many punctuation marks either missing or misplaced. The body paragraph needs to be split in two with the ensuing changes in mechanics be made. As for format, the document looks proper with a very long title *Plastic surgery make you prettier only from the outside*.

Morever, Corinne's recurrent mistakes include an incomprehensible sentence "It's laughable to think that having large lips and hips are out better way of self-expression". Among the words often confused, we can find *humain* and *human* used correctly but once, *effet* instead of *effect*, *remedey* instead of *remede* as used in Week 1 (French for remedy). Another direct translation mistake is that of 'benefic' from French instead of *beneficial*, its English counterpart.

Compared to Week 1, Corinne has made some minor improvements in layout and mechanics. With a few words/sentences plagiarized, the student still has gaps to fill. The gaps are in writing as well as in grammar. Corinne has made a slight improvement and has quantitatively written more, even if what has been written lacks perfect structure. She has learned to add a title to the writing, but failed to capitalize it according to the conventions.

Corinne's grades remain average, almost unchanged throughout the semester. The grade she receives on her first essay 62/100 is matched with a 63/100 on the last essay. Hence, almost undetectable improvement in writing and grammar. Corinne's scores are 32/50 on Writing in Essay 1 and 33/50 in Essay 9. On Grammar, she scores 30/50 in both Essays 1 and 9.

CH9: Control Group High Achiever Student's Week 9 Essay Analysis (Maria)

This essay has a title that reads, *Plastic surgeries : with or against.* which is followed with a 5-sentence introductory paragraph, two body paragraphs that are neither short nor imbalanced (i.e., they fluctuate in length) and ends with a 3-sentence concluding paragraph.

Concerning writing, even though the introductory paragraph starts with a general statement and develops further and narrows down to the topic, the thesis statement is fragmented and includes a question mark; hence not a true statement. Paragraph organization lacks nothing in terms of connectors and development of sentences from main ideas to supporting ones in both body paragraphs. Connectors used include *First of all, second of all, moreover, however, fore (first) and foremost, also,* and *besides.* This shows the student has used the linking words provided in class. Evidence and support are good enough to provide more than the necessary and sufficient for the argumentative essay written. The quality of ideas is well maintained throughout the essay bearing in mind that the topic does lend itself to personal opinion being developed further.

Concerning Grammar, Maria maintains a good grammar level. Sentence structure is varied and does not result in any run-ons nor fragments. Verb usage is good though not too rich in variety. For example, verb usage includes gerunds and tenses such as simple present and present perfect. There is also an instance of If conditionals. Words and phrases used include *fabrication, privileged, feign illnesses, altering God's creation, disfiguration, charred off by fire, save their sanity, cardiac arrest, evolved greatly, risks have diminished, justifiable and refutable.* Of the spelling mistakes that comprise mechanics, one can list *comas* (never plural), *fore and foremost* to mean *first and foremost, and anesthisie* (anesthetic). One shaky sentence in the conclusion *"Also, people are unique but it is up to them – and only them – to decide whether or not to <u>them</u>'.*

Compared to Week 1, Maria has made some major improvement in connectors. No basic gaps in grammar nor in writing are recorded. She has added a title to the writing just like in Week 1 but failed to capitalize it according to the conventions. The conversational tone in Week 1 is shed due to the rhetorical mode of the argumentative essay imposed.

As such, Maria's grades change from an 80/100 on her first essay to 82/100 on her last; a minor improvement which is not striking anywhere in the rubric. Maria's grades, on both writing and grammar, witness a +1; hence 40/50 for each of writing and grammar is matched with 41/50.

Experimental Group Students' Essay Analysis (Post-Test in Week 9)

EL9: Experimental Group Low Achiever Student's Week 9 Essay Analysis (Yara)

Is cosmetic surgery good or bad is the title of the argumentative essay written by Yara in the experimental group. The essay roughly divides itself into four parts. An introductory paragraph narrows down to a topic sentence, not a thesis statement which does not include the student's position for argumentation.

In terms of writing, Yara succeeds at coming up with a title but fails to capitalize it and maintain the interrogative with the question mark at its end. Paragraph organization suffers basics such as length of sentence in each of the two body paragraphs. Neither are the topic sentences fairly detailed, nor are they sufficiently supported. Despite that, a few connectors are used here and there. Evidence and support are restricted to the student's ability to express her opinion. However, each body paragraph has an example to support the main idea. The quality of

ideas is basic. There has been an instance of plagiarism where the student has copied a full sentence from a reading passage read in class. The sentence reads as "In case of disfiguration, cosmetic surgery can be very important". As for the conclusion, the student is able to summarize and repeatedly restate the points mentioned even if the overall essay does not fully count as an argumentative essay.

In terms of grammar, Yara has attempted to use full sentences and longer ones inserting very few connectors. Sentence structure is still basic, but with a better mastery of a subject-verb agreement, the student is able to use some phrases over and over again confidently. As for verb usage, the student has successfully started the essay with the present perfect tense. This has been the only time for this tense to appear in this writing. In another instance, the student used a conditional in the past with an appropriate modal auxiliary. Another example is the use of the gerund with a singular verb followed by its parallel structure. Word usage is quite good and there has been the emergence of a few new words in her writing. Mechanics has somehow improved with more attention paid to capitalization throughout the text but not in the title. The comma is used correctly in a list of items followed by the Oxford comma before the 'and'. Format is acceptable, even though, as mentioned earlier, the sentences in the body paragraphs are insufficient. To exemplify, Yara uses the following words and phrases in a correct way: *especially, powerful, improve their appearance, copying celebrities, to the extreme, advantages and disadvantages,* and *take a risk.* The recurrent mistake of It have appears only once. There is a rather weakly structured, incomprehensible sentence *"Some people are extra enlargming them; it's becoming very ugly".*

Compared to Week 1, Yara has, to a great extent, rid herself of the heavy French interference and is making more conscious choices with word usage. French interference at the

verb level (mainly tenses) has also decreased. However, one cannot claim that all redundancies have been remedied. Repetitious words are still there but there seems to be no trace of *very very much* and *too much.* The fragmented way of writing is now replaced with a better flow of ideas and better flow or sentence structure as well. Words like *people, someone, everyone* are void of agreement mistakes if we check the verb that follows these subjects. *It's* is used correctly over and over again.

One can observe a visible change in Yara's grades from 33/100 on her first essay to 49/100 on her last one. Her grades progress in both grammar and writing. Yara's 17/50 on writing zooms to 25/50. Her grammar grade changes from 16/50 to 24/50.

EA9: Experimental Group Average Student's Week 9 Essay Analysis (Jana)

"Cosmetic Surgery and its Aftermath" is the title of the argumentative essay written by Jana in the experimental group in Week 9. Three sentences and a bi-partite sentence serving as the thesis statement make up the introductory sentence. Two body paragraphs with the topic sentences and the supporting ideas make up the body; the former starts with "*On the one hand*" to introduce one side of the argument, and the latter starts with *"On the other hand"* to present the counter argument. The concluding paragraph comprises three rather short sentences.

Concerning Writing, the introductory paragraph and the thesis statement are far from perfect. The thesis statement can be put in one better worded thesis statement. Paragraph organization is fairly done. A series of connectors are used throughout the essay, both between

and within paragraphs. In one paragraph, she uses *For instance*, in another paragraph she uses *For example*, to avoid repeating the same transition markers. The topic sentences in their turn are supported by quite a few supporting sentences that in turn safeguarded enough evidence and support. The quality of ideas is met through a series of different justifications. The conclusion starts with "In a nutshell" but it still requires a few edits and even a re-write.

Concerning grammar, Jana has attempted more varied sentence structure, minding parallelism and sentence problems, avoiding run-ons and fragments. Even if the essay is rather concise, the sentences are consistent throughout the essay. Verb usage boasts the use of new verbs as well as new verb tenses. One good example is that of the repeatedly correct use of the present perfect tense as in *"have left"* and *"have witnessed"*, two verbs that perfectly agree with the preceding subjects. Hence, not a single Subject Verb Agreement mistake is made throughout the essay. Word usage is acceptable for it covers and expresses the ideas necessary for the development of the essay. Mechanics conventions are respected and neither capitalization nor spelling mistakes are detected, not even in the title. Connectors are followed with commas. Format follows the norms and regulations with a suitable title.

Compared to Week 1, the heavy French toll brought upon on Jana's first essay is long gone. Hence, gone are the French interference instances of words and phrases. Run-ons and fragments are a rarity. Sentences flow better, that too in the target language manner. There is a noticeable use of *could* and *would* for probabilities in the medical field in the future. Diction has improved in such ways that the student uses *cons, consequences, demerits, dire, aftermath* and *at what cost.* It is also worth noting however, that, the fillers used by the student in Week 1 no more

used in Week 9. Jana is now able to elaborate the ideas instead of listing synonyms incessantly. Furthermore, the student is able to draw upon that which has been said and take it to the next level.

Jana's grades witness a noticeable improvement from 63/100 on her first essay to 79/100 on her last essay. Jana starts off with 31 out of 50 on each of Writing and Grammar respectively only to better them with 38/50 on Writing and 41/50 on Grammar.

EH9: Experimental Group High Achiever Student's Week 9 Essay Analysis (Sarah)

Is it always about Perfection is what Sarah in the experimental group chose for her argumentative essay in Week 9. This is by far the longest essay written in both sections, even if the paragraph distribution remains to be the same – four paragraphs overall. Three long sentences make up the Introduction. Rather long body paragraphs give enough support and evidence culminating in a well-developed essay. The student submits a complete essay with a two-sentence concluding paragraph.

Concerning writing, the introduction is well developed and the overall essay is well-established. Supporting sentences are varied and numerous. Paragraph organization starts with the general, delving to the more specific. Paragraphs are logically organized, unified, balanced and cohesive. The essay is known for its accurate transitions between and within paragraphs. Specific topic sentences accurately focus on all body paragraphs. Evidence and support are accurate, specific, sufficient, balanced and linked to thesis. The essay does not include copied

parts; hence no plagiarism. The message is well developed and meaningful. Throughout the essay, the student sticks to the topic and remains clear, focused, giving relevant and accurate details, while showing insight into the topic. The conclusion, even if short, is logical and briefly restated, even if not developed.

Concerning grammar, sentence structure demonstrates the use of complex and compound sentence structure, covering a broad range of sentence lengths and clauses. Almost no fragments, run-ons, nor comma splice can be detected in Sarah's essay. She further demonstrates a flexible use of complex structures. A part that is worth focusing on is verb usage whereby the student demonstrates the use of a range of verb tenses and forms with almost no inaccuracies and errors. As for word usage, Sarah almost uses accurate word endings and pronouns. Word order is accurate and flexibly used throughout, though few local errors may occur. Mechanics punctuation, capitalization, and spelling are accurate throughout. The essay may contain 1-3 non-systemic errors. Format follows conventions on spacing and indentation including an effective title.

Compared to Week 1, Sarah's essay has increased in size but not at the cost of content. Even though the topic does not lend itself to a literary style, she manages to use a proverb as she did in Week 1. She uses the present perfect tense wherever she can, bringing the tense back to the present simple tense where need be. She displays an array of expressions and myriad supporting sentences each with a different style to better develop the topic sentences in each paragraph. Another new use in terms of sentence structure is the use of inversions with the right verb tense combination as in "not only… but also…" In another instance, the student makes use

of "No sooner had they (past perfect)… than (simple past)". The word choice is heightened to that of a medical terminology, using the right collocations. To exemplify the words and expressions borrowed from the medical field, we mention *breast augmentation, face lifts, botox injections, laser hair removal, reconstructive plastic surgery, trauma, irreversible, substance abuse,* and *chemical addiction.* She further discusses the *" root causes, their underlying insecurities as well as what lies beneath".*

Sarah boosts her grades considerably. She scores 79/100 on her initial essay and 92/100 on the last. Her writing grade is now at 45/50 as compared to 41/50 at the beginning of the semester. Her grammar grade is bettered from 45/50 to 47/50 throughout the semester.

Before winding up this chapter, it is worth noting that the choice of errors exemplified was from the broader spectrum of errors that were covered well beyond the rubrics. The discussions in Chapter 5, Analysis of Students' Essays, echo the statistical results discussed in Chapter 4, Results: Quantitative Analysis. Findings in both chapters highly correlate to each other. The errors further corroborate the assumptions made. Chapter 5, which mainly deals with the analysis of students' errors, further exemplifies the improvements and the edits students made while writing over a period of 10 weeks. By focusing on the many errors chosen to exemplify, I found out that many of the French interference, subject-verb agreement, tense, and preposition mistakes, which had previously and repeatedly been an 'eyesore' to the scorer's judgment, were edified. The types of errors chosen for the discussion reveal how the intervention remedied not only grammar but also writing, and boosted the overall grade.

CHAPTER SIX

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

As the grammar teaching practices changed, the language teaching and learning field has witnessed an avid comeback to explicit instruction of grammar with Archer and Hughes. For such reasons, researches have always been in constant quest for the best teaching methodology at the heart of which lies the issue of grammar instruction, be it implicit or explicit. We can revert to the Grammar Translation Method or choose to navigate the many methodologies that ultimately rejected the direct or explicit instruction of grammar due to their steadfast belief that grammar could be internalized through osmosis, through the communicative method. Inflicted with the same query is my Action Research study into the validity of explicit instruction of grammar to translation students at a French medium university and its effect on students' essays. Learners who happen to be at the center of learning pyramid come from a plethora of backgrounds, with myriad language gaps to fill, weaknesses to tackle, and linguistic competences to master. This has been the primary drive that stimulated me to probe into the issue of explicit instruction of grammar.

Due to the fact that quite an extensive amount of literature has proposed the return of grammar into the language teaching scene, it was highly interesting to test whether teaching grammar explicitly would work wonders with students and aid them to improve, if not perfect, their writing skills or not.

During the course of the semester, the experimental group students were subjected to an intensive, explicit grammar instruction sessions throughout their course. Participants in this

group showed ongoing gradual improvement that has been validated in the essay scores analyzed in Chapters Four and Five. Even though students in the control group have also improved, the grades scored by the experimental group far outweigh those achieved by the control group. Despite the fact that Writing has improved in both groups, each at a different level and to a different extent, the improvement in grammar is rather pronounced with the experimental group students.

The above-mentioned findings further corroborate the answers to the research questions below.

Question One: How does the explicit instruction of English Grammar influence the grammar usage in the English essay writing of First-Year Translation students in a French medium university in Lebanon?

The explicit instruction of English grammar influences the grammar usage in the English essay writing of First-Year Translation students in a French medium university in Lebanon in many positive ways. Students are made aware of the metalinguistic competence and are able to infiltrate the newly acquired and reinforced grammar notions into their writing with a rather high accuracy, each at their own pace and relative of their linguistic competence at entry level.

Question Two: How does the explicit instruction of English Grammar to First-Year Translation students compare to implicit instruction in terms of the usage of grammar in their essay writing?

The ensuing statistical results of the control group that have been subjected to implicit instruction of grammar (only when the need arose) show that these learners' knowledge of basic grammar skills has remained rather isolated. Students can not make use of it in their writing. Osmosis or habit-formation could have been at the center of the minor improvements seen in their writings. These students were unable to transfer any new linguistic notion to the writings they produced. Despite the minor changes, their inability to improve their grammatical competence gave the upper hand to the experimental group, who, in turn, showed a significant improvement.

To discuss the implications for explicit versus implicit teaching, it is clear that based on the findings, both groups have made some progress after 10 weeks of instruction. However, the explicit teaching of grammar made a visible difference by pushing the grammar grade (50%) more than the writing grade (50%), which ultimately boosted the overall writing grade (100%). Even when there was no intervention prior to the mid-test and the post-test in the control group, students were making some progress which is normal given the fact that they are still being exposed to English and are still being taught the target language through the same skills with the exception of grammar. While the experimental group was subjected to intensive exposure, practice and consolidation of grammar, the control group did not have any of that. The overall 10 point improvement in the mean of pretest to post-test in the experimental group proved the hypotheses right.

In contrast to the improvement made by both groups, if I were to look into the grammar mistakes made and maintained throughout the essays written by the control group, the major conclusion to be drawn is that of inconsistency and unpredictability. Random mistakes, similar and identical mistakes have been repeatedly and haphazardly made in the control group, as opposed to the rare instances of such a bout of mistakes in the experimental group.

Regarding the implications for translation training, it is worth noting that translation instructors are not always holders of degrees in linguistics and are not necessarily multi-disciplinary instructors. Some instructors who teach translation have participated in (and at times run) language-teaching-learning workshops. They tend to, at times, interfere at the linguistic level and feel obliged to explain the grammatical rule in class. They further expect the student to use them instantly. Having taken that step of remedying mistakes and filling gaps and lacks into my hands in the English course, the translation instructor will need to do that, if ever, less frequently. The direct grammar, that has been taught and consolidated, tends to echo the grammar rule taught and leaves a positive impact on the students' writing skills.

Another dimension that can be discussed is that of the limited time given for translation students to improve their English before taking translation courses from Arabic and French into English. Given the little time students have to remedy their errors, students coming from French medium schools feel safer when given a set of rules covering grammatical notions, followed by a set of exercises. The same rules taken down in class are what students refer to when writing. This works as a safety net and act as a reference every time they feel unsure of a certain tense usage or subject-verb agreement usage. A learner needs to spend hundreds of hours in a communicative

setting in order to be exposed to the many examples of subject-verb agreement. The same learner prefers to internalize these grammar notions in a much shorter time through exposure to an explicit instruction of direct grammar. Translation students, who are adult learners with a high level of motivation, feel safer when given a set of rules to refer to when in doubt. These are set of rules students can refer to outside the classroom, when the teacher is absent. For them, language learning is both an end and a means towards becoming independent learners and good translators. This type of explicit instruction of grammar better meets their needs, their learning styles, and preferences. This seems to work well with this particular type of audience.

Concerning implications for L3 acquisition, it is worth noting that L1 and L2 at the School of Translation at USJ are Arabic and French respectively. English is their L3. This also resonates the assumptions the School of Translation at USJ makes for its students and their studies. Language A is Arabic, the country's native tongue; Language B is French, the University's language of instruction. Language C is English. The implications that can be drawn although not explicitly stated are the following: there has been a remarkable improvement in grammar after the use of explicit instruction of grammar to students. Even though a few students consider English as their L2, the findings reveal that it is more of their L3. Only a qualitative study would further reveal their stance and attitude towards that which is considered L3. The English language that they think they master is the language they use to socialize within certain contexts, and it remains to be their L3.

Translation students in the USJ context, even in the Lebanese context at large, have more or less the same challenges and face similar problems. Among those are their lacks and

inconsistency in the knowledge of all three languages prior to applying for such a major. Hence, they enter with unequal capacities in each of L1, L2 and L3. Just as there are some who are weak in French, others might be relatively weak in Arabic or not as competent in English. One cannot deny that there is no preparatory year during which they can fill all the linguistic gaps or improve a skill each faces in a target language before they sign up for their major course. Hence, students start improving their language while taking translation courses. Both processes occur in parallel. The need for a grammar booster has always been a must. Prior to the Action Research study I conducted at the School of Translation at USJ, students were given extra remedial intervention in a particular language on a one-on-one basis. To avoid adding variables to my study, this practice was stopped in the year I conducted my study.

Currently, following my study and the ensuing results, and with the intention of tutoring low-achieving students, one-on-one intervention has been instilled. The result is that of introducing devising a 10-hour remedial tutoring session, with almost double as much the time in terms of homework assignments to make students 'catch up' with high achieving students. The bulk of this intervention mainly comprises of grammar based on the diagnostic writing a student submits to his/her tutor. The spoken English the student uses is also taken into consideration before the teacher opts for the appropriate selection of the task that improves a student's weak skill (L, R, W or S) while scaffolding and highlighting the direct grammar that can be taught and revised through this selection.

Limitations of the Study

With only two classes being studied and compared, the researcher is well-aware of the shortcomings given the number of students comprising the sample under study, and as well as the limited time to cover only specific rhetorical modes. Both the duration of the study (one semester) and the duration of the course (10 weeks) amount to be a little less than one semester, no longer than ten weeks. Repeated studies of same major students would give better results.

Comparing Translation students to those in other disciplines would shed further light on students' performance across disciplines, given the fact that the level of motivation, personal expectation, learning styles and preferences would change dramatically as compared to Translation students. Even among Translation students, one might find major differences from one learner to another, even if the majority taps into the highly-motivated and willing-to-learn category.

Throughout the course of the study some hindrances have been encountered, which may or may have not affected the results of the study.

1. Time Factor: As an Action Research study that was conducted in a 10-week semester, students were made to write several essays during such a short time. Had they been given more time, more could have been done on the intervention level (direct instruction of grammar) and more could have been processed in class and ultimately reaped by the end of the session. It is believed that even though there is no drill and kill in explicit instruction of grammar, the more time is given to drill and skill, the better results are guaranteed.

2. Participants: As an Action Research study that is carried out only on 30 students at a time, it is practically impossible to overgeneralize the results and state that the same improvement could be achieved with other groups in the same major, or other students in other majors, bearing in mind the high discrepancy in students level of motivation, along with their learning styles and strategies.

3. Students' Involvement: Even within each of the control and experimental groups, both instructors encountered discrepancy in students' attendance, attentiveness to the grammar explained or strategy taught, diligence to do assigned work in a timely manner which would otherwise disrupt the whole course of the heavily-packed 10-week course. Grading each of the pre, test and post-tests is a good idea to make students work towards a certain goal, but when a student is only fixated on no more than a passing grade, many of the attempts and efforts made in class by the instructors are rendered futile, heavily affecting the overall class average, and thus affecting the overall statistics.

Suggestions for Further Research

After having conducted this study which had positive results, a few ideas popped to mind:

1. Giving the study a broader perspective, with a bigger number of participants from different majors at a time, hence adding to the variables, even taking the study to an English medium university, only to check if such an instruction could give similar results in Remedial Classes. Another possibility would be that of comparing the results between the same course given intensively and another time extensively.

2. This study aimed at looking for improvement in students' essay writing skills. In a course that has Oral communication and Oral Presentations to deliver, it would be interesting to see if students' grammar improves in their oral output just as it did in their written output.

3. A more detailed approach would be worthwhile to study the interrelatedness of the writing versus the grammar grade as this has been partly considered in this study.

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APPENDIX A

The Sixteen elements of Explicit Instruction

The Sixteen elements of Explicit Instruction are as follows:

1. Focus instruction on critical content.
2. Sequence skills logically
3. Break down complex skills and strategies into smaller instructional units
4. Design organized and focused lessons
5. Begin lesson with a clear statement of the lesson's goals and your expectations
6. Review prior skills and knowledge before beginning instruction
7. Provide step-by-step demonstrations
8. Use clear and concise language
9. Provide an adequate range of examples and non-examples
10. Provide guided and supported practice
11. Require frequent responses
12. Monitor student performance closely
13. Provide immediate affirmative and corrective feedback
14. Deliver the lesson at a brisk pace
15. Help students organize knowledge
16. Provide distributed and cumulative practice

(Archer and Hughes, 2011 p. 2-3).

APPENDIX B

GRAMMAR TASK 1

Word Formation Through Mind Mapping

In this exercise, students are taught to pile up derivations. This exercise remedies spelling and morphology errors due to French interference in L3. This exercise is given in a Unit titled Stereotyping. Hence, the activity involved is not out of sync with the choice of words and the targeted grammatical rules that are taught and consolidated. The starting point is that of the word PERSON and through mind mapping and explaining morphological rules (prefix, suffixes, doubling the consonant), the word ends up having many forms as in:

Person / Personal / Personally

Person / Personal / Personalize / Personalization

Person / Personal / Personality

Person / Personal / Impersonal /

Person / to Personify / Personification

Person / Personal / Impersonal

Person / to Impersonate

Person / Persona

Person / To person / personing

Students are then asked to use the sentences in grammatically correct and meaningful sentences. To further consolidate the mastery, students are asked to write a paragraph about themselves whether they are a morning or an evening person. This best links the newly acquired grammatical knowledge to vocabulary gained and writing done in class.

APPENDIX C

GRAMMAR TASK 2

It's High Time Subjects and Verbs Agreed for Good!

In this exercise, students are taught to master subject-verb agreement. Examples have been clustered as per grammatical rule. The rule is first explained on the board and then the examples follow along with the exception(s) where applicable. At the end of this exercise, students are divided in two groups and the instructor prompts random subject-verb agreement questions based on the earlier practice. To further consolidate the mastery, students are thus asked to draw a few examples and talk about their immediate surrounding (friends and hobbies, etc.).

Fill in the blanks with the singular or plural form of verbs TO BE, TO DO or TO HAVE.

Each in this class__ a USJ student.
Every USJ student ___ to have an ID.
Everyone __ here today.
Nobody __ exempted from English.
No one __ allowed to eat in class.
None of the rules and regulations __ logical.
All students ___ under the law.
Several students __ **not** going to pass this test.
Some of these facts__ incorrect.
Some of this information __ incorrect.
No news __ good news.

The English __ proud people.
English __ an international language.
The Arabs __ a rich language.
Arabs __ known for their generosity.
Arabic __ not similar to English.

People __ here to attend the event.
Peoples __ represented at the UN summit today.
The police __ on their way to the crime scene.
The policeman __ responsible for his badge.
The policewomen __ very efficient.

(N)either the players (n)or the coach __ shown up.
(N)either the boss (n)or the secretaries __ come.
(N)either the ministers (n)or the deputies __ attended the event.
(N)either the President (n)or the Speaker __ commented on the situation.

One means of transportation __ enough for me.
Two means of transport __ enough for the Police.
A series of encyclopedia __ found at the library.
Many series of encyclopedia __ sold at the bookshop.
Many dog species __ found at the Animals Pet Shop.
My favorite dog species __ the cocker spaniel.

EXPLICIT INSTRUCTION AND TRANSLATION STUDENTS

Mathematics ___ my favorite subject.
Linguistics ___ the study of language.
Semantics ___ the study of meaning.
Physics ___ different from chemistry.
Statistics ___ an interesting field.
The statistics ___ never taken into consideration.

10 minutes ___ more than enough for this exercise
20,000 Lebanese Pounds ___ too much for a mug.
42.195 Km ___ what you run in a Marathon.

The number of students in this class ___ 9.
A number of students ___ absent today.
Half of the students ___ from another country.
Half of the class___ from another country
40% of the people _____ support the new law.
50% of the country _____ support the new law.
2/3 of the book ___ on Lebanon.
Only 1/4 of the books on display ___ sold at the book exhibition.
My jewelry ___ stolen by the thief.
5 rings ___ missing from my safe.
10,452 sq. km ___ the surface area of Lebanon.

The club ___ here for training every other day.
The club ___ away on vacation.
My family ___ big; (it/they) ___ very helpful when I need help.
The class ___ here today.
The class ___ preparing for their summer vacation.
The class ___ preparing for a class reunion in 2020.

ABC ___ located in Ashrafieh.
Sears ___ a famous department store in the USA.
Bacon and eggs ___ a typical English breakfast.
Mac Donald's ___ a fast food franchise.
Macaroni and cheese ___ my comfort food.
Fish and chips ___ a favorite English fast food.
The bread in this basket ___ stale.
Washing the dishes ___ my favorite chore at home.
Doing up the lounge and tidying up the dining room ___ not part of my duty.
Hansel and Gretel ___ a famous children's story.
Marks & Spencer ___ soon to open in Lebanon.
Spinneys ___ a chain of supermarkets.
The population ___ at around 4.5 million.
The cook and driver ___ here today.
The horse and rider ___ at the grandstands.
The black and white movie ___ my favorite.
The northern states of the USA ___ known for their cold climate.
The United Nations ___ its headquarters in NYC.
The USA ___ a great power.
The United Arab Emirates ___ located in the Gulf.
The Philippines ___ composed of many islands.
The rich ___ getting richer while the poor ___ getting poorer.

APPENDIX D

GRAMMAR TASK 3

In this exercise, students are taught to master Prepositions of Place and Time, a source of interference from L2 (French). Rules of how and when to use IN, ON, and AT are explained on the board, then students are asked to complete the exercise based on their newly acquired grammatical notion. A similar game to that of S-V Agreement is played in class. To further consolidate this grammatical knowledge, and to link it to their writing, a classwork assignment is given to students inspired from their daily life, linked to their immediate environment, meeting their basic needs. Then they are asked to write to their friends briefing them on the change in class schedule and meeting venue. As such, students are asked to use as many Prepositions of Time and Place as possible (a minimum number has been assigned).

ACE PREPOSITIONS OF PLACE AND TIME!

Fill in the blanks with IN, ON or AT, where necessary.

e are ___ the universe
_ the galaxy
_ the world
_ this planet
_ Earth
_ Mars
_ the northern hemisphere
_ Asia
_ Europe
_ the European Union
_ Antarctica
_ the Far East
_ the Near East
_ the Arab world
_ the Arabian Peninsula
_ the Middle East
_ Lebanon
_ Beirut
_ Tripoli, Byblos, Sidon, Tyre, Zahlé
_ Ashrafieh
_ Sodeco
_ Damascus Road
_ Street # 19
_ 110 Pine Street
_ the streets
_ the roads
_ the cross roads

___ the bus stop
___ the car park
___ the intersection
___ the building
___ the villa
___ the castle
___ the flat/apartment
___ the house
___ the room
___ the lounge
___ the kitchen

We are ___ the attic
___ the basement
___the 6th floor
___ campus
___ the premises of CSH
___ the balcony
___ the patio
___ the terrace
___ the wall
___ the roof

___ the 21st century
___ an era
___ a period

___ a decade
___ 2012
___ October
___ October 2013
___ Friday
___ September 16, 2013
___ 12 September 2013
___ 12/10/2010
___ Fall / Autumn / Spring / Summer / Winter
___ the afternoon / the morning / the evening
___ sunset / sunrise
___ midnight / midday / noon
___ Adha, Fitr, Christmas, Easter, Diwali, etc.
___ Christmas eve
___ Boxing Day
___ St. Patrick's Day
___ last century
___ two decades ago
___ next year
___ the following week
___ tomorrow
___ yesterday
___ 8:00 am sharp/on the dot

APPENDIX E

USJ Course Description

Sample Course Description: Level B **Course Schedule:** Days, hours, location

Course Goal: The purpose of the Level B English Communication skills course is to help you to improve your ability to understand authentic English when you listen and read and to speak and write in English to express your ideas clearly and effectively. The focus of the course is on activating your English to communicate well in a variety of real situation.

Specific Objectives: by the end of this course, you should be able to

Listen to conversations, interviews, short talks, and academic and professional lectures and show understanding of topics and key points by taking brief notes while listening;

Speak during conversations, small group discussions and debates and class discussions on topics related to the course, using strategies, to participate actively to use accurate grammar and pronunciation, and to interact effectively according to the purpose of the discussion;

Present your ideas clearly to an audience in oral reports and short presentations that you prepare and deliver as a member of a group, a panel of speakers, and individually;

Read a variety of authentic passages such as news and Internet articles and book chapters using reading methods that increase your efficiency to read faster and understand more.

Write a variety of compositions and short papers, including summaries of one source, essays, letters, critiques, recommendation reports, and syntheses of several sources, using a process to organize, compose and revise your writing for coherence of ideas and accuracy in the use of grammar and vocabulary.

Use a computer as a tool for finding information and communicating your ideas including the use of a word processor, e-mail and Internet searching.

Class Activities and Assignments: During this course you will have many opportunities to practice English actively in class and on homework assignments to improve your communication skills. The types of classroom learning activities, homework assignments, projects, and computer assignments include the following:

- Listen to audio and video recordings to gather information in brief note form;
- Read passages about course topics outside of class to collect information and take brief notes;

- Set up an individual personal system of vocabulary study both for understanding and active use of new words and expressions;
- Read independently and report by writing summaries and responses;
- Practice grammar through workbook exercises for homework;
- Work together with classmates as a team to discuss topics and make decisions and recommendations;
- Write a major writing assignment weekly, such as an essay, letter, summary or report;
- Prepare brief oral presentations individually and as a member of a group. Duration: 1-10 minutes.

Evaluation and Grades: Your progress in the course will be evaluated on your performance during class, on tests and homework assignments, and projects that demonstrate your skills. The major assignments that are graded will be scheduled weekly, so it is important for you to keep up with the classwork and homework regularly. It is not possible to pass the course or get a good grade simply by studying at the end of the course. Learning to communicate in English requires regular consistent practice, so you should plan to study and practice throughout the course.

Criteria for Grades: Your grade depends on your performance in the following requirements:

Attendance and punctuality
Efforts during class and on assignment
Performance on tests, projects, and assignments
Participation and class work
Performance on the Final Evaluation Project

These show your achievement of the Level B Performance Objectives.

APPENDIX F

Essay Writing Guideline

In a well-structured 4-paragraph essay, write about the topic given. While writing, editing and proofreading, pay attention to the following:

- ✓ Title
- ✓ Introductory Paragraph + Thesis Statement : Minimum 2-3 sentences
- ✓ Body Paragraph 1: Minimum 4-5 sentences
- ✓ Body Paragraph 2: Minimum 4-5 sentences
- ✓ Body Paragraph 3: (where specified) Minimum 4-5 sentences
- ✓ Concluding Paragraph: Minimum 2-3 sentences

APPENDIX G

USJ English Department Writing Rubric

SCORE	INTRO PARAGRAPH & THESIS	PARAGRAPH ORGANIZATION	EVIDENCE & SUPPORT	QUALITY OF IDEAS	CONCLUSION
5	Introduce specifically. Introduce subject with clear connections among ideas leading to a clear, direct thesis.	Paragraphs logically organized, unified, balanced and cohesive; accurate transitions between and within paragraphs. Specific topic sentences accurately focus on all body paragraphs.	Evidence and support are accurate, specific, sufficient, balanced and linked to thesis. Does not include copied parts.	Well developed and meaningful message; Narrow and manageable topic; clear, focused, relevant and accurate details. Shows insight into topics.	Conclusion is logical and sufficiently developed.
4	Introduces subject but is overly formulaic or lacks connections among ideas. Thesis is clear and effectively positioned but general.	Paragraphs logically organized, and mostly unified, balanced and cohesive; mostly accurate transitions between and within paragraphs. Specific or general topic sentences accurately focus on all body paragraphs.	Evidence and support are accurate, but may be too general somewhat unbalanced or no thesis links; does not include copied text.	Somehow developed and rather meaningful message. Topic fairly narrowed; new ways of thinking about topic attempted; credible details with some support. Writer understands topic.	Conclusion is logical and somewhat developed.
3	Introduces subject (may be formulaic or lacks connections among ideas). Includes a general theses (may be unclear or positioned ineffectively)	Paragraphs logically organized, but lack some coherence or unity; accurate but basic infrequent transitions (may be missing in some key areas). General topic sentences accurately focus on all body paragraphs.	Evidence and support are general with some missing info; may be unbalanced; may include some copied text.	Hardly developed and fairly meaningful message. General topic defined; reasonably clear ideas; details present but not precise. Shows some specifics.	Conclusion is general and lacks development. May be one sentence.
2	Introduces topic but key elements may be missing or inaccurate. Thesis is vague, unclear or irrelevant.	Paragraphs include errors in organization; underdeveloped and not unified; basic or infrequent transitions (may be misused). Topic sentences are vague, unclear or inaccurate.	Evidence and support are inaccurate, vague, insufficient or irrelevant; may be unbalanced; may have some copied text.	Message not well developed. Hints at topic. Reader left with many unanswered questions; sporadic details; glimmer of main point.	Conclusion depends on unrelated information.
1	Intro is incomplete or inaccurate. Thesis is unclear or missing.	Paragraphs include errors in organization; lack coherence and unity; few transitions (may be misused). Topic sentences are unclear, inaccurate or missing.	Evidence and support are inaccurate or missing; may have some copied text.	Searching for a topic; limited information; vague details; random thoughts.	Conclusion is unclear or missing.

APPENDIX H

USJ English Department Grammar Rubric

SCORE	SENTENCE STRUCTURE	VERB USAGE	WORD USAGE	MECHANICS	FORMAT
5	Demonstrates the use of complex and compound sentence structure, a broad rabge of sentence lengths and clauses. Has few to no fragments, run-ons, comma splices, etc. Demonstrates flexible use of complex structures.	Demonstrates the use of a range of verb tenses and forms with almost no inaccuracies and errors.	Almost uses accurate and appropriate vocabulary, word endings and pronouns. Word order is accurate and flexibly used throughout, though few local errors may occur.	Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling accurate throughout. May contain 1-3 non-systemic errors	Format follows conventions on spacing and indentation including an effective title.
4	Demonstrates the use of complex and compound sentence structure, a broad range of sentence lengths and clauses. Has few fragments, run-ons, comma splices, etc. Demonstrates accurate but controlled use of complex structures.	Demonstrates the use of a range of verb tenses and forms with few inaccuracies and errors.	Uses accurate and appropriate vocabulary, word endings and pronouns most of the time. Word order is controlled and accurate with a few local/non-systemic errors.	Punctuation, capitalization, and spelling accurate throughout but has 1-2 systemic errors.	Format mostly follows conventions on spacing and indentation; may include an effective title.
3	Demonstrates emerging sentence variety but short sentences dominate. When attempted, this sentence variety sometimes results in errors including fragments, run-on, comma splices, etc.	Demonstrates the use of an emerging range of verb tenses and forms with inaccuracies and errors.	Accurate but basic vocabulary with little variety; uses accurate word endings and pronouns at times, Word order is mostly controlled with a few systemic errors and may have at least one example of direct translation.	Systemic errors in punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling, but mostly accurate.	Format mostly follows conventions on spacing and indentation; may include a routine title.
2	Demonstrates little sentence variety with basic connectors. Has many sentence structure errors, including fragments, run-ons, comma splices, etc.	Demonstrates the use of few verb tenses and forms; inaccuracies and errors throughout.	Basic vocabulary, inaccuracies in word endings and pronouns are common; informal tone. Word order errors are noticeable and may have more than one example of direct translation.	Systemic errors in punctuation, capitalization, and/or spelling occur throughout but mostly accurate. Demonstrates minimal understanding of rules and conventions.	Format does not follow conventions on spacing and indentation; may include an ineffective or off topic title
1	Demonstrates no sentence variety. Has many sentence structure errors, including fragments, run-ons, comma splices, etc.	Demonstrates the use of very few verb tenses and forms; many inaccuracies and errors throughout	Basic vocabulary, inaccuracies in word endings and pronouns are common; informal tone. Does not demonstrate understanding or word order with examples of direct translation throughout.	Demonstrates no understanding of rules and conventions of punctuation, capitalization, and spelling.	Format does not follow conventions on spacing and indentation; title is missing.

APPENDIX I

The Experiment

THE EXPERIMENT					
PHASE	**ONE**	**TWO**	**THREE**	**FOUR**	**FIVE**
Duration	September through Mid-January			Mid-January till Mid-May	
Students' Tasks	Students write their Pre-Test	Students write their Test	Students write their Post-Test	--	--
Instructors' Tasks	Both teachers correct and grade	Both teachers correct and grade	Both teachers correct and grade	Practitioner collects and prepares data for SPSS	Practitioner analyzes SPSS statistical results exemplifying from essay samples

APPENDIX J

Students' essay types used for this research

Group Name **Learners** **Short Description** **Instructor**	**No. of sts.**	**Pre-Test**	**Mid-Test**	**Post-Test**
		Writing 1 **Week 1**	**Writing 2** **Week 5**	**Writing 3** **Week 9**
		Essay on Likes and Dislikes	**Opinion Essay on Social Media**	**Argumentative Essay on Plastic Surgery**
Group 1: Experimental First Year Translation Students Explicit Instruction of Grammar Practitioner	30	1 draft	1 draft	1 draft
Group 2: Control First Year Translation Students Implicit Instruction of Grammar Instructor	30	1 draft	1 draft	1 draft

APPENDIX K

Table 2: Control Group Week 1 Essay Statistics

		Mean	Mode	SD	CV	Mean %
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	5.80	7.00	1.75	30.17%	58.00%
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.17	7.00	1.46	23.74%	61.67%
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.20	6.00	1.52	24.48%	62.00%
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.27	7.00	1.48	23.68%	62.67%
	Conclusion (10)	6.27	7.00	1.48	23.68%	62.67%
	Total (50)	30.70	35.00	7.34	23.89%	61.40%
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.00	6.00	1.39	23.16%	60.00%
	Verb Usage (10)	5.73	7.00	1.41	24.64%	57.33%
	Word Usage (10)	5.60	6.00	1.35	24.19%	56.00%
	Mechanics (10)	5.73	7.00	1.72	30.01%	57.33%
	Format (10)	5.87	7.00	1.89	32.20%	58.67%
	Total (50)	28.93	38.00	7.39	25.54%	57.87%
Overall Grade (/100)		**59.63**	**69.00**	**14.51**	**24.34%**	**59.63%**

APPENDIX L

Table 3: Experimental Group Week 1 Essay Statistics

		Mean	Mode	SD	CV	Mean %
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	6.47	7.00	1.28	19.78%	64.67%
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.60	7.00	1.40	21.28%	66.00%
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.37	7.00	1.43	22.40%	63.67%
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.53	6.00	1.38	21.17%	65.33%
	Conclusion (10)	6.30	7.00	1.47	23.27%	63.00%
	Total (50)	32.27	39.00	6.59	20.43%	64.53%
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.10	7.00	1.16	18.94%	61.00%
	Verb Usage (10)	5.77	6.00	1.14	19.68%	57.67%
	Word Usage (10)	6.10	7.00	1.52	24.86%	61.00%
	Mechanics (10)	6.37	7.00	1.43	22.40%	63.67%
	Format (10)	6.23	6.00	1.36	21.76%	62.33%
	Total (50)	30.57	32.00	6.17	20.20%	61.13%
Overall Grade (/100)		**62.83**	**63.00**	**12.68**	**20.17%**	**62.83%**

APPENDIX M

Table 4: Control Group Week 5 Essay Statistics

		Mean	Mode	SD	CV	Mean %
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	6.03	7.00	1.52	25.19%	60.33%
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.20	7.00	1.35	21.76%	62.00%
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.30	7.00	1.44	22.89%	63.00%
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.30	7.00	1.51	24.00%	63.00%
	Conclusion (10)	6.53	7.00	1.50	23.00%	65.33%
	Total (50)	31.37	35.00	7.02	22.38%	62.73%
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	5.97	6.00	1.38	23.07%	59.67%
	Verb Usage (10)	5.80	7.00	1.37	23.70%	58.00%
	Word Usage (10)	5.57	6.00	1.33	23.91%	55.67%
	Mechanics (10)	5.83	7.00	1.46	25.10%	58.33%
	Format (10)	6.13	7.00	1.66	26.99%	61.33%
	Total (50)	29.30	32.00	6.79	23.17%	58.60%
Overall Grade (/100)		**60.67**	**65.00**	**13.56**	**22.34%**	**60.67%**

APPENDIX N

Table 5: Experimental Group Week 5 Essay Statistics

		Mean	Mode	SD	CV	Mean %
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	6.87	8.00	1.46	21.20%	68.67%
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.90	7.00	1.42	20.62%	69.00%
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.97	8.00	1.25	17.87%	69.67%
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.63	6.00	1.27	19.19%	66.33%
	Conclusion (10)	6.90	8.00	1.56	22.63%	69.00%
	Total (50)	34.27	36.00	6.61	19.30%	68.53%
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.50	7.00	1.28	19.69%	65.00%
	Verb Usage (10)	6.63	7.00	1.10	16.55%	66.33%
	Word Usage (10)	6.77	8.00	1.48	21.85%	67.67%
	Mechanics (10)	7.23	8.00	1.48	20.44%	72.33%
	Format (10)	7.23	8.00	1.30	18.04%	72.33%
	Total (50)	34.37	24.00	6.22	18.11%	68.73%
Overall Grade (/100)		**68.63**	**75.00**	**12.71**	**18.52%**	**68.63%**

APPENDIX O

Table 6: Control Group Week 9 Essay Statistics

		Mean	Mode	SD	CV	Mean %
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	6.30	7.00	1.26	20.06%	63.00%
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.40	7.00	1.16	18.17%	64.00%
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.50	7.00	1.31	20.10%	65.00%
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.47	7.00	1.38	21.39%	64.67%
	Conclusion (10)	6.77	7.00	1.28	18.89%	67.67%
	Total (50)	32.43	35.00	5.98	18.44%	64.87%
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.07	6.00	1.34	22.04%	60.67%
	Verb Usage (10)	5.97	5.00	1.30	21.78%	59.67%
	Word Usage (10)	5.73	6.00	1.20	20.96%	57.33%
	Mechanics (10)	6.07	7.00	1.20	19.81%	60.67%
	Format (10)	6.37	5.00	1.40	22.01%	63.67%
	Total (50)	30.20	26.00	6.02	19.93%	60.40%
Overall Grade (/100)		**62.63**	**68.00**	**11.75**	**18.76%**	**62.63%**

APPENDIX P

Table 7: Experimental Group Week 9 Essay Statistics

		Mean	Mode	SD	CV	Mean %
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	7.30	8.00	1.34	18.40%	73.00%
	Paragraph Organization (10)	7.03	8.00	1.27	18.09%	70.33%
	Evidence & Support (10)	7.23	8.00	1.14	15.69%	72.33%
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.90	7.00	1.27	18.39%	69.00%
	Conclusion (10)	7.23	8.00	1.50	20.76%	72.33%
	Total (50)	35.70	38.00	5.98	16.76%	71.40%
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.83	7.00	1.18	17.22%	68.33%
	Verb Usage (10)	7.43	8.00	1.43	19.25%	74.33%
	Word Usage (10)	7.07	8.00	1.39	19.64%	70.67%
	Mechanics (10)	7.60	8.00	1.35	17.82%	76.00%
	Format (10)	8.00	9.00	1.31	16.41%	80.00%
	Total (50)	36.93	40.00	6.18	16.74%	73.87%
Overall Grade (/100)		**72.63**	**76.00**	**12.02**	**16.55%**	**72.63%**

APPENDIX Q

Table 8: Control Group: Comparison Between Weeks 1 & 9

		Means		% of improvement	t value	Sig
		Week 1	Week 9			
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	5.80	6.30	8.62%	-3.340	**0.002**
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.17	6.40	3.78%	-2.041	0.050
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.20	6.50	4.84%	-2.192	**0.037**
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.27	6.47	3.19%	-1.989	0.056
	Conclusion (10)	6.27	6.77	7.98%	-4.349	**0.000**
	Total (50)	30.70	32.43	5.65%	-4.834	**0.000**
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.00	6.07	1.11%	-1.000	0.326
	Verb Usage (10)	5.73	5.97	4.07%	-2.249	**0.032**
	Word Usage (10)	5.60	5.73	2.38%	-1.682	0.103
	Mechanics (10)	5.73	6.07	5.81%	-2.567	**0.016**
	Format (10)	5.87	6.37	8.52%	-3.525	**0.001**
	Total (50)	28.93	30.20	4.38%	-3.739	**0.001**
Overall Grade (/100)		**59.63**	**62.63**	**5.03%**	**-4.771**	**0.000**

APPENDIX R

Table 9: Experimental Group: Comparison Between Weeks 1 & 9

		Means		% of improvement	t value	Sig
		Week 1	Week 9			
Writing	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	6.47	7.30	12.89%	-5.221	**0.000**
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.60	7.03	6.57%	-3.067	**0.005**
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.37	7.23	13.61%	-7.549	**0.000**
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.53	6.90	5.61%	-2.626	**0.014**
	Conclusion (10)	6.30	7.23	14.81%	-5.215	**0.000**
	Total (50)	32.27	35.70	10.64%	-7.923	**0.000**
Grammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.10	6.83	12.02%	-6.279	**0.000**
	Verb Usage (10)	5.77	7.43	28.90%	-12.042	**0.000**
	Word Usage (10)	6.10	7.07	15.85%	-6.227	**0.000**
	Mechanics (10)	6.37	7.60	19.37%	-8.266	**0.000**
	Format (10)	6.23	8.00	28.34%	-11.841	**0.000**
	Total (50)	30.57	36.93	20.83%	-16.046	**0.000**
Overall Grade (/100)		**62.83**	**72.63**	**15.60%**	**-14.297**	**0.000**

APPENDIX S

Table 10: Comparison between Control & Experimental Groups in Week 1

		Means		% of difference	t value	Sig
		Control	Experimental			
riting	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	5.80	6.47	11.49%	-1.685	0.097
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.17	6.60	7.03%	-1.170	0.247
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.20	6.37	2.69%	-0.438	0.663
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.27	6.53	4.26%	-0.720	0.474
	Conclusion (10)	6.27	6.30	0.53%	-0.088	0.931
	Total (50)	30.70	32.27	5.10%	-0.870	0.388
ımmar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.00	6.10	1.67%	-0.303	0.763
	Verb Usage (10)	5.73	5.77	0.58%	-0.101	0.920
	Word Usage (10)	5.60	6.10	8.93%	-1.347	0.183
	Mechanics (10)	5.73	6.37	11.05%	-1.552	0.126
	Format (10)	5.87	6.23	6.25%	-0.864	0.391
	Total (50)	28.93	30.57	5.65%	-0.929	0.357
Overall Grade (/100)		**59.63**	**62.83**	**5.37%**	**-0.910**	**0.367**

APPENDIX T

Table 11: Comparison between Control and Experimental Groups: Week 9

		Means		% of difference	t value	Sig
		Control	Experimental			
riting	Introduction Paragraph+ Thesis (10)	6.30	7.30	15.87%	-2.970	**0.004**
	Paragraph Organization (10)	6.40	7.03	9.90%	-2.012	**0.049**
	Evidence & Support (10)	6.50	7.23	11.28%	-2.321	**0.024**
	Quality of Ideas (10)	6.47	6.90	6.70%	-1.265	0.211
	Conclusion (10)	6.77	7.23	6.90%	-1.296	0.200
	Total (50)	32.43	35.70	10.07%	-2.115	**0.039**
ammar	Sentence Structure (10)	6.07	6.83	12.64%	-2.357	**0.022**
	Verb Usage (10)	5.97	7.43	24.58%	-4.156	**0.000**
	Word Usage (10)	5.73	7.07	23.26%	-3.978	**0.000**
	Mechanics (10)	6.07	7.60	25.27%	-4.639	**0.000**
	Format (10)	6.37	8.00	25.65%	-4.658	**0.000**
	Total (50)	30.20	36.93	22.30%	-4.275	**0.000**
Overall Grade (/100)		**62.63**	**72.63**	**15.97%**	**-3.258**	**0.002**

APPENDIX U

CL1 for the Control Group Low Achiever, Maya

<no title>

Every one have likes and dislikes and every pepol have preferences. I like and dislike musique and sport.

I like musique classique and arabe and I like english song but not too much cause I didn't understand there means.

I like fairouz, sabah, wadih safi farid atrache et asmahan.

I also like Magida el roumie coz she is beautiful and have beautiful voice also, i like musique classique cause I was playing the piano since 12 years. I too much like piano for to be calme after playing piano to cure my nervosity…

I dislike too much sport for i never like it from school. I hate my sport teacher in the school he always shout on me and my collegues I don't like to go to gym and sport centre cause I prefere playing piano in this times. I also don't like sport cause they utilize musique I don't like… in the school when I play sport we sit with our perspiration in the classroom until we go home on the bus and this is very very bad...

To conclued I like something and I don't like something else: musique and sport.

APPENDIX V

CA1 for the Control Group Average student, Corinne

<no title>

Our planet is full of 6 billion people. All of us, humains, have our likes and dislikes and I also have my likes and dislikes. I have many more than one like and dislike, but in this essay I will discuss one of each category. The first category is reading books and the second category is to go to the cinema.

Reading is my passion, as a human, a student and now as a translation major. Since we were children my mother was always telling us to read books by reading to us while in bed. Reading makes me acquire more knowledge and enlarge my horizons. In our school, we were also always encouraged to read and summarize books on top of our all subjects. Reading also makes you able to have a wild imagination. Reading is the remede for ignorance.

On another hand, going to the cinema is my nightmare either if it is about the movie that I read its book. I cannot stand inside the movie for more than 5 minutes because I am claustrophobe. I don't have anything against watching movies and series at home but I cannot like the cinema coz it is dark and loud noise. I know that many people consider cinema the 7th art but I can wait until I will find the movie in the shops and buy it in order to watch it at home with my family or my friends.

For the reasons I mentioned before I cannot love the cinema for its darkness and claustrophobic effet on me and also I cannot dislike reading because of all the rewards it gives me. These are my likes and dislikes, what about you?

APPENDIX W

CH1 for the Control Group High Achiever, Maria

Title: Black and White

Everyone on Planet Earth has likes and dislikes and myself being one of this world's citizen's I happen to have likes and dislikes just the same. In this essay, I will try to expose each of my distastes as well as my preferences in one paragraph each. Let's start with the negative and end with the positive.

Of the many things that I dislike is politics even though as a translation major, I have to read a lot from all fields of study. The reason why I dislike politics is because I come from a nonpolitical family which believes that bad politics is the cause of the civil war in our country during my parents' generation. Politics divides people instead of uniting them. When your neighbor is sick or poor, you help him because he is your neighbor, not because he belongs to this political party or that one. When your cousin needs you, you help him even though he supports Riyadi instead of Sagesee. When the cousin of your father comes to visit his family in Beirut from abroad, we go pick him up from the airport even if he belongs to another ideology. Politics, in my opinion, divides more than it unites, just as it did with the very long civil war in Lebanon.

Of the many things that I like, I will choose to discuss cooking and its effect on me. Ever since I was little girl, I always cooked with my aunt who lives with us and my mum in the kitchen. Not exactly cook, but when they made Lebanese raviolis (shish barak), I was given a piece of dough to play with and shape into little food particles. Later on when my parents travelled, each one of us wanted to try to cook and with the help of my aunt and sometimes my grandma, we were able to present something eatable on the dinner table. Last but not least, TV channels like Food Network and Fatafeat triggered the cooking skill in me and made me try as many recipes as possible.

To conclude, Politics and Cooking remain to be one example of what I call black and white, to represent my aversions and joys. Politics has more disadvantages than advantages. Just like politics divides people, cooking unites the family and the cousins around a lovely dinner table adding a smile on all the faces of those who are invited to the feast.

APPENDIX X

EL1 for the Experimental Group Low Achiever, Yara

Every man and every woman have likes and dislikes. Some men have more likes and dislikes than some women. I also have my many likes and dislikes. In this essai I will write about two sports that I like and dislike.

I hate weightlifting very much because every one considere it a sports and they test the sports people in the competitions and in the olympiques games as well and I didn't considere it like sport. I dislike weighlifting coz they hurts there back and bodys. I also say weighlifting is not chic sport and it is very sauvage. Personnes who make weighlifting can not think in a better way coz of this sport. The technique they use is not good. The sport is like to carry a washing machine and putting in somewhere… this is why I hate weightlifting. I love basketball very much and I follow the tournaments and also in lebanon. I love Sagesse very very much and I love the green groupe. I love basketball too much coz it is rapid game. The players in this game are 5 only and they can all play together. All players can play and score not only one or two like in football .

Like I said, I like basketball and I dislike weighlifting like every body else who likes some things and not something else.

APPENDIX Y

EA1 for the Experimental Group Average student, Jana

Many people always discuss likes and dislikes when they first meet after they say hello. My likes and dislikes differ chiefly from the likes and dislikes of my sister, my brother and cousins. This is why many people have different tastes. This essay will elaborate my preferences and less favorite likes.

First of all, my likes are many but I will discuss only some of them. I like dancing, music, reading and writing poemes. All of those have in common one thing, the artistic caractere. I like dancing and playing modern music and I also like to write poemes in frensh and in arabic. I like also Lebanese writers who write in European languages like Amine Maalouf and Gibran Khalil Gibran who writes in english. I also try to write poemes but not always. I like many genres and types of music in english and frensh oldies but not too much Arabic.

Coming to my dislikes, they are also many, but I will choose to talk about animals and pets. I don't like animals in general. They are frightening me. I also don't like zoos and don't think putting them in a cage is a good idea. I like freedom and this way, animals are not free. They are not living in their environnement. I like a horse that jumps freely in the nature. I don't like a horse that participed in competition and people lose money. Also another reason is when a dog attacqued me when we were a child and my friends and me were playing in the garden in our village.

Many reasons make me choose many likes and dislikes and in this essay I choose to discuss arts and animals. I love arts for the humaine face and I hope that one day I will like animals like I like arts or maybe not be afraid from them like always.

APPENDIX Z

EH1 for the Experimental Group High Achiever, Sarah

Love & Hate Communicate

Everyone around us has his own personality, his inclinations, even objects of love or hatred. One man's meat can be another man's poison. So what I like might be among my friends' dislikes, and vice versa. My likes and dislikes encapsulate Cooking and Lying, which I will be expanding in the lines below.

Let's start with my object of adoration. Cooking has always been a passion that went down the generations, from my maternal great-grandmother who was known for her perfect cooking and food preserving skills. My grandmother being an impeccable cook, her genes affected my Mom's who took up Cooking classes and ended up in me as a hobby. One look at our kitchen shelves will give you an idea of what it means to have a passion for cooking. Shelves loaded with various cookbooks of different cuisines beautifully decorate our kitchen, while staples beautify the pantry shelves ready to be used by my mom when the needs arise. As such, cooking is something that also enhances in me my passion of translation, translating cultures into foods.

On the other hand, life is not all so beautiful so we also have some things that we dislike, or even hate. The one thing that I dislike is lying. One might say that lying comes in degrees but I'm categorically against lying of all sorts. A white lie, a black lie or a grey like are all identical. Lying can harm, hurt, even wreak havoc among families, destroy relationships and cause family breakdowns. Thou Shall Not Lie is among the Ten Commandments that God passed down to us through his prophets. I'll be lying if I say that I never lie but I try to remain silent instead of saying something incorrect, which makes my parents and friends realize that there is something wrong, something's the matter with me that I'm avoiding any information on the subject discussed. Another strategy I use is that as soon as I'm done with the lying, I immediately tell someone I know that I lied. That someone is usually my Mom.

In conclusion, cooking a beautiful meal and enjoying it with family & friends is the perfect recipe for happiness. This happiness can be interrupted only if one person lies about the ingredients of the recipe or about the ingredients of the story shared. The cooked ingredients that made up a beautiful meal can be tarnished by the aftertaste lying leaves behind on our taste buds!