

Use of Translation in the Classroom by EFL Teachers in Libya (A descriptive study)

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Abstract

The use of translation in foreign/second language teaching has divided language teachers into supporters and opponents. Some teachers hold the view that translation should not be used in foreign language teaching. This view is apparently based on the criticism of the Grammar-Translation Method in foreign language teaching. Other teachers think that translation can be useful in foreign language teaching and learning. In Libya, some EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teachers claim that they find translation helpful in their teaching and that their students find it useful in facilitating their learning. These claims go in line with the views of some modern researchers and writers on the use of translation in foreign language teaching. Therefore, this study is to explore aspects of the use of translation by EFL teachers in the classroom in Tripoli and nearby areas. The study is based on data collected via a questionnaire from 171 teachers of English holding different qualifications and teaching English at universities, higher institutes, language centers and schools. The findings confirm that translation is widely used as a technique to check students' understanding, help students clarify the meanings of linguistic units, increase students' vocabulary, develop students' ability of contrastive analysis, and assess students' overall language learning. These findings support new research worldwide in favor of a controlled use of translation in foreign language teaching and learning. The findings open the venue for further investigation of this issue in other parts of Libya and other Arab countries.

Keywords: English, foreign language, Libya, teaching, translation