INVESTIGATION OF THE RELATIONSHIP(S) BETWEEN USING SUBSTITUTION DRILL TECHNIQUE AND MEMORY PERMANENCY IN ADULT EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract - Using substitution drill technique in second language teaching has a history of decades. Although many critics have connected this technique to rote learning and advise teachers to use other more communicative methods, it seems that the effects of drilling on memorization and helping learners to build a faster and more organized structure of second languagein their minds is underestimated and ignored to some extent. The present paper, aims at having a deeper investigation on the possible relationships between using substitution drill technique and memory permanency on Persian learners of English. To do so, 84adult Persian learners of English (42 males and 42 females),whose level of English was Intermediate, were voluntarily asked to attend an 18-session English course for learning 504 Essential English words and another 18-session English class for learning Intermediate English Grammar. The learners of both experimental and control groups passedpre-tests and post-tests and the results were analyzed by SPSS. The results of the present study showed a 34 percent of higher effectiveness in learning vocabulary and 16 percent of higher effectiveness in learning grammar for the experimental group. Since other possible factors were fully controlled, this increase might push some teachers to maintain this technique as a useful tool along with other mother teaching methods.

Keywords - Second Language Teaching, Substitution Drill, Teaching Methods, Permanent Memory, Memorization

I. INTRODUCTION

A substitution drill is a classroom technique in which the learners are to repeat or imitate the teacher's modelling of a word, a structure or a sentence and then changing or substituting one or more key words and saying the new structure. Substitution drills can be used to practice different structures or vocabulary items. Substitution drill is not the only drilling activity and there are other kinds of drills such as question and answer drill, as well.

There are many pros and cons about using this technique in modern teaching classes, both with some reasonable arguments. Many teachers believe that drill-learners have no or very little choice over what is said so drills are a form of very controlled practice. This is an inherent characteristic of drill as it is defined: "a type of highly controlled oral practice in which the students respond to a given cue" (Matthews, Spratt & Dangerfield, 1991, p.210).

II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

2.1 Drills

Drills are useful language materials to practice language chunks. At the same time, they facilitate the comprehension of language patterns and help foreign language learners have more effective language productions. Drills are also believed to build confidence that will enable the learners to provide prompt responses without hesitation in real communications and consequently gain better achievements(Khetaguri&Albay, 2016).There are four basic drill types: simple repetition, substitution (as in the example above), transformation (e.g. changing and affirmative sentence into a negative sentence), and translation.

Drills are useful to improve fluency and accuracy. They teach learners how to respond quickly. During second language learning process, accuracy holds an important place. When learners master the language through drills accurately, they will gain accuracy. Drills in language learning can be used to practice grammatical structures and vocabulary items.

Drilling technique is a technique for teaching language through dialogues which emphasize on the students' habit formation by repetition, memorizing grammatical structures, and tense transformation, using the target language and the culture where the language is spoken (Setiyadi, 2006, p.54), In addition, drill is part of audio-lingual method (ALM). On the other hand, drill means forcing the students to use the target language. There are several types of drilling techniques in ALM (Setiyadi, 2006, p.63-66), which are repetition drill, substitution drill, transformation drill, replacement drill, response drill, cued response drill, rejoinder drill, restatement, completion drill, expansion drill, contraction drill, integration drill, and translation drill. In this study, the writer chose three of them: repetition drill, substitution drill, and translation drill.

In addition to accuracy, drill based learning promotes learners‟ oral language development as well. When scores are compared it is possible to conclude that by means of drill based learning learners are able to use the target language more accurately and fluently (Nattinger&DeCarrio, 1992, p.35).

For the learners, drills can:

- Provide for a focus on accuracy. Increased accuracy (along with increased fluency and

complexity) is one of the ways in which a learner's language improves so there is a need to focus on accuracy at certain stages of the lesson or during certain task types.

- Provide learners with intensive practice in hearing and saying particular words or phrases. They can help learners get their tongues around difficult sounds or help them imitate intonation that may be rather different from that of their first language.
- Provide a safe environment for learners to experiment with producing the language. This may help build confidence particularly among learners who are not risk-takers.
- Help students notice the correct form or pronunciation of a word or phrase. Noticing or consciousness raising of language is an important stage in developing language competence.
- Provide an opportunity for learners to get immediate feedback on their accuracy in terms of teacher or peer correction. Many learners want to be corrected.
- Help memorisation and automisation of common language patterns and language chunks. This may be particularly true for aural learners.
- Meet student expectations i.e. They may think drilling is an essential feature of language classrooms.
- For the teacher, drills can:
- Help in terms of classroom management, enabling us to vary the pace of the lesson or to get all learners involved.
- Help us recognise if new language is causing problems in terms of form or pronunciation.
- (Setiyadi, 2006, p.63-66)

2.2 Substitution Drills

Substitution drill is one type of drilling techniques that involves the teacher as the first modeling a word or a sentence and the learners repeat it. The learners then substitutes one or more key words, or changes the prompt. (Sutrisno, 2013).

Substitution drills are more interactive than repetition drills because they usually give students practice in changing a word or structure in response to a prompt or cue from the teacher or another student. The teacher's prompt can be a whole sentence, a word, a phrase, or a picture. This type of drilling may be applied by substituting any sound instead of the other sound. (Larsen and Freeman,1987 p:28)

In this substitution drill learners will see how grammar works. These drills will help learners learn the grammar of the target language accurately. Learning grammar through drills is not source of frustration for learners as they are learnt in an enjoyable learning environment. Furthermore, drills conducted in the classes will contribute to learners‟ pronunciation.

According to Pillai &Narasimharao, (1985) substitution drill may be of various types according to the mechanism of operation and they are:

a. Simple substitution/Single slot substitution

To enable the learners to begin to assimilate the structure and the variation in a single frame. It enables him to recognize and use the class of segments that can fit into a particular frame.

b. Substitution in different slots/Mixed slot substitution

To enable the learners to assimilate the grammatical category of the words with appropriate places of their occurrence.

c. Substitution that forces a change in the structure

To enable the learners to know that substitution in a slot sometimes forces a change in the structures.

d. Substitution that calls for a change in the cue

To enable the learner to know which grammatical category would fit in the filler sentence.

e. Multiple slot substitution

To help learners distinguish between the different word classes.

f. Progressive slot substitution/Moving slot substitution

To help learners have more active and flexible understanding of the structures.

III. METHODS

The study used a pre-experimental method with the one group pre-test-post-test design. It aimed at finding out whether or not the use of substitution drill can improve the ability of the students to learn English vocabulary and grammar.

The participants in this study were 44 adult Persian learners of English (22 males and 22 females), whose level of English was Intermediate, were voluntarily asked to attend an 18-session English course for learning 504 Essential English words and another 18-session English class for learning Intermediate English Grammar. Each class was hold with 22 learners of both sexes.The grammar syllabus and its tests were on the basis of the book English Grammar in Use Intermediate 5th Edition (Raymond Murphy, 2016). Two groups were created for the present study, and each group included 22 students. The researcher used the textbooks for teaching grammar and vocabulary in one of the groups, and drills were used in the other group to develop speaking skills of the students. The researcher presented the same materials to both groups. The learners of both experimental and control groups passed pre-tests and post-tests and the results were analyzed by SPSS. A T-test was used to investigate the meaningfulness of the results.

IV. RESULTS

The tables 1&2, shows the pre-test results for both experimental and control groups in learning grammar.

Table 1:Grammar pre-test results

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Σ (the total score)	891	904
N	22	22
Maximum Score	64	60
Minimum Score	28	30
Mean	42.43	43.05
SD	8.74	9.12

Table 2: Grammar post-test results

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Σ (the total score)	1176	1039
N	22	22
Maximum Score	81	69
Minimum Score	37	38
Mean	56.01	49.50
SD	11.54	10.49

Table 3, shows the difference in improvements of the experimental group who were taught English grammar through substitution drill technique and the control group for which the textbook was used.

Table 3:Comparison of the two groups on Grammar progress

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Progress %
Experimental	42.43	56.01	14
Control	43.05	49.50	6

Table 3, reveals that there was a significant (8 %) difference in using substitution drill.

Tables 4&5, shows the pre-test results for both experimental and control groups in learning vocabulary.

Table 4:Vocabulary pre-test results

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Σ (the total score)	1185	1219
N	22	22
Maximum Score	75	75
Minimum Score	42	45
Mean	56.43	58.05
SD	8.74	9.12

Table 5: Vocabulary post-test results

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Σ (the total score)	1710	1450
N	22	22
Maximum Score	100	86
Minimum Score	67	56
Mean	81.43	69.05
SD	9.74	9.12

Table 6, shows the difference in improvements of the experimental group who were taught English vocabulary through substitution drill technique and the control group for which the textbook was used.

Table 6:Comparison of the two groups on Vocabulary progress

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Progress %
Experimental	56.43	81.43	25
Control	58.05	69.05	11

Table 6 shows that in teaching vocabulary, using substitution drills was even more effective than teaching grammar and presents the significant difference of 14 percent higher effectiveness.
Figures 1&2 show the results in a better visual view.

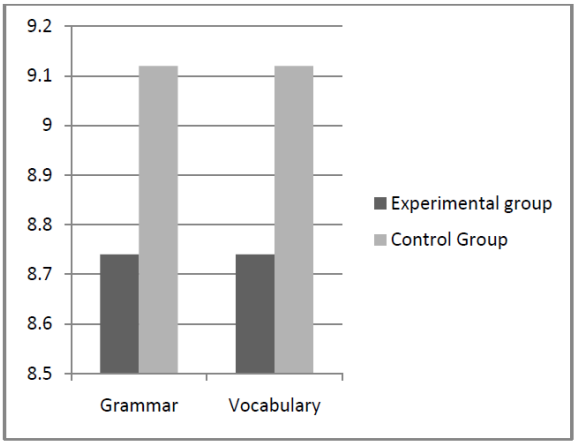

Figure 1: Pre-test results of both experimental and control groups

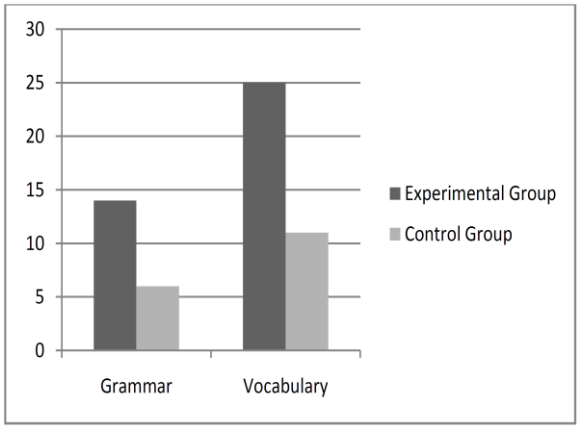

Figure 2: Post-test results of both experimental and control groups

To check the effectiveness of using substitution drill technique in teaching grammar and vocabulary, the post tests were repeated 2 months later, with the same difficulty for both experimental and control groups. The results of repeated post-tests are shown below:

Table 7: Grammar REPEATED post-test results

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Σ (the total score)	1061	923
N	22	22
Maximum Score	76	65
Minimum Score	35	32
Mean	53.06	46.17
SD	11.21	10

Table 8: Vocabulary REPEATED post-test results

	Experimental Group	Control Group
Σ (the total score)	1584	1324
N	22	22
Maximum Score	94	80
Minimum Score	61	50
Mean	75.43	63.05
SD	8.50	10

Table 9:Comparison of the two groups on Grammar progress

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Progress %
Experimental	42.43	53.06	10.63
Control	43.05	46.17	3.12

Table 10:Comparison of the two groups on Vocabulary progress

Group	Pre-test	Post-test	Progress %
Experimental	56.43	75.43	19
Control	57.05	63.05	6

Tables 9&10 show that memory permanency in both teaching vocabulary and grammar has been considerably higher in experimental group than control group.

V. CONCLUSION

Drilling is not a new or a fashionable classroom technique, but, used appropriately in the classroom, it can be of great value to our learners.

The results of the present study showed a 14 percent of higher effectiveness in learning vocabulary and 8 percent of higher effectiveness in learning grammar for the experimental group. When achievement of learners in drill based is compared with text book based, it is clearly seen that drill based learning yields better results. It is possible to conclude that drill based language learning allows learners to learn foreign language vocabulary and grammar more effectively.

Based on the results of the data analysis and research findings, the researcher concludes that there is asignificant difference in vocabulary and grammar achievements and memory permanency between the students who were taught by using drilling technique and those taught without using drilling.

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