To Translate or not to Translate: The Added Value of Translation in Second Language Teaching[1]

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Abstract

This thesis investigates the ongoing debate about the role of translation in second language teaching. In the past, scholars and teachers alike assumed that translation caused L1 interference, and therefore slows down and limits a learner's progress in learning a second or foreign language. More recent research, however, has attempted to counter common conceptions regarding translation's ineffectiveness as a language-learning and language-teaching tool. The recently developed task-based instruction, as described by Hummel (2014) and Norris (2011), aims at contextualized tasks instead of isolated exercises, which also include translation tasks. In a pilot study I investigated the value of translation tasks when Dutch secondary school students are learning the present perfect in English. Overall, the study showed that using translation tasks enhances the use and understanding of grammatical aspect (i.e. the present perfect), and although there appeared to be a discrepancy between HAVO and VWO scores, both translation groups improved in their use of the present perfect and its context as the study progressed.

Keywords: Task-based instruction, translation, present perfect, interference

Introduction

Translation and translation exercises started to vanish from the secondary school curriculum around the 1900s after the emergence of methods other than the grammar-translation method. Many different methods and approaches have been devised regarding effective second language acquisition, out of which translation has only been incorporated in a few of them. Many methods and approaches label translation exercises as too unilateral and resulting in faulty acquisition, as these exercises only focus on the written form of the language while neglecting other aspects such as listening and speaking

ch and task-based instruction were devised. These types of teaching claim that communication should be seen as both the goal of learning a language as well as the means (Marqués-Aguado & Solís-Becerra, 2013).

Although the idea of communication as the basis for language learning seems effective, it lacks sufficient research and a clear-cut methodology, which has resulted in an abundance of different variations used in secondary schools (Hummel, 2014). Task-based instruction is one variation of the

communicative approach which has, in fact, devised a methodology, and therefore provides teachers with solid guidelines for communicative tasks, as described by Skehan (1998):

1. Meaning is primary,
2. There is some communication problem to solve,
3. There is some sort of relationship to comparable real-world activities,
4. Task completion has some priority,
5. The assessment of the task is in terms of outcome, (p. 95)

Task-based instruction uses language 'tasks' which differ from 'exercises'. Tasks are not isolated but are instead based on communication and context (Norris, 2011), which means that they "go beyond what is purely linguistic, and involve social action and pragmatic goals" (Hummel, 2014, p. 117). Recent research into task-based instruction has shown the value of these tasks. Examples of such research are Samuda and Bygate (2008), who looked at different types of tasks to see which contribute to and which detract from successfully completing a task, and Poupore (2013), who examined students' motivation for tasks and how complex these tasks could be without producing a negative impact on students' motivation.

Translation is a communicative task as well, and it also adheres to the five guidelines described above. The traditional arguments against translation are based on translation as used in the grammar-translation method, in which translation is the framework for language learning instead of a single exercise (Hummel, 2014). When translation is used in such a manner, it has indeed proven to be too unilateral, artificial, and decontextualized (Al-Amri & Adbul-Raof, 2014; Hummel, 2014). However, when implementing translation as a task targeted at a specific language feature, it can thus also be used to appropriately measure and improve a leaner's L2 proficiency. Recent research into translation has also shown its added value as it can be used to strengthen students' vocabulary (Hayati & Mohammadi, 2009), as well as improve their usage of the L2 cohesion system, association patterns, and idiomatic expressions (Al-Amri & Adbul-Raof, 2014; Cordero, 1984). Translation is a cross-linguistic exercise which raises the awareness of certain similarities and differences between the first language and the second language, thereby improving their communicative competence (Marqués-Aguado & Solís-Becerra, 2013), and also helps to develop three essential language qualities: accuracy, clarity, and flexibility (Duff, 1989). Some scholars have even devised a model portraying the conceptual links between the learner's L1 and L2, arguing that translation speeds up the process of mastering a second language (Kroll & Stewart, 1994; Potter, So, Eckardt, & Feldman, 1984). So, when used as a communicative task (by adhering to the five guidelines as described by Skehan (1998)) instead of a decontextualized exercise, translation proves to be an added value to language classes.

However, many language areas are still left untouched. One such area is the usefulness of translation when learning specific grammar rules. Although grammatical competence is often a by-product of other research projects (see Duff, 1989; Marqués-Aguado & Solís-Becerra, 2013), or looked at as a whole (see Pekkanli, 2012; Tsagari & Floros, 2013), no project has looked solely at using translation to teach a specific grammatical feature. I have implemented the findings of the abovementioned research in a pilot study in which I will address the gap by analysing the effectiveness of translation tasks when teaching the present perfect, a specific grammatical feature, to Dutch students of English in secondary school.

Objectives of this study

This article will argue that translation tasks can be an added value to the learning of a specific grammatical feature, as they provide contextualized tasks for language learning rather than isolated exercises. The following two research questions will be addressed:

1. Is there any difference between using gap texts or translation tasks in terms of learning specific grammar rules, and more specifically the present perfect?
2. If so, which one (i.e. gap text or translation task) is more effective when learning specific grammar rules, and more specifically the present perfect?

As recent research has shown the effectiveness of translation exercises, I hypothesise that:

I. Translation tasks are more effective than gap texts in terms of learning specific grammar rules, and more specifically the present perfect.

In doing so, this article aims to fill part of the existing research gap in this field by looking at the acquisition of grammar through translation tasks, and by providing a starting point for other studies which will look at the acquisition of grammar through translation tasks.

Methodology

In this pilot study I incorporated existing research results and looked at a research area still left untouched: grammatical features. I decided to look at the English present perfect as this grammatical feature is notoriously difficult for Dutch students of English, and context is needed in order to use it. The example below illustrates the abstract rule for the present perfect:

A form of *to have + past participle* (e.g. "He has refused the offer.")

As described by Voort (2009), the present perfect is used in two different situations:

1. The present perfect is used when we talk about the present effects of something that happened at an unspecified time in the past;
2. The present perfect is used to express that something began in the past and continues in the present. (pp. 58-59)

The present perfect proves to be difficult for many Dutch learners of English as the Dutch equivalent of the 'present perfect' can be used in a wider variety of contexts than the English version can (Voort, 2009). Sometimes the Dutch 'present perfect' is even used with a form of *to be* instead of *to have* (Voort, 2009). These differences make the present perfect a difficult aspect to master for Dutch learners of English.

Participants

The participants of the pilot study were 76 Dutch secondary school students at a public school in Hellevoetsluis. They had been studying English as a second language, were around the ages of 14-15,

and all of them had studied English as a compulsory course for at least 2.5 years. They had three hours of English per week with a non-native instructor. The participants were divided over 4 classes, two of which were HAVO (= higher general secondary education) and two of which were VWO (= pre-university education), as shown below.

1. A HAVO class that made the gap texts (N = 19);
2. A HAVO class that made the translation tasks (N = 20);
3. A VWO class that made the gap texts (N = 19);
4. A VWO class that made the translation tasks (N = 18).

Materials

The following instruments were used in this pilot study:

1. *An online survey, used to establish the learners' background knowledge of English (see Appendix A);*
2. *An error-analysis test, used as both a pre-test and a post-test to determine the learners' knowledge of the present perfect (Ellis, 2005; Voort, 2009) (see Appendix B);*
3. *BBC News articles, used as the basis for both the gap texts and for the translation tasks (see Appendix C);*
4. *Gap texts adapted from BBC news articles, used in group 1 and 3 (see Appendix D);*
5. *Translation tasks adapted from BBC news articles, used in group 2 and 4 (see Appendix E).*

Procedures

In order to control the students' background knowledge of English, they had to fill in a survey. This survey consisted of questions with regards to the students' exposure to the English language to establish their eligibility for this study, as much exposure could result in incomparable participants. The survey results showed no large differences in exposure between participants.

Additionally, in order to determine the students' knowledge of the present perfect, an error-analysis test was used. The error-analysis test was adapted from *Core Grammar for Higher Education* by Piet van der Voort (2009) and provided a way to measure students' grammatical knowledge (R. Ellis, 2005). Students were required to analyse five sentences in total in terms of their correct usage or avoidance of the present perfect. They were required to state whether they deemed the sentence to be correct or incorrect; if they deemed it incorrect, they were also required to explain why they deemed the sentence incorrect and indicate what a corrected version of the sentence would look like. This pre-test was intended to measure the students' knowledge of the present perfect and its uses before the study.

Group 1 and group 3 both participated in three different gap texts divided over three lessons. All three texts were based on news articles from bbc.co.uk, as students are expected to be familiar with both the subject matter and the language use (Cordero, 1984). These news articles were slightly adapted to contain verbs mostly in the past simple and in the present perfect. The verbs were then deleted from the text and put in brackets so that students had to decide what tense the verb in brackets had to be in.

The participants of groups 2 and 4 took part in three translation tasks divided over three lessons. The tasks were Dutch translations from the adapted news articles also used for groups 1 and 3, so that students would be familiar with the subject matter and the language use (Cordero, 1984), and to be able to accurately compare results between the two different tests. As translating a text will take longer than

completing sentences, the translation groups were given only one paragraph of the text, whereas groups 1 and 3 were provided with two or three paragraphs. The translation students were also provided with a word list containing the most difficult words. The direction into which students had to translate was from their L1 into their L2, as research has shown that translating from one's L1 into one's L2 puts emphasis on the different linguistic, contextual and cultural norms between the two languages, which means students will be forced to look at contexts specific to the present perfect (Al-Amri & Adbul-Raof, 2014; Collins, 2007; Cordero, 1984; Els, Bongaerts, Extra, Os, & Jansen-van Dieten, 1984).

After completing all three texts, all of the participants were again required to perform an error-analysis test. This post-test consisted of the same five sentences used in the pre-test, and it was supposed to measure the students' knowledge after the study, and determine whether their knowledge of the present perfect and its context had improved.

Problems

As this pilot study was conducted over a period of two weeks, some problems were expected to occur in terms of participation and logistics. Not all participants showed up for each component of the pilot study. In total, 12 participants, roughly divided over all of the four groups, were removed from the study, because they didn't participate in one or more components. As a result, a total of 76 participants were included in the analyses, instead of the original 88.

Besides 12 participants failing to show up for the post-test, another 52 participants failed to fill in the survey. While removing 12 participants from the study due to the lack of a pre-test or post-test is credible, removing yet another 52 participants due to the lack of a survey seemed unnecessary, as the groups had specifically been selected to include Dutch students with a low proficiency of English. The participants who did fill in the survey highlighted their assumed low proficiency as well. The survey results of 24 participants are therefore used to represent all 76 participants.

Results

Survey

The survey used for this pilot study consisted of ten questions in total, aimed at establishing the learners' background knowledge of English. This section will highlight two questions in particular as these illustrate that the participants' level of proficiency corresponds to the proficiency necessary for the pilot study. The results of 24 participants will be used to represent all participants as discussed previously.

Graph 1 shows that all 24 participants who filled in the survey speak only one language at home: Dutch. As these participants generally speak Dutch at home, it can be deduced that they are not exposed to native or near-native speakers of the English language in their home setting, therefore excluding the possibility of participants having a high level of proficiency due to English being the native language at home. This answer ties in well with the aim of choosing participants with a low level of proficiency for the pilot study as this would allow for the possibility of improvement, whereas participants with a high level of proficiency might not allow for this possibility.

What language do you speak at home?

Beantwoord: 24   Overgeslagen: 0
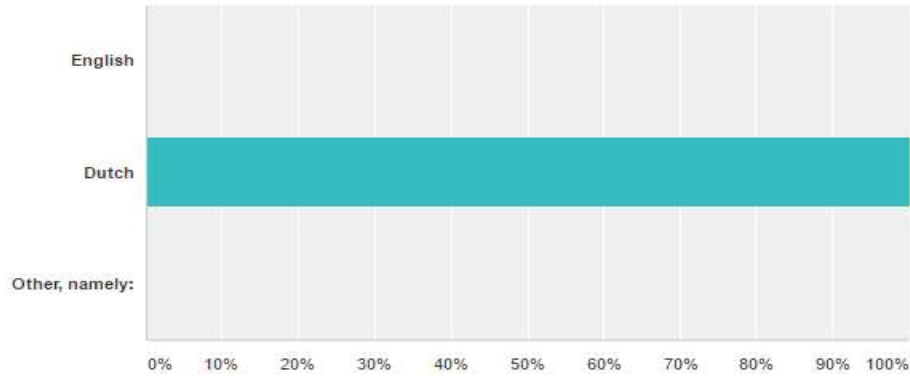
GRAPH 1 Question 4: What language do you speak at home?

Graph 2 shows that all participants prefer to watch English-language films but that only 25% of the participants prefer English-language films without subtitles, whereas 75% of the participants prefer English-language films with subtitles. Most of the participants still need subtitles to fully understand English-speaking films, thereby again illustrating that their proficiency in English is rather low. Moreover, 66.7% of all participants used Dutch subtitles to fully understand an English-language film, and only 8.3% of all participants used English subtitles, thereby again illustrating the participants' low proficiency of English.

When you watch English-language movies, what is your preference?

Beantwoord: 24   Overgeslagen: 0
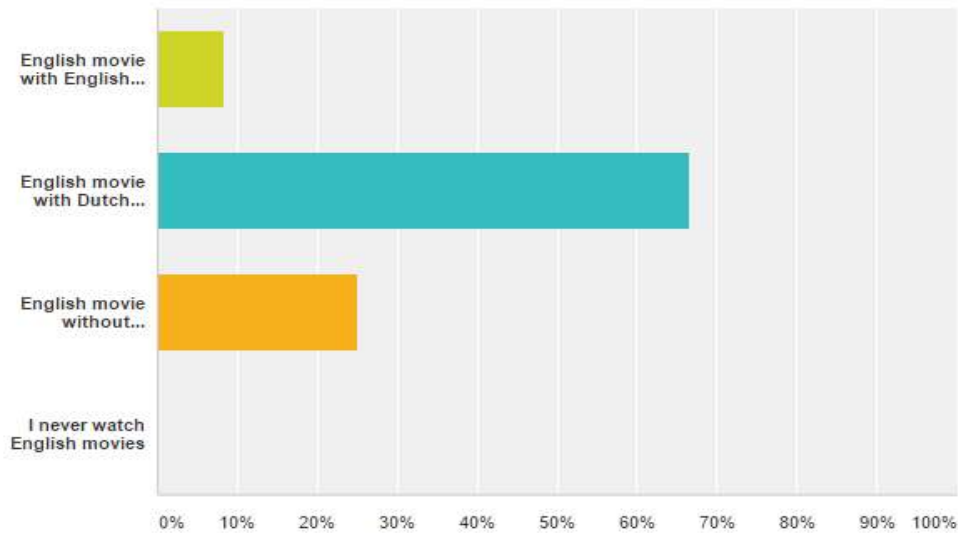
GRAPH 2 Question 8: When you watch English-language films, what is your preference?

Pre-test and Post-test

In order to determine which group understood the present perfect best after the pilot study, pre-test and post-test percentages of the four groups were compared. In case of an incorrect sentence, full points were only given when a student could correctly produce a grammatically correct sentence in addition to noticing its ungrammaticality. If a student was only able to notice a sentence's ungrammaticality without producing the corrected version, they did not receive any points.

Tables 1 and 2 contain the percentages of respectively the pre-test and the post-test, categorized per school level, and sentence. A total score has also been calculated for each group to indicate their overall control of the present perfect. In addition, an average score has also been calculated for each sentence, to show its relative difficulty.

TABLE 1 Percentages of the pre-test

|	HAVO		VWO		
	Group 1	*Group 2*	*Group 3*	*Group 4*	**Average score**
Sentence one	0%	0%	0%	0%	**0%**
Sentence two	59.1%	62.2%	94.7%	88.9%	**76.2%**
Sentence three	77.3%	82.6%	73.7%	66.7%	**75.1%**
Sentence four	18.1%	13.0%	47.4%	61.1%	**34.9%**
Sentence five	27.3%	30.4%	15.8%	38.9%	**28.1%**
Average score	**36.4%**	**37.6%**	**46.3%**	**51.1%**	

Table 1 highlights two peculiarities regarding the participants' understanding and use of the present perfect prior to the study: 1) the context in sentence one proved too difficult for all participants, and 2) the VWO groups scored higher on average than the HAVO groups. While a difference between the educational levels can already be established, all four groups still make ample mistakes when it comes to the present perfect, with only one group scoring slightly above 50%.

Table 2 illustrates the participants' understanding and use of the present perfect after the study. According to the table, the same peculiarities can be seen: 1) the context in sentence one still proved too difficult for all groups, and 2) the VWO groups again scored higher on average than the HAVO groups. Although a difference between educational levels can still be seen, the average scores differ significantly from before. Group 2 scored almost as high as the VWO groups, thereby somewhat closing the gap between educational levels. Group 1 scored significantly lower than the other groups, and group 4 seemed to score evenly with groups 2 and 3, instead of higher. None of the groups, however, were able to score above 50% in the post-test.

TABLE 2 Percentages of the post-test

	HAVO		VWO		
	Group 1	*Group 2*	*Group 3*	*Group 4*	**Average score**
Sentence one	0%	0%	0%	0%	**0%**
Sentence two	86.4%	82.6%	73.7%	83.3%	**81.5%**
Sentence three	54.5%	73.9%	84.2%	55.6%	**67.1%**
Sentence four	18.2%	34.8%	47.4%	50.0%	**37.6%**
Sentence five	18.2%	26.1%	26.3%	38.9%	**24.9%**
Average score	**34.9%**	**43.5%**	**46.3%**	**45.6%**	

Graphs 3 and 4 illustrate a comparison of the pre-test and post-test, indicating the difference in scores, as well as the groups progression or regression after conducting the study. Graph 3 shows one peculiarity when comparing the pre-test and post-test scores per sentence: It does not seem as if there was any real progression after the study, as the participants performed better on sentences 2 and 4, while performing worse on sentences 3 and 5. No real difference in the participants' understanding of the present perfect can therefore be deducted from only looking at sentence scores. Graph 4, on the other hand, illustrates more specifically the groups' progression and regression after conducting the pilot study. Group 2 scored significantly higher during the post-test, as hypothesized, whereas group 4 scored significantly lower, showing the direct opposite of what research has shown so far.
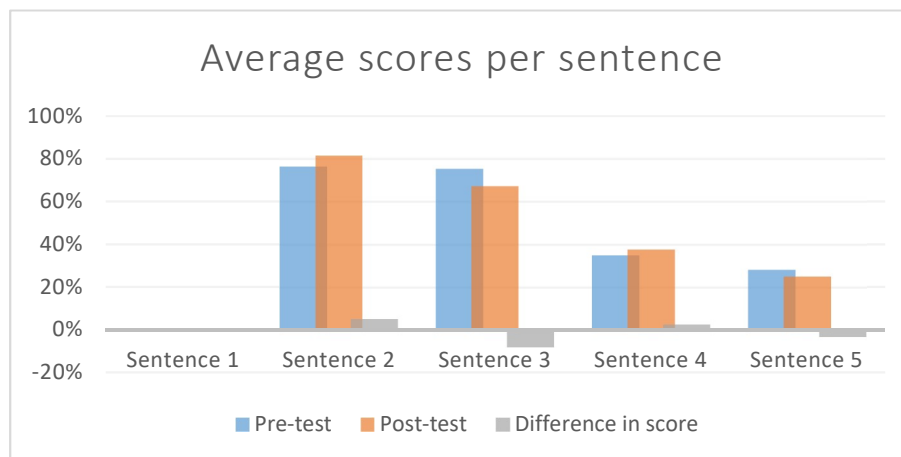
GRAPH 3 Average pre-test and post-test scores per sentence
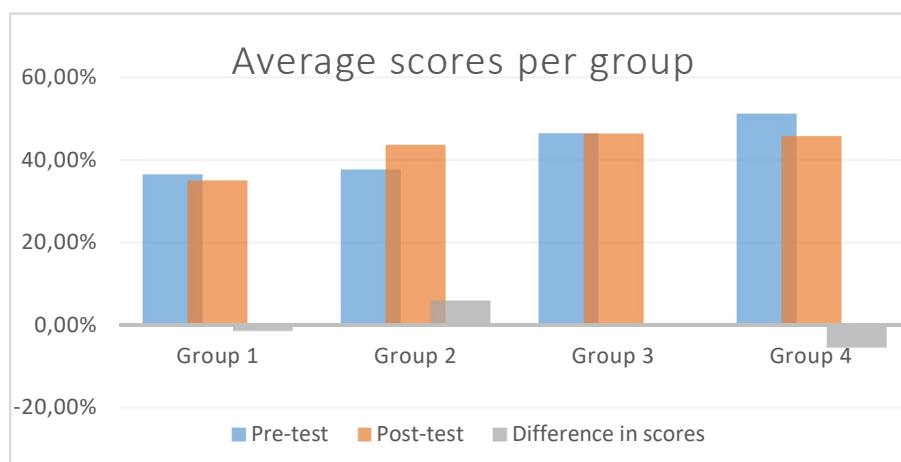
GRAPH 4 Average pre-test and post-test scores per group.

Gap Texts and Translation tasks

I also looked at the gap texts and translation tasks themselves, as those results might more accurately explain the pre-test and the post-test, as well as the participants' understanding and use of the present perfect. Both incorrect and correct uses of verbs can explain a student's control of the present perfect and whether they improved or not.

Tables 3 and 4 show how the participants scored per gap text or translation task. Spelling mistakes and mistakes with regards to irregular verbs are ignored, as this pilot study focusses on the

understanding and the use of the present perfect and not on how words are spelled or how well participants memorized irregular verbs.

Table 3 highlights two peculiarities regarding the participants' understanding and use of the present perfect throughout the study: 1) the VWO group scored higher on average than the HAVO group, as expected from their pre-test scores, and 2) while the VWO group started to perform slightly better throughout the study, the HAVO group did not.
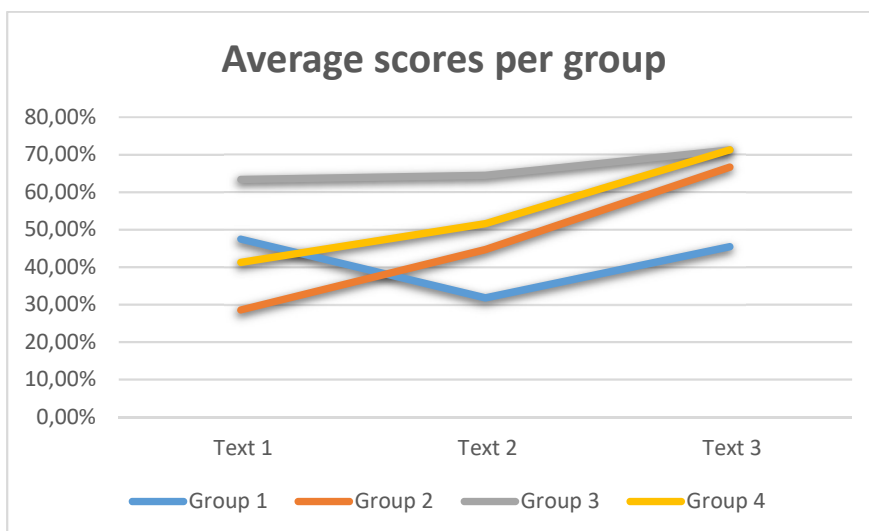
TABLE 3 Average scores per gap text

	HAVO	**VWO**	
	Group 1	*Group 3*	**Average score**
Gap text one	47.5%	63.4%	**55.5%**
Gap text two	31.8%	64.5%	**48.2%**
Gap text three	45.5%	71.3%	**58.4%**
Average score	**41.6%**	**66.4%**	

Table 4 shows that both translation groups started to perform better throughout the study. The VWO group started out with a higher percentage than the HAVO group, as expected from the pre-test, but they ended up with quite similar scores towards the end of the study, indicating their improved control over the use of the present perfect and its contexts.

TABLE 4 Average scores per translation tasks

	HAVO	**VWO**	
	Group 2	*Group 4*	**Average score**
Translation task one	28.6%	41.3%	**35.0%**
Translation task two	44.7%	51.6%	**48.2%**
Translation task three	66.7%	71.3%	**69.0%**
Average score	**46.7%**	**54.7%**	

Graph 5 shows a visual of the groups' scores per gap text or translation task, thereby summarizing (non-)progression of each group.

GRAPH 5 Average gap text or translation task scores per group

Discussion

Based on the results as outlined, the pilot study showed that the translation groups were able to use the present perfect correctly more often than the non-translation groups were. While the post-test shows that group 2 outperforms group 1 significantly, thus confirming the hypothesis, the opposite appears to be true for group 3 and 4. Group 4 performed worse after the pilot study, scoring almost identical to group 3. An analysis of the post-test and tasks, however, shows why group 4 only appears to perform worse after the pilot study. This section will therefore discuss the most commonly found errors in the pre-test and post-test, as well as peculiarities found in the gap texts and translation tasks in order to explain these seemingly contradictory results.

Pre-test and post-test

The most commonly found mistakes in the pre-test and post-test can be categorised under six labels:

1. Judging the sentence incorrect without providing a correct version;
2. Rewriting whole sentences;
3. 'Since' + present perfect is correct, no matter which verb is in the present perfect;
4. Well-trained on spotting signal words belonging to the past simple;
5. 'Have' being both the main and the auxiliary verb;
6. Focusing on an aspect other than the verb.

First of all, many participants judged a sentence to be incorrect without providing a correct version. This error mainly occurred with sentence 1, which appeared incredibly difficult according to the results. The students were able to intuitively judge that a sentence did not make much sense, but were unable to lay their finger on what the incorrectness was. Rewriting whole sentences also ties in with this explanation. Students probably 'felt' that the sentence was wrong, without precisely knowing which element was incorrect, and so they simply rewrote the entire sentence, creating a different yet grammatically correct sentence. These two types of mistakes strongly illustrate the students' lack of knowledge concerning the present perfect and its context.

A third commonly made mistake also occurs most often in sentence 1. The sentence itself consists of a signal word 'since' and two verbs, out of which only one is in the present perfect. Many participants deemed the sentence to be correct as the sentence consisted of both a marker for the present perfect and a verb in the present perfect. They were, however, unable to discern that the wrong verb was put in the present perfect.

Moreover, what can be filtered from both tests is that the participants are trained quite well in spotting signal words belonging to the past simple, and therefore also to the context belonging to the past simple. Students were able to spot time adverbials quite easily. However, they often denoted random time adverbials to also indicate a past simple, even when the sentence also contained a signal word denoting a present perfect (e.g. 'for five years now'). This overgeneralization resulted in a loss of points, especially on sentences 4 and 5, therefore showing yet again their lacking competence when it comes to the present perfect and its context.

Furthermore, sentence 4 contained the main verb 'to have,' which apparently tricked many students into believing the sentence already contained a present perfect, even though an auxiliary 'to have' is also needed to create a present perfect. This error also quite effectively shows the participants' lack of competence with regards to the present perfect and its context.

Participants also seemed to focus on the positioning of signal words instead of focussing on the grammatical features of the verb. Some moved the signal words between the auxiliary and main verb (e.g. 'Have you already lived here long?'), creating an ungrammatical and rather Dutch-sounding sentence, and others moved it simply elsewhere (e.g. 'Have you lived here already long?'). These participants did often notice the correct use of the present perfect, illustrating their knowledge of the present perfect and when it should be used, but then decided that something else must be wrong with the sentence. If we were to ignore all such mistakes, the average post-test scores of groups 1, 2 and 3 would improve slightly, while the average post-test scores of group 4 would improve significantly (i.e. 45.6% → 54.4%). In such a case, group 4 would have actually shown progression when comparing the pre-test and post-test, thereby removing the discrepancy between group 2 and 4, and proving my hypothesis for VWO as well.

Gap Texts

While group 3 showed some progression over the course of the pilot study, group 1 actually performed worse on the second and third gap text. As gap texts are generally rather isolated exercises, they add little to a student's communicative competence (N. Ellis, 2008). Moreover, this pilot study shows that gap texts barely improve a student's knowledge of the communicative context of the present perfect, as group 1 performed worse during the post-test, while group 3 performed identically on both tests.

Some peculiarities found in gap texts made by group 1 and 3 were: 1) the complete avoidance of the present perfect, 2) using the present perfect form for all gaps, 3) producing forms unrelated to the exercise (e.g. the infinitive), and 4) producing non-existing forms. These peculiarities could be due to confusion on the students' part, or their fear of using the present perfect, but it nonetheless illustrates their inability to produce and effectively use the present perfect in its context, greatly hindering their overall communicative competence. Context of course normally provides readers and listeners with a clear structure and can thereby clarify what is being conveyed. Even if the sentence contains an incorrect usage of the present perfect or misses a present perfect altogether, a more ambiguous context allows for more than one interpretation. Therefore, knowing how to make the present perfect is not enough to effectively use it in communication; only knowing the why and when can help learners improve their communicative competence.

Translation tasks

Table 4 and graph 5 show that participants in group 2 and 4 showed progress in their use of the present perfect better throughout the study, progressively scoring better on each consecutive translation task. This shows that both groups improved significantly in their use of the present perfect when translating from Dutch to English, indicating a new awareness of the context in which the present perfect is used.

However, translations produced even during the third translation task lacked overall communicative competence with regards to language aspects other than grammar. While participants were able to produce the correct form of the verbs after some practice, other elements of the English language still proved quite difficult to them, such as: 1) English sentence structure, and 2) (subtle) differences in context between languages. Most produced translations included word-by-word translation, resulting in participants sticking close to Dutch sentence structures instead of creating English sentence structures. As for the second seemingly difficult element, the auxiliary verb 'hebben' (English: 'to have') can be used in a wide array of contexts in Dutch but it is quite restricted in English (Voort, 2009). However, participants were unable to notice these (subtle) differences, and translated 'to have' literally whenever it occurred in the source text.

Besides these two common mistakes, participants also frequently used Dutch words in their English target texts, left words blank in their translations, forgot to add punctuation and capitalization, and mistranslated words. The first three mistakes were not taken into consideration when producing the percentages, as these had barely any effect on the correct usage of the present perfect (as long as the verb was translated). However, mistranslated words did affect the results as sometimes students would mistranslate verbs, resulting in unreadable sentences. In such cases, near-translations ('has gotten' instead of 'has obtained') were deemed correct, whereas nonsense translations ('crawl' instead of 'search') were deemed incorrect. In addition, one participant even translated their text not as a whole but as separate sentences, portraying their low level of communicative competence and their decontextualized mind-set.

Conclusion

The present study investigated the use of translation tasks on the acquisition of grammar, and more specifically the acquisition of the present perfect by Dutch students of English. Recent research into translation (Al-Amri &Adbul-Raof, 2014; Collins, 2007; Cordero, 1984; Duff, 1989; Hayati & Mohammadi, 2009; Marqués-Aguado & Solís-Becerra, 2013) and tasks (Poupore, 2013; Samuda & Bygate, 2008) suggested that translation tasks should have a greater effect on understanding the present perfect than regular gap-filling exercises would, because of the added effect of contextualization (N. Ellis, 2008; R. Ellis 2005), and the conceptual links between the learner's L1 and L2 (Kroll & Stewart, 1994; Potter et al., 1984).

The findings of this pilot study support that suggestion by providing important evidence demonstrating the added value of translation tasks when learning specific grammatical features. The non-translation groups 1 and 3 showed some understanding of the present perfect, but barely improved over the course of the pilot study, and showed no progression in their understanding of the present perfect and its context. Translation group 2 showed significant progression in their understanding and use of the present perfect and its context, both during the translation tasks and during the post-test. Translation group 4, on the other hand, did show significant progression in their understanding and use of the present perfect during the translation tasks, but appeared to score worse during the post-test. An analysis of their mistakes, however, shows that group 4 focussed mostly on elements other than the verb, often looking for some form of incorrectness, even if there was none. All in all, translation tasks seem to be an added value to second or foreign language learning when it comes to learning a specific grammatical feature such as the present perfect.

Future Research

While most research has mainly investigated grammatical competence as a by-product, this study has shown the added value of translation tasks when learning grammatical features such as the present perfect. I believe it would be interesting to also investigate other grammatical features, as translation tasks force learners to contextualize the grammatical feature, rather than producing the abstract rule and creating an over-reliance on signal words. It would also be interesting to investigate the effects of translation tasks on skills other than a learner's writing skills. Other studies have already shown the effects of translation on cohesion, association patterns, structuring, and overall communicative competence (Al-Amri & Adbul-Raof & 2014; Cordero, 1984; Marqués-Aguado & Solís-Becerra, 2013), but this might not be limited only to writing skills.

Moreover, I noticed other elements of the English language that also proved difficult for the average learner, such as (subtle) differences in context, illustrating their low level of communicative

competence and their decontextualized mind-set. Further research into the effectiveness of translation could consider looking into ways of helping language learners master those elements as well. One possibility would be to integrate Schmidt's noticing hypothesis (1990; 1994; 2001) to draw extra attention to these elements, therefore leading to an improved noticing of that particular element.

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Appendix A: Survey

Survey	Name:
1) What year are you in?	- VWO 3 - HAVO 3
2) Do you have any family members that are native speakers of English?	- Yes, namely: - No
3) What language do you speak at home?	- Dutch - English - Other, namely:
4) Have you ever lived in an English-speaking country?	- Yes, namely: - No
5) When did you start learning English at school?	- Primary school - 1HAVO/1VWO - 2HAVO/2VWO - 3HAVO/3VWO
6) How often do you watch an English-language film?	- I never watch English movies - Once a week - Two/three times a week - Four/five times a week - More than five times a week
7) When you watch English-language films, what is your preference?	- English movie with English subtitles - English movie with Dutch subtitles - English movie without any subtitles - I never watch English movies
8) How many hours a week do you play video games?	- I don't play video games - 1-2 hours a week - 3-4 hours a week - 4-6 hours a week - More than 6 hours a week
9) When you listen to music, what language do you prefer?	- Dutch - English - Other, namely

Appendix B: Post-test & Pre-test

Post-test & Pre-test
Error-analysis test. Are the following sentences correct? If not, correct the mistake and give the grammar rule.

1. Since they have met at school, they are friends.
2. He has died some years ago.
3. Have you lived here long already?
4. We have this dog for five years now.
5. He is dead for two years.

Appendix C: BBC articles

Clinton emails: FBI chief may have broken law, says top Democrat
The Democratic leader in the US Senate says the head of the FBI may have broken the law by revealing the bureau was investigating emails possibly linked to Hillary Clinton.

Harry Reid accused FBI director James Comey of violating an act which bars officials from influencing an election. News of the FBI inquiry comes less than two weeks before the US election. The bureau has meanwhile obtained a warrant to search a cache of emails belonging to a top Clinton aide.

Emails from Huma Abedin are believed to have been found on the laptop of her estranged husband, former congressman Anthony Weiner. There are reportedly 650,000 emails to search through on the laptop, making it unlikely investigators can give a verdict on them before election day.

Mr Reid also accused Mr Comey of withholding "explosive information about close ties between [Republican candidate] Donald Trump, his top advisers, and the Russian government".

"The public has a right to know about this information. I wrote to you months ago calling for this information to be released to the public," Mr Reid said. The FBI believes the emails might be "pertinent" to its previous inquiry into Mrs Clinton's use of a private server when she was secretary of state in the Obama administration.

The case was closed in July without any charges being brought against Mrs Clinton. Mr Weiner is subject to a separate investigation on suspicion of sending sexually explicit messages to an underage girl.

WhatsApp warned over Facebook data share deal
WhatsApp has been warned by European privacy watchdogs about sharing user data with parent company Facebook.

The regulators said they had "serious concerns" about the changes made to WhatsApp's privacy policy, which made the sharing possible. In a letter to the messaging firm, they asked it to stop sharing data until it was clear that European privacy rules were not being broken. WhatsApp said it was working with data watchdogs to address their concerns.

In August this year, WhatsApp revealed that it would be sharing more information with Facebook, which bought the messaging app in early 2014 for $19bn (£16bn). WhatsApp justified the change by saying this would mean suggestions about who people should connect with would be "more relevant". But many criticised its decision because of earlier pledges that WhatsApp had made to remain independent of Facebook.

The decision to share information prompted investigations by data protection bodies across Europe. Now, the Article 29 Working Party, the collective association of data watchdogs, said more work needed to be done to ensure regional rules governing privacy were not broken when information passed from one firm to another.

The Working Party said this work had to be done because the sharing involved processing data in ways that were not in the privacy policy operating when people signed up. The group called for data sharing to be halted while the terms of the deal were scrutinised. A WhatsApp spokeswoman said: "We've had constructive conversations, including before our update, and we remain committed to respecting applicable law."

Tesla shows off solar roof tiles
Roof tiles with built-in solar panels have been unveiled by Tesla chief executive Elon Musk.

The tiles, made from glass, are intended to be a more attractive way to add solar panels to homes, compared with currently-used solar technology. The launch took place in Universal Studios, Los Angeles, on what used to be the set for the television show Desperate Housewives.

It comes with Tesla due to take over struggling energy firm Solar City. Some of the electric carmaker's investors have expressed concern over the takeover, suggesting it is a Tesla-funded bail-out of a company Mr Musk has a vested interest in as its biggest shareholder.

Bringing the solar tiles to the Desperate Housewives set was a way of displaying the idea's key selling point: it looks far better than solar panelling. Mr Musk jokingly described it as a "sweet roof!". No price was given for the tiles, which come in a variety of colours and styles, though Mr Musk did say it would be cheaper than fitting a traditional roof and then adding solar on top.

Also part of the launch was Powerwall 2, Tesla's home battery product. The primary function of the Powerwall is to store any surplus energy from the solar panels. It will cost $5,500 (£4,511), Mr Musk said. Tesla posted a surprise profit in its last quarterly earnings - its first in three years. The $2.6bn acquisition of Solar City seems set to see the company plunge back into the red, but Mr Musk insisted on Friday that the deal made sense as having separate companies would "slow things down". Tesla shareholders vote on the acquisition on 17 November.

Appendix D: Gap text exercises

Exercise one
Brief for Gap Text
Complete the sentence by putting the verb in brackets in the correct tense. You can choose between the Past Simple and the Present Perfect. Adverbials in brackets should be filled in correctly as well.

Gap text
Clinton emails: FBI chief (1)… (to break / just) the law, says top Democrat
The Democratic leader in the US Senate (2)… (to say) the head of the FBI (3)… (to break / just) the law by revealing that last night the bureau (4)… (to investigate) emails possibly linked to Hillary. Harry Reid (5)… (to accuse) FBI director James Comey of influencing the election. News of the FBI inquiry (6)… (to come) less than two weeks before the US elections. The bureau (7)… (to obtain / since) a warrant to search a cache of emails belonging to a top Clinton aide.

The FBI also (8)… (to claim) yesterday that they (9)… (to find) emails from Huma Abedin on the laptop of her estranged husband, former congressman Anthony Weiner. They also (10)… (to state) that they believe the emails "pertinent" to its previous inquiry into Mrs Clinton's use of a private server when she (11)… (to be) secretary of state in the Obama administration.

Exercise two
Brief for gap text
Complete the sentence by putting the verb in brackets in the correct tense. You can choose between the Past Simple and the Present Perfect. Adverbials in brackets should be filled in correctly as well.

Gap text
WhatsApp Warned over Facebook data share deal
WhatsApp *(1) ... (to be)* warned by European privacy watchdogs about sharing user data with parent company Facebook. The regulators *(2) ... (to say)* they *(3) ... (to have)* "serious concerns" about the changes WhatsApp's *(4) ... (to make)* to their privacy policy, which *(5) ... (to make)* the sharing possible. In a letter to the messaging firm, they *(6) ... (to ask)* it to stop sharing data until it *(7) ... (to be)* clear that European privacy rules had not been broken.

In August this year, WhatsApp *(8) ... (to reveal)* that it would be sharing more information with Facebook, which *(9) ... (to buy)* the messaging app in early 2014 for $19 billion. WhatsApp *(10) ... (to justify)* the change by saying this would mean suggestions about who people should connect with would be "more relevant". But many people *(11) ... (to criticise)* its decision since because of earlier pledges WhatsApp *(12) ... (to make)* to remain independent of Facebook.

Exercise three
Brief for gap text
Complete the sentence by putting the verb in brackets in the correct tense. You can choose between the Past Simple and the Present Perfect. Adverbials in brackets should be filled in correctly as well.

Gap text
Tesla (1) ... (to show off) solar tiles
Tesla chief executive Elon Musk *(2) ... (to unveil / recently)* roof tiles with built-in solar panels. The launch *(3) ... (to take place)* in Universal Studios, Los Angeles, on what used to be the set for the television show Desperate Housewives. This *(4) ... (to be)* due to Tesla taking over the struggling energy firm Solar City in August. Some of the electric carmaker's investors *(5) ... (to express / just)* concern over the takeover, suggesting it *(6) ... (to be)* a Tesla-funded bail-out.

Bringing the solar tiles to the Desperate Housewives set *(7) ... (to be)* a way of displaying the idea's key selling point: it *(8) ... (to look)* far better than solar panelling. Mr Musk jokingly *(9) ... (to describe)* it as a "sweet roof!". No price *(10) ... (to be / yet)* given for the tiles, though Mr Musk *(11) ... (to say)* it would be cheaper than fitting a traditional roof and then adding solar on top.

Appendix E: Translation tasks

Exercise one
Translation brief
Nu.nl is op zoek naar vertalers Nederlands-Engels omdat ze het bereik van hun website willen vergroten. Het aantrekken van Engelse lezers is dan ook hun doel. Jij vindt dit wel een leuk idee en wil graag naar de baan solliciteren. Als test vertaal je de eerste alinea van één van hun nieuwsberichten en stuurt deze naar hen op.

Translation text

Clinton E-mails: Hoofd FBI heeft wet gebroken, zegt top-Democraat.

De leider van de Democraten in de tweede kamer van de Verenigde Staten heeft in een verklaring gezegd dat het hoofd van de FBI de wet heeft gebroken door bekend te maken dat ze e-mails hebben onderzocht die mogelijk gelinkt zijn aan Hillary. Harry Reid heeft FBI directeur James Comey ervan beschuldigd de verkiezing te beïnvloeden. Nieuws van het FBI-onderzoek kwam minder dan twee weken voor de verkiezingen aan het licht. De FBI heeft sindsdien een machtiging gekregen om een berg e-mails van Clintons top-assistente te doorzoeken.

Woordenlijst

Dutch	English
Hoofd FBI	FBI chief
Tweede kamer van de Verenigde Staten	US Senate
Verkiezingen	Elections
Machtiging	Warrant
Assistent	Aide

Exercise two

Translation brief

Je werkt voor een ICT-bedrijf in Nederland dat veel met *social media* doet. Dit bericht over Whatsapp en het eventuele schenden van hun privacy beleid zou dan ook grote gevolgen kunnen hebben voor jouw bedrijf. De opdracht die jij van je baas hebt gekregen is om dit bericht naar het Engels te vertalen, om op jullie website te zetten. Hieronder staat de eerste alinea. Vertaal deze naar het Engels.

Translation text

WhatsApp gewaarschuwd over data-uitwisselingsdeal met Facebook

WhatsApp is door Europese privacy-waakhonden gewaarschuwd over het uitwisselen van gebruikersgegevens met moederbedrijf Facebook. De wetgevers hebben verklaard dat ze "ernstige bedenkingen" hadden omtrent de veranderingen die WhatsApp aan hun privacy beleid had gemaakt, waardoor uitwisseling van data mogelijk werd. In een brief aan WhatsApp hebben ze de firma gevraagd te stoppen met de data-uitwisseling totdat het duidelijk was dat de Europese privacyregels niet waren geschonden.

Woordenlijst

Dutch	English
Data-uitwisselingsdeal	Data share deal
Waakhonden	Watchdogs
Gebruikersgegevens	User data
Bedenkingen	Concerns
Omtrent	About
Privacybeleid	Privacy policy

Translation brief

Je vader werkt voor een bedrijf in het oosten van het land dat zojuist de zonnepanelen van Tesla heeft opgekocht. Het bedrijf heeft een kort artikel geschreven over de lancering van dit nieuwe product en wat de voordelen en nadelen zijn. Jouw vader heeft de klus gekregen dit bericht naar het Engels te vertalen zodat ook de Engelse klanten van het bedrijf het nieuwsbericht kunnen lezen. Helaas is zijn Engels niet zo goed, dus vraagt hij of jij de tekst voor hem wil vertalen. Vertaal de eerste alinea van de tekst om te kijken of je genoeg van dit onderwerp af weet om je vader te kunnen helpen.

Translation text

Tesla pronkt met zonnepanelen.

Elon Musk, directievoorzitter van Tesla, heeft onlangs dakpannen met ingebouwde zonnepanelen onthuld. De lancering van dit innovatieve product vond plaats in *Universal Studios, Los Angeles*, op wat vroeger de set voor de televisieserie *Desperate Housewives* was. Dit kwam doordat Tesla het kwakkelende energiebedrijf Solar City in augustus had overgenomen. Een aantal investeerders van de producent van elektrische auto's heeft hun bedenkingen geuit over de overname, aangezien het een door Tesla gefinancierde reddingsactie suggereert.

Woordenlijst

Dutch	*English*
Pronken	To show off
Directievoorzitter	Chief executive
Zonnepanelen	Solar panels
Onthullen	To unveil
Kwakkelende	Struggling
Bedenkingen	Concern
Overname	Takeover
Door Tesla gefinancierde reddingsactie	Tesla-funded bail-out