

The Role of Translation in Second Language Learning: Junior Secondary Level Learners' Beliefs and Strategy Use on Writing Skills

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ABSTRACT

Translation has a noteworthy historical background towards second language learning, but to some extent, several researchers demonstrate that it only leads to a short-term, balanced connection between the local and second language learners. Despite these drawbacks, this study will investigate the secondary level learners' beliefs about the use of translation for enhancing their writing skills. Furthermore, this research presents the outcome of a survey that is centered on learners' thoughts, strategy use, and responses regarding a translation task. There are 15 secondary-level learners whose data have been collected for this research. Many researchers worked on the use of translation in second language learning, and most of them concentrated on the learners' errors in translation and their ability to translate certain structures, but very few were on the importance of translation in teaching English. Finally, it has been found in this study that although the use of translation and strategies involving translation to learn a foreign or second language, there is a difference in the impact on learners from different media of instruction.

Keywords: translation, strategy, foreign language, belief, writing skill

INTRODUCTION

In the language learning process, translation plays a significant role that cannot be overlooked, whether it is utilized in second language learning or foreign language learning. Quite a few effective variables are responsible for effective language learning, and those variables are facilitated through translation. A handful of significant studies have emerged to support as well as oppose this statement that translation effectively helps learners learn a second language. Researchers such as Cook (2010) and Leonardi (2010) have called for a reassessment of the role of translation in language teaching, suggesting that, when used judiciously, it can enhance various aspects of

language learning, including vocabulary acquisition, grammatical competence, and cultural awareness (Dagilienė, 2012). In addition, translation has a noteworthy historical background towards second language learning, but to some extent, several researchers demonstrate that it only leads to a short-term, balanced connection between the local and second language learners. Despite these drawbacks, this study will investigate the junior secondary level learners' beliefs about the use of translation for enhancing their writing skills. This study also tries to figure out the consequences of translation in second language learning, as well as how it affects second language learners emphatically, as the research methodology is a qualitative one. Furthermore, this research presents the outcome of a survey that is centered on learners' thoughts and responses regarding translation-related activities, exercises, and their efficacy in the second language learning process. In addition, Wharton (2007) argued that the use of the first language offers learners a clear communicative purpose when producing the second language. Furthermore, Nguyen (2024) highlights that translation is not merely a linguistic process but a form of communication in which learners must take into account both purpose and audience. This communicative dimension encourages greater learner engagement and investment in the task, thereby making translation a meaningful and relevant classroom activity despite ongoing debates about its place in language teaching.

Many researchers worked on the use of translation in second language learning, and most of them concentrated on the learners' errors in translation and their ability to translate certain structures, but very few were on the importance of translation in teaching English. Very few researchers worked on the learners' beliefs about translation. Generally, many of the learners think and act in learning a language depending on their beliefs and conceptions about their circumstances. In today's educational systems and situations, language learners' beliefs and ideas about certain subject matter influence their whole process of learning a language. Drawing on findings from multiple studies on language learning strategies, translation has been recognized as a cognitive strategy. Chamot (2004) noted that this strategy promotes awareness by transferring ideas from one language to another through direct, word-for-word rendering.

In Bangladesh, English is used as a foreign language, and learners from different education levels learn this language to fulfill their educational requirements. Also, learners from different levels learn this language as a subject rather than acquiring a new language. In the Bangladeshi education system, there are two types of medium of instruction followed by the educational institutions. Both Bangla and English version students have English as a subject, but Bangla medium learners use Bangla as the medium of instruction, whereas English version learners use English as their medium of instruction. English version learners' curriculum and study materials are translated into English. Both groups of learners have first language interference (both positive and negative) in learning English. The present study addressed this issue of using translation as a strategy to learn English, particularly writing skills, and tried to find out whether translation has any impact on junior secondary level learners' writing skills. The study also addressed the fact that although the use of translation in learning another language has some negative interference, more professionals believe in the facilitating role of the students' native tongue in language classrooms (Liao, 2006; Cook, 2010) (as cited in Karimian & Talebinejad, 2013).

This study investigates the role of translation as a language learning strategy in enhancing junior secondary level learners' English vocabulary knowledge and writing skills, with particular attention to how translation is perceived and used by learners. Specifically, it examines learners' beliefs about the effectiveness of translation in developing writing skills, identifies the types of translation strategies employed in English writing, and compares the use of translation strategies between English version and Bangla medium learners. Using a quantitative research approach, data were collected from a total of fifteen students drawn from two secondary schools in Dhaka city: one Bangla medium and one English medium school. Although the sample size and institutional scope are limited, the study employs both direct and indirect translation tasks to ensure a rigorous analysis. The findings aim to provide insights into the pedagogical value of translation in secondary-level English language learning and to help teachers and learners better understand its potential benefits for improving writing skills. However, the results are not intended to be generalized; rather, they should be interpreted as indicative, highlighting the need for further research with larger and more diverse learner populations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Although previously many researchers ignored the importance of the use of translation in a foreign or second language learning, at present, "EFL learners and teachers have different perspectives toward translation and its use in their learning and teaching activities" (Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010, p. 228). Learners' beliefs about translation have both positive and negative impacts on their 'risk-taking' and 'ambiguity tolerance' (Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010, p. 228). Moreover, EFL learners have positive attitudes towards translation as to 'comprehend, remember, and produce a foreign language' (Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010, p. 228). Foreign language learners try to use their L1 knowledge while producing something similar in an FL/SL. "Based on her survey of foreign language students,

Horwitz also argues that some preconceived beliefs are likely to restrict the learners' range of strategy use" (as cited in Ashouri & Fotovatnia, 2010, p. 229). In other words, learners' set beliefs about the use of translation hinder or restrict their learning, and it can also be different for individual learners.

Second language learning also requires a transfer of L1 knowledge into L2 cultural knowledge (Malone, 2012). He further pointed out that 'L1 can be very useful in learning the L2.' When learners are asked to translate in their classrooms between the target language and a foreign language, they tend to use their L1 naturally better than the foreign or second language (Machida, 2011). Machida (2011) also pointed out that in the case of wrong or incorrect translation, learners become aware of links between their L1 and L2. Learners use 'dictionaries to find lexicon,' they also 'consult with the teacher' or 'websites or books' to get information about a particular theme if they have less knowledge about it (Machida, 2011). One of the research studies by González Davies (2014) considers translation to be a key strategy for building (inter)linguistic and intercultural communicative competence. In other words, the use of translation indicates using both intra- and inter-language competencies to learn English language skills.

Translation can be used to 'expand students' vocabulary skills' (Dagilienė, 2012). It also builds their 'understanding of how languages work' and 'improves the comprehension of L2' (Dagilienė, 2012). "Students taught by using pedagogical translation are encouraged to practice reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar, and speaking. One of the main aims of foreign language teaching is to develop the student's ability to communicate in the target language" (Dagilienė, 2012). "Introducing the act of translating into SL/FL class promotes positive use of the learners' L1 and knowledge and experience in their SL/FL learning" (Machida, 2011). Translation also helps improve learners' styles of writing (Dagilienė, 2012).

Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis (CAH) refers to similarities and dissimilarities between a learner's first and second languages. For doing this study, the researcher kept CAH as a hypothesis, which predetermines that the L2 learners have positive L1 transfer while learning English as a foreign language (Ellis, 1985). The data has been organized through a point Likert scale. The researcher intentionally formulated a point Likert to avoid learners' bias on the items. Therefore, 'it is imperative to transform an abstract issue into a figurative shape in order to measure it up to the best possible extent' (Joshi, Kale, Chandel & Pal, 2015). The reliability and consistency of the items have been examined through 'Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient' (Gliem & Gliem, 2003). Gliem and Gliem (2003) also pointed out, "Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient normally ranges between 0 and 1. However, there is actually no lower limit to the coefficient. The closer Cronbach's alpha coefficient is to 1.0, the greater the internal consistency of the items in the scale.

Although advanced learners demonstrate a high level of language proficiency, they still experience shortcomings in their L2 competence that require support. Consequently, since writing in a second language is demanding, the use of translation often becomes an unavoidable compensatory strategy (Murtisari, 2020). In fact, In Translation Studies, translation is viewed as a communicative tool and, therefore, should be introduced at the early stages of foreign language learning to help students become accustomed to their roles as communicators and intercultural mediators (Graff, 2021).

According to Shuwaib (2024), integrating translation into English language teaching is particularly beneficial for enhancing learners' language development, as well as for fostering a deeper sensitivity to and awareness of linguistic and cultural nuances. Shuwaib (2024) further noted that incorporating translation within a balanced pedagogical framework enables educators to offer a more holistic and effective learning experience, addressing the diverse needs of learners in multilingual classrooms. Shuwaib's (2024) study revealed significant insights into preferred methods of integrating translation in English Language Teaching. The findings showed that both teachers (75%) and students (70%) favored brief, targeted translation tasks embedded within regular lessons rather than extended, independent translation projects. This preference indicates an effort to maintain a balance between translation and other language learning activities while also responding to concerns about limited instructional time. In addition, while a wide variety of texts were used in translation activities, there was a strong preference for authentic materials. Teachers (68%) and students (75%) reported that news articles, song lyrics, and social media posts were particularly engaging and effective for learning (Shuwaib, 2024). Moreover, the survey further highlighted several perceived benefits of incorporating translation in English Language Teaching. Both teachers (90%) and students (88%) identified vocabulary development as the most significant advantage, followed by enhanced grammatical understanding, as reported by 85% of teachers and 80% of students (Shuwaib, 2024).

According to Brown (2021), translation activities can foster learner autonomy by equipping students with tools for independent language exploration and self-directed study. Through engagement in translation tasks, learners develop strategies for moving between languages and using reference resources effectively, skills that are essential for sustained and lifelong language learning. Recent studies have shown positive outcomes when translation is incorporated as a core component of the curriculum, with evidence of its effectiveness in vocabulary development (Belpoliti & Plascencia, 2013) and reading comprehension (Valdeón, 2015). Beyond enhancing vocabulary and grammatical knowledge, translation activities can also support the development of metacognitive skills. Through

the process of translation, learners become more conscious of their own learning strategies as well as the linguistic challenges they encounter. Many learners, especially those at advanced proficiency levels or in specialized domains such as business and academia, are likely to engage in translation or cross-linguistic mediation in their future professional contexts. Consequently, incorporating translation into ELT can help prepare learners for authentic, real-world language use situations (Nguyen, 2024).

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The central research questions of this study are whether junior secondary level learners learn the English language, especially writing skills, through the use of translation, and what the perceptions of junior secondary level learners are about the use of translation as a language learning strategy. In this chapter, the researcher discusses the methods that have been applied to collect data for this study. Besides, this chapter presents the research design, participants, sampling, setting, theoretical framework, data collection procedure, data analysis, instrumentation, and obstacles encountered during the study.

Research Design

This research has been intended to examine whether junior secondary level learners learn English language through the writing skills through the use of translation. What are the perceptions of junior secondary level learners about the use of translation as a language learning strategy? Besides, the researcher intends to figure out both the English and Bangla versions of junior secondary level learners' beliefs about the use of translation, and also their strategies for using translation. For investigating these two, the researcher adapted and modified survey questionnaires of IBT and ITLS of Translation by Liao (2006). For doing a comparative analysis, the researcher collected data from students aged 14 to 16 years from both English version and Bangla medium schools. There was no interruption during data collection as the researcher informed the students of the reason for her research and gave them clear and understandable instructions regarding the survey questionnaires and translation-based tasks.

The responses of the participants of both groups are observed and measured based on the 'Contrastive Analysis Hypothesis' of language acquisition, which gives the idea that a learner's knowledge of his/her L1 has a great impact on the learning of an L2 and which has both 'psychological and linguistic aspects' of language learning (Ellis, 1985, p. 23). In this case, L1 transfer leads to errors, and these are known as 'interference' like errors (Ellis, 1985, p. 24). However, the strength of the 'act of translation' helps learners achieve better understanding in the written systems (Machida, 2011). The "linguistic, social and cultural sensitivity" developed through the translation procedure helps learners enhance their 'noticing' and 'observing details of the linguistic in L1 and SL/FL' (Machida, 2011).

Participants

The participants for this research are 7 junior secondary level learners of an English version school ($M = 14.92857$, $SD = 0.607493$) and 8 junior secondary level learners of a Bangla medium school aged 14 to 16 ($M = 14.6875$, $SD = 0.703943$). The learners are from 2 schools in Dhaka city. Among the participants, 7 are girls, and 8 are boys. Learners from 'Post-primary education in the general stream is imparted by junior secondary schools (grade 6-8)' (Rahman, Hamzah, Meerah & Rahman, 2010, p. 115).

Sampling

The sample used in this study consists of 15 secondary-level learners from two schools. They have been selected from two different versions of schools, English version learners can be assumed as X, and Bangla version learners can be assumed as Y. The number of participants from each school is $X:Y = 7:8$. Moreover, 46.66% of the sample is girls, and 53.33% of the sample is boys. The researcher did a random selection of the participants; thus, she can make the study unbiased and balanced.

Setting

This research has been conducted in a classroom setting to make the children feel comfortable, as they are in a familiar environment. Moreover, there were two survey questionnaires with 5 statements for each of the questionnaires. The researcher explained to the learners both the questionnaires and the translation activity, and requested the teacher to be there so that the participants would get a familiar environment and respond without hesitation. Therefore, it can be said that the responses from the questionnaires and translation activity have validity and reliability, with no bias.

Instrumentation

The researcher used two survey questionnaires, one of which was based on learners' beliefs or perceptions on the use of translation to enhance their writing skills, and another was based on the learners' use of translation through various strategies. To set a standard, the researcher kept the same questionnaire and translation activity for both groups of learners. Each of the learners got 30 to 35 minutes to complete the survey and translation activity. Before doing the survey, the researcher explained the purpose of the survey and told the participants that she expected unbiased and reliable answers from them as learners.

Data Collection Procedure

To minimize the number of variables for this study, the researcher decided to follow several steps to ensure consistency through different responses of the participants. First of all, she decided to collect data from 2 schools. As the researcher wanted to do a comparative analysis, she kept one school from the Bangla version and another from the English version. Although she has got permission, the learners' willingness to be a part of the research was lower, as most of the learners were busy with their extracurricular activities. Therefore, the researcher collected some of the learners' contacts and provided them with the questionnaires during their break time. The data collection procedure started by seeking permission from the authorities of the schools. The researcher has submitted a recommendation letter to each of the school authorities, which was given by her supervisor, and the school authorities allowed the researcher to collect data during their art or extra-curricular classes. For this reason, the researcher had to collect the class routine and set everything according to the school. The researcher told the students that if they were interested, only then could they participate in the survey and translation activity. The researcher provided chocolates to each of the participants and teachers who helped with the survey. The learners took 30 to 35 minutes to complete the survey.

Data Analysis Procedure

The data has been analyzed through several stages. Firstly, the researcher divided the learners into two groups. The learners' age was 14 to 16. Secondly, the researcher used the Inventory for Beliefs about Translation (IBT) to measure the secondary level learners' beliefs about the use of translation in enhancing their writing skills, and the Inventory for Translation as a Learning Strategy (TILS) to determine the secondary level learners' strategy use, comprising translation. Alongside, the researcher has computed the mean score and standard deviation for both groups of participants' responses by using Microsoft Excel 2013. A quantitative research method has been followed for calculating the data. Then, the findings were analyzed and interpreted through the interpretation scale by Seligar and Shohamy (1989). The reason for using both mean score and standard deviation for analyzing the data is that the mean score gives the idea of only one aspect of the outcome; on the other hand, standard deviation helps get a reliable, consistent descriptive value of the measures of the research sample. For the translation activity, the researcher kept a task completion rate for both groups of learners. She also marked their writing based on their performance. The researcher, as a language teacher, judged the translation activity of the learners and categorized them into four themes: punctuation, style of writing, vocabulary knowledge, and use of discourse markers. This helps the researcher answer the central research questions without having any prejudice.

Data has been interpreted according to the interpretation scale by Seligar and Shohamy (1989),

- 1.00 – 2.25: Strongly disagree/ Never
- 2.26 – 3.00: Disagree/ Rarely
- 3.01 – 3.75: Agree/Sometimes
- 3.76 – 5.00: Strongly agree/ Always (p. 214).

Findings

Data has been interpreted according to the interpretation scale by Seligar and Shohamy (1989),

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- 3.01 – 3.75: Agree/Sometimes
- 3.76 – 5.00: Strongly agree/ Always (p. 214).

Findings from the English version of learners' beliefs about translation

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for the IBT Items

No. of items	Item Description	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Translation helps me remember advanced English vocabulary; therefore, I can use it in my writing.	7	3.571429	0.534522

2	Translation helps me understand English grammar rules, as some rules are quite similar to Bangla.	7	2.428571	0.534522
3	Translation helps me learn English idioms and phrases and use those in my writing.	7	3.142857	0.899735
4	When the English writing assignments seem difficult, I depend more on translation.	7	2.285714	0.95119
5	Translation helps me write any type of English composition.	7	2.714286	0.755929

The descriptive statistics indicate mixed beliefs among junior secondary level English version learners regarding the use of translation in learning English writing skills. Learners generally hold a positive view of translation as a support for drawing on their L1 knowledge to learn English, as reflected in a relatively high mean score ($M = 3.57$, $SD = 0.53$), and they also tend to agree that translation helps them learn English idioms and phrases and apply these in writing ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.90$). In contrast, the learners express disagreement with the role of translation in understanding English grammar rules through similarities with Bangla ($M = 2.43$, $SD = 0.53$), relying on translation when writing tasks appear difficult ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 0.95$), and using translation to write different types of English compositions ($M = 2.71$, $SD = 0.76$). The relatively low standard deviations across items suggest limited variability in responses, indicating a fairly consistent pattern of beliefs within the group.

Findings from the English version learners' strategy use, comprising translation

Table 2. Means and Standard Deviations for the ITLS Items

No. of items	Item Description	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	To write in English, I first take notes about the topic in Bangla.	7	2	0.57735
2	When I write in English, I first think in Bangla and then translate my ideas into English.	7	2.57142	0.9759
3	I write Bangla outlines for my English compositions.	7	1.714286	0.48795
4	I use Bangla translation of grammatical terms such as parts of speech, tenses, and agreements to help me simplify the roles of the grammatical parts of English sentences.	7	2.285714	0.755929
5	I memorize the meaning of new English vocabulary words by remembering their Bangla translation.	7	3.142857	0.377964

The findings reveal that junior secondary level English version learners generally show limited reliance on translation-based strategies during the process of English writing. The learners strongly disagree with taking notes in Bangla before writing in English ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.58$) and with preparing Bangla outlines for English compositions ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.49$), indicating a low tendency to use L1 at the planning stage. They also disagree with thinking in Bangla and then translating ideas into English while writing ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 0.98$), as well as with using Bangla translations of grammatical terms to simplify English grammar rules ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 0.76$). However, a contrasting pattern emerges in vocabulary learning, as learners agree that they memorize the meanings of new English words by recalling their Bangla translations ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.38$). The relatively low standard deviations across items suggest that responses are fairly consistent among the participants.

Findings from Bangla medium learners' beliefs about translation

Table 3. Means and Standard Deviations for the IBT Items

No. of items	Item Description	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	Translating helps me remember advanced English vocabulary; therefore, I can use it in my writing.	8	2.75	1.164965
2	Translating helps me understand English grammar rules, as some rules are quite similar to Bangla.	8	2.375	0.744024
3	Translating helps me learn English idioms and phrases and use those in my writing.	8	3.25	0.707107
4	When the English writing assignments seem difficult, I depend more on Bangla translation.	8	2.625	0.517549
5	Translating helps me write any English composition.	8	3.125	1.125992

The results indicate that junior secondary level Bangla medium learners generally hold negative beliefs about the role of translation in learning English writing skills, with one notable exception. The learners strongly disagree

that translation helps them use their L1 knowledge to learn English as an L2 ($M = 2.00$, $SD = 0.58$) and that it supports learning English idioms and phrases for use in writing ($M = 1.71$, $SD = 0.49$). They also disagree that translation facilitates understanding English grammar rules through similarities with Bangla ($M = 2.57$, $SD = 0.98$) or that they rely more on translation when English writing tasks become difficult ($M = 2.29$, $SD = 0.76$). However, in contrast to these generally negative perceptions, the learners agree that translation helps them write different types of English compositions ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 0.38$). The relatively low standard deviations across items suggest a consistent pattern of responses among the Bangla medium learners.

Findings from Bangla medium learners' strategy use comprising translation

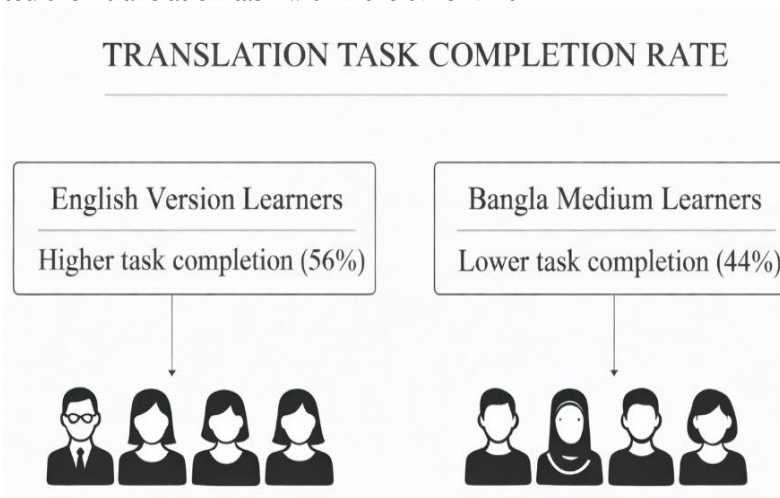
Table 4. Means and Standard Deviations for the ITLS Items

No. of items	Item Description	N	Mean	Standard Deviation
1	To write in English, I first take notes about the topic in Bangla.	8	2.375	1.06066
2	When I write in English, I first think in Bangla and then translate my ideas into English.	8	2.875	0.991031
3	I write Bangla outlines for my English compositions.	8	2.25	0.886405
4	I use Bangla translation of grammatical terms such as parts of speech, tenses, and agreements to help me simplify the roles of the grammatical parts of English sentences.	8	2.5	1.069045
5	I memorize the meaning of new English vocabulary words by remembering their Bangla translation.	8	2.75	0.707107

The findings show that junior secondary level Bangla medium learners generally report limited use of translation-based strategies in their English writing process. The learners disagree with taking notes in Bangla before writing in English ($M = 2.38$, $SD = 1.06$) and with thinking in Bangla and then translating ideas into English while writing ($M = 2.88$, $SD = 0.99$). They also strongly disagree with preparing Bangla outlines for English compositions ($M = 2.25$, $SD = 0.89$) and disagree with using Bangla translations of grammatical terms to simplify English sentence structure ($M = 2.50$, $SD = 1.07$). Additionally, learners disagree with memorizing new English vocabulary through Bangla translations ($M = 2.75$, $SD = 0.71$). While most items show relatively consistent responses, greater variability is observed in note-taking and the use of grammatical terminology, suggesting differing individual preferences within the group.

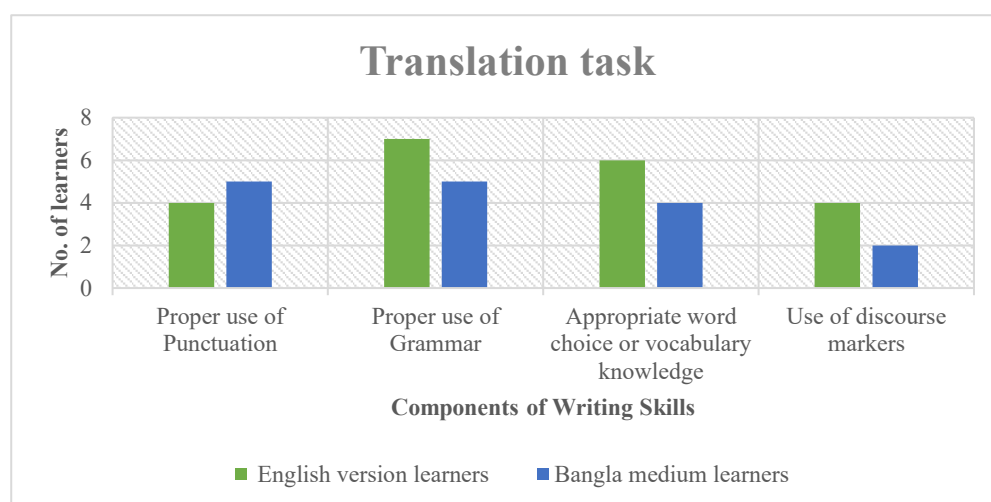
Task Completion Rate of English Version and Bangla Medium Learners

The following pie chart indicates the task completion rate of the English version and the Bangla medium learners. 52% English version secondary level learners completed their task within the time limit, and 48% Bangla version learners completed their translation task within the time limit.



Findings from the English version and the Bangla medium learners' translation task

The following chart shows the findings from the translation task by both English version and Bangla medium learners. The translation task had three phases. In phase one, the learners write a short paragraph on their 'Goals.' In phase two, the learners write about the same topic in Bangla. Finally, in phase three, the learners translated the Bangla version of the writing into English. Moreover, learners did direct and indirect translation of their own writing throughout the activity.



Proper Use of Punctuation

While doing the translation task, among 7 English version learners, 4 (57%) learners properly punctuated their writing. On the other hand, among 8 Bangla medium learners, 5 (63%) have properly used punctuation in their writing.

Proper Use of Grammar

While doing the translation task, among 7 English version learners, 7 (100%) learners used accurate grammar. However, for the same task, among 8 Bangla medium learners, 5 (63%) have used proper grammatical structures in their writing.

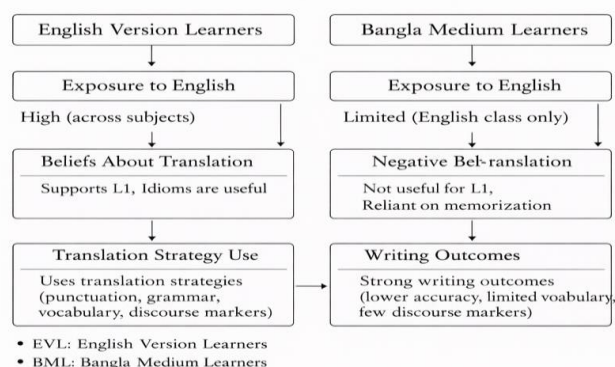
Word Choice and Vocabulary Knowledge

While doing the translation task, among 7 English version learners, 6 (89%) have good word choice. However, for the same task, among 8 Bangla medium learners, 4 (50%) learners have appropriate word choice according to the context of writing.

Use of Discourse Markers

While doing the translation task, among 7 English version learners, 4 (57%) learners have used discourse markers, for example, besides, firstly, then, also, however, etc. However, for the same translation task, among 8 Bangla medium learners, 2 (25%) have used very few discourse markers in their writing.

Conceptual Summary of Differences Between English Version Learners (EVL) and Bangla Medium Learners (BML)



Comparative Summary Table

Dimension	English Version Learners	Bangla Medium Learners
Exposure to English	High (across subjects)	Limited (English class only)
Belief in translation for L1 support	Agree	Disagree
Grammar via translation	Disagree	Disagree
Idioms & phrases	Agree	Strongly disagree
Vocabulary via translation	Agree	Disagree

Dimension	English Version Learners	Bangla Medium Learners
Reliance during difficult tasks	Disagree	Disagree
Grammar accuracy (%)	100%	63%
Vocabulary appropriacy (%)	89%	50%
Discourse marker use (%)	57%	25%

DISCUSSION:

The results of this study show significant variations in the ways junior secondary students view and employ translation as a method for developing their English writing abilities. Learners in Bangla and English versions both displayed unique attitudes and tactical approaches that mirror more general tendencies in the application of translation in EFL situations. In general, students tended to see translation favorably when it helped them with particular writing subskills, such as recalling terminology and comprehending complicated sentences. This pattern is in line with studies showing that EFL learners frequently think translation aids in language acquisition by strengthening lexical knowledge and making it easier to understand new linguistic structures (Putrawan et al., 2019). For instance, learners of the English version expressed comparatively more agreement that translation aids in their retention of complex vocabulary and the efficient use of colloquial idioms in writing. Further evidence that selective application of first language (L1) knowledge can support rather than impede second language (L2) writing performance comes from their performance in vocabulary selection and grammar accuracy.

On the other hand, learners do not generally use translation as a default learning technique, as seen by the general low reliance on translation strategies seen in both groups, especially during the planning and writing stages. According to Genç, Kuluşaklı, and Boynukara's (2018) qualitative research, learners may turn to translation when faced with challenging language tasks, although they typically do so strategically rather than frequently. For example, English version learners disagreed with taking lengthy notes in Bangla before writing in English, indicating that they are increasingly trying to interact directly with English when writing.

Bangla language learners usually held unfavorable opinions about translation, particularly with regard to its function in comprehending idiomatic idioms and grammar. Limited exposure to English outside of the classroom may have an impact on this, as it limits the possibilities to use translation for meaningful communicative practice. These results are consistent with research indicating that learners' attitudes on translation are influenced by both classroom instruction and their general exposure to L2 material (Arfianti & Widiati, 2023).

However, across both groups, especially the English version learners' vocabulary memorization by translation turned out to be a significant exception. This lends credence to the idea that translation can be a useful tactic for vocabulary retention; additional research has shown that learners have favorable opinions of translation when it improves lexical acquisition (Putrawan et al., 2019).

The intricate connection between the usage of translation and real writing performance is further revealed by the translation challenges. The benefit of greater L2 exposure is seen by English version learners' greater use of discourse markers and proper word choice as compared to Bangla medium learners. In agreement with research on translation and writing processes, engaging in translation activities can heighten learners' attention to linguistic elements such as word diversity and sentence structure, so indirectly increasing writing quality (Zhao, 2017).

Overall, the findings indicate that translation should not be written off as an antiquated method; rather, when carefully incorporated into writing education, it can function as a contextualized supporting approach. Teachers should instruct students on how to utilize translation effectively, stressing when and how it helps with vocabulary growth and text accuracy. They should also promote direct interaction with English to foster writing autonomy.

CONCLUSION

This study examined junior secondary-level learners' beliefs and use of translation as a language learning strategy in English writing across two media of instruction. The findings indicate that English version learners generally believe translation helps them use their L1 knowledge to learn English as an L2, particularly for learning vocabulary, idioms, and phrases. However, they do not rely on translation for understanding grammar, organizing writing, or completing difficult writing tasks. Their strategy use reflects these beliefs, as they avoid thinking or planning in Bangla while writing in English but selectively use translation for vocabulary learning.

In contrast, Bangla-medium learners hold largely negative beliefs about translation and demonstrate minimal use of translation-based strategies in English writing. They neither rely on translation for planning and grammar nor for vocabulary learning. Analysis of writing performance shows that English version learners outperform Bangla-medium learners in grammar accuracy, vocabulary choice, and the use of discourse markers, although Bangla-medium learners show slightly better punctuation use.

Overall, the findings suggest that English version learners use translation strategically and selectively, whereas Bangla-medium learners largely avoid translation as a learning strategy. Learners' beliefs and strategy use are closely aligned in both groups, and differences appear to be strongly influenced by the medium of instruction and exposure to English. Future research with larger samples and varied contexts may further clarify the role of translation in developing different language skills.

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