

FROM L1 TO L2: PEDAGOGICAL TRANSLATION AND ITS ROLE TO LANGUAGE ACQUISITION

Mohammad Ali Yafi^{1,2}

¹ Primary School Teacher Education, Universitas Tunas Pembangunan Surakarta

² English Language Education, Universitas Negeri Semarang

DOI: 10.23917/jph.v26i1.9006

Received: March 25th, 2025 Revised: March 10th, 2025 Accepted: March 11th, 2025

Available Online: March 26th, 2025 Published Regularly: February 2025

Keywords	Abstract
Pedagogical Translation, Language Acquisition	<i>Traditionally, translation has been an element in language instruction and learning processes under the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM). This article provides a brief literature review of the recent study covering how pedagogical translation can contribute positively to second language acquisition (SLA). Despite the many benefits of pedagogical translation in language learning, several drawbacks and challenges are also provided in this article. This article briefly provides the theoretical perspective, primary debate, and relevant empirical studies to assess how and to what extent translation from L1 to L2 can contribute to language learning.</i>
Corresponding Author	
Mohammad Ali Yafi Universitas Tunas Pembangunan Surakarta Email: mohammadaliyafi@lecture.utp.ac.id Phone: +6285227489193	

INTRODUCTION

In the process of second language acquisition (SLA, hereafter), pedagogical translation has long been an interesting topic for researchers and educators. This approach involves using the first language (L1) to aid in understanding and acquiring the second language (L2) by translating text or linguistic structure from L1 to L2 in the context of teaching and learning processes. Although this method was once considered a conventional or traditional approach that was less effective compared to immersion or communicative method, many studies show that pedagogical translation still has a significant influence in SLA, especially in the bilingual context like Indonesia and many other countries that utilize English as a second or foreign language.

Historically, the translation method has been applied in language learning, particularly the Grammar Translation Method. This method emphasizes literal translation and grammar analysis as the primary method of understanding foreign languages. However, recent research shows that this method is ineffective, especially in developing speaking and listening skills. As a response to this limitation, a communicative approach was introduced, focusing on interaction and language use in real situations and contexts. However, further research has found that pedagogical translation can be an additional effective aid if applied strategically with a communicative approach (Gunawan, 2020).

One of the primary benefits of pedagogical translation is its ability to systematically help students understand the differences and similarities between L1 and L2. Pedagogical translation plays an important role in enhancing students' understanding of foreign languages, whether in the spectrum of vocabularies or syntactical structures (Chen, 2022). Furthermore, integrating pedagogical translation and audiovisual-based methods and technology can help cultivate the effectiveness of the L2 learning process (Fang, 2024).

In Indonesia, foreign language instructors have integrated translation into English language education practices (Imran et al., 2024). Educators have utilized translation to help students enhance their receptive skills and ensure students' understanding. Ultimately, this approach proves beneficial and practical. However, some scholars may not fully support using translation in teaching practices. Debates still rage over the effectiveness of pedagogical translation in SLA. Some scholars argue that too much reliance on L1 in learning can hinder fluent communication in L2 and reduce students' exposure to authentic input. In contrast, translation-based approaches can help increase students' metalinguistic awareness and facilitate understanding of the syntactic and lexical aspects of the target language (Mohamed et al., 2021).

This article explores how pedagogical translation can contribute to the aspects of SLA where English is the target language. This present study provides a brief literature review of the role of pedagogical translation in SLA in the context of Indonesian and English. This article briefly provides the theoretical perspective, primary debate, and relevant empirical studies to assess how and to what extent translation from L1 to L2 can contribute to language learning. Besides that, this article explores the practical implications for educators and suggests future research direction in this field, including how integrating pedagogical translation with a communicative-based approach can provide optimal outcomes in language learning.

METHOD

This present study was a literature review to analyze the role of pedagogical translation in acquiring a second language. This review covered an analysis of various theoretical frameworks related to pedagogical translation and SLA, including language transfer theory, metalinguistic awareness, and communicative approach in second language learning. Besides, this paper reviewed various empirical studies that assessed and evaluated the impact of translation on second language learning. In addition, articles that elaborated pedagogical practices integrating translation in the classroom were examined, including innovative approaches incorporating technology and audiovisuals in pedagogical translation.

The research selection criteria in this review included articles from peer-reviewed scientific journals, academic books, and research papers in linguistics, SLA, and language pedagogy. Only articles published in English and reputable journals that addressed the benefits and limitations of pedagogical translation were included in the analysis. In addition, studies that examined the impact of translation on second language skills and those that offer theoretical and practical approaches that could be applied in language learning were selected.

RESULT

Concept of Translation and Second Language Acquisition

Various scholars had presented interpretations of translation. Translational involved transferring written or spoken messages from one language to another. According to Catford (1965), he defined translation as "transferring content from one language with the material in another." This means that it was about substituting material from one language with corresponding content in another. Translation, as defined by (Brislin, 1976), involved conveying thoughts and concepts from one language to another, whether through written or spoken means, regardless of whether the languages had writing systems or rely on signs

like sign language for deaf and hard of hearing people. Nida and Taber (2003) explained that translation entails expressing the source language message in the target language using equivalents that closely match the meaning and style. While these definitions emphasized the general translation process, pedagogical translation focuses on how this practice could be applied in educational contexts to enhance learning and understanding.

Translation techniques significantly supported Second Language Acquisition (SLA) by facilitating tasks such as code-switching, paraphrasing, and completing translation exercises. Paraphrasing, a technique in translation work, proved valuable when translating phrasal verbs that lack direct equivalents in the target language (Oktaviela, 2023). This method enabled communication of intended meanings when literal word-for-word translations were not feasible. Furthermore, paraphrasing aligned with communicative translation approaches and domestication translation principles by emphasizing the significance of conveying messages in contextually appropriate ways (Gunawan et al., 2022).

The practice of code-switching was quite common in SLA. Multiple languages might be spoken in this setting, especially from the mother tongue to the target language. Teachers often used student's native language (L1) to assist in tasks like managing assignments, clarifying instructions, exploring vocabulary and meanings, and presenting grammar concepts. This was important for adult language learners (Jing-xia, 2010). Mastering code-switching could improve the learning experience by enhancing clarity and aiding comprehension. In addition, when it came to translating, code-switching, and code-mixing, various techniques such as neutralization, modulation, paraphrasing, transposition, implication, explicitation, compensation, and description were employed to ensure accurate and meaningful translations take place (Swandani et al., 2022).

When someone learned a language after mastering their first language, it fell under the realm of SLA. It involved exploring language learning processes beyond acquiring one's mother tongue. For instance, when a child started school and learned English despite speaking Bahasa Indonesia at home, that is an example of acquiring a second language, in this case, English. SLA referred to acquiring a language and studying individuals or groups learning it after growing up with their first one. Whether it was the fourth or even language they are learning, the additional language was considered an L2. Any language being learned was sometimes called a target language (TL) in conversations. SLA encompassed classroom instruction learning in real-life situations and a mix of both scenarios.

The SLA theory had undergone several phases of development. From the 1900s to the 1950s, language acquisition was viewed as habit formation based on stimulus and reaction. The theory was that if desired responses to stimuli were obtained, they would be reinforced. Furthermore, several articles published in the 1970s helped establish Krashen's Monitor Model (Hassan, 2022). Other researchers and theorists had criticized it. Acquisition learning, monitoring, natural order, input, and affective filter were the five hypotheses that make up the theory.

In the 1960s and 1970s, psychologists used a logical approach to investigate the deeper structures and underlying reasons for behavior. They applied reasoning, logic, extrapolation, and inference to comprehend behavior. They thought knowledge, comprehension, and meaning were important study components. They believed a built-in mechanism called the language acquisition device (LAD) naturally determined language acquisition. According to Chomsky, spoken language did not instantly reveal the abstract norms that natural languages adhere to. A youngster would not be able to understand these rules if they only depended on the information in their environment. Children had to, therefore, be guided by specific rules when acquiring a language. These ideas make up Universal Grammar, the set of characteristics and procedures all languages and learners have in common. Reducing structures was not the goal of a child's language development; instead, it was the methodical creation of hypotheses based on input that is received, which

was subsequently evaluated and modified as language proficiency advances. In order to better understand second language acquisition, links between linguistics and cognitive science (awareness), neuropsychology (brain modularity), and sociocultural frameworks were developed in the 1980s and 1990s.

Pedagogical Translation and Second Language Acquisition: Challenges and Opportunities

Regarding acquiring a second language, pedagogical translation had received attention as one of the methods that could develop language skills. Pedagogical translation was not only a means to understand the meaning of the target language but also a means to build cross-cultural communication. Several papers had studied the effectiveness of the implementation and the challenges it raised.

The implementation of the translation method in language learning could enhance the student's ability to understand and use the target language effectively. Therefore, it was important to design translation activities that were adjusted to the student's needs so that they could translate word by word and understand the syntactical structure and semantical nuances in the target language (Fang, 2024). Furthermore, the use of translation methods in L2 learning could foster accuracy in terms of understanding and resulting text in the target language (Huang, 2023). In this research, Huang (2023) had further explored the impact of translation on the acquisition of vocabulary, reading comprehension, and writing skills. However, this research also cautioned that over-reliance on translation hindered the ability to think in the target language directly, an important aspect of L2 communication.

In addition to linguistic benefits, translation had significantly contributed to improving students' intercultural skills. Studies conducted by several researchers showed that translation had been helping students understand the meaning and phrases and the cultural context covering them. Students could better understand social norms, idiomatic expressions, and cultural nuances, which could not be depicted only from traditional language learning by translating text from one language to another (Huang, 2023).

However, some challenges regarding implementing pedagogical translation in L2 learning needed to be overcome. One primary challenge was ensuring that the translation was used as a supporting aid, not a replacement tool for direct learning in the target language. Several research studies showed that the overuse of translation could make students dependent on their first language and therefore hindered their ability to think and communicate spontaneously in L2 (Saha, 2020).

Moreover, many teachers were not competent enough to apply this translation method effectively. Teachers tended to use unplanned translation through code-switching in the classroom, which could hinder the L2 acquisition process (Mohamed et al., 2021). Therefore, this research emphasized the importance of more structured training in integrating translation into the language curriculum. An approach that was well organized could help students develop their confidence in using the language in various contexts. Therefore, teachers and curriculum developers had to consider factors like students' proficiency, learning objectives, and text types used in the translation activity (Fang, 2024).

Previous studies had shown that pedagogical translation was the potential to help L2 acquisition, provided it is used with the right strategy. With a deep understanding of the benefits and challenges of the translation approach, teachers could use this method to enhance the effectiveness of their language teaching and learning process. This way would help students acquire higher competence in the target language.

DISCUSSION

This research aims to review the role of pedagogical translation in the SLA, especially in Indonesia, where English is a foreign language. The literature review shows the

challenges and opportunities of pedagogical translation to improve language learning, especially speaking and writing skills. This paper tries to synthesize recent findings on pedagogical translation and its implication for SLA. This paper reviews relevant theoretical frameworks, such as the theory of language transfer, metalinguistic awareness, and communicative approach.

One of the most influential findings is that pedagogical translation plays a significant role in helping students understand the syntactical structure and vocabulary of L2. Studies by Chen (2022) and Fang (2024) highlight how pedagogical translation enables students to comprehend nuances of grammar and vocabulary of L2 through the translation of L1. This supports comprehension and helps the students develop their language use accurately. This is important for the sake of fluency of communication in L2. Moreover, integrating audiovisual methods with pedagogical translation can enhance the effectiveness of language learning by creating a more engaging and context-rich environment (Fang, 2024).

However, the implementation of pedagogical translation is not without challenges. The over-dependence on L1 during the translation can hinder the development of spontaneous communication skills in L2 because it tends only to encourage students to think of their mother tongue instead of directly on the target language. This concern is also expressed in Huang's (2023) research finding, which suggests that over-dependence on translation will hinder the development of L2 fluency. Therefore, teachers should find a balance between the use of translation as an aid and creating an environment where students are encouraged to think in L2.

Moreover, one of the main challenges in pedagogical translation is the lack of training for teachers. Mohamed et al. (2021) research highlights how unplanned translation with code-switching is applied without a clear pedagogical objective. Practical training on the strategic implementation of translation can help overcome this problem and ensure that translation can be an asset instead of a barrier in SLA. Teachers should also be able to adjust translation based on the student's proficiency and the specific objective of the learning (Fang, 2024).

In addition to linguistic benefits, pedagogical translation can significantly enhance cross-cultural skills. Translating text enables students to be involved with the context of the culture behind the target language, promoting deeper understanding in regard to social norms, idiomatic expression, and cultural nuance. This aspect is important as cultural awareness plays a significant role in understanding and communication across languages (Huang, 2023).

Future research direction in the arena of translation and SLA can focus on the exploration of the effectiveness of translation in the context of vocabulary retention and the outcome of language learning (Benmoqadem & Koumachi, 2024; Hummel, 2010). Moreover, Research on the development of information literacy by translators and linguists can also be accomplished so that it can provide wider information to enhance their competence to access and evaluate information resources (Massey & Ehrensberger-Dow, 2011).

CONCLUSION

When used strategically, pedagogical translation offers a significant potential to enhance L2 acquisition. However, it is also important to overcome the challenges regarding the over-dependence on L1 and the need for teacher training in providing suitable material and using a relevant strategy. Language educators can cultivate students' competence in L2 acquisition and their cultural understanding through the structural integration of pedagogical translation. This article is limited that only articles published in English were reviewed. Further literature review may include articles published in Bahasa Indonesia to foster empirical research in Indonesian context. Moreover, this article has only contributed to broader aspect of SLA. Therefore, further study may look deeper

on specific language skills that may be influenced by pedagogical translation in classroom setting, including primary school, high-school, and higher education setting.

REFERENCES

- Benmoqadem, A., & Koumachi, B. (2024). Translation as a mediaton activity for vocabulary retention: an empirical study. *Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 6(1), 117–122. <https://doi.org/10.32996/jeltal.2024.6.1.14>
- Brislin, R. (1976). *Translation: application and research*. Gardene Press, Inc.
- Catford, J. C. (1965). A linguistic theory of translation: an essay in applied linguistic. *Oxford University Press*, 110.
- Chen, Z. (2022). The positive effect of pedagogical translation. *Journal of Higher Education Research*, 3(3), 267. <https://doi.org/10.32629/jher.v3i3.875>
- Fang, G. (2024). The application of pedagogical translation and translation teaching in second language acquisition. *Arts, Culture and Language*, 1(7). <https://doi.org/10.61173/kez0t011>
- Gunawan, F., Syukri, H., & Burdah, I. (2022). Revisiting interpretive translation method: a case study of Muhammad Thalib's Quranic translation [UIN Sunan Kalijaga]. In *UIN Sunan Kalijaga* (Vol. 14, Issue 1). <https://doi.org/10.47012/jjml.14.1.6>
- Gunawan, S. A. (2020). Pedagogical translation in second language acquisition. *Jurnal Basis*, 7(2), 225–232. <https://doi.org/10.33884/basisupb.v7i2.1996>
- Hassan, M. (2022). Krashen's monitor model in L2 acquisition: a critical review. *UTAMAX: Journal of Ultimate Research and Trends in Education*, 4(3), 1–11. <https://doi.org/10.31849/utamax.vxxx>
- Huang, X. (2023). A review of research on the role of translation in second language acquisition. *Lecture Notes in Education Psychology and Public Media*, 27(1), 201–205. <https://doi.org/10.54254/2753-7048/27/20231177>
- Hummel, K. M. (2010). Translation and short-term L2 vocabulary retention: hindrance or help? *Language Teaching Research*, 14(1), 61–74. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1362168809346497>
- Imran, M. C., Jubhari, Y., & Sasabone, L. (2024). Lesson from pedagogical translation: translation as a learning strategy in English education program. *International Journal of Education and Humanities*, 3(2), 168–176. <https://doi.org/10.56314/ijoleh.v3i2>
- Jing-xia, L. (2010). Teachers' code-switching to the L1 in EFL classroom. *The Open Applied Linguistics Journal*, 3(1), 10–23. <https://doi.org/10.2174/1874913501003010010>
- Massey, G., & Ehrensberger-Dow, M. (2011). Investigating information literacy: A growing priority in translation studies. *Across Languages and Cultures*, 12(2), 193–211. <https://doi.org/10.1556/Acr.12.2011.2.4>
- Mohamed, N. Z., Ab Aziz, A. A., Kamlun, K., & Othman, I. W. (2021). Translation pedagogy versus pedagogical translation in language learning. *International Journal of Education, Psychology and Counseling*, 6(43), 83–96. <https://doi.org/10.35631/ijepc.643008>
- Nida, E., & Taber, C. (2003). *The theory and practice of translation*. Brill.
- Oktaviela, S. G. (2023). A Translation Analysis of Idiomatic Expressions in the Webtoon Comic Entitled 'Winter Wood'. *Jurnal Bahasa Sastra Dan Studi Amerika*, 29(1), 1. <https://doi.org/10.20961/jbssa.v29i1.60953>
- Saha, A. (2020). Importance of translation as a means of language development. *International Journal of English and Teaching Skills*, 2(3), 1361–1374. <https://doi.org/10.15864/ijelts.2306>
- Swandani, A., Nababan, M. R., & Santosa, R. (2022). Analysis of code-switching and code-mixing translation quality in Yowis Ben film structure. *Ijeltal (Indonesian Journal of English Language Teaching and Applied Linguistics)*, 6(2), 289. <https://doi.org/10.21093/ijeltal.v6i2.1087>