
Accuracy of Past Tense in Four Tasks: Does Translation Facilitate Narrative Writing?

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Abstract

This paper attempts to investigate whether or not translation facilitates the accuracy of the past tense. It looks at the correlations between the two translation tasks and the actual writing of a narrative genre. One hundred seventeen second year university students from the General Education program enrolled in *Writing in the Discipline* took the four writing tasks as their prelim examination. Four writing tasks included: word level morphological transformation, sentence level translation, paragraph level translation, and actual writing of a narrative genre. Results show that both translation tasks, and paragraph writing are statistically different when students are grouped according to the language used at home. All four writing tasks are high in level whether students are bilingual or multilingual speakers. The correlations between sentence level translation and paragraph level translation to the actual paragraph narrative writing aver that translation facilitates the accuracy of the past tense of the verbs in actual paragraph narrative writing. The study offers implications for language teaching and learning, and the relevance of the study for the Mother Tongue-Based–Multilingual Education curriculum implemented in the Philippines.

Keywords:

bilingualism, Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education, narrative genre, past tense, translation

Introduction

To date, the utility of translation has been revived and reappraised in language learning (Krüger, 2012; Pavan, 2013). Newmark (2007) supports that language learning and translation have to be reconsidered, reassessed, and reprogrammed in today's world "...since it remains so useful as the point of resemblance to or of contrast with the

new home language" (p. 105). Notably, translation involves greatly the use of the mother tongue which can be used as a cognitive, memory, affective, communicative, and compensatory learning strategy to boost learning effects (Pan & Pan, 2012). It should be noted, however, that translation approach is not new; historically, the grammar-translation approach was used to teach classical language to the teaching of modern languages. Students had to

translate sentences from the target language into their mother tongue, and vice versa. They also focused on grammatical parsing like the form and inflection of words (Celce-Murcia, 2006).

It is worth mentioning that this present study zeroes in on the use of translation and mother tongue in a writing topic, especially the narrative essay genre. The rationale behind this is the fact that even if the narrative genre appears to be the easiest type of essay, many Filipino high school and university students in general fail to achieve perfect accuracy of the different forms of the past tense. This case may be attributed to various reasons as posited in the issues of interlanguage (Selinker, 1972), contrastive analysis (Lado, 1957), and error analysis (Corder, 1981; Richards, 1974). For instance, Tagalog has different verb conjugations when compared to the English verbs. Slabakova (2014) claims that “to acquire syntax and meaning in a second language, the learner has to go through the functional morphology; hence, morphology is the bottleneck of acquisition” (p. 21). However, even if students fail to achieve perfect accuracy of the past tense of the verbs, this does not necessarily mean that students do not understand that the narrative is already in the remote past. But as regards students’ grammatical competence, they should master that the predictability of a narrative genre is with the use of past tense of the verbs. Put simply, students should be exposed to the distinct features of each genre (Ismail & Alsheikh, 2012).

Learners may carry out any writing task with some trepidation, perhaps because writing in so many ways poses great challenges as it entails enough control over a number of rules and conventions governing it, including linguistic accuracy (Celce-Murcia, 2006; Olshtain, 2006). Consequently, teachers have attempted to vary their teaching strategies just to get writing skills mastered. For example, many researchers have conducted studies with the intention to explicate what students experience when writing (e.g., Abbuhl, 2011; Hsu, 2006; Huang, 2015; Rumney, Buttress, & Kuksa, 2016; Wang, 2015). Another notable solution is using the mother tongue in the students’ and teachers’ repertoires (Ahmadian, Pouromid, & Nickkhah, 2016; Grim, 2010). This translation involves a significant amount of the recourse of the mother tongue (Pan & Pan, 2012) which helps the process of teaching and understanding the target language. In short, policies in the use of

one or two languages have been made to augment educational outcomes (Walter & Benson, 2012), not only in the teaching of writing.

Literature Review

Fatemi and Ziaei (2012) reported how the student-respondents translated Farsi adjectives into English. These adjectives had at least two equivalents in English which was predicted to cause problem. The results of their study confirmed that out-of-context translations, without the aid of context, could twist the intended meaning of the original definitions. On the other hand, Zawahreh’s (2013) study on translation from Arabic adjectives into English purported the caveat of translation especially that the study focused on out-of-context translation. The major findings of the study revealed that it was truly difficult, confusing, and misleading when the students translated text into English out of context. They found it hard to choose the right Arabic adjectives into English equivalents. Thus, students should pay attention to the general context, parts of speech and collocation of the target language while translating. In addition, Ismail and Alsheikh (2012) reported that fourth year elementary education students performed better when they wrote essays directly in English. The results may be attributed to the fact that the students have been used to writing English essays, thus neglecting the use of translation, from Arabic to English.

Moreover, the students favored the use of direct writing because they were successful in choosing and varying the most appropriate vocabulary when they thought and wrote their essays directly in English. Thus, Ismail and Alsheikh presented three major disadvantages in using translation in students’ essays: (1) the confusing and challenging nature of translation especially in organizing their ideas; (2) choosing the exact word or expression is difficult; and (3) the obvious difference of writing conventions between Arabic and English. In terms of the strategies in both languages, the difference was insignificant, hinting that the students in the study were all competent in different strategies in both direct and translated essays. However, the significant difference was evident in the attempt to use a wide variety of vocabulary, in favor of Arabic as their mother tongue. This indicates that students may transfer first language writing strategies when writing in L2, and vice versa.

Sarhady (2013) also used the translation method in analyzing the errors of 64 male and female junior university students majoring in English language and literature at Kurdistan University. The respondents were asked to translate 30 Persian sentences into English. These sentences were intentionally selected based on the possible problems on interlanguage. It was found out that only 21.5% of the students naturally and authentically translated proverbs and similes into English because, as expected, English and Farsi both have different structures, word and phrase combinations. The study of Machida (2008) also employed translation tasks in the sentence level using newspaper articles. The main goal was two-pronged; that is, to let the students learn basic differences of grammar and vocabulary in English and Japanese; and to provide basic translation skills. Students had to translate Japanese sentences into English in group that generated metatalk among the students. Results showed that the translated passage contained more syntactic errors than the vocabulary errors. In the study by Jung (1997), students were asked to translate a Korean passage into English. The specific goal of the study was to test how translation can affect students' L2 accuracy in medio-passive voice. Due to language transfer, Korean students inappropriately used the canonical passive voice instead of the medio-passive. Although Jung pointed out that the problem stems from language transfer, the author also asserted that the insufficient instruction of medio-passive in Korean textbooks might have influenced the translation process.

It should be borne in mind that recent studies affirm that the use of mother tongue facilitates students' learning. One cannot deny the ample ways in which L1 is used in many classroom situations. For example, Alshammari (2011) reported that Arabic as students' L1 is used for clarification purposes. Students also used mother for answering, scaffolding, self-correction, and clarification (Bozorgian & Fallahpour, 2015). Furthermore, mother tongue is seen to be a compensation communicative strategy for the deficient target language (Dornyei, 2005). Auerbach (1993) also highlighted the positive uses of L1 in L2 classrooms such as: classroom management, language analysis, presenting grammar rules, discussing cross-cultural issues, giving instructions or prompts, explaining errors, and checking for comprehension. L1 can be used as a short-cut for instructions and explanations; to inter-link L1 and

L2 together; to allow students to express ideas when doing collaborative dialogues; and to develop L2 activities that demand code-switching (Cook, 2001). These all redound to the issues on the amount and purposes of L1 use in EFL classrooms (Bozorgian & Fallahpour).

Likewise, those who support translation method use the given disadvantages as benefits especially in making the structures of both languages clear and explicit. Translation can raise the awareness of the learners about the similarities and differences between two languages. Karimi (2006) used the term source language (SL) which is the basis when converting the SL to the target language (TL); in the process, a translator decodes the SL and encodes this understanding and interpretation of the TL form. The 'act of translating' demands full understanding of the source text including its linguistic and non-linguistic parameters (Machida, 2008). Karimi further asserted that translation is a branch of applied linguistics wherein a translator exhausts the possibility of seeing the similar and different aspects of these two languages to find the equivalents. As a whole, translation assists and eludes the interference of mother tongue, thus enhancing L2 learning process (Pan & Pan, 2012). Moreover, Pavan (2013) enumerated some parameters to use in translation technique in a classroom (see pp. 133-134). First, translation is a valid metacognitive, metalinguistic, and metacultural technique in teaching foreign languages that enhances and facilitates student autonomy. This position is aligned with the recent study by Bozorgian and Fallahpour (2015) showing how teachers resort to translation as a tool for classroom facilitation although many students have adequate English proficiency.

On the one hand, Pavan (2013) expressed that translation should not only be considered as a skill which involves the transfer of minimal linguistic units, but also as an act of intercultural communication. As a matter of fact, translation is about language, but it is also about culture. It can also deepen one's social and cultural knowledge of a specific country (Tomimori & Nomoto, 2013). Takimoto and Hashimoto (2010) also shared that interpreting and translation are capable of promoting 'intercultural exploration' between L1 and L2. Furthermore, Cenoz and Gorter (2012) maintained that the use of minority languages may not be feasible because these languages lack strong written tradition unlike majority languages such as English, Chinese,

Spanish and French that have been codified for a long time and have been established for academic purposes. However, initial predictions have prompted the researchers in this present study to expect that the two translation tasks may not be inextricably related to cultural underpinnings. The translation tasks are too limited to the target forms of the past tense of the verbs. The vocabularies used in the original Filipino sentences have also possible direct English equivalents. Thus, it can be claimed that students may not experience a total coupling between culture and language in these translation tasks.

However, the use of translation and mother tongue like any other methods inevitably receives some attacks. The use of translation receives frequent criticisms based on two general arguments. First, it is assumed that students are deprived with sufficient second language input in favor of the use of the mother tongue. Second, the use of mother tongue during translation process triggers negative transfer due to the different systems of the two languages (Pan & Pan, 2012). In the study of Ismail and Alsheikh (2012), the student-respondents did not favor the use of translation because it can confuse them when organizing their ideas, when choosing the exact words and expressions, especially on the issue of out-of-context translation (Zawahreh, 2013) just for the sake of translation. Another reason was due to the obvious and predictable difference of writing conventions between Arabic and English which failed students to naturally and authentically translate one sentence to another (Sarhady, 2013).

In the same manner, Lee (2011) pointed out that the challenge in translating news springs from the dearth of both sociocultural and subject knowledge background on the Target Text (TT) audiences. Consequently, Lee's study shows that translators adjust the informativity gap by employing additive information, deleted information, the inclusion of parenthesis, and the localization of information. Cultural backgrounds interfere in the act of translation that significantly affects the universal features of translation (Park & Chung, 2009). To aid this, the most important factor in translation is perhaps the meaning (Xia, 2016). If the meaning is retained regardless of some social, cultural, and historical underpinnings then the text may be considered successful. Furthermore, the structure may not be important as long as the text

is successful in showing the intended meaning. This is especially true when the source text and the target text contain different syntax and linguistic features, including a number of phrase structure rules.

Recently, the use of mother tongue may receive little practical importance because it may be incompatible with communicative language teaching (CLT) that continues to influence to the development of L2 communicative competence (Johnson, 2000). It may downplay the goal of most teachers to make their classroom communicative, not heavily focused on the forms of the language. In like manner, the use of translation is underrated as it is often associated with grammar-translation (Pavan, 2013), and the use of mother tongue had no effect on students' academic performance (Olanipekun, Atteh, Zaku, & Sarki, 2014). It is also noted that L1 use and code-switching may be instrumental to the reduction of students' L2 exposure (Cook, 1991). This will eventually lead to the possible overuse and inadvisable use of mother tongue (Ellis, 1985) which may not auger well with the trends in communicative language teaching and learning.

Although a myriad of studies explicates the differing views about the merits of translation, many studies also support translation tasks vis-à-vis on bilingualism and multilingualism. In the Innatist tradition, Krashen (1982) in his Affective Filter Hypothesis pointed out that what prods learners to acquisition includes a low-anxiety learning environment. The use of mother tongue or bilingualism as a recourse will help ease up student's comfort and a tense-free environment. Krashen's hypothesis may relate to the theory of bilingual communicative competence (Grosjean, 1982), wherein the first language is considered an integral part of students' lives, socially, emotionally, cognitively, and educationally (Peregoy & Boyle, 2001). Cummins (1979) also proposed the 'developmental interdependence' hypothesis that states that the competence in second language (L2) is the result of solid foundation of the first language. This hypothesis is used into a model of bilingual education. Most importantly, although Machida (2008) raised the question whether or not the translation activities can be a major methodology, she takes note of teacher's and students' positive attitudes towards developing the act of translation as a major method.

'Multicompetence' is preferred over bilingual and multilingual terms as language use is not described using these two words (Scott, 2010). This is identical to Cook's (1995) term 'multi-competence' to define "an individual's knowledge of a native language and a second language, that is, L1 linguistic competence plus L2 interlanguage" [Abstract]. More than the terms that these scholars prefer, a more pressing issue zeroes in on the abilities and competencies between a bilingual and multilingual speaker in ESL/EFL classrooms. For example, Laurent, Nicoladis, and Marentette (2013) argued that as monolingual children generally become good at storytelling as they get older. This case may not be true among bilingual children. With this in mind, the two translation tasks employed in this present study are anchored on bilingualism/multilingualism because translation is operationalized using one or more languages either one's native language or second languages.

On Philippine languages and Tagalog/Filipino: A short background

Filipino as its official language is categorized in the Level 4 of Underdeveloped National Languages. The languages under Level 4 are often "described as colloquials, trade languages or lingua francas. Though widely spoken on national or regional levels, and frequently used in oral form, they are less likely to be used in print media or in education" (Baldauf & Nguyen, 2012, p. 281). Consequently, it is not surprising that to date, there is a profuse use of Taglish and bilingualism in all socio-economic strata in the Philippine society. As recalled, Sibayan (1985) predicted that the future of a modern and intellectual Pilipino is irreversibly Taglish.

Historically, the issue on bilingualism has deeply seated in the Filipino socio-political terrain. Foremost, Sibayan (1985) surveyed that the constitution of the Philippines is written in both Pilipino and in English, but in most cases English text prevails. Hardly is Filipino/Pilipino used purely in many domains resulting in mixing (mix-mix) or code switching from English to Pilipino, or commonly known as Taglish (Bautista, 2004; Sibayan, 1985). Consequently, Taglish is the chief means of signaling that a speaker is in the loop of Philippine life. To date, English and Filipino as media of instruction have been used minimally from Kinder to Grade 3 through Order No. 74, "Mother Tongue-Based

Multilingual Education starting school year 2012-2013. In this curriculum, eight major languages are used as the medium of instruction, namely: Tagalog, Kapampangan, Pangasinense, Iloko, Bikol, Cebuano, Hiligaynon, Waray, Taussug, Maguindanaoan, Maranao, and Chabacano (Department of Education Order, 2012). Consequently, Tupas (2011) believed that this initiative has supplanted the country's bilingual education policy, thus has displaced English and Filipino as the media of instruction.

Rationale and Purposes of the Research

This work has been conceptualized following Bozorgian and Fallahpour's (2015) suggestion that L1 use is imperative in elementary and pre-intermediate levels, and following Takimoto and Hashimoto's (2010) position that translation is a powerful resource suitable for language teaching even at the university level. This also relates to Sarhady's (2013) notion that mother tongue resources are utilized even by advanced learners whenever they fall short of the target language. Unfortunately, the implementation of Mother Tongue-Based Multilingual Education curriculum is only for Grades 1 to 3. Translation method is often a neglected method in learning English as a second language in the tertiary level in the Philippines because of high expectations from the teachers that students have already mastered the English language, resulting in limited studies on translation.

In like manner, this present study has built on previous works on direct writing, translated writing, back translated writing, and opinion writing (Kim & Uhm, 2010; Sattayatham & Honsa, 2007). This study has taken a special goal in exploring the narrative genre with distinct predictable features on the use of past tense. For many years of teaching different genres, these two researchers have been perplexed why even university students in general regardless of academic courses fail to achieve perfect accuracy of the past tense of the verbs given the fact that a narrative genre is the easiest genre to write, and that all human beings show the propensity to tell stories (Johnson-Sheehan & Paine, 2013; Nadell, McMeniman, & Langan, 2005; Story, 2009). Therefore, the translation tasks tested students' accuracy of the past tense of the verbs from sentence level to paragraph level. It is an attempt to investigate whether or not the two designed translation tasks could help escalate the accuracy

of the past tense of the verbs in actual paragraph narrative writing. Specifically, the study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the second year general education university students' level of accuracy in setting past tense markers in the following tasks: (a) word level morphological transformation, (b) sentence level translation, (c) paragraph level translation; and (d) actual narrative writing?
2. Are there significant differences of performances in each writing task when students are grouped according to (a) Tagalog vs. Taglish speakers at home, (b) bilingualism vs. multilingualism?
3. Are there any correlations of the four writing tasks?

Methodology

Research design

The study, a quantitative-descriptive in nature, endeavored to describe a systematic, actual, accurate and objective situation, problem, or phenomenon (Creswell, 2003). Quantitatively, the study used scores in all four tasks which were utilized for further statistical treatment. A descriptive statistics was also employed to present the most and least mastered forms of the past tense.

Participants

One hundred seventeen second year university students (male - 27.35%; female - 72.65%) formed the group of participants in this study. Their average age is 19.31, between 18-20 years old (45.30%). They were officially enrolled in *English Plus B/Writing in the Discipline* last first trimester of school year 2016-2017 at a non-religious, non-sectarian university in Metro Manila, Philippines. Students, mostly second year (64.10%) were enrolled in the following courses: Bachelor of Fine Arts and Design (41), Bachelor of Psychology (18), AB- Communication Arts (21), AB- Foreign Service and Diplomacy (12), Bachelor of Science in Music Education (12), Bachelor of Science in Tourism (3), Bachelor of Science in Marketing

(2), Bachelor of Science in Hotel and Restaurant Management (4), Bachelor of Science in Social Works (2), Bachelor of Science in Environment Science (1), and Bachelor of Science in Accountancy. They all comprised of four sections handled by one of the researchers in this present study. There were a total of 139 official students from four sections. Six Filipino students who were absent on the day of prelim exam, and the 16 foreign students (Africans, Indonesian, Cambodian, Vietnamese, and Saudis) were excluded. With regard to the languages they use at home, purely Tagalog speakers at home was 92.31% while Tagalog and English speakers was 7.69%. Participants were bilinguals, that is, Tagalog and English speakers (57.26%), and multilinguals, that is, Tagalog and English, plus local dialects/minor languages and foreign languages (42.74%). It should be noted, however, that the levels of proficiency and fluency of the foreign language that students indicated were not investigated.

Instruments

The instrument (See Appendix A) was a teacher-made test to suit the purpose of the study. It was validated and piloted tested accordingly. The questionnaire was composed of four tasks: (I) morphological transformation, (II) sentence level translation, (III) paragraph level translation, and (IV) actual paragraph writing in a form of a narrative genre. Task I contained 22 base form of the verbs which had to be transformed into past tense. The target past tense included: (1) past simple in regular form, (2) past simple in irregular form, (3) past simple with the change of spelling, (4) past simple with the same spelling, (5) past progressive, (6) past perfect, (7) past perfect progressive, (8) copular/be verb in singular form, (9) copular/be verb in plural form, (10) reported speech with a modal "will", (11) modal auxiliary, "could", (12) reported speech with a modal auxiliary, (13) past possessive, (14) past passive voice, singular, (15) past passive voice, plural; and (16) operator do (did). These were then further re-grouped into 11 types for an easier presentation (see Table 2).

Task II required test takers to translate 16 sentences written in the Filipino language into English. Task III was on paragraph level translation with 19 sentences, 213 words. These two levels of translation contained controlled sentences with target verbs with

definite time markers in Filipino to convey that the meaning is in the past. Lastly, Task IV required test takers to write at least 2 paragraphs recounting a short story, entitled *All Is Well* (Munalim, 2014). The choice of this story was based on some intrinsic factors in translation like the familiarization/defamiliarization effect (see Newmark, 2007). The questionnaire is related to the questionnaires employed by Kim and Uhm (2010), and Sattayatham and Honsa (2007). Meanwhile, the validity index was determined by getting the coefficient of correlation relating each of the four types of assessment to the sum of these assessment, thus:

Variables	Validity Index	Verbal Interpretation
Morphological transformation	0.637	High
Sentence- level translation	0.8	High
Paragraph- level translation	0.859	Very High
Paragraph writing	0.672	High

Data collection and testing procedures

The actual translation tasks were taken in August 2016 as their official prelim examination. Students were also required to read a short story, *All Is Well* (Munalim, 2014) for one hour. At least 70 high vocabulary words were given first as a homework. All students were given the list of advanced words used in the story, with corresponding meanings to help them better understand the short story. The required reading had to be used for Task IV, the actual paragraph writing. Although the story employs *syuzhet*, its *fabula* is clear (Brooks, 2002; Dobie, 2015). Students were already familiar with the features of a narrative genre.

Data Analysis

Task I (Morphological transformation) which contained 22 items received 22 points, while Task II (Sentence level translation) also got 22 points. The other two tasks such as paragraph level translation and actual paragraph writing shared the same scoring technique, that is, the “22 points minus wrong” system. Every occurrence of incorrect verb forms was automatically deducted from the 22 points. Each deduction was based on the target of at least 11 categories of verb forms. The rationale behind this is that the raters could not control the number of verbs per sentence resulting from the process of translation. For example, the original Filipino sentence only contained one verb form, but the student’s actual English translation contained more than one verb. The same applied to paragraph writing where the students owned the freedom to recount the story on their own. The subtrahend was the considered the raw score of the students. Total possible score in all tasks was 88 points. Other errors resulting from the translation tasks and from paragraph writing other than the past tense of verbs were not accounted for in the counting of errors or scores. Moreover, t-test and ANOVA were used accordingly. Statistical significance was set at the probability of 0.05.

Results and Discussion

The Level of Accuracy of Past Tense in Morphological Transformation, Sentence Level Translation, Paragraph Level Translation, and Narrative Genre Writing

Table 1 reveals the SD, CV, and mean interpretation of all four types of task under study whose accuracy range between average and high scores. As a whole, the table specifically shows that

Table 1. SD, CV, and mean interpretation of the four types of task

Types of Task	Mean	S	CV	Mean Interpretation
TaskI Morphological Transformation	18.66	3.07	16.46	High Score
TaskII Sentence Level Translation	16.62	2.75	16.54	High Score
TaskIII Paragraph level translation	14.40	4.71	32.70	Average Score
Task IV Paragraph Writing	15.78	4.62	29.30	Average Score

**Table 2. Raw scores of morphological transformation and sentence level translation
(Total Possible Score: 234)**

Forms of Past Tense	Morphological Transformation	Sentence Level Translation	Total	%
Regular -d/-ed	116	102	218	93.16
Passive	104	108	212	90.60
Change of spelling (irregular)	104	107	211	90.17
Same spelling, different pronunciation	113	92	205	87.61
Be verbs (copular verbs)	108	91	199	85.04
Operator did (do)	91	103	194	82.91
Possessive had	98	82	180	76.92
Simple past perfect	99	71	170	72.65
Modals	100	66	166	70.94
Past progressive	75	71	146	62.39
Past perfect progressive	65	23	88	37.61

students perform a high level ($M=16.38$, $SD= 3.78$) of accuracy of past tense markers across four writing tasks.

Comparatively speaking, the standard deviations of the scores in all four tasks are quite large, ranging from 2.75 to 4.62. This trend suggests that the subjects' performances are nearly heterogeneous. Although morphological transformation is the most mastered task, its standard deviation is higher than the sentence level translation ($SD=2.75$). Likewise, paragraph level translation shows the most number of inaccurate use of past tense of the verbs.

Extract 1

Winter and Wela **arrive** and I really cried because I never **expect** that they **will** come. It was so funny because my brother **sing** songs as many as he could. After the celebration, I **give** all my visitors some souvenirs. What did I **did** after the celebration? I **open** all my presents inside my room. Then I read one short story before I **go** to sleep.

At the same time, it performs the highest standard deviation ($SD=4.71$), suggesting that there was a variety of raw scores from one hundred seventeen students. The results may echo Kim's (2009) assertion

that there are always problems when one language is translated to another, which in this study is more on the paragraph level translation. Overall, these results may be well explicated in the students' performance in the different forms of past tense as divulged in the proceeding tables.

On the one hand, Table 2 condenses the results of morphological transformation and sentence-level translation tasks. There are at least eleven types of morphological, including phonetic transformations of the verbs when they are used in a narrative text whose grammatical features are predictable in terms of the past tense of the verbs.

Needless to say, the results in Table 2 are predictable especially that the regular *-ed* or *-ed* is taught as early as in the elementary level in the Philippines. The same table also shows a predictable result mostly in the territories of perfect tense-aspect combinations. Perfect involves current relevance in the present, considered as an unmarked form. Perfect tense-aspect in English is a challenge even to advanced learners because it is an optional alternative to the simple past tense (Hundt & Biewer, 2007). Consequently, the results confirm Celce-Murcia and Larsen-Freeman's (2008) argument that the traffic on the map of the 12 traditional tense-aspect combinations is mostly situated in northwest

part including the present progressive, giving little attention to the perfect tenses. The Philippine English books have not mainly concentrated on the territory of perfect tenses. These books often present only the basic simple tense-aspect combinations. Presumably, it may be crisp to assert that while learners are getting more familiar with the basic forms of the verbs, they have taken for granted the territories of past perfect tense-aspect combinations which are also equally important features of a narrative genre. Meanwhile, the reliability index was obtained using the split half where the first 50% of the total score was correlated with the other 50%.

Variables	Reliability Index	Verbal Interpretation
Morphological transformation	0.99	Very High
Sentence level translation	0.55	Moderate

Table 3, on the one hand, presents the raw scores of paragraph level writing and actual narrative genre writing.

The results in Table 3 may imply that students use past tense of the verbs in the regular forms and be verb forms less accurately when they were asked to translate a paragraph, and write an actual narrative genre. More or less, these two tasks provide the students the freedom to express the meanings in the past tense without so much restrictions as compared to morphological transformation and sentence level translation. The results may auger well with Kim and Uhm's (2010) findings, pointing out that students show poor ability to maintain consistent simple past tense markers usage during translation tasks. They also reveal that Back Translated Writing has the fewest word-level choice errors and sentence structure errors.

Furthermore, Table 4 shows that only sentence level translation and paragraph level translations are statistically the same. Specifically, the results imply that more or less the high level of the accuracy of the past tense markers is statistically identical. Likewise, morphological transformation and the actual narrative genre writing are statistically different. Although the general level of the four tasks are high, results may not be impressive at all. These disconcerting results may point out the dearth of accuracy of all forms of the past tense.

Table 3. Raw scores of paragraph level translation and narrative genre writing

Forms of Past Tense	Paragraph Level Translation		Narrative Genre Writing		
	F	%	F	%	%
Be verbs (copular verbs)	175	22.26	183	23.28	45.55
Modals	199	25.32	96	12.21	37.53
Regular -d/-ed	117	14.89	174	22.14	37.02
Change of spelling (irregular)	130	16.54	85	10.81	27.35
Simple past perfect	118	15.01	15	1.91	16.92
Past progressive	60	7.63	49	6.23	13.87
Past perfect progressive	67	8.52	4	0.51	9.03
Possessive had	5	0.64	40	5.09	5.73
Passive	15	1.91	11	1.40	3.31
Operator did (do)	10	1.27	17	2.16	3.44
Same spelling, different pronunciation	1	0.13	1	0.13	0.25
Total Errors	897		675		

Table 4. Tukey-Kramer groupings using Post Hoc ANOVA Test

Type of Task	Homogenous Group		
	1	2	3
TaskI Morphological Transformation	14.33		
TaskII Sentence Level Translation		15.73	
TaskIII Paragraph level translation		16.57	
TaskIV Paragraph Writing			18.63

Table 5. Data summary of the 4 types of task grouped according to language spoken

Types of Task	Tagalog		Taglish		p-value	Bilingual		Multi		p-value
	Mean	S	Mean	S		Mean	S	Mean	S	
Task I	18.63	3.164	18.67	1.658	.954	18.58	3.349	18.70	2.682	.833
Task II	16.45	2.753	18.00	1.732	.032	16.46	2.771	16.72	2.658	.612
Task III	14.01	4.671	18.22	2.587	.009	14.66	4.611	13.90	4.773	.391
Task IV	15.47	4.663	18.78	2.333	.002	15.34	4.891	16.24	4.187	.289

The results in Table 4 imply that achieving perfect past tense is not likely to be perfected. The word level morphological transformation which is expected to be perfected is not realized, more so in the actual narrative genre writing. As regards the translation tasks, it is possible that the absence of past tense markers in their mother tongue, and the different verb conjugations of their first language hindered them to achieve this accuracy. Consequently, many students in this study failed to duplicate the right tense in the target language due to the absence of these markers in their mother tongue. Pooling the results together, the translation tasks may be a cognitive problem-solving task that involves analytical transformation of linguistic forms, and involves high control of the rule-based processing.

The Significant Differences of Performances According to (a) Tagalog vs. Taglish Speakers at Home, and (b) Bilingual vs. Multilingual Speakers

Table 5 shows that the accuracy of past tense in both translation tasks, including paragraph

is statistically significant. The morphological transformation task is statistically insignificant. In other words, the language they use at home as their first language is a factor in the accuracy of the past tense markers in three out of four writing tasks.

On the contrary, the morphological transformation at the word level is not affected by the first language that students use at home, that is, the task is easy for both users of Tagalog and Taglish. Likewise, when students were grouped according to bilingualism and multilingualism, results show that all four writing tasks are high in level whether students are bilingual or multilingual speakers. It echoes that the number of languages ESL/EFL learners can speak or understand may not be a factor in achieving very high level of accuracy of the past tense markers. Cummins' (1978) study showed that bilingual children at both grade levels demonstrated a significantly greater awareness of the arbitrary nature of word-referent relationships and in evaluating non-empirical contradictory statements. With this in mind, Herdina and Jessner (2002) concluded that new skills such

Table 6. Correlation of the four types of task

Tasks	I		II		III		IV
	r	p-value	R	p-value	R	p-value	r
Task I	1						
Task II	0.490632	0.000	1				
Task III	0.497391	0.000	0.664309	0.000	1		
Task IV	0.095795	0.366	0.35995	0.000	0.358623	0.000	1

as metacognition and metalinguistic awareness are developed in the mind of multilingual learners, thus can facilitate awareness of a number of linguistics features.

The Correlations between and among Four Writing Tasks

This section presents the correlations between and among the four writing tasks. The results explicate whether or not translation tasks facilitate the accuracy of the past tense of the verbs.

Table 6 discloses that morphological transformation has a correlation with sentence level translation, and paragraph translation, but shows no correlation with actual paragraph writing. This means that if students can transform the word level word into accurate past tense markers, they can also translate sentence level with accurate past tense markers. However, even if they can transform the base forms of the verb into accurate past tense, they cannot still write a narrative writing with accurate past tense. Additionally, results show that the positive correlations of both sentence and paragraph level translations demonstrate correlation to the actual writing of the narrative genre. This means that when students are exposed to regular translation tasks both in sentence level and paragraph level, a much higher level of accuracy of the past tense may occur. Hence, to answer the question, “Does translation facilitate narrative writing,” the answer is statistically positive.

Conclusion

This paper attempts to investigate whether or not translation facilitates second year university students’ accuracy of the use of the past tense the

verbs in the different levels such as morphological transformation, sentence level translation, paragraph level translation, and actual paragraph narrative writing. The study offers three major findings: This group of university students performs a higher level of accuracy of the past tense of the verbs across four tasks, but achieving perfect past tense of the verbs is not likely to be perfected. In fact, even the easiest task on morphological transformation such as changing the word “write” to “wrote” is not perfected. Secondly, results show that all four tasks are high in level whether students are bilingual or multilingual speakers. That is, the accuracy of the past tense of the verbs may not be achieved through the number of languages a learner can speak.

Lastly, it is important to address the main purpose of the study with regard to the correlations of the four tasks such as morphological transformation, sentence level translation, paragraph level translation, and actual paragraph narrative writing. First, students’ accuracy of the past tense of the verbs in the morphological transformation is carried out into the sentence level translation. On the contrary, students’ accuracy in the morphological transformation, however, may not be instrumental to a perfect accuracy of the past tense of the verbs in the actual paragraph narrative writing. Fortunately, the sentence and paragraph level translations are seen to have been correlated with the actual paragraph narrative writing. By and large, the sentence level translation and paragraph level translation may facilitate the accuracy of the past tense markers in actual paragraph narrative writing.

With all this in mind, implications for language teaching and learning are clear-cut. Translation occupies a pragmatic role in language teaching and learning in a bilingual, multilingual setting such as

the Philippines. The use of mother tongue in the curriculum should not only be confined within the basic education level, but should be extended even to the university level. It is likewise worth noting that language teachers have the rich linguistic resources that they can explore if they aim for perfect accuracy of the past tense of the verbs. As found out, sentence level translation and paragraph level translation are practical classroom tasks that can augment accuracy of these linguistic features. Hence, translation, together with the mother tongue, is never a bane, but is always a boon in English language teaching and learning.

class (Machida, 2008). Consequently, this calls for a judicious and prudent use of mother tongue in the classroom, and the language policy of bilingualism in an ESL/EFL classroom not only in the Philippines, but also in many countries with a bilingual and multilingual set up.

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Recommendations

From the results, it appears that L1 offers both a positive and negative influence in the accuracy of the past tense markers of the verb. The use of mother tongue through translation may facilitate to raise consciousness and awareness of the accurate past tense. The present findings suggest that it may be worthwhile to include bilingualism in an English classroom where the students own a sense of option and leeway to use the language that they are most convenient. As regards bilingualism and translation tasks, rather than restricting the students to the stringent English-only policy, teachers can observe a balanced use of the target language and the students' mother tongue. Likewise, the need for more translation exercises at the sentence and paragraph levels to polish students' perfect accuracy of the past tense may be imperative. Future studies should apply regular translation tasks in one semester, and employ a multiple linear regression test to see the marginal effect of sentence-level and paragraph level translation to the actual narrative genre writing. Future studies should also include more participants from different year levels and investigate the extent of more translation activities in a bigger population.

To close, the Mother Tongue-Based–Multilingual Education (MTB-MLE) program in the Philippines has been implemented since 2012 only from Grades 1 to 3. The initial results in this study hopefully will also serve as a reminder that even college or university students need the resource of their mother tongue in the study of English as a second language. In fact, translation is used as a teaching methodology in an advanced ESL/EFL

Appendix A

Prelim Examination

English Plus B/Writing in the Discipline/Advanced LSRW with Research

First Trimester, SY 2016-2017

Task I. Supply the past tense of the given verbs.

1. attend
2. cry
3. lose
4. go
5. am thinking

Task II. This is ONLY FOR FILIPINO STUDENTS. Translate the following Filipino sentences into English sentences.

1. Dumalo sa aking kaarawan kahapon sina Wela at Winter.
2. Iniisip kita ng dalawang oras kahapon sa ganitong oras.
3. Nakaalis na si Donna noong dumating ako sa bahay kahapon.
4. Binigyan ng parangal ang aking mga magulang kahapon.
5. Makukulay ang mga bulaklak noong 1982.

Task III. This is ONLY FOR FILIPINOS. Translate the given Filipino paragraph into an English paragraph. You may not translate the sentences word by word.

Binuksan ko ang mga regalo sa loob ng aking kwarto. Pagkatapos, binasa ko ang isang maikling kwento bago natulog. Napakaganda ng selebrasyon! Sobrang saya ko!

Task IV. Narrate/recount the same short story, "All Is Well" between 2-3 paragraphs. Use the correct past tense of the verbs.

N.B. Full text of the instrument is only available upon request.

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