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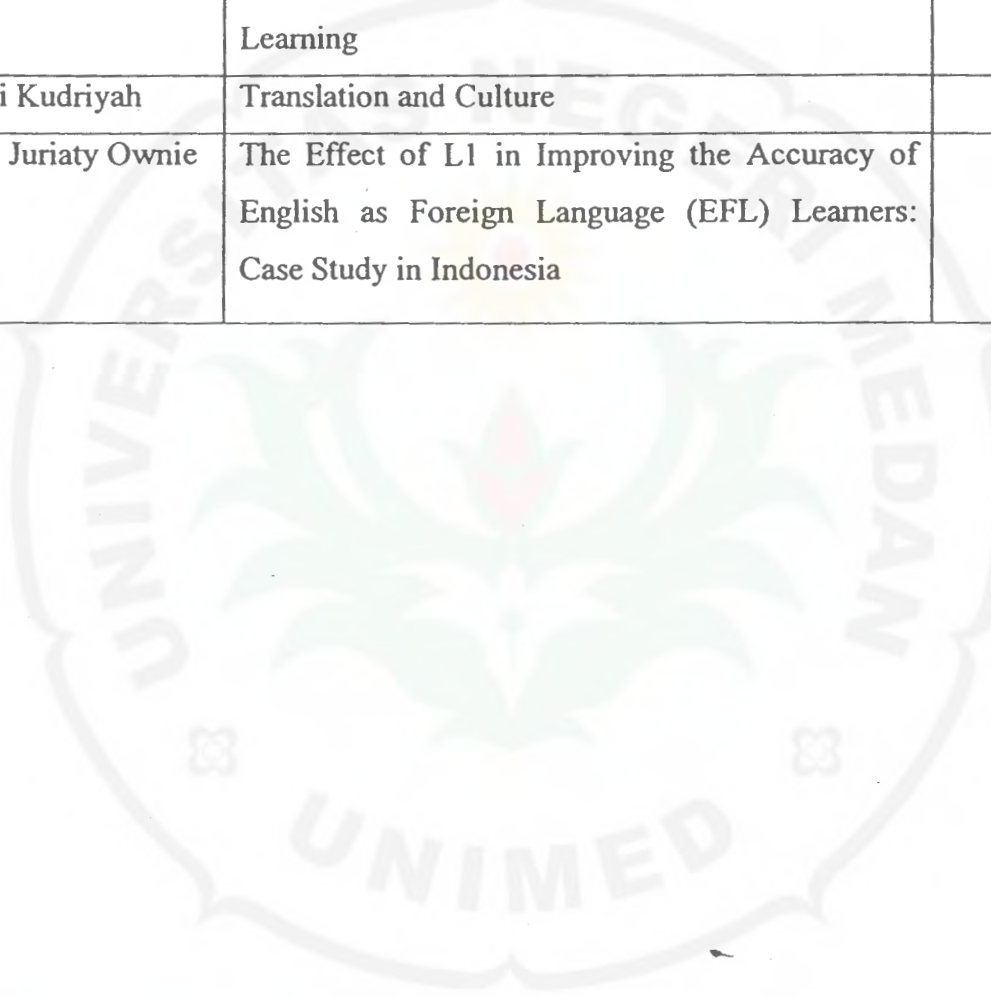
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The Effect of L1 in Improving the Accuracy of English as Foreign Language (EFL) Learners: Case Study in Indonesia

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Abstract

This study was conducted to examine the effect of using translation from L1 to L2 as a teaching technique on the improvement of EFL learners' accuracy. To fulfill the objective of the study, 72 pre-intermediate learners were chosen by means of administering an achievement test. This test, which also functioned as the pre-test, was designed in a way that the participants who did not have familiarity with the four aimed structures of this study, i.e. *Passive voice, Indirect reported speech, Conditional type 2,* and *Wish+ simple past,* were identified. Based on the pretest, the experimental and comparison groups were formed. The experimental group underwent the treatment, i.e. translating Persian sentences into English using the newly learned structures. Nonetheless, the comparison group received the placebo—grammar exercises in the course book. Both groups were post tested through another achievement test. The results of the post-test—through *t*-test analysis—demonstrated that the experimental group outperformed the comparison group in terms of accuracy. It is concluded that to reinforce new structures teachers can use this technique.

Key words: Accuracy, Focus on form and Translation

1. Introduction

The debate over whether English language classrooms should include or exclude students' native language has been a controversial issue for a long time (Brown, 2000). Although the use of mother tongue was banned by the supporters of the Direct Method at the end of the nineteenth century, the positive role of the mother tongue has recurrently been acknowledged as a rich resource which, if used judiciously, can assist second language teaching and learning (Cook, 2001). Therefore, this research study tries to open up a new horizon for English instructors to find a thoughtful way to use learners' mother tongue in second language teaching.

The technique in which L1 was used in this study was translation from L1 to L2; a technique which is rarely used systematically by EFL teachers. Atkinson (1987) is one of the first and chief advocates of mother tongue use in the communicative classroom. He points out the methodological gap in the literature concerning the use of the mother tongue and argues a case in favor of its restricted and principled use, mainly in accuracy-oriented tasks. In his article, Atkinson (1987) clearly sates that translation to the target language, which emphasizes a recently taught language item is a means to reinforce structural, conceptual and sociolinguistic differences between the native and target languages. In his view, even though this activity is not communicative, it aims at improving accuracy of the newly learned structures. Similarly, this research aimed at investigating the effect of translation from L1 to L2 on the accurate use of the structures.

The arguments in supports of using the learners' mother tongue in L2 instruction clearly reveal that not only the use of first language has a negative impact on L2 learning, but also it can be a factor to help students in improving the way they learn a second language. Although the 'English Only' paradigm continues to be dominant in communicative language

teaching, research into lecturer practice reveals that the L1 is used as a learning resource in many ESL classes (Auerbach, 1993). Auerbach adds that when the native language is used, practitioners, researchers, and learners consistently report positive results. Furthermore, he identifies the following uses of mother tongue in the classroom: classroom management, language analysis and presenting rules that govern grammar, discussing cross-cultural issues, giving instructions or prompts, explaining errors, and checking comprehension.

Professionals in second language acquisition have become increasingly aware of the role the mother tongue plays in the EFL classroom. Nunan and Lamb (1996), for example, contend that EFL teachers working with monolingual students at lower levels of English proficiency find prohibition of the mother tongue to be practically impossible. Cook (2001) in support of the role of L1 states that "bringing the L1 back from exile may lead not only to the improvement of existing teaching methods but also to innovations in methodology" (p. 189). Furthermore, Brooks and Donato (1994, cited in Cook, 2001) argue that the use of mother tongue is a normal psycholinguistic process that facilitates L2 production and allows the learners both to initiate and sustain verbal interaction with one other.

L1 can have various uses in L2 classroom; Auerbuch (1993) suggests the following uses for the first language of learners: language analysis and presenting rules that govern grammar, classroom management, giving instructions or prompts, explaining errors, discussing cross-cultural issues, and checking comprehension. Moreover, Cook (1999) asserts that treating the L1 as a classroom resource opens up a number of ways to use it, such as for teachers to convey meaning, explain grammar, and organize the class, and for students to use as part of their collaborative learning and individual strategy use. "The first language can be a useful element in creating authentic L2 uses rather than something to be shunned at all costs" (p. 185).

Although the provision of maximum L2 exposure to the learners seems essential, L1 can be used alongside L2 as a complement. In this regard, Turnbull (2001) states that maximizing the target language use does not and should not mean that it is harmful for the lecturer to use the L1. "A principle that promotes maximal lecturer use of the target language acknowledges that the L1 and target language can exist simultaneously" (p. 153). Similarly, Stern (1992) states that "the use of L1 and target language should be seen as complementary, depending on the characteristics and stages of the language learning process" (p. 285). On the other hand, overuse of L1 will naturally reduce the amount of exposure to L2. Therefore, attempt should be made to keep a balance between L1 and L2 use. In this regard, Turnbull (2001) acknowledges that although it is efficient to make a quick switch to the L1 to ensure, for instance, whether students understand a difficult grammar concept or an unknown word, it is crucial for teachers to use the target language as much as possible in contexts in which students spend only short periods of time in class, and when they have little contact with the target language outside the classroom.

Surely there is a difference between judicious and principled use of L1 and an absolute leeway in using the mother tongue of the learners. For example, Duff and Polio (1990) examined the quantity of input to which students were exposed in foreign language classes at an English-speaking university. They reported that the 13 teachers' L2 use ranged from 10% to 100% of the time observed. The authors noted that "there seems to be a lack of awareness on the part of the teachers as to how, when, and the extent to which they actually use English in the classroom" (p. 320).

Bawcom (2002, cited in Krajka, 2004), in her study on using L1 in the classroom, found out that in the group of learners under investigation, 36% used the mother tongue for affective factors (e.g. sense of identity, security, social interaction); 41% as a way of implementing learning strategies (e.g. checking comprehension, going over homework); for 18% of learners it was an example of expediency (e.g. translation of directions for activities

and passive vocabulary), while the remaining 5% was unintelligible. Cook (1992) argues that all second language learners access their L1 while processing the L2. She suggested that the L2 user does not effectively switch off the L1 while processing the L2, but has it constantly available (p. 571). She also maintains that when working with ESL learners, teachers must not treat the L2 in isolation from the L1. In fact, according to Cook, one cannot do so because "the L1 is present in the L2 learners' minds, whether the lecturer wants it to be there or not. The L2 knowledge that is being created in them is connected in all sorts of ways with their L1 knowledge" (p. 584). One might suppose that using L1 in L2 instruction will lead to negative interference. However, Beardsmore (1993) believes that although it may appear contrary to common 6sense, maintaining and developing one's native language does not interfere with the developing of the second language proficiency. To him experience shows that many people around the world become fully bi- and multilingual without suffering interference from one language in the learning of the other.

Another benefit of using the L1 in L2 teaching is psychological values. Contrary to reasons put forth as to why students should be encouraged to use only the target language in class, informal translation in the class can become a form of peer support for the learners. According to Atkinson (1987) one reality of the classroom is that the students bring their own L1 strengths into the class and it is not possible to create a class where all the students are of equal abilities because some students have stronger listening skills than others and some have better comprehension of syntax or lexical items.

Lucas and Katz (1994) put more emphasis on the psychological value of using the mother tongue by asserting that "using native language in EFL classroom has psychological benefits in addition to serving as a practical pedagogical tool for providing access to academic content, allowing more effective interaction, and providing greater access to prior knowledge" (p. 539). If the native language of learners is used and valued in schools and classrooms, it will support and enhance the students' learning because they themselves are indirectly valued.

The use of students' native language can also increase their openness to learning by reducing the degree of language and culture shock they are encountering (Auerbach, 1993). He adds that because "relations of power and their affective consequences are integral to language acquisition" (p. 16), students' learning can also be enhanced by integrating students' native language into their educational experiences, thus giving their language a status more comparable to that of English. Finally, Harbord (1992), in support for using L1 in the classroom as a humanistic treatment of learners, states that eliminating or limiting the use of mother language does not guarantee better acquisition, "nor does it foster the humanistic approach that recognizes learners' identities as native speakers of a valuable language that is as much a part of them as their names" (p. 351).

Another issue addressed by this paper is translation. Translation is obviously one of the noticeable aspects of using L1. The role of translation in the ESL and EFL classroom has and will continue to be a highly debatable issue. The use of the students' first language (L1) in the foreign language classroom has been an issue of argument for linguists and teachers alike since the fall from grace of Grammar- Translation as a teaching method. It is also assumed that translation does not belong in the classroom because it does not embody making full use of the target language.

Even though translation is still widely used throughout the world, no teaching methodology exists that supports it and many speak out against it (Richards & Rodgers, 1986). Atkinson (1987) claims that because there is not much positive literature on the use of translation in the classroom, and the negative treatment it receives by the experts, teachers have been cautious of experimenting with it or doing research on it. However, to some experts, translation can constructively be used in L2 teaching and it can also serve as a

teaching technique. Cook (2001) asserts that the word 'translation' has so far been avoided as much as possible because of its negative implication in teaching. "Translation as a *teaching technique* is a different matter from translation as a goal of language teaching" (p. 200). Moreover, translation has been viewed, in Oxford's (1990) view, as a learning strategy. Despite the traditionally negative view of translation, Atkinson (1993, p. 53) claims that by raising one's consciousness of the nonparallel nature of languages, the learning process becomes richer; translation not only "allows learners to think comparatively," but it is also "a real life activity" because students who learn English for their jobs will probably need to know something about translation. Similarly, Duff (1989) states that translation does not have to be an aimless struggle between the learner and the text. However, many other approaches are possible which introduce purposeful and imaginative use of translation in language learning programs. "If we can find a way to offset the weak points and make the best use of its assets, translation as a teaching technique can be used to help students learn a second language more thoughtfully and effectively" (p. 6).

The two extreme positions of pure translation and forbidding translation in the classroom are unnecessary extremes and instead a balanced approach in which teachers strategically use L1 in order to promote foreign language acquisition seems to be logical. Stibbard (1994) analyzed the use of oral translation as a L2 teaching activity. He suggested that translation might play a valuable role in L2 teaching. Moreover, he asserted that translation should be an integral part of the language-learning program. In addition, Levenston (1985) presents an overview of the role of translation in foreign language teaching and learning. He argues that translation is useful for: (1) practicing grammatical structures, (2) explaining vocabulary items, (3) testing at all levels, and (4) developing communicative competence. He recommended translation be taught as a skill in its own right. Contrary to what many might think translation is not a passive activity which lacks communication. According to Duff (1989) translation is a kind of communicative activity, which is practiced within a meaningful context. He adds that "it enhances interaction between the lecturer and the students and among the students themselves due to the fact that rarely is there any absolute right rendering of the text" (p. 55).

A significant benefit of translation in language teaching is that teachers can use translation as an effective means of explaining particular aspects of language, such as cultural differences, grammatical rules and syntactic structures with which the students have difficulty. In this regard, Chellapan (1982) explains that this way of using translation involves a conscious process of learning. Through translation, a learner can be aware of the distinctiveness of similar structures in the two languages, and also of the different processes used in conveying the same message. Deliberate translation, as he calls it, focuses on lexical items, where the contrasts in the two languages vary; therefore, it should be done in a larger context which will help the students learn the different distributions in the two languages and also shows that the meaning of any item is part of the total environment of the text in the two languages.

Atkinson (1987) suggests that activities that involve some translation promote guessing strategies amongst students and help reduce the word-for- word translation that often occurs and which results in inappropriate L2 use. Similarly, Harbord (1992) admits that some translation work teaches students to work towards transferring meaning "rather than the word-for-word translation that occurs when the learner's unconscious need to make assumptions and correlations between languages is ignored" (p. 354). Moreover, focus on form is the last issue dealt with in this paper. Focus on form, in its communicative sense, is defined by Richards and Schmidt (2002) as any focusing of attention on the formal linguistic characteristics of language, as opposed to a pure focus on meaning in communication. The significance of focus on form has been valued by Ellis (2002) who claimed, "there is by now

ample evidence to show that form-focused instruction (FFI) has a positive effect on second language (SL) acquisition". That is, by and large, learners seem to learn the grammatical structures they are taught" (p. 225). Therefore, today, one can claim that the current trend in language teaching has shifted attention to focus on form and improving accuracy (See Celce-Murcia, 1991).

Although new teaching methods give more prominence to fluency rather than accuracy, many research studies support the idea that accuracy is, at least, as important as fluency, and they should be used integrally in L2 teaching. For example, in a research to investigate the effect of focus on form on the quality of instruction, Lightbown and Spada's (1990, cited in Muranoi, 2000) observations of the intensive program classes revealed that the major portion of instruction focused on meaning-based activities, and teachers gave little attention to grammar or accuracy. Their observations also indicated; however, that some teachers responded to learners' errors more often than others and, in some cases, this response appeared to be related to the achievement of higher levels of accuracy. In another study, Leeman, Arteagoitia, Fridman, and Doughty (1995, cited in Muranoi, 2000) compared focus on form instruction and focus on meaning instruction. The participants consisted of two groups of US college students in advanced Spanish classes, one of which received focus on form instruction, the other of which received focus on meaning instruction. Post-tests revealed that those students who received focus on form instruction were more accurate in their production of Spanish verbs than were those who received focus on meaning instruction. As a result of this need to pay attention to the structural aspect of language in language teaching, the present study aims at using a teaching technique to improve linguistic accuracy of Indonesian EFL learners. In other words, this study tries to investigate the efficiency of a teaching technique— namely translating from L1 to L2—in enhancing Indonesian intermediate learners' focus on form by means of using particular grammatical structures.

2. The purpose of the study

To achieve the purpose of this study, the following research question was proposed:

Does the use of translation from L1 to L2 have any effect on the improvement of Indonesian EFL learners' linguistic accuracy—focus on form?

Based on the research question, the following null hypothesis was formulated:

Using translation from L1 to L2 has no effect on the improvement of Indonesian EFL learners' linguistic accuracy—focus on form.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

To accomplish the objectives of this study, 70 male and 85 female (i.e. 155 participants, altogether) Indonesian pre-intermediate learners of English between the ages of 13 to 24 studying at university level in North Sumatera Province, Indonesia were given a pre-test. 124 learners met the necessary condition (i.e., lack of familiarity of the aimed structures in the study to enter the second phase. In the second phase, 72 participants, out of 124, with scores one standard deviation below and above the mean on the normal distribution curve of the pretest were chosen for the final phase of the study. On the basis of their pretest scores, they were randomly put into two similar groups; one group as the experimental group, and the other as the comparison group.

3.2 Instruments

In order to carry out this study, a number of learners were required who had almost no familiarity with certain structures under study. Therefore, two main points had to be kept in mind; firstly, some structures had to be selected to be worked on in the research; and secondly, a number of participants had to be selected who had almost no familiarity with those structures. Consequently, in order to have a sound justification for the choice of the structures to work on, a structured questionnaire was designed to find out which structures

are more difficult to master for pre-intermediate and intermediate learners of English. To do so, textbooks were chosen and according to the table of specification of these books, the list of structures, which were taught in these books, was produced. Therefore, the questionnaire included the list of structures existing in the mentioned textbooks. The questionnaire was answered by 50 EEL lecturers and they were asked to determine the structures which seemed to them to be more difficult to master for the learners of textbooks.

Having gathered the data - through the calculation of the frequency of the marked structures - 4 structures, from the first 6 structures, which were found out to be the more complicated ones to be mastered than others, were selected. The selection of these 4 structures was mainly due to the fact that they were all presented in one handbook or module. Hence, such a selection made the study considerably more manageable to be carried out. The most frequently marked structures in the questionnaire were: *Passive voice*: 80%; *Indirect reported speech*: 78%; *Conditional type 2*: 68%; and *Wish* 70%; *Conditional sentences type 3*: 84%; *Causative*: 82%. The next step was to construct a test to identify the participants who did not have familiarity with the aimed structure. Therefore, an achievement test was designed which included three main types of items: 1) 20 teacher-made achievement items based on handbook or modul. It is worth mentioning that these items were prepared according to the table of specifications of the mentioned books, which contribute to the content validity of the test. 2) 20 items of the aimed structures of the study: *Passive voice*: 5 items, *Indirect reported speech*: 5 items, *Conditional type 2*: 5 items, and *Wish+ simple past* 5 items. 3) 10 items which had not yet been studied by the participants.

Moreover, after reviewing and rewriting the items, the test was piloted with 30 similar learners to determine item characteristics, i.e., item facility and item discrimination. After applying necessary changes to the questions, the final version of the test was ready to be administered. Also, a time allocation of 60 minutes was decided for the final version of the test to be appropriate. In addition, the reliability of the test was calculated through KR-21 method, which turned out to be 0.80. The treatment used in this study was the Persian sentences, which had to be translated by the participants in the experimental group into English within 16 sessions. For each structure under study in this project, that is, *Passive, Wish+ simple past, Conditional type 2,* and *Indirect reported speech*, 24 Persian sentences were distributed among the participants to translate into English within 4 sessions; that is, 6 sentences each session.

The last instrument used in this study was the posttest which was designed in a way that had a similar format and content as the pre-test; hence, the difficulty level was kept the same. Also, this test was piloted with 30 participants in order to be checked in terms of item characteristics; that is, item facility, item discrimination and choice distribution.

3.3 Procedure

This study required 72 homogeneous learners who also had almost no familiarity with four grammatical structures namely *Passive, Wish+ simple past, Conditional type 2,* and *indirect reported speech*. To do so, twenty items (i.e., five items for *conditional type 2* sentences, five items for *wish*, five items for *passive*, and five items for *indirect reported speech*) were added to the test. It is worth mentioning that the participants who incorrectly answered at least 3 items out of the 5 items designed for each structure were selected for the final phase of the study. In other words, those who answered 3 or more items of each aimed structure correctly were omitted from the study. This procedure made it possible for the researcher to make sure that in the beginning of the treatment, the participants had almost no familiarity with the aimed structures in the study.

The test was first piloted with 30 learners and after applying the necessary changes and calculations to achieve item characteristics, i.e., item facility and item discrimination, as well as reliability, 155 learners took the test, out of whom 124 learners met the necessary

condition (i.e., lack of familiarity with the aimed structures) to enter the second phase. In the second phase, 78 participants, out of 124, with scores one standard deviation below and above the mean on the normal distribution curve were chosen for the final phase of the study (since 6 participants did not take part in the whole steps of the study, the number of participants decreased to 72). On the basis of their pretest scores, they were randomly put into two similar groups, each containing 36 participants; one group as the experimental group, and the other as the control group.

Regarding the treatment of the study, as discussed in the Instrumentation section, Persian sentences were used to be translated into English. For this purpose, for each structure under study in this project; that is, *Passive, Wish+ simple past, Conditional type 2,* and *Indirect reported speech*, 24 Persian sentences were distributed among the participants to translate into English within 4 sessions; that is, 6 sentences each session. Therefore, the whole project took 16 sessions of instruction. In other words, after presenting each of the mentioned structures to the participants in the experimental group, 24 Persian sentences, which were supposed to be translated into English using the same structure which had been taught, and with the same difficulty level as the ones which were presented in the textbook, were given to the participants to be translated into English. After the participants' translating the sentences individually as an exercise, the last step was to translate and discuss the sentences by the teacher—in terms of correct use of structures. This important part of the treatment was accompanied by grammatical explanations on the part of the teacher.

Regarding the comparison group, everything was similar to that of the experimental group, except that there were no Persian sentences to be translated into English. Instead, they received the same amount of grammar exercises but from their course book and some similar ones, which were provided by the teacher, not to mention, in English. Consequently, contrary to the experimental group, the control group received no exercise, which included Persian language. The two groups were post tested through another achievement test—similar in content with the pretest— in order to make sure that the difference in the scores of the aimed structures is due to the function of treatment. Of course, only the twenty items, which included the aimed structures, were significant to the researcher. In other words, the comparison was made only between the scores of the items, which addressed the aimed structure. Therefore, contrary to the pretest scores, which were calculated out of 50 items, the posttest scores were calculated out of 20, i.e. the number of items of the aimed structures, in order to see whether the application of treatment improved participants' knowledge in the specific area of the structures under study.

3.4 Data Analysis

To delve into the purposes of the study certain statistical procedures were utilized to analyze and interpret the data elicited by the study. The main statistical procedure employed in this study was *t*-test in order to compare the means of the experimental and comparison groups of the study to determine whether the application of the treatment had any considerable effect on the linguistic accuracy of the experimental group.

4. Results and discussion

The first step in the statistical procedures of the research pertained to the selection of a homogeneous group. Therefore, populations of 72 participants with scores one standard deviation above and below the mean with the following descriptive information (Table 4.1) were selected.

Table 4.1 Descriptive Analysis of the Pretest

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Comparison	36	17.44	4.19
Experimental	36	16.66	3.52

In order to determine if the difference between the means of the scores of the two

groups were significant on the pre-test, an independent t-test was conducted between the scores of the participants in both groups. The observed t-valve of the df= 70 was 0.85, which is a smaller than the critical t-value that equals 2.00 at the same degree of freedom (df= 70). Therefore, it can be concluded that the difference between the means of the pre-test scores in the two groups was not significant, i.e. the two groups performed fairly similar to each other in the pre-test. Of course, the purpose of t-test was twofold: to determine whether the two groups under study were homogenous, and to compare participants' performance in the pre-test and the post-test. The result of the independent *t*-test for the pre-test scores is shown in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2. Independent Sample t-test for Pre-test Scores

Comparison &	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	0.85	70	0.39

In order to find out the effectiveness of using translation from L1 to L2 on the improvement of the linguistic accuracy—focus on form—of the experimental group and compare their improvement with their counterparts' in the control group, both groups took part in a post-test which enjoyed similar content and format as the pre-test. It is worth mentioning that in the posttest only the scores of the items, which corresponded to the aimed structures of this study, were of significance to the researcher. Therefore, the scores of the participants in this test are calculated from 20. The descriptive analysis of the post-test is presented in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3. Descriptive Analysis of the Post-test

	N	Mean	Std. Dev.
Comparison	36	10.69	2.84
Experimental	36	12.69	3.87

After administering the post-test to both groups, an independent t-test between the scores of the participants in the experimental and the control groups was conducted to determine the significance of the mean difference between the scores of the two groups. As shown in the Table 4.4. below, the observed t-value for the post-test was 2.49 (df=70), which is greater than 2, i.e. the critical t-value at the same degree of freedom (2.49>2; df=70).

Table 4.4. Independent Sample t-test for Post-test Scores

Comparison &	t-test for Equality of Means		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
Experimental	2.49	70	0.015

From the t-test table (i.e. Table 4.4), it is quite obvious that the effect of using translation from L1 to L2 on the improvement of the linguistic accuracy —focus on form— has been significant since the *t*-observed value is greater than the set value of *t* critical. Therefore, as a result of the above-mentioned analyses reveal, the hypothesis formulated in this study can be rejected with caution. In other words, it is concluded that using translation from L1 to L2 improves the linguistic accuracy of Indonesian EFL learners.

Consequently, the results of the statistical analyses of this research manifested that translation from L1 to L2 as a teaching technique plays a major role in improving learners' linguistic accuracy. The results obtained from the t-test analysis and the obtained value of *t*-observed is high enough to claim that the null hypothesis has been rejected. In other words, the findings obtained in this research suggest that the experimental group, which received treatment in the form of translation form L1 to L2 using specific structures, outperformed the control group, which received the placebo.

The findings of this study support Cook's (2000) idea who believes that translation is a *teaching technique,* which can promote learners' accuracy as well as fluency. The results also support Atkinson's (1987) statements who introduces translation from L1 to L2 as a

means of improving the accuracy of the newly learned structures:

> *An exercise involving translation into the target language of a paragraph or set of sentences, which highlight the recently taught language item can provide useful reinforcement of structural, conceptual and sociolinguistic differences between the native and target languages. This activity is not, of course, communicative, but its aim is to improve accuracy. (p. 244)*

The findings of this research are also in line with Duff's (1989) belief: "translation as a teaching technique can be used to help students learn a second language more thoughtfully and effectively" (p. 6). As for the role of L1 and the significance of translation, this research project supports Nunan (1999) who states that:

> *In some cases it is inevitable that language learners use their dominant languages (L1) as a resource. Indeed it is a kind of individual learning style for some students. They need to be able to relate lexis and structures of target language into their equivalents in their mother tongue. Therefore, sound pedagogy should make use of this learning style. (p. 52)*

5. Conclusions

Based on the results obtained from the statistical analyses in the study, it was discovered that the idea of the effectiveness of using translation from L1 to L2 as a teaching technique to improve a group of Indonesian EFL learners' linguistic accuracy was supported. Therefore, it can be concluded that translating form L1 to L2, using specific structures, can enhance learners' linguistic accuracy within the scope of those structures. It also manifests that learners' mother tongue is not a useless element in second or foreign language learning. In other words, mother tongue, if used purposefully and systematically, can have a constructive role in teaching other languages. In effect, the purpose of the present study was to join the three vertices of the triangle i.e., first language, translation, and focus on form.

Moreover, it can be claimed that translating sentences form L1 to L2, if selected purposefully, can push learners to use specific structures accurately when producing utterances in the second language. This mental practice in transforming an idea from mother language to the second language helps the learner tackle the psycho-linguistic challenge they have to face in producing second language in real life situations. Nevertheless, when utilizing this teaching technique, the learners should be beware about the structural differences existing between languages which may cause negative interference from their L1. In other words, learners should be warned that there is not always a structural correspondence between their first language and the language they are learning. To make it short, translation form L1 to L2 is a kind of practice, which makes the learners use specific L2 structures *accurately* in order to express L1 ideas. This transformation—mental translation from L1 to L2—is a natural and sometimes inevitable process, which is mostly experienced by the learners of lower levels. Consequently, as discussed above, the technique used in this study is a means through which learners can practice producing L2 grammatically correct sentences which enables them to perform accurately in communicative situations.

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