Translation as a Tool for Language Acquisition: Perspectives of Saudi English Majors

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Abstract

This study aims to explore the perceptions of English major students on translation, its use as a learning strategy, and the relationship between these perceptions and translation practices. A quantitative approach was employed, gathering data through two types of questionnaires. The results indicated that English majors at a public university in Saudi Arabia consider translation as a valuable tool for acquiring English language skills and understanding various linguistic aspects. These students utilized translation to enhance their language competence in reading, writing, listening, speaking, grammar, and lexis. Additionally, the study reveals a strong connection between students' beliefs of translation and their application of it as a strategy for learning English as a foreign language.

Keywords: translation, EFL learning, English majors, Saudi Arabia, language strategies, ESL/EFL practices, language acquisition

1. Introduction

1.1 Introduce the Problem

The importance of the English language in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia (KSA) cannot be understated, given its prevalent use in educational institutions, social occasions, and businesses (Althobaiti, 2020). The provisions of Article 50 of the Saudi Arabian Educational Policy, which require students to learn and be taught at least one foreign language, underpin the rationale for teaching the English language in Saudi schools and the prioritization of building learners' capacity to communicate in this critical international language (Al-Seghayer, 2023). In KSA, English is thus perceived as a vital tool for the development of the kingdom, given its ability to facilitate international engagement and collaboration in critical areas such as scientific-technological advancement and international relations. The English language is also regarded as a key aspect in the success of the country's cultural and social transformation as well as globalization (Althobaiti, 2020). The significance of English in KSA is perhaps best exemplified by the designation of English-language education as a critical element in the attainment of the goals and objectives of the country's Vision 2030 (Al-Seghayer, 2023). While English is widely taught in KSA, is given an eminent status in different sectors and across all levels of society, and is perceived as the primary foreign language; the language is not politically recognized as the second official language, given its lack of any special administrative status in Saudi society and its inability to fulfill certain functions critical for intra-national communication (Al-Seghayer, 2023).

The prominence of the English language in KSA has led to the development of a dynamic translation industry and the creation of specialized English departments in universities and colleges throughout the kingdom. The demand for English translators and educators in Saudi Arabia has grown significantly, further highlighting the rising significance of the English language in the Saudi translation market (Abu-ghararah, 2017). To address the professional demands of the modern translation market in KSA, English-language education, and in particular fluency in English, has become a fundamental element of translator training programs being established nationwide (Abu-ghararah, 2017). Contemporary trends in the Saudi translation industry suggest a correlation between the structuring of the translation curriculum and effective language learning.

Despite the importance of English in the country and the prominence of the language in the Saudi translation industry, English language learning in KSA has not been without its fair share of challenges. According to Nelson et al. (2019), the teaching and learning of English as a second language (ESL) or foreign language (EFL) in KSA have predominantly focused on the linguistic and communicative functions of the language, as opposed to its cultural functions. Gaps in the requisite cultural literacy pose a major problem for English literature students, who experience difficulties in internalizing norms of language use as well as challenges in grasping fundamental concepts of the unmodified foreign language. The cultural and linguistic issues encountered by learners negatively affect their performance in English language learning. English language learning is also affected by the reluctance of students to participate, problems of understanding advanced vocabulary, and persistent language errors challenges that can be attributed to students' poor background in this foreign language (Nelson et al., 2019). Albeshri (2021) states that students learning English are also faced with comprehension, speech, and grammar challenges. These challenges often manifest in the form of comprehension difficulties, grammatical construction

problems, verbal communication inadequacies, speech and reading difficulties, and poor mastery of core language skills. Pedagogical issues such as classroom congestion, inadequate and inappropriate language texts, and poor application of major teaching methods, including grammar-translation, direct and structural approaches, also significantly affect English learning (Albeshri, 2021). Effective application of these established English teaching and learning approaches can significantly promote language acquisition and skills among learners and enhance the learning of the English language. While the direct method of instruction promotes language acquisition by maintaining the use of the target language in EFL/ESL classrooms (Albeshri, 2021), the grammar-translation technique promotes comprehension of morphology and syntax, thus promoting language acquisition by enhancing grammar and writing (Albeshri, 2021; Eisa, 2020; Lestary, 2019). The structural approach, on the other hand, improves English language acquisition by helping structure and select English vocabulary (Albeshri, 2021).

1.2 Problem Statement

The debate regarding the use of translation as a language learning strategy (LLS) has been a contentious issue among scholars, as evidenced by studies that have criticized the grammar-translation method and, more specifically, translation activities in ESL/EFL classrooms, as well as the integration of the first language (L1) into foreign language learning. A similar controversy also surrounds the extent to which translation is used by EFL/ESL students in their English language learning. These controversies negatively affect EFL learners' beliefs about translation as an LLS, potentially hindering its use to promote EFL aspects such as listening, writing, reading, and speaking skills, as well as the development and use of related phrases, idioms, grammar, and vocabulary among learners. This study, as outlined above, examines the beliefs of Saudi English majors regarding translation as an LLS and the extent of its use in their learning institutions.

1.3 Research Questions

This study aims to investigate the prevalence of translation as an EFL learning strategy among English majors at a public institution in Saudi Arabia, as noted in prior research conducted in other contexts. This study examines the subsequent research questions:

1.   What are English majors' beliefs about the role of translation in EFL learning in Saudi Arabia?

2.   How do English majors employ translation as a strategy for learning EFL in Saudi Arabia?

3.   Is there a correlation between English majors' beliefs about translation and their use of translation as a strategy for learning EFL in Saudi Arabia?

1.4 Significance of the Study

The findings of this study will establish the extent to which Saudi English majors believe in translation as an assisting tool in acquiring various English language skills and competencies. The findings will also highlight the role that translation, as a learning strategy (LS), plays in the attainment of relevant English language skills. This study will thus offer recommendations on how translation can be effectively used to teach and learn English in KSA, as well as highlight areas of the related teaching strategy that may require improvement. The study will also contribute to the existing body of research by demonstrating the connection between the beliefs of Saudi Arabian English majors about translation and its application as a strategy for learning EFL/ESL. Furthermore, the study will attempt to bridge the existing gap in the utilization of translation as an LS for English language education in Saudi Arabia.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Language Learning Strategies (LLSs): Theories and Practice

Language learning strategies play a critical role in EFL/ESL learning and acquisition (Dahmash, 2023). According to Dahmash (2023), LLSs constitute mental operations, particularly the specific techniques, actions, and behaviors used by students to discover the input, knowledge, and output of a second or foreign language. LLSs are thus regarded as an integral aspect of the field of ESL/EFL teaching and learning (Alnufaie, 2022), particularly given the strong effects they have on how learner development and language processes in a second/foreign language are understood (Dahmash, 2023).

In practice, LLSs enhance learner autonomy by equipping foreign and second language students with practical techniques and approaches to overcome barriers that hinder target language acquisition. The process enables learners to not only acquire target language skills but also to develop autonomous, self-directed, and long-lasting learning approaches that they apply even beyond the confines of the classroom. However, the capacity of ESL/EFL learners to control the direction of their own learning is a function of the kind of language learning and teaching experiences elicited by the LLSs employed, and hence the need for adopting learning strategies that elicit pleasant language learning experiences (Dahmash, 2023). According to Alnufaie (2022), good strategies help both poor and good language learners develop and acquire target language skills.

Strategy instruction constitutes a key element of LLSs. As Alnufaie (2022) states, strategy instruction denotes classroom procedures through which language instructors explicitly help learners discover their own learning strategies, as well as integrate language use techniques and LLSs in language instruction. The importance of strategy instruction in developing vital strategic skills and promoting self-directed learning and autonomy among language learners cannot be understated. Hence, the tendency of good strategy instruction to positively influence the proficiency, achievement, and success of learners in the second or foreign language (Alnufaie, 2022; Chinpakdee & Gu, 2024).

Differences in the choice and use of LLSs among language learners lead to differences in individual learning behavior and language learning success (Dahmash, 2023). According to Alhaysony (2017), LLSs use and choice among Saudi EFL/ESL students are affected by the gender of the learners and the duration the students have studied English, with female learners using more LLSs compared to their male counterparts, while those who had studied English longer used the strategies most frequently. The findings indicate low awareness of the available LLSs among Saudi ESL/EFL learners, use of teaching methods that do not promote LLSs usage, and inadequate strategy training (Alhaysony, 2017).

LLSs available for use in the Saudi English majors' context include compensation, metacognitive, and cognitive strategies, as well as social, affective, and memory-related strategies (Alhaysony, 2017). Direct learning strategies, among them compensation, cognitive, and memory-related strategies, entail specific use of the English language, while indirect language learning strategies, such as social, affective, and metacognitive strategies, help manage and promote language learning (Alhaysony, 2017; Dahmash, 2023). Another LLS commonly used in EFL/ESL teaching and learning is code-switching. According to Zaghlool and Altamimi (2023), Saudi EFL teachers and learners regard code-switching as an effective LLS, given its capacity to enhance comprehension and promote knowledge of grammatical structures. Translation has also emerged as a popular strategy in learning English as a second or foreign language.

2.2 Translation as an LLS

Numerous recent studies attest to the wide recognition of translation as an LS. ESL/EFL students can employ translation as a cognitive strategy by transferring, receiving, and processing English text based on their first language-an effective strategy to minimize their anxiety related to learning the language (Al-Musawi, 2014); as a social strategy where they engage with one another to solve English tasks (Mollaei et al., 2017); as a compensatory strategy where they produce English tasks based on their first language (Arfianti & Widiati, 2020); as a memory strategy by making links between their first language and English texts; and as a metacognitive strategy where they review and evaluate their English skills and knowledge (Arfianti & Widiati, 2020). The findings of the study by Karimian and Talebinejad (2013) affirm the tendency of ESL/EFL learners to employ different strategies related to translation in the language learning process.

Several studies have investigated the beliefs of various EFL/ESL students about the use of translation as an LS in different educational contexts. A study conducted by Al-Musawi (2014) among English major undergraduates in Bahrain revealed that while the learners believed that translation assisted them in reading, writing, checking their comprehension, and learning English vocabulary, the students hardly employed the strategy to learn English grammatical rules, proverbs, expressions, phrases, and idioms. Edelia and Maharsi (2022) conduct a similar study among EFL higher education students in Indonesia and similarly found that while the use of the translation strategy promoted text-meaning comprehension among the learners, it was least used to understand the meaning of expressions and idioms. A similar study conducted by Arfianti and Widiati (2020) in Indonesia also established the critical role the translation strategy plays in supporting the English learning process and their belief that it ought to be used cautiously to avoid dependency on the first language. A similar study conducted by Thani and Ageli (2020) in Bahrain revealed that 4th-year EFL students held negative beliefs about the use of translation as an LS compared to their first-year counterparts, who held positive beliefs about the use of this strategy. A comparable study by Karimian and Talebinejad (2013) also showed that EFL students in Iran believe that the application of the translation strategy assists them in comprehending, remembering, and producing the foreign language.

2.3 The gap in the literature

Although several studies have investigated the beliefs of various EFL/ESL students about the use of translation as an LS in different educational contexts, none of the studies has explicitly addressed this specific subject with respect to the Saudi EFL/ESL education context. Only two studies, one by Al-Shorman and Kamal (2022) investigating idiomatic expression translation strategies employed by Saudi translation students, and the other by Eisa (2020) examining the effects of the grammar-translation approach on the language proficiency of Saudi EFL learners, closely related to the subject of translation and EFL/ESL learning. However, like all other studies, they hardly address the question of using translation as an LS in the Saudi EFL/ESL context. Hence, based on the foregoing review of the available literature, no study has been conducted to investigate "Translation" as an LS in the Saudi context, indicating a gap in the literature.

3. Methodology

3.1 Participants

Seventy-one undergraduate English majors from a public university in Saudi Arabia participated in the study, which was conducted in 2024. These students, comprising both male and female participants from different year levels, were actively enrolled during the year of the study and were concurrently taking a translation course. Participants were chosen through a random sampling procedure, ensuring that each eligible student had an equal opportunity for inclusion.

Prior to participation, students were informed that their involvement in the study was entirely optional and would not influence their course grades. They were guaranteed the confidentiality and anonymity of their responses. This ethical consideration sought to alleviate external pressures and foster an open, stress-free environment for participants.

3.2 Instruments and Procedure

The participants were required to complete two questionnaires initially created by Liao (2006). The first, the Inventory for Beliefs about Translation (IBT), sought to examine participants' beliefs on translation, whereas the subsequent, the Inventory for Translation as a Learning

Strategy (ITLS), assessed their utilization of translation in learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). The IBT comprises 24 items, whilst the ITLS consists of 28 items, both employing a 5-point Likert scale, with responses ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The questionnaires were translated from English to Arabic to ensure understanding and clarity.

Initially, the questionnaires were given in their original English version, but some students expressed difficulty in understanding certain items. As a result, a faculty member with a PhD, proficient in both English and Arabic, reviewed the Arabic translation to ensure appropriateness, clarity, and readability. Furthermore, the translation process included a back-translation phase, during which the translated text was independently rendered back into English by a different bilingual expert to ensure its equivalence to the original version. Discrepancies were resolved through recurrent reviews to improve the precision of the Arabic translation. To mitigate social desirability bias, the questionnaire was constructed to guarantee participant anonymity and privacy, encouraging honest responses. Moreover, indirect questioning techniques were used to phrase certain items in a less personal and judgmental manner, reducing pressure to provide socially desirable answers.

Since the IBT and ITLS were originally designed for Taiwanese students by Liao (2006), a pilot study was conducted with 50 students to verify the validity and reliability of the questionnaires within the Saudi Arabian context. The pilot group was meticulously chosen to encompass students with differing levels of English proficiency to guarantee that the instruments were comprehensible and suitable for a varied range of learners. The pilot aimed to assess whether the indirect questioning method effectively reduced social desirability bias while maintaining item clarity. Additionally, the pilot ensured that the instructions were clear, the content was easy to understand, and the length of the questionnaire was manageable, encouraging participants to complete all items (Schleef, 2013). To reduce memory bias, the questions were crafted to emphasize current and unique experiences rather than general or long-term memories. Moreover, all participants were concurrently engaged in translation courses during the year of the study, guaranteeing their consistent engagement with translation practices. This consistent involvement in translation practices enabled participants to effortlessly remember their translation strategies, hence ensuring accurate and reliable responses.

To confirm validity, Pearson Product-Moment Correlation analyses ($p < 0.05$) were performed to measure how well each questionnaire assessed its intended concepts. Both the IBT and ITLS showed acceptable validity ($0.00 < 0.05$). Internal consistency was further assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with a high alpha (>0.60) indicating reliable internal consistency of the items in both questionnaires.

4. Results

4.1 Descriptive Statistics to Check English Majors' Beliefs about Translation in EFL Learning in Saudi Arabia

The descriptive statistics presented in Table 1 clearly show the English majors' beliefs in Saudi Arabia about the use of translation in learning English. The survey of 71 undergraduate English majors provides valuable information about these learners' perceptions of translation as a means of improving their English.

The mean scores of different items suggest a relatively positive attitude toward the usefulness of translation. For instance, the highest mean score of 4.3944 is associated with the statement, "*Translating helps me memorize English vocabulary*." This indicates that students are confident that translation helps them memorize the words of the second language, which is essential in language learning. Likewise, the item "*Translating assists me in comprehending textbook readings*" also had a high mean of 4.3099, supporting the notion that translation aids in understanding academic content.

Furthermore, the statement that translation helps in writing in English has a mean of 4.1831 for the item "*Translating helps me write English composition*." This shows that students have more confidence in their writing skills when they can translate, and this implies that they use their L1 as a framework for constructing meaning in L2. The mean score of 4.0845 for "*Translating assists me to comprehend spoken English*" extends the perceived advantages of translation in boosting listening skills, which are always a thorn in the neck of EFL learners.

Notably, however, some items appear to be hostile towards translation despite the overall positive attitude most items depict. The item "*Translating does not help me make progress in learning English*" was given a mean score of 2.2394, which indicates that students do not support the opinion that translation hinders the development of language skills. This finding implies that while there may be issues with overreliance on translation, the learners do not consider translation an obstacle to their learning of English.

The data also reveal the multifaceted nature of learners' interactions with translation. For instance, the mean score of 3.4366 for "*At this stage of learning, I cannot learn English without Arabic translation*" shows the degree of reliance on translation among the students. This may be due to the difficulties they experience in acquiring a new language, especially when the language being used is not English. Moreover, the item "I think everyone has to use Arabic translation at this stage of learning" was rated with a mean of 3.8028, showing that learners perceive translation as a helpful approach to language learning at their current level.

On the other hand, the item "*I prefer my English teachers always use English to teach me*" gave a mean score of 3.6197, which may indicate the participants' willingness to be fully immersed in the target language. This desire for English-only instruction may indicate that the learners recognize the need to be exposed to the language to gain fluency. However, this desire conflicts with their use of translation, suggesting that EFL learners in Saudi Arabia experience difficulties because the educational context might not always facilitate immersion.

The findings also shed light on the following potential disadvantage of translation: The overall mean score of the study was 3.8873 for the

item "*Using Arabic translation may interfere with my ability to learn English well*," showing that learners understand that although translation is helpful, it can also hinder learning. Another example of this duality is the mean score of 3.1268 for "*Arabic translation reduces the amount of English I am exposed to*," suggesting that translation compromises adequate exposure to English.

Therefore, the descriptive statistics from this study present a rather intricate picture of the interaction between translation and EFL learning for Saudi students. There is a belief that translation is helpful when it comes to the comprehension and production of English; however, there is also an understanding of the possible drawbacks of translation. These observations highlight the importance of balancing the use of translation as an auxiliary means and as a tool increasing the target language activation level for language acquisition.

Table 1. IBT mean and Standard Deviation

Descriptive Statistics			
Item Description	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
"Translating helps me understand textbook readings."	71	4.3099	1.12874
"Translating helps me write English composition."	71	4.1831	1.05978
"Translating helps me understand spoken English."	71	4.0845	1.18015
"Translating helps me speak English."	71	4.0704	1.11258
"Translating helps me memorize English vocabulary."	71	4.3944	1.02091
"Translating helps me understand English grammar rules."	71	3.7746	1.28949
"Translating helps me learn English idioms and phrases."	71	4.19718	1.022877
"Translating does not help me make progress in learning English."	71	2.2394	1.47808
"Translation helps me understand my teacher's English instructions."	71	4.1408	1.03228
"Translation helps me interact with my classmates in English class to complete assignments."	71	3.9577	1.18848
"The more difficult the English assignments are, the more I depend on Arabic translation."	71	4.0282	1.18288
"Using Arabic translation helps me finish my English assignments more quickly and save time."	71	4.0282	1.12086
"Using Arabic translation while studying helps me better recall the content of a lesson later."	71	4.1690	1.15864
"I like to use Arabic translation to learn English."	71	3.9718	1.20679
"The use of Arabic translation may interfere with my ability to learn English well."	71	3.8873	1.22532
"Arabic translation diminishes the amount of English input I receive."	71	3.1268	1.36203
"At this stage of learning, I cannot learn English without Arabic translation."	71	3.4366	1.30638
"I think everyone has to use Arabic translation at this stage of learning."	71	3.8028	1.27189
"I will produce Arabic-style English if I translate from Arabic to English."	71	3.1408	1.26825
"I prefer my English teachers to always use English to teach me."	71	3.6197	1.17554
"I feel pressure when I am asked to think directly in English."	71	3.2958	1.29167
"I tend to get frustrated when I try to think in English."	71	2.6197	1.32413
"When using English, it is best to keep my Arabic out of my mind."	71	3.2817	1.19742
"I believe one needs to be immersed in an English-speaking culture for some time before he/she is able to think in English."	71	3.6620	1.36218
Valid N (listwise)	71		

4.2 Descriptive Statistics to Check How English Majors Use Translation as an LLS in Saudi Arabia

The descriptive statistics shown in Table 2 help to understand how English majors in Saudi Arabia employ translation as an LS. The findings, based on a survey conducted among 71 undergraduate English majors, show that the participants' practices and beliefs about translation in language learning are diverse. The results of the mean scores and standard deviations for different items reveal how much these learners depend on translation to help them comprehend and use English.

Among the most significant results is the relatively high mean score of 4.1690 (SD = 1.14625) for the item "*When reading an English text, I first translate it into Arabic in my mind to help me understand its meaning*." This indicates that the majority of the participants rely on mental translation as the primary way of comprehending texts. This reliance on translation highlights the psycholinguistic factors in

learning, where learners must resort to their first language to understand and store information.

Likewise, the item "*After I read English articles, I use an available Arabic translation to check if my comprehension is correct*" was highly rated, with a mean of 4.1972 (SD = 1.20261). This means that learners not only translate while reading but also seek affirmation of what they have read from available translations. This practice is also an example of non-reactive learning, where students absorb information and translate it to check their understanding. Translation is not limited to reading but is also applied in other areas. For example, the item "*When I write in English, I first think in Arabic and then translate my ideas into English*" scored 4.0141 (SD = 1.22466). This is a common scenario for most learners, especially when it is easier to think in their native language before translating into English. This cognitive strategy may help learners write texts and express their ideas through translation.

Notably, "*I memorize the meaning of new English vocabulary words by remembering their Arabic translation*" also had a high mean score of 4.1690 (SD = 1.09526). This implies that learners often use the translation technique, associating new vocabulary with familiar Arabic words to remember them. This strategy aligns with the principles of associative learning, where relations between new and familiar information aid memorization.

However, some items portray a lower degree of reliance on translation. For example, the item "*When reading English, I try to read and comprehend what is written without translating it into Arabic*" received a mean score of 3.7887 (SD = 1.21791). This implies that while most learners still use translation, they recognize the importance of comprehending material directly in English. This approach presupposes that learners can cope with the challenges of second language acquisition and balance between translation and direct use of the target language.

The data also reveals learners' preference for using translation tools and resources. The mean scores of the items "*I use English-Arabic dictionaries to help myself learn English*" (Mean = 4.0563, SD = 1.10696) and "*I use Arabic-English dictionaries to help myself learn English*" (Mean = 4.0986, SD = 1.09746) highlight that learners are willing to seek assistance from such resources, recognizing that dictionaries and translation aids facilitate foreign language learning.

Furthermore, "*I practice mentally translating my thoughts from Arabic to English in various situations*" was rated with a mean score of 4.1408 (SD = 1.05959). The findings suggest that learners not only translate in academic contexts but also apply this technique in real-life situations, which may assist them in feeling more comfortable with the English language since they are constantly engaging with it in their daily lives.

Hence, the descriptive analysis reveals that translation is a significant strategy used by English majors in Saudi Arabia. The high mean scores across different items indicate that students heavily depend on translation in reading, learning new vocabulary, and writing. Therefore, while learners recognize that direct communication is essential in English, they also appreciate that translation helps them understand and express ideas. This duality is essential in the learning process, as translation is both a means of moving from one language to another and a step toward mastering the target language. The outcomes thus suggest that educators should embrace and integrate translation strategies into teaching methodologies to enhance students' language acquisition.

Table 2. ITLS Means and Standard Deviation

Descriptive Statistics			
Item Description	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
"When reading an English text, I first translate it into Arabic in my mind to help me understand its meaning."	71	4.1690	1.14625
"I read Arabic translations in the course reference book to help me better understand English articles in the textbook."	71	4.0282	1.25325
"After I read English articles, I use an available Arabic translation to check if my comprehension is correct."	71	4.1972	1.20261
"To write in English, I first brainstorm about the topic in Arabic."	71	3.8732	1.19439
"When I write in English, I first think in Arabic and then translate my ideas into English."	71	4.0141	1.22466
"I write Arabic outlines for my English compositions."	71	3.7324	1.17056
"When I listen to English, I first translate the English utterances into Arabic to help me understand the meanings."	71	3.9155	1.21592
"I read the Arabic translation scripts before I listen to instructional English tapes or CDs."	71	3.4930	1.36144
"When I watch English TV or movies, I use Arabic subtitles to check my comprehension."	71	4.0845	1.20412
"I listen to or read Arabic news first in order to understand English radio/TV news better."	71	3.5915	1.31559
"When speaking English, I first think of what I want to say in Arabic and then translate it into English."	71	3.8592	1.21062

"If I forget certain English words or expressions in the middle of conversation, I translate from Arabic into English to help me keep the conversation going."	71	4.0845	1.11799
"I memorize the meaning of new English vocabulary words by remembering their Arabic translation."	71	4.1690	1.09526
"I learn English grammar through Arabic explanations of the English grammatical rules."	71	3.9296	1.15045
"I use Arabic translation of grammatical terms such as parts of speech, tenses, and agreements to help me clarify the roles of the grammatical parts of English sentences."	71	3.9296	1.07337
"I learn English idioms and phrases by reading their Arabic translation."	71	3.8028	1.28307
"I use English-Arabic dictionaries to help myself learn English."	71	4.0563	1.10696
"I use Arabic-English dictionaries to help myself learn English."	71	4.0986	1.09746
"I use an electronic translation machine to help myself learn English."	71	3.9155	1.26204
"If I do not understand something in English, I will ask other people to translate it into Arabic for me."	71	3.9296	1.24584
"I ask questions about how an Arabic expression can be translated into English."	71	3.9437	1.01260
"When the teacher assigns English articles for reading, I work with others to translate them."	71	3.6620	1.22991
"I practice mentally translating my thoughts from Arabic to English in various situations."	71	4.1408	1.05959
"I take notes in Arabic in my English class."	71	3.7887	1.36188
"I write Arabic translations in my English textbooks."	71	4.0563	1.21758
"I try to clarify the differences and similarities between Arabic and English through translation."	71	3.9859	1.15255
"When reading English, I try to grasp the meaning of what I read without thinking of Arabic equivalents."	71	3.7887	1.21791
"When speaking English, I think of what I want to say in English without thinking first in Arabic."	71	3.5775	1.34867
Valid N (listwise)	71		

4.3 Correlation Analysis to Test if There is a Relationship between English Majors' Beliefs about Translation and Their Use of Translation as an LLS in Saudi Arabia

The correlation analysis presented in Table 3 offers a valuable understanding of the association between English majors' perceived beliefs about translation and their actual use of translation as an LS in Saudi Arabia. Pearson correlation coefficients measure the degree and direction of these relationships, which are evident and highly important in showing the contribution of translation to language learning.

The first is between the attitude "*Translating helps me understand textbook readings*" and the behavior of translating English texts into Arabic for better understanding. The Pearson coefficient of 0.544 suggests a moderate positive correlation. It is significant at $p < 0.01$. This implies that students who think translation helps them understand what is in the textbooks will likely translate texts mentally. This result supports the argument that learners who believe that translation is helpful will adopt it more often as an LS, thus supporting the argument that positive beliefs towards translation will enhance the use of the strategy in learning environments.

Moreover, the relationship between the belief that "*Translating helps me understand textbook readings*" and the ability to write English compositions is the strongest, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.764, also significant at the 0.01 level. This high correlation shows that students who feel that translation helps comprehend the readings are also likely to think it is helpful for writing. This relationship shows how comprehension and production skills relate to language learning and how good translation practices can improve understanding and writing skills. It emphasizes the need for translation as a complex process that serves different functions in learning a second language.

On the other hand, the relationship between the perceived statement "*Translating helps me write English compositions*" and the frequency of reading Arabic translations to comprehend English articles is comparatively low, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.125, which is not very significant at a 95% confidence level since the p-value is 0.298. This implies that despite the students' understanding of the usefulness of translation in writing, this understanding does not necessarily lead to the practice of using Arabic translations to enhance knowledge of English texts. This difference may imply that students distinguish between the mental operations needed for writing and those required for reading, thus pointing to a more intricate connection between the two.

Another interesting link is the connection between the use of English texts translated into Arabic and the reading of Arabic translations in the materials studied. The Pearson correlation coefficient was 0.613, representing a very close positive correlation, which is significant at the 0.01 level. This finding implies that students who practice mental translation while reading English texts also use Arabic translations available in their learning materials. Such behavior might be explained by the fact that students are trying to strengthen their knowledge through various types of translation, which can contribute to the improvement of the general understanding of the English language.

The correlation analysis indicates a significant relationship between English majors' perceptions of translation and their actual behaviors.

The high positive correlations imply that students with positive attitudes towards translation are likely to use translation strategies in their learning. This discovery underlines the significance of promoting positive attitudes towards translation among learners since such attitudes can affect the learners' use of translation as an LS.

Furthermore, the analysis also stresses the importance of educators acknowledging the importance of translation in learning languages. Thus, analyzing the connections between beliefs and practices will help educators identify ways to improve students' translation skills and provide them with the necessary support. Engaging students in discussing their assumptions about the nature of translation and allowing them to translate in context may also enhance their language development.

Therefore, based on the findings of the correlation analysis, translation is an effective LS among English majors in Saudi Arabia. The study implies that positive attitudes towards translation are related to its use in the teaching and learning of English; therefore, teachers need to incorporate translation into their teaching strategies to enhance learning.

Table 3. Relationship between convictions about interpretation and utilization of translation

		"Translating helps me understand textbook readings."	"When reading an English text, I first translate it into Arabic in my mind to help me understand its meaning."	"Translating helps me write English composition."	"I read Arabic translations in the course reference book to help me better understand English articles in the textbook."
		Correlations			
"Translating helps me understand textbook readings."	Pearson Correlation	1	.544**	.764**	.216
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000	.071
	N	71	71	71	71
"When reading an English text, I first translate it into Arabic in my mind to help me understand its meaning."	Pearson Correlation	.544**	1	.374**	.613**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.001	.000
	N	71	71	71	71
"Translating helps me write English composition."	Pearson Correlation	.764**	.374**	1	.125
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.001		.298
	N	71	71	71	71
"I read Arabic translations in the course reference book to help me better understand English articles in the textbook."	Pearson Correlation	.216	.613**	.125	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.071	.000	.298	
	N	71	71	71	71

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

5. Discussion

The findings of this research align with the general conversation regarding the use of translation as a tool in language learning, as evidenced by various scholarly works. According to Al-Musawi (2014), translation can help the learner connect the first language and the second language they are learning, enabling them to comprehend new language structures. The research participants also share this view, as they consider translation a valuable means of enhancing their knowledge of English and different aspects of the language. Building on the findings of this research, the learners' beliefs about translation have a positive relationship with the extent to which they use it as a strategy in learning EFL, proving the role of learners' perceptions in their learning behaviors. This supports Althobaiti (2020), who stated that learners' perceptions of a specific LS may influence its use. The positive relationship found in this study implies that promoting a positive attitude toward translation could improve the incorporation of translation as a LS among English majors. The use of translation as an LS, as revealed by the findings of this study, is not an isolated occurrence. Dahmash (2023) points out that language learning strategies,

such as translation, are essential in EFL/ESL learning and acquisition. The analysis of this research shows that translation is one of the most frequently used strategies by English majors in Saudi Arabia.

Nevertheless, using translation as an LS is not without some difficulties. Nelson et al. (2019) state that overdependence on translation can hamper the progress of direct thinking in the target language. This is an issue that should be considered in the Saudi EFL context, as translation is a shared learning technique. However, several scholars support the use of translation in language learning, not in a direct manner but in a strategic manner. Lestary (2019) states that translation can help develop meta-linguistic awareness among learners, while Eisa (2020) postulates that translation can help build critical thinking skills. Such potential benefits indicate the effectiveness of translation as an LS, as evidenced by the participants' beliefs and practices in this study.

Based on the findings of this study and the literature review, translation seems to play a vital role in EFL learning in Saudi Arabia. However, as Chinpakdee & Gu (2024) point out, it is equally important to manage the extent of translation and other learning strategies to develop language skills. This study adds to the existing literature on this subject and agrees with other scholars' findings and arguments in that more research must be conducted to establish the best way of using translation in language acquisition. This study, therefore, has provided a better understanding of Saudi EFL learners' perceptions and attitudes toward using translation as an LS. The findings of this study emphasize the role of translation in the EFL learning context in Saudi Arabia and highlight the necessity of future research in this field. The study also contributes to the existing literature by establishing the relationship between learners' beliefs about translation and the use of this method in learning.

6. Conclusion

This study, which explored Saudi English Majors' Belief about Translation as a Language Learning Strategy, has provided significant information regarding the perception and learning disposition of English major university students in Saudi Arabia. The study proves that these students view translation as a beneficial way of learning English and various aspects of it. Most importantly, the study reveals a significant correlation between the learners' attitudes towards translation and their utilization of translation as a learning aid in EFL.

The importance of English in the Kingdom of Saudi Arabia is quite understandable, as it is used in education and business settings. Hence, the implications of the results of this study are significant to the teaching and learning of English in KSA. Therefore, the study of the beliefs and practices of English majors concerning translation as an LS can be helpful in enhancing the teaching and learning process by comparing the students' beliefs and practices with the strategies employed in the classroom. Thus, the findings of this study not only shed light on the beliefs and practices of Saudi English majors regarding the use of translation as an LLS, but also underscore the importance of translation in the EFL learning context in Saudi Arabia, effectively highlighting the need for further research in this area.

The study also contributes to the existing literature on language learning strategies. This seems to be in line with the assertion made by Dahmash (2023) that learning strategies such as translation are critical in EFL/ESL learning and acquisition. Based on the present research findings, the use of translation as an LS in the EFL context in Saudi Arabia could be recommended. The study also contributes to the existing body of knowledge by demonstrating the correlation between learners' beliefs about translation and its application as an LS. The implications of these findings for English language teaching and learning in KSA are significant and warrant further exploration.

This study also provides insight into areas of this field that require future research. Whilst the current study offers an understanding of the beliefs and practices of English majors in a specific public university in Saudi Arabia, there is a need for the findings to be generalized to the entire education context. Subsequent research may look at the attitudes and actions of English majors in other universities in KSA and other learners learning English as a foreign language.

In addition, the study generates research interest in the impact of such beliefs and practices on the learners' acquisition of English. Another analysis that could be conducted is the comparison of the frequency of using translation as a beneficial LS and the learners' level of English. Future research may examine the utilization of translation strategies across various academic levels and assess whether views and practices differ according to the academic year. Additionally, research could investigate how the participants' use of translation evolves as they progress through different proficiency levels (e.g., beginner, intermediate, advanced). Longitudinal studies may investigate the long-term effects of using translation strategies on EFL acquisition and proficiency development. Another potential area of research is the impact of integrating translation strategies into EFL curricula and its influence on students' motivation and engagement.

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