EXAMINING EFL STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION TOWARD
TRANSLATION AS A SKILL IN FLA UKSW

THESIS

Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Sarjana Pendidikan

LIDYA SARTIKA DIANING PUTRI
112014104

ENGLISH LANGUAGE EDUCATION PROGRAM
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND ARTS
UNIVERSITAS KRISTEN SATYA WACANA
SALATIGA
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Saya yang bertandatangan di bawah ini:

Nama       : Lidya Sartika Dianing Putri
NIM        : 112014104 Email : 112014104@student.uksw.edu
Fakultas   : Bahasa dan Seni Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
Judul tugas akhir : Examining EFL Students’ Perception Toward Translation as A Skill in FLA UKSW
Pembimbing : E. Titik Murtisari, Ph.D

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Nama : Lidya Sartika Dianing Putri
NIM  : 112014104 Email : 112014104@student.uksw.edu
Fakultas : Bahasa dan Seni Program Studi : Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris
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E. Titik Murtisari, M. Trans.Stud, Ph.D.

Thesis Examiner

Antonina Anggraini S. M.Pd.

Lidya Sartika Dianing P
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NIM: 112014104

Approved by:

Supervisor  Examiner

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EXAMINING EFL STUDENTS’ PERCEPTION TOWARD TRANSLATION AS A SKILL IN FLA UKSW

Lidya Sartika Dianing Putri

Abstract

The use of translation as a language learning tool has received different compliments and criticism throughout EFL's long history. Translation integrated into the language learning practice along with generally used learning activities, such as reading, listening, writing, and vocabulary development could be defined as a "pedagogical tool", considering that its purpose is to teach a language. Translation activities make students communicate both ways: into and from the foreign language. While translating students are incited to notice differences in structure and vocabulary, to strengthen grammatical competence, to shape their own way of thinking and to correct common mistakes that could otherwise remain unnoticed. This study is aimed to know the perceptions of the students of the Faculty of Language and Arts (FLA) of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana toward translation as a skill, through descriptive quantitative study attempts to discover EFL students' beliefs about translation as a skill in the language learning process. A total of 80 students from batch 2015 of Language Literature Program of FLA participated in this study by filling in five-point Likert scale questionnaire and closed-ended questions to get higher percentage data. Students can make the best out of their learning if they are encouraged to use translation skills properly. The findings of the survey suggest that translation is a good tool in the English language learning purposed enhancement of students' foreign language skills.

Keywords: translation, students' perception, language teaching, learning tool, language skills.

INTRODUCTION

Al-Salam (2007) states that (while acknowledging that global market has given rise to the use of English as international language) the need for translation from English into other languages and vice versa has become an important role for learning a language. In language teaching and learning, translation is known to be a common tool which helps the student or teacher. In spite of this, the rejection of the use of translation in the 19th century made a concern about how relevant the
purpose of translation in language teaching and learning. It is because there was issue that translation may ruin the productive learning skills in the form of L1 derangement (Carreres, 2006). It is argued that translation obstructs the improvement of L2 application and is irrelevant.

Translation has always been a controversial matter on whether it can be a valid and effective tool in foreign language learning. Until recently, the language teaching community did not agree if translation was used as a language learning activity. It was considered as being not in accordance with the context of foreign language learning (Brown, 2002). Translation was also criticized because traditional grammar translation had a close association with translation. Even today, translation is often underestimated as some kind of linguistic transfer tool of one language to another. It is still rejected as a useful language learning tool because it is considered as inappropriate, boring, and time-consuming (Dagiliene, 2012). Despite this, previous studies show overwhelming good responses about translation.

As a preliminary study, this study sought the relevance of translation for improving foreign language skill from students’ point of view. Specifically, this study involved 80 participants from students of Faculty of Language and Art of Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana. Hopefully, the result of this study will be beneficial for English teachers in their decision making about the importance of the use of translation in teaching and learning process in the future.
LITERATURE REVIEW

A. Defining of perception and translation

A.1 Perception

The ability to choose something through the senses (seeing, hearing, touching, smelling) is often also called perception. To respond to other people or a situation each person has a different perception in every comprehension. According to Lindsay & Norman (1977); perception is the process of interpreting and regulating sensations that can produce meaning from the world experience. This is often referred to differences in a perception; where people think the same thing, but they have different thoughts about it; the way people appreciate and think about someone or something. Perception also has a connection with persons’ point of view regarding an object in a different way using his senses, to obtain an interpretation. In the subconscious condition, human’s perception is like a file that has been stored. The file that will appear when there is a stimulus which triggers it. Perception is the work of the brain in understanding or assessing something that happens around it (Waidi, 2006: 118).

According to Bodenhauses and Hugenberg (2009), perception can be illustrated as a bridge among “inner and outer worlds” of a person (p.2). When a person gives a stimulus such as vision, sound, or things related to the senses, the process of perception is evident. Then the receiver of the incentive will perceive it as the inner experience of the world. In short, perception is the process of interpreting objects through the humans senses as a result of giving stimuli which can form a judgement or understanding of something inside the head.
In translation, students get input from the learning process, which means there is stimulation from the lecturer and other students to be heard or felt. These stimuli will direct students to interpret their learning process. Perception in this study is related to students’ responses in assessing translation as a skill in language learning process.

A.2 Translation

The process of transferring source text semantically and with the same style into the target languages is called translation (Bassnett, 1980; Catford, 1965; Koller 1989), as cited in Apriyanti, Wulandari, Safitri (2016). According to Dubois (1973) as cited in Bell (1991, pp. 5-6), translation is a work of expression by preserving semantic and stylistic equivalent in another language (or the target language) from a source. A popular view of translation is that a communication transferring the meaning from one language to another language, comes from Latin language *translatum*, a form of the word transferre which means “to carry across”. However, in translation, not everything can be carried across because of the difference of meaning from source to target language, which sometimes causes the notion of translation loss (Cook, 2010).

According to Djuhari (2004), translation is divided into two, namely translation as a product and translating as a process. The translating process begins with source analysis, afterwards changes the structure into the target language. In other words, the nature of translation always involves the process of transferring the source into the target language (Apriyanti, Wulandari, Safitri, Dewi, 2016). In short, the nature of the translation is the transfer of the meaning of the word from
source to target language which includes mastery of two languages to understand the source and transferring process that must be proper.

**B. Pros and Cons of translation in language learning**

Translation has an important role in globalizing world and raise the multilingual language acquisition which often used on daily basis (Leonardi, 2011). Nevertheless, there are also different opinion from another linguists, methodologists and teachers. The use of translation in teaching and learning process causes controversial problem. It was proved by a number of studies which are still debating the pros and cons of translation in language learning. According to Vermes (2010), in the dominant form of language teaching until 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the obvious shortcomings of the Grammar-Translation Method caused the objection against the used of translation in language teaching. To take a popular example of such voices, Bloomfield (1933) as stated in Vermes (2010) wrote that translation into the native language tended to mislead the learner, because the semantic units of different languages do not match, and under the practiced stimulus of the native form, it can make the students certain to forget the foreign one. In other words, translation is hiding the differences that exist between the system of the two languages, and by providing stimulus that not exactly fits could trigger fails to reinforce correct language behavior.

This behaviorist conception of language learning was introduced by B. F. Skinner, he is the psychologist who writes Verbal Behaviour book. In his book, he explained language as a form of behavior and stated that the first language was
achieved by the infant through stimulus-response-reinforcement cycle, and most of performance was a result of positive or negative reinforcement. This idea of language learning lead to the rise of Audio-Lingual Method for second language teaching, which focused use drills and pattern practice in the target language followed by instant positive or negative reinforcement from teacher. For this methodology, translation could not be applied.

However, people who followed other methodologies were also against translation. According to Newson (1998), translation made it difficult to achieve the generally goals of foreign language teaching, such as fluency in spoken language and the introduction of communicative strategies. Translation also makes the effects of the learning process become not observable, both from the new vocabulary or structural items, and does not support the use of communicative language.

Moreover, the efficiency of translation in the language learning process still become questionable. According to Malmkjaer (1998:5, in Dagiliene,2012) the main reasons why translation were ignored:
1. Translation is independent and radically different from the four skills which define language competence: reading, writing, speaking and listening.
2. Translation takes up valuable time which could be used to teach these four skills.
3. Translation is unnatural.
4. Translation misleads and prevents students from thinking in the foreign language.
5. Translation is a bad test of language skills.
6. Translation produces interference.
7. Translation is only appropriate for training translator.

Those objections could be found if we thought of translation as an exclusively written activity. Regardless, translation can also be implemented orally. In principle, it gives benefits to develop spoken language skills. Also, there is no theoretical reason why translation could not be used as the tool of language teaching. Stibbard (1998) argues that translation is an activity that is very universally beneficial, even in a monolingual society. Therefore it must be included in a language teaching program. Since most people in the world are bi/multilingual, Malmkjaer (1998: 8) argues that translation always involves the process of reading, writing, speaking and listening, which could develop the four skill of language, so translation is a natural skill and can be used as a natural classroom activity.

There are also “significant and visible signs of a revival of translation in language teaching according to recent literature and applied linguistics” (Malmkjaer in Dagiliene, 2012). Many theorists, linguists, teachers agree on the importance of using translation in foreign language classes. For instance, Schaffner (1998) in Dagiliene (2012) claims that translation and related exercises could be beneficial to foreign language learning:

1. To improve verbal agility.
2. To expand students’ vocabulary in L2.
3. To develop their style.
4. To improve their understanding of how languages work.
5. To consolidate L2 structures for active use.
6. To monitor and improve the comprehension of L2.
Ross (2000) states that translation is recognized as the fifth skill and the most important social skill since it promotes communication and understanding. As a form of communication, translation involves interaction and cooperation between people, which makes it a very useful tool in foreign language teaching. According to Dagiliene (2012), translation could also trigger language awareness. When translating, students are asked to identify differences in structure and vocabulary, which makes them have to involve a strategy to equalize the potential of both languages. The comparison of language, vocabulary, word order, grammar and other language points in the target language and student’s mother tongue is a real benefit of translation in foreign language classes. The impact on students’ language system is the contrasting language of native languages and language targets. Despite this, in Leonardi’s (2010) research, translation can be used to support learning as a valuable tool and teaching aid, can be implemented as a pedagogical tool at each level of proficiency in schools and universities and can also strengthen four language skills: writing, reading, speaking and listening.

C. Previous Studies

The previous studies of students’ perception of translation as a language learning tool affirm positive beliefs about translation (Carrees, 2006; Fernandez-Guerra, 2014; Murtisari, 2016). According to Carreres’ survey (2006), translation becomes a useful device in language learning for Modern Languages students at Cambridge University (4.6 mean out of 5 perfect score). Over 90 % of the students said that their language skill such as, vocabulary (100 %), grammar (96 %), writing (96 %) and L2 register (90 %) were improved due to translation. Another study
came from Hsieh (2000) where 52 participants who were given a questionnaire about their attitudes and thought toward translation, 73% of the students learnt the importance of their native language (China) through translation; 85% of students learnt coherence and contextualization of English reading text; 65% of students reported that they become more aware of the multiple meaning of a word in English; 62% agreed translation help them increase vocabulary knowledge and reading skills. In 2006, with qualitative and quantitative surveys on 351 Taiwanese, Liao found that the students’ in his study believed that translation helped them acquire English language skills such as, vocabularies, writing, reading, speaking, and also Idioms and phrases.

According to Dagiliene’s research (2012), 78 participants of her study stated that translation helped them to improve their languages skills. It was shown by the data where 80% of the students improved their reading and vocabulary skills through translation activities, 65% were helped to improve their speaking skills, 50% were helped improve listening skills, and 60% were helped to improve their grammar and writing skills. Furthermore, Murtisaris’ research (2016) shows that translation gives positive effects to the students’ skill in learning L2. A total of 95 students participated, for instance, reported that the participants improved their writing and speaking skill through translation. The data showed that 62.1% of the respondents agree with the statement that learning to translate into English can help students become more aware of the differences between Indonesia and English. The study also demonstrated that translation have a role in L2 writing. The chart showed that 96.8% of the students agreed or strongly agreed that they tend to translate ideas
mentally when writing in the target language. According to Murtisari (2016), the use of translation as a method in speaking was avoided because it would obstruct automaticity in language production. However, her study showed that 77.9% of the students agreed that translation helped them to speak more naturally in the language. In other words, translation skill strongly influence their language learning ability, either speaking or writing.

THE STUDY

This study came up after the researcher read the journal about students’ perception toward translation from Dr. E. T. Murtisari (Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana). The researcher also wants to prove the hypothesis that translation is a good tool for language learning. The study was conducted using a quantitative method which aims to investigate students’ perceptions toward translation as a skill. The setting of the study was at Universitas Kristen Satya Wacana Salatiga. Students of batch 2015 of Faculty of Language and Arts majoring in English Literature program were chosen for the research as they became translation class students in UKSW.

A. Research Question

This study seeks to answer the following research question:

What are the students’ perceptions towards translation as a skill in L2 language learning/ teaching?
B. Participants

Convenience sampling was used in this study. The participants were from the same campus as the researcher. “Cases selected because they are readily available” (Perry, 2011, p. 58). The participants were from 2015 batch who were taking translation class. A total of 80 students participated out of the target population of around 150 students who are taking the Indonesian into English Translation course. This 3 credit course is offered in the third year of the program. That number of students would be representative enough to show their perceptions of translation as skill in L2 language learning/teaching.

C. Instrument

The data of this study were collected using a questionnaire with seventeen statements in Likert Scale in the form of multiple response sets and closed-ended questions. According to Foddy (1993) as cited in Reja, Lozar, Hlebec, and Vehovar (2003), closed ended questions limit respondents towards available answer choices, while open ended makes respondents express too broad an opinion. The researcher used closed ended questions to get a higher percentage of data. It will also minimize the occurrence of irrelevant and confused answer from the respondent. The questionnaire was partly developed based on Murtisari’s research (2016).

D. Data Collection and Analysis

Data collection conducted after the translation course had finished. This is to make participant freely expressed their opinions. The questionnaire was distributed to students in the translation class. Students were asked to filling out the questionnaire honestly.
The researcher used content analysis after obtaining the data from the questionnaire. Then the data entered were calculated into percentages and counted using Microsoft Excel program to find out the percentage of students’ perception toward translation. After that, it was analyzed by connecting it to the theories cited by the researcher.

**FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

This section discusses and presents the results of the questionnaire and data analysis. The data collected were put into four categories based on the research questions, which are students’ perception toward translation, linguistic awareness, benefit in writing, and improved skill.

**A. Students perception towards translation**

This subheading discusses students’ perception toward translation. The findings regarding students’ perception about translation showed that they believe that the translation is a helpful tool in their English learning and did not become something that obstructs the learning process. These findings are also confirmed the statement of Leonardi (2011) about translation has an important role in the language acquisition. Below are the results of the participants’ responses to several statements in percentage, followed by a discussion of the results.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Translation is important as a language learning tool.</td>
<td>44</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>76</td>
<td>95</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As shown in Table 1, all of the respondents agreed that translation is important as a language learning tool (S1). This finding supported the statement of Ashouri and Fotovatnia (2010) about students’ positive belief of the role of translation in Iranian student in English learning. Then, with 72.5% of students thought that translation tasks were enjoyable and entertaining. Only 26.25% of student who felt that translation was boring. From the data of students’ feeling about translation, it seems that their perception is positive. When the students were asked if translation was appropriate for training translator, 68.75% of respondents ticked “disagree” which meant that even if they would not become a translator, they still needed translation.

After that, when students were asked if translation produces interference, 47.5% of the respondents ticked “agree” and only 52.5% of the participants
disagreed with the statement. Although the result tends to be divided, they still believe that translation is an appropriate language learning tool. The findings in this study contradict with the statement of Malmkjaer (1998) in Dagiliene (2012) about the reason why translation was ignored as language learning tool. This was strengthened by the next statement, translation is useful as a means of learning English foreign language, which all of the respondent were agreed about that. This result was not surprisingly since translation activities is very universally beneficial to the bi-multilingual or even in a monolingual society (Stibbard, 1998)

B. Linguistic Awareness

Table 2 below shows the students’ response concerning the statements related to linguistic awareness. They had significantly positive response toward the role of translation in linguistic awareness.

Table 2

*Students’ perception toward translation as a skill on linguistic awareness*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No</th>
<th>Statements</th>
<th>SA</th>
<th>A</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>D</th>
<th>Tot</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I think translating helps me to make faster progress in my foreign language learning.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>77</td>
<td>96.25</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.75</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.</td>
<td>Learning to translate into English helps me to become more aware of the differences between Indonesian and English.</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As seen in Table 2, most of the statements have an average of more than 90% for positive responses toward the advantages of translation in linguistic awareness. Starting from statement 7, 30 of students choose “agree” while 47 ticked “strongly agree” which means this statement got a response positive from the respondents. Students believe that translation makes faster progress in their foreign language learning (S7). The assumption that translation was a waste of time did not seem to be valid to Literature Program students in UKSW. Another finding was learning to translate also helped students to become more aware of the differences between Indonesian and English language. 96.25% of the students totally agreed (S8). Correspondingly, Dagiliene (2012) claimed that translation could make students more aware with languages. Not only that, 97.5% respondents also thought that learning to translate into English help them become aware of English grammar (S9). The next statement, the students also agreed that learning to translate improve their understanding of how languages work into L2 in Murtisari’s research (2016), which is proved by the result of statement 10.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Learning to translate into English helps me to become aware of grammatical use in English.</th>
<th>42</th>
<th>36</th>
<th>78</th>
<th>97.5</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>0</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>2.5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.</td>
<td>Learning to translate into English improve my understanding of how languages work in L2</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>97.5</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C. Benefit in Writing

This study discusses the students’ positive beliefs toward the role of translation in developing writing skills.

Figure 1. The skills to translate into English helps me to write more naturally in the language.

Figure 1 indicates that students also have a positive belief that translation skills into English helps them to write more naturally in the target language. With 62.5% of the students ticked “agree” while 35% “strongly agree” with the statement. This result confirms that the use of translation is also beneficial for writing. Correspondingly, Murtisari (2016), in her study also explained about students’ positive belief toward translation as a skill to improve their ability in writing. Therefore, this is not surprising when students also have strong confirmation of the positive view since translation make a faster progress in developing their English writing skill.
D. Improved Students Skill

*Figure 2. The Results of Students’ Improved Skills.*

As seen figure 2, the data of the survey showed the result of questions about areas of language skill where students considered to be improved. Improving vocabularies got the highest 99%. Almost all of the respondents were helped by translation. This finding has been predictable since the previous studies also showed the similar belief that translation could expand students’ vocabularies. Followed by 95% and 90% of respondents who thought that their grammar and writing skills were also improved. This finding also supported the research by Carrees (2006) and Dagiliene (2012), where according to their study that students could develop their grammar and writing skills through translation. Another chart indicates that reading skills were rated 94%. Dagiliene (2012) seems also have the same view toward the idea.

As many as 69% of the respondents reported of having improved speaking skills through translation activities. These findings rated mediumly high while the use of translation is often considered to interrupt the automaticity of language
production. This finding supported Murtisari’s (2016) research where according to her study translation helped the students to speak more naturally in the language. Only 31% agreed their listening skills improved.

Thus, all the results affirm students’ progress in language learning. This means that translation is a suitable learning tool and could be applied in the foreign language learning process. Most of the students built up the English language knowledge, developed skills in reading, writing, listening, speaking, vocabulary and grammar.

CONCLUSION

This study aims at investigating students’ perception towards translation as a skill in English Language Literature Program of Faculty of Language and Arts of UKSW, Salatiga. The perception was divided into four parts. There are the perception of students’ feeling towards translation, the awareness of language, benefit of translation in writing process, and students’ improved skills by the use of translation.

Based on the results of the research, it can be concluded that translation can be a learning method for developing students’ English language skills, although translation is still being one of the research subjects that is pro-contra and often discussed by methodologists, teachers and language experts. This study shows students’ positive belief that they can improve their skills by using translation. When being applied in class, it can improve the ability of reading, writing, speaking and vocabulary of students.
Based on the one of the findings the students’ strong desire to be able to better learn translation even though it is not a specifically career path for the program’s graduates. Many students also say that translation is important, so translation can be used as a valid English language learning tool. However, the portion must also be considered and must be integrated with the appropriate language learning. This is intended to prevent the language interference.

At last, the results of this study can be used to support the use of translation in language learning process due to the adding the number of translation researches where most of their findings showed positive responses on translation. Further studies of this topic can expand the scope of this study and investigate more on the students’ perception towards translation. The improvisation of the factors in the questionnaires and the use of various method is also essential to get richer data from the students.
ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

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REFERENCES


APPENDIX

Questionnaire

I am Lidya Sartika, student of 2014 major in English Language Education Program (ELEP) UKSW Salatiga. I want to use this questionnaire for the needs of academic. I would appreciate your participation if you are willing to answer the questions in this questionnaire. Make sure to answer all of the question with honestly. There is no right and wrong answer. Thankyou.

Directions: Read each item carefully. Using the scale below, please circle the number that best describes translation as a language learning tool. Answer each item according to the following scale: 1: corresponds not all (strongly disagree); 2: corresponds a very little (disagree); 3:corresponds a lot (agree); 4: corresponds exactly (strongly agree).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Statement</th>
<th>Scale</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Translation is important as a language learning tool.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation tasks are enjoyable and entertaining</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to translate into English is boring.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation produces interference in learning language.</td>
<td>1 2 3 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>---</td>
<td>---</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I think translating helps me to make faster progress in my foreign language learning.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to translate into English helps me to become aware of grammatical use in English.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to translate into English helps me to become more aware of the differences between Indonesian and English.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Learning to translate into English improve my understanding of how languages work in L2.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The skills to translate into English help me to write more naturally in the language.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation helps me improve my writing skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation helps me improve my reading skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation helps me improve my grammar.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation helps me improve my vocabulary.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation helps me improve my speaking skills.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation is only appropriate for training translator.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Translation is useful as a means of learning English foreign language.</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Respondent's Personal Data

Name / Initials:

Gender:

Batch:

No. Phone / Mobile:

Last GPA:

Thank you for your participation!