Can Translation be a Useful Tool in Preparing Speaking Tasks for EFL Students?

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Abstract

In response to the emphasis on fostering productive skills described in Courses of Study for junior and senior high schools in their foreign language sections in Japan (MEXT, 2017, 2018), this paper aims at discussing the effectiveness of translation in preparation for speaking tasks in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context especially in Japan, where a foreign language (L2) is learned as a school subject, through the past theoretical and empirical research. Even though translation often entails negative connotations and beliefs, it has started to be considered as having pedagogical advantages (Cook, 2010, 2018). Yet, there are few studies that have investigated its practical use for L2 learning. Since an increasing number of studies have verified effects of using students' first language (L1) in the L2 classroom, which helps discuss positive aspects of translation use (Hall & Cook, 2012), this paper includes studies on L1 use to understand its functions and purposes as well as those of the translation use, after overviewing the research on planned speaking tasks. In conclusion, it is suggested that allowing EFL students to use translation when they prepare for speaking tasks can give them cognitive and affective support.

Key Words: Translation, L1 Use, Speaking Tasks

1. Introduction

Over the last few decades, the use of translation in foreign language (L2; English in this article) learning has been positively reconsidered. Since the 2000s, publications about its use have increased significantly, and new approaches and conceptualizations regarding translation in the L2 classroom are being investigated (Gutiérrez, 2018). However, translation has a bitter past, when it was considered as a villain from different sectors especially in the 1970s and 1980s (Cook, 2010), although L2 teachers and their students have used it in the classroom as a pedagogical tool (Cook, 2016; Hall & Cook, 2012). It seems that translation has been always there but that its use is so natural among them that they took it for granted, resulting in the absence of openly discussing its merits and demerits at the classroom level.

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In academics, there was a movement that L2-only teaching approaches were highly recommended. Teaching approaches such as Krashen's Natural Approach and Long's Interaction Hypothesis, both of which focus particularly on oral communication, have become two main reasons for using L2 exclusively for L2 learning (Macaro, 2009; Turnbull & Dailey-O' Cain, 2009). The traditional Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which emphasizes teaching L2 grammar deductively, memorization of L2 vocabulary, and translation of isolated texts, was badly criticized (Cook, 2010; Masuda, 2019). Economically, English became a means of communicating with other people in the world in the 1970s, and this internationalization of English has influenced its learning for practical purposes. For example, due to an increasing number of tourists who went abroad in the 1980s, people in Japan started to doubt the traditional way of teaching and to focus more on the importance of practical English learning (Sasaki, 2008). At the commercial level, the emergence of Berlitz School, which hired only native speakers as teachers and required them and their students to speak L2 exclusively in the classroom, gained its popularity in other language institutions. This approach later became known as Direct Method and criticized the use of students' first languages (L1s) (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Cook, 2010; Hall & Cook, 2012). What happened in the 1970s to 1980s has caused people to implant a belief that a foreign language should be taught in that language. The belief has remained deeply rooted among teachers in their minds due to the theories that they learned in college, through national language policies, and from more experienced teachers (Macaro, 2001; Masuda & Matsuzawa, 2018). Despite those critiques of translation, the recent movement towards its positive use as a new field of research and without the association of the GTM can give L2 teachers the proof that what they do in the classroom is the right thing to do.

Unlike translation, the research on using L1 in the L2 classroom has been widely conducted and shown its positive effects from the viewpoints of teachers and students (Hall & Cook, 2012). These L1-related studies help researchers and educators to talk about translation more openly (ibid.). Further, Cook (2018) notes that "translation is one of a number of ways of using the students' own language(s) to aid learning" (p. 290). Thus, this paper tries to identify the effectiveness of translation, referring to the studies on L1 use. In order to do so, a particular task needs to be selected. Responding to the importance of developing the five areas of listening, speaking (interaction), speaking (production), reading, and writing, which is described in the Courses of Study (COSs) (MEXT, 2017, 2018), more and more L2 teachers have put their energy into speaking tasks recently. Although some articles discuss the importance of planning before implementing a speaking task, there is no research, claiming that translation may be a useful strategy for students to plan their oral productions. Thus, the aim of this article is to explore the possible positive effects that translation may give to L2 teachers and students during the planning stage in speaking tasks, through the past empirical and theoretical research. It is hoped that this article gives some insights into the effects of using translation in the EFL classroom.

2. Effects of Planning

The new COSs (MEXT, 2017, 2018), referring to the *Common European Framework of Reference for Languages* (CEFR) (Council of Europe, 2001), have added another skill, Interaction, to the traditional four skills of listening, speaking, reading, and writing in order to put more emphasis on interactive language uses, such as exchanging ideas or feelings, in the L2 classroom. Responding to the COSs and other government-announced documents, language teachers in Japan have been trying to focus on students' output in L2 through tasks based on Can-Do Lists written by schools (MEXT, 2013). Tasks are often discussed in the Task-based Language Teaching approach (TBLT), where the goal of learning an L2 is to accomplish an authentic task, not to master L2 grammar like in the Presentation-Practice-Production (PPP) approach (Sato, 2010). Since some Japanese researchers claim the difficulty of implementing TBLT in Japan's language classrooms (Sato, 2010; Miyasako, 2013), in this article, tasks are discussed in the framework of the Task-supported Language Teaching (TSLT), where tasks are used supplementally so as to achieve syllabus goals constructed based on grammar or language functions, or discussed in the last p (production) in the PPP approach, as Sato (2010) and Miyasako (2013) point out the applicability of the two in the EFL context.

A few studies prove that giving students some planning time has benefits in their productions of speaking tasks. Kerr (2017) stresses that planning time helps students alleviate cognitive overload and that they are more likely to attend fluency, accuracy, and linguistic complexity in the production. He summarizes some techniques that teachers can use in planning time for either fluency or accuracy as in Table 1.

Table 1
Kerr's (2017) techniques in planning a speaking task

Fluency-oriented	Accuracy-oriented
・Giving students time to think, silently, about the task they are going to perform.	・Encouraging students to mentally rehearse what they are going to say.
・Giving students time to make notes about what they are going to say.	・Giving students time to review relevant notes or look up useful vocabulary items in a dictionary.
・Allowing students to brainstorm ideas with another student (in English or in their own language).	・Providing students with a short list of phrases that they may find useful in the task.
・Giving students time to research (e.g. online) the topic they are going to talk about.	

(Kerr, 2017, p. 7)

Some researchers have made comparisons between planned and unplanned conditions before a speaking task was carried out and investigated the language produced by students in both conditions in terms of fluency, accuracy, and complexity as in the following.

Crookes (1989) targeted two groups of 20 Japanese people who were learning English in an English as a Second Language (ESL) context and explored whether there would be any change in their monologue productions if they were given ten minutes to prepare their

monologues. The participants were given either Task 1 or Task 2, which were similar tasks that required them to describe the configuration of Lego blocks (Task 1) or buildings on a map (Task 2). They implemented either of the tasks first with then without time for planning, or first without then with time for planning. A distractor task was used between the two task versions. The researcher found out that the participants made more complex production in terms of words and a number of subordinate clauses per utterance, as well as improved the use of the definite article, the. Crookes (1989) concludes that planning can lead to more developed speech in the short term, compared with the unplanned condition. He, however, does not discuss whether the participants used translation in the planned condition.

Skehan and Foster (1997), targeting 40 part-time students who were 18 to 25 years old and attended college to learn English as a foreign language with various L1 backgrounds, investigated whether the language they produced was more fluent, more accurate, and more complex, in planned conditions, compared with the language in unplanned conditions. Fluency was measured by the number of pauses in an utterance, accuracy by the percentage of error-free clauses, and complexity by the total number of clauses in an utterance. The students were randomly allocated in four different groups – two groups with ten-minute planning time and the other two without planning time – and implemented three different task types: Personal information exchange, narrative, and decision-making, the last of which was the most cognitively demanding. The result revealed that the planning groups paused significantly less frequently than the groups without planning across the three task types. In terms of accuracy and complexity, the level of cognitive and linguistic difficulty of the tasks seems to have influenced language production. The more a task was complicated, the less the learner tended to focus on language form; produced language was more complex but less accurate. However, the simpler language a task asked for, the more the learner tended to have control over language form; produced language was more accurate but less complicated. Yet, as the Crookes' (1989) study, the researchers do not consider whether the students in planned conditions used their L1s or translation to achieve the tasks.

Bamanger and Khalid (2015) also explored the speaking production, in terms of fluency, accuracy, and linguistic complexity under planned conditions, where the experimental group was given five minutes unguided pre-task planning time, compared with the unplanned conditions where the control group was not given any time for planning, on an information-gap activity. The participants were 16 to 19 year-old post-beginner level high school students who were learning English as a school subject and were randomly divided into two groups. The researchers pointed out that fluency significantly increased when planning time was given and helped the students to set goals and organize the content of what they were going to speak. For accuracy and complexity, giving the students some time for planning prior to the activity helped them focus on a certain language form and edit their oral productions, resulting in an increased accuracy. Moreover, there was greater complexity in the productions of those in the experimental group because they focused on meaning during planning time. Like the two studies above, this research does not show whether the participants used their

L1 or translation during planning time.

These studies paid special attention to the effects of planned conditions before speaking tasks begin. It seems that planners speak more fluently and accurately and speak more complicated sentences though it depends on the cognitive complexity of tasks. Though Kerr (2017) points out that allowing students to brainstorm ideas with a partner in L2 or in L1 would contribute to more fluent speeches (Table 1), there has not been enough research on whether using translation during planning time has a better outcome. The following sections can provide some answers to that based on L1- and translation-related studies.

3. Effects of L1 Use

Broadly speaking, using students' L1 can be an effective tool for L2 learning if used judiciously (Antón & DeCamilla, 1999; Bruen & Kelly, 2014; Butzkamm, 2003, Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009; Cook, 2016; Hall & Cook, 2012; Littlewood & Yu, 2011; Masuda, 2019; Macaro, 2001, 2009; Turnbull & Dailey-O'Cain, 2009; Veiga, 2013; Widdowson, 2003). Ellis and Shintani (2014) put it, "In recent years, advocacy of L1 use has grown in strength and it is now clear that the pendulum has swung firmly in its favor at least in applied linguistic circles" (p. 233). Butzkamm (2003) emphasizes that L1 "is the most important ally a foreign language can have" (p. 30). In fact, in Japan, the functions or benefits of L1 use have come under the spotlight, and many language teachers and educators started to have an open discussion about it without criticizing it (Masuda & Matsuzawa, 2018; Taniguchi, 2019). Since translation is part of L1 use (Cook, 2018) and, as Hall and Cook (2012) note, "the rehabilitation of own-language use may in fact open a gateway for translation" (p. 283), the discussion about L1 use can help affirm the benefits of translation in L2 classes. Thus, this section clarifies possible functions and benefits that L1 could possess in the EFL context based on some empirical studies through their eyes. Further, some studies in the field of Foreign Language Studies, where a foreign language other than English is taught and learned, are introduced because they have contributed to the spread of affirmative views on L1 use.

Ross (2016) summarizes ten principles of L1 use in L2 teaching as shown in Table 2. The first seven resulted from his investigation about the L1 functions in Thailand through class observations and interviews, and the last three came from the past literature he had read. He distinguishes the principles into four categories – cognitive, affective, pedagogic, and political – and adds the reasons for the L1 use.

Table 2
Ross' (2016) ten principles of L1 use in EFL classrooms

	Categories	Principles	Use
(A)	Principles of teachers' use of L1 - identified within this study		
1	Cognitive	L2 knowledge	To explain L2 vocabulary, grammar usage, culture
2	Affective	Solidarity	To facilitate easy, 'natural' interaction in class
3		Collaboration	To develop team-work abilities
4	Pedagogic	Time-effectiveness	To make good use of limited classroom time
5		Comprehensibility	To ensure that meaning is conveyed successfully
6		Inclusivity	To ensure that all students can participate
7		Contingency	To respond to immediate teaching/learning needs
(B)	Principles of teachers' use of L1 - identified beyond this study		
8	Pedagogic	Class management	To maintain discipline
9	Political	Globalisation	To enable students to code-switch
10		Resistance	To question the spread of English

(Ross, 2016, p. 99)

Hall and Cook (2013) carried out a large-scale study on teachers' L1-use functions, attitudes, and beliefs through an on-line survey and interviews using video chats. 2,785 teachers around the world responded to the survey and 1,161 volunteered to be interviewed. Of them, 17 teachers were interviewed from China, Indonesia, France, Estonia, and Argentina in primary education, Malaysia, Saudi Arabia, Latvia, Spain, Greece, and Egypt in secondary education, and Armenia, Brazil, Japan, Mexico, Portugal, and Turkey in tertiary education. Over 70 percent of the respondents reported to use L1 when meanings in English are not clear, and over 60 percent explained L2 vocabulary in L1. Half of the respondents used L1 to explain L2 grammar, develop rapport and a good classroom atmosphere, and to maintain discipline. Liu, et al. (2004) studied the functions of L1 by investigating when 13 South Korean high school teachers actually used Korean (L1) in their classrooms, responding to the national curriculum guidelines which require English (L2) teachers to maximize their L2 use in class. They found out, through class observations and interviews, that the six most salient L1 functions among the participants were explaining difficult vocabulary and grammar, giving background information, overcoming communication difficulties by expressing in Korean what the teachers had difficulty saying in English, saving time, highlighting important information, and managing students' behavior. The L1 functions that these two studies identified fall into the Ross' (2016) four principles. It can be said that L2 teachers in the EFL context choose to use L1 for particular reasons depending on the teaching context, regardless of their national guidelines where maximized L2 use is recommended.

Not only teachers but also students do actually use L1 in class and want their teacher to switch to L1 when needed. Having observed students' language choices of Spanish adult learners who are native speakers of English in collaborative interaction, it was found that they used L1 for scaffolding purposes, for intersubjectivity, which means a shared perspective on tasks, and for private speech, especially when what they wanted to say or write was cognitively and linguistically challenging to them (Antón & DeCamilla, 1999). The researchers

note that language and thoughts are interconnected and that to prohibit L1 in the classroom stops the thinking processes of the students, depriving them of a tool in collaborative dialogues when they have faced cognitively difficult tasks. Bruen and Kelly (2014), by having analyzed the responses of students who were studying German or Japanese as a foreign language and whose shared L1 was English at a higher education institute in Ireland, mention that the students, especially those at the beginner level, desired their teacher's use of L1 when L2 meanings were unclear. Moreover, some of the students wrote that L1 made them feel less intimidating. Azami and Yamaguchi (2015) investigated 224 Japanese high school students' perceptions about English (L2) lessons conducted in L2 through a questionnaire. It was revealed that most of the students thought that it was better to use Japanese (L1) when the teacher explained grammar etc. instead of explaining everything in L2. Although the majority perceived that L2 instruction was fun and motivating, and helped enhance speaking and listening abilities, most students had difficulty understanding in L2-only instruction. In Turkey, Kocaman and Aslan (2018) targeted 96 Turkish-speaking private high school students who were aged 15 to 17 at the time of the study, and explored their perceptions of using L1 in the EFL classes. The result showed that the students were willing to use L1 in class. The majority of them felt the need to explain grammar, grammar difference, and the difference in the use of rules in L1. More than half of the students wanted their teacher to use L1 when explaining new words, giving instructions, and checking listening and reading comprehension.

To summarize, there seem to be some similarities in the purposes of using L1 between teachers and students. Looking back at the Ross' (2016) principles (See Table 2), EFL students also need cognitive, affective, and pedagogic use of the common language, L1. Hence, natural L1 interaction occurs, under the unconscious agreement between teachers and students or among students, to carry out the meaningful L1 functions.

4. Affirmative Views of Translation

As mentioned above, the functions and positive views of L1 form a solid foundation for discussing the use of translation in the L2 classroom. Cook's *Translation in Language Teaching* (2010) discusses an in-depth understanding of translation use in language teaching and learning from historical, educational, pedagogical, and political perspectives and has given many researchers an opportunity to argue the reality of translation use by L2 teachers and students. He questions the negative connotations that translation has entailed, such as dull, authoritarian, and demotivating, advocating Translation in Language Teaching (TILT), and discussing the benefits of TILT from theoretical and empirical standpoints. It has pedagogical advantages, meaning that it promotes learning, gives the student scaffolded help in complicated tasks, and is a practical skill in the globalizing society (Cook, 2010). Gutiérrez (2018) has organized functions of TILT into three categories as follows:

(1) Pedagogical translation – "designates those translating activities and/or tasks that are included in foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. These tasks enhance the development of specific language and translating skills and are based on various aspects of translation and other pragmatic issues central to the FL classroom. … "

(2) Code-switching – "involves different forms of alternation between the learners and teachers' languages (L1, L2, etc.). That is, it refers to the interaction between the teacher and the students or among the students. … "

(3) Interior translation – "Cognitive strategies that involve the use of the students' own language (L1) or additional languages (ALL) as a tool. … This strategy usually happens instinctively and the learners are often unaware of it. … "

<div align="right">(Gutiérrez, 2018, p. 16)</div>

She criticizes that "traditionally widespread sense of mistrust or discomfort is partly due to a lack of terminological consistency in this field narrowing the possibility of developing pedagogical translation beyond a [*sic*] L1 use" (p. 7). It appears that her taxonomy contributes to getting rid of the negative connotations about translation and leads to more constructive discussions for its positive use. Four empirical studies are introduced below based on the taxonomy above, which were all conducted in the EFL context.

Ebbert-Hübner and Maas (2018) reveal that pedagogical translation helps increase EFL students' grammar accuracy. 94 German-speaking university students who were enrolled in English Studies undergraduate degree took a pre-test before taking a Contrastive Analysis and Translation (CAT) class, then a post-test to see whether there was any difference in grammar retention between the two tests, which targeted English articles, tenses, prepositions, and false friends. The result indicated that, after the CAT class, the students' scores on tense and preposition tasks significantly improved. Their ability to distinguish between collocates and false friends also improved. The researchers contend that the CAT method may be an effective tool for those who have learned most grammatical aspects to reinforce rules and avoid interferences in the future. Masuda (2017) explored 74 Japanese-speaking high school students' beliefs about their teachers' use of translation in English (L2) classes. 72 students considered the translation use as useful, and the rest viewed it as somewhat useful. The researcher presents five roles of translation, pedagogical translation in Gutiérrez' (2018) terms, based on the students' perceptions about it: (1) To understand L2 meanings, (2) to understand L2 structures, (3) to feel a sense of security, (4) to study at home, (5) to prepare for English examinations. Veiga (2013) investigated students' perceptions of translation use in the L2 classroom, targeting 12 to 18 year-old native Portuguese students, who attended a public secondary school at that time and was studying English or French (L2). Results disclosed that the majority of the students preferred translation activities and felt the necessity of translation in their learning process. Moreover, most of the students felt reassured when L1 or translation was used. Song and Lee (2019) conducted a study on the effectiveness of code-switching when the teacher taught English (L2) vocabulary to 72 Korean-speaking pupils, 5 to 6 years old, who

were learning English as a foreign language in South Korea. As a result, in the post-test and delayed post-test, a code-switching group obtained higher scores than an L2-only group. In other words, code-switching was more effective for L2 vocabulary retention.

From the studies overviewed above, it can be said that translation provides cognitive (Ebbert-Hübner & Maas, 2018; Masuda, 2017; Song & Lee, 2019) and affective (Masuda, 2017; Veiga, 2013) support. These aspects prove Cook's (2018) claim as follows:

> It [Translation] can develop a learner's explicit knowledge of the structure of the new language, and indeed of their own language too, giving a sense of confidence and organization. The fact that there are no linguistic surprises or unknowns can imbue a sense of security which may be helpful to learning. (Cook, 2018, p. 292)

The second section of this article shows that if students are given planning time before a speaking task, their oral productions can be more fluent, accurate, and complicated. The translation-related studies in this section demonstrate that if they are allowed to use translation during planning time, it can help them speak more fluently and confidently with less stress and use more accurate and complex sentences by having selected appropriate L2 words and structures beforehand through translation as a cognitive support.

5. Concepts That Support Translation

From the empirical studies in the previous sections, it is clear that the judicious use of translation can give EFL students cognitive, affective, sociocultural, and pedagogical support. In other words, if teachers and students use the appropriate amount of translation in a given EFL context, it can become a meaningful tool that they can share in the classroom. This positive view of translation use is supported not only in empirical studies but also in some theoretical perspectives in terms of bilingual teaching.

There were times when translation was considered to be a detrimental tool to L2 learning that promoted interference and slowed learning process as negative transfers in the Second Language Acquisition (SLA) research (Cook, 2010; Ellis & Shintani, 2014), and that the popularity of monolingual teaching as known as L2-only instruction boosted as discussed in the first section. Yet, some researchers and educators have claimed the importance of bilingual teaching, questioning the effectiveness of monolingual teaching, and criticizing that it has no empirical evidence (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009). Butzkamm and Caldwell (2009) call this shift to bilingual teaching a true paradigm shift and assert the necessity of incorporating translation activities into L2 classes because translation plays an important role in the process of L2 learning. Thus, bilingual teaching can be another way of supporting the use of translation in EFL classrooms.

Cook (2016) queries the goal of language learning in monolingual teaching, which is to become a native speaker of a target language, and criticizes that the goal "limits the

components they [students] try to those that monolingual native speaker possess rather than the additional skills of L2 users, such as codeswitching or translation" (p. 179). He distinguishes L2 users from native speakers of L2, characterizing the former as having multicompetence, meaning "the overall system of a mind or a community that uses more than one language" (ibid., p. 14). Murahata and Murahata (2016) also explain it as the unified language system "L1 + L2," (p. 6) rather than multiple separate language systems in the same mind. Cook (2016) asserts that the goal of language learning is thus not to become like a native speaker of L2, but to become an L2 user who has multicompetence and who use translation and codeswitching whenever necessary, supporting bilingual teaching.

In an interview with Oxford University Press, Widdowson also holds doubts about the goal of becoming like a native speaker and is opposed to monolingual teaching (Oxford University Press, 2015), saying:

> To do this [to develop a more general communicative capability instead of aiming at becoming a native speaker] we need to recognize that when learners come to the classroom they already have the experience of how communication works in their own language and that this experience can be drawn upon in their learning of English as a foreign or other language. This would mean that the learners' L1 should not be suppressed, as it generally is, but put to strategic use and the current practice of exclusive monolingual L2 teaching abandoned. (Oxford University Press, 2015, pp. 64-65)

In his book (Widdowson, 2003), he points out that the goal is bilingualism in teaching English as a foreign language in school. He describes a classroom situation where while the teacher tries to carry out his or her lessons only in L2, students are busy connecting L1 with L2 through a learning process of bilingualization.

Cummins' (1979) Linguistic Interdependence Hypothesis is similar to Cook's multicompetence and Widdowson's claim that communication skills acquired in L1 help students learn an L2, but he uses a dual iceberg as a metaphor to explain his theory that supports bilingual teaching. He distinguishes between the surfaced features of two peaks of an iceberg – one peak represents words and grammar of the L1, and the other means those of the L2 – and the unified and hidden part of the iceberg, called Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP), which includes concepts and intellectual skills that students have learned in L1. Those skills are shared when they learn an L2. The theory claims that if those underlying skills in the CUP are well developed in an L1, the skills can transfer to the students' L2, called cross-linguistic transfer, once they reach a certain threshold of proficiency in the L2 (Chalmers, 2019; Cummins, 1979). As one of the concepts to support bilingual teaching, Chalmers (2019) also mentions Cummins' two different types of language proficiency, BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communicative Skills) and CALP (Cognitive/Academic Language Proficiency), the latter of which needs cross-disciplinary skills, such skills as hypothesizing, justifying, classifying, synthesizing, evaluating, and inferring found in the CUP in order to understand cognitively

demanding concepts in class. Because CALP requires a longer time to develop compared to BICS, bilingual teaching is necessary when students are learning difficult concepts until they reach a linguistic level enough to understand them in the L2.

These concepts that support bilingual teaching can admit teachers' and students' use of translation for L2 learning. The previous section indicates that translation may facilitate cognitive processing and reduce stress when EFL students implement a speaking task, if it is used during planning time for the task. This section implies that when they need help with understanding the content or L2 grammar when planning a speaking task, it can be effective to use translation as a cognitive tool because they can reach the knowledge acquired in their L1 and apply it to the task.

6. Conclusion

This article has summarized the importance of using L1 and translation in EFL classrooms based on recent empirical literature and theoretical concepts. There are in fact some language teachers who feel guilty when they resort to L1 (Butzkamm & Caldwell, 2009). However, the recent studies prove that the teachers or their students do not need to feel this way because using L1 and translation judiciously provides positive effects on L2 learning. Since speaking tasks are cognitively demanding and cause stress in presenting one's own speech in a foreign language in front of his or her peers, translation can become a savior to alleviate cognitive overload and stress by letting students use it in preparation for the tasks. Thus, the answer to the question in the title of this article is that translation can be a useful tool in preparing speaking tasks for EFL students.

There have been few studies about the effective use of translation, so it is still unclear about when to use translation in class. Future research thus needs to investigate the necessity of using translation in preparation for a speaking task from EFL students' voices to support the assumption that the author has made in this article. Other types of tasks, such as writing an essay or reading L2 texts, will also be target themes for future research.

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