

The Impact of using Translation Strategies for Effective Essay Writings by EFL International Students during English Intensive Course

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Abstract

Students across the globe attend universities in Malaysia, especially from Africa and Asia. Therefore, in the attempt to harness their performances in language skills, English Intensive Course (EIC) is emphasised and made compulsory to the newly admitted international students, especially those from the countries that use English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Nonetheless, majority of the EFL students encounter challenges in English Writing Tasks (EWT). To understand the extents of using translation strategies before writing English Essays during EIC program, this paper purposively sampled 50 EFL students of various nations in Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). The selected participants were administered Writing Strategy Questionnaires (WSQ) and analysed using SPSS. The paper indicates negative results as most of the EFL students were not writing bits of the text in their native languages before translating into English during Essay Writing, having 38% validation of “never true” as the most frequent feedback. On the other hand, the paper indicates positive results on EFL students writing a difficult word on their native languages and subsequent search for appropriate English equivalent, with 32% validation of “usually true” as the most frequent response and 88% cumulative. The results suggest that, although the EFL students are aware of the significance of translation strategies, but lack engagement in the writing bits of the text in their native languages before translating into English. The results also implied that the UUM EFL International students are normally confident of using their initial knowledge and what they have been taught during the EIC program in the attempt to maintain their writing standard.

Keywords: Translation Strategies, Writing Strategy, English as Foreign Language, Language Skills

1. Introduction

Translation is viewed as change that occurs in language (Larsson, 1998). Therefore, translation deals with the conveyance of meaning from the source language text to the target language readers. Translation as a strategy is a complicated task that requires the encoding of meaning in the target language via meaning decoding of the source

language. In fact, translation strategies are significant in transacting information between languages. Translators in turn, required translation strategies as professional continuum to convey meaning across the source and the target languages (Bergen, n. d.). Hence, translator is responsible for seeking the words equivalents from the source texts to the target text (Nababan, 1997).

The use of translation strategies in writing received much attention, as many studies have shown the influence of translation in improving the writing standard (Baker, 1992). However, there is a paucity of empirical studies on the use of Translation Strategies for effective writing by EFL students during English Intensive Course in order to understand the impact and extent of their Effective Essay Writings. Since, many scholars shared a common believe that translation strategies are mostly employed when language users faced difficulty on the use of words or texts in writing.

Learning to write refers to the process of enhancing ones efficacy in the use of writing strategies for effective writing (Ou, 2013). The modern trend on writing pedagogy revealed that emphases are now shifted from the outcome of written product to the writing process (Ou, 2013) being a recursive and overlapping process (Susser, 1994; Mekheimer & Aldosari, 2013).

Meanwhile, current trend in research suggests that writing processes and writing strategies are used interchangeably to denote composition process. This is because they both conveyed the conscious management of techniques and various mental activities to achieve a particular writing objective (Ou, 2013). Hence, as a matter of convenience and specification, this paper adopts strategy as operational terminology. Strategy is a process of conscious selection that enhance the learning or the use of Second/Foreign Language, through the storage, retention, recall or application of information about a language (Cohen, 1998).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Writing Strategies and Learning Efficiency

Most of the strained issues involved in quality writings are the challenges writers normally faced in selecting task specific strategies to resolve their writing issues (Ou, 2013). Chamot, Kupper, Impink-Hernandez (1988) and Chamot (2001) discovered that learners write effectively while combining various strategies along with different tasks. Similar findings also showed students are often malleable to the extreme when it comes to the use of strategies as they always hasty the effective changes on the kind of strategies that could produce befitting results (Leki, 1995). In contrast, Spack (1984) reflected that the diction of strategy could be miscarried and lead the learners into a multitude of other workable strategies. Zamel (1983) further established that expert writers' choice of strategy is normally based on self-developed manner compared to the novice writers whose production is based on writing instruction as demonstrated in the following words:

“Another very skilled writer, interestingly enough, began composing his paper only after writing down what he thought would make a fine conclusion. (This same writer, incidentally, wrote his introduction only

after completing his paper.) It seems then that these writers have developed their own individual strategies for "getting into" a topic, strategies that may not necessarily involve pre-writing at all." (Zamel, 1983:172)

To resolve the contending arguments, this paper classified good writing strategies into their variant levels for its extensive achievement following Mu (2005) explicit synthesised *Taxonomy of ESL Writing Strategies*. The Mu (2005) five major categories includes rhetorical, meta-cognitive, cognitive, communicative and social or effective. Mu (2005) further identified 21 sub-categories of taxonomy of ESL writing strategies out of which Rhetorical is relevant to this paper. In **Rhetorical strategies**, the researcher generated *Organisation* as the sub-strategy and speculated that *Beginning, development and ending* as the speculation. On the other hand, using *L1 during Writing* as sub-strategy Mu (2005) speculated that it involved *Translate generated idea into ESL*, while *Formatting/Modelling* as sub-strategy, it involved *Genre consideration and Comparing* involved the *Different rhetorical conventions*. In terms of **Meta-cognitive strategies**, Mu (2005) unwrapped *Planning* as a sub-strategy and the speculation is *Finding focus*, while *Monitoring* has speculation of *Checking and identifying problems* and *Evaluating* has *Reconsidering written text, goals* as speculation.

Again, Mu (2005) had also categorised Cognitive strategies as major strategy where writers employed for *Generating ideas* as sub-strategy and *lead-in, inference* among others as speculation, while with *Revising* as sub-strategy with *making changes in plan, written text* as speculation. Cognitive strategies also involved *Elaborating* as sub-strategy with *extending the contexts of writing* as speculation and *Clarification* with *Disposing of confusions* as speculation. In addition, *Retrieval* sub-strategy has *Getting information from memory* as speculation, while *Rehearsing* with *Trying out ideas or language* as speculation as well as *Summarizing* sub-strategy with *Synthesizing what has been read* as a speculation. Communicative strategies equally has *Avoidance* as a sub-strategy *obtaining Avoiding some problem* a speculation, *Reduction* sub-strategy with *Giving up on some difficulties* as speculation along with *Sense of readers* sub-strategy with *Anticipating readers' response* as speculation. Social/affective strategies has *Resourcing* a sub-strategy with *Referring to libraries and dictionaries* as speculation, while *Getting feedback* being a sub-strategy has *Getting support from professor and peers* as speculation (Mu, 2005).

Ou (2013) maintained that this kind of categorisation is obviously accepted and utilised by many as evidently seen in Oxford's (1990) strategy system which distinctively clarified the direct strategies in relation to the use of language, along with memory, compensation strategies as cognitive being the sub-categories, and the indirect strategies that wherewithal language learning, along subcategories of metacognitive, affective as well as social strategies. It was reported that the strategy system by O'Malley and Chamot's (1990) had equally shows the distinction between cognitive, metacognitive, and social-affective strategies. The aforementioned writing strategies' classification been discussed may be of significant benefit to scholars dealing with studies related to writing strategies since it is well understood that one can classify strategies based on his cognitive standard. Hence, every researcher is ought to realise that the variance in the sub-strategies, the categorisation as well as the multiple extends of categories are tend to be confused, specifically if not properly defined in their studies.

In fact, attention on writing strategies and students' performances is not much. However, Chen (2011) was among the few that attempted to bridge such gap. Chen (2011) explored the relationship between the Chinese non-English students writing strategies and the student's writing achievements. The findings have established a correlation among the 27 independent variables used in the study, having only 4 items with statistical significance. Chien (2010) on their parts have studied metacognitive strategies based writing instruction for vocational college students so as to understand whether the strategies could enhance the students' positive writing experience, or have significant role in the students' actual writing performance. It was also part of the hypothesis of Chien (2010) to determine which of the two aspects has the highest impact on the students' real writing performance. Hence, their findings revealed that significance difference between the control group and the experimental group in the post-test one writing performance. Similarly the findings revealed significant difference in the pre-test two and the post-test one in the writing scores.

Murat and Maarof (2013) studied the EFL upper secondary school students' use of writing strategies while writing English Essays in Selangor, Malaysia. With the aid of 50 administered questionnaires, the findings revealed pre-writing stage as the most frequent used compared with the two other writing stages. Equally, the findings reflect that the total mean of writing strategies used by students from the high-intermediate are little bit higher than those of the low proficiency. However, both the two group of students were found to employ while-writing strategies more frequently than the other two strategies.

Meanwhile, recently, studies (e.g., Feng Teng, 2021) started convincing this paper that self-regulatory effort in the use of writing strategies permits the students to write effectively. To this effect, the current paper came across the efforts of certain scholars (e.g., Teng & Zhang, 2016; Teng, Qin, & Wang, 2021) who attempted to explore the correlation between students' writing performance and self-regulatory writing strategies. Through the use of multiple regression analysis, Teng and Zhang (2016) recommended the text processing, planning, monitoring, evaluating, feedback handling, emotional control, and motivation as the possible strategies that could ensure the writing proficiency of EFL students. It was also identified that self-regulation of cognition, motivation and behaviour of the EFL students are the mediating factors of their communities, personalities and writing performances (Teng, Qin, & Wang, 2021). Therefore, in the study of metacognitive academic writing strategies, Teng, Qin, and Wang (2021) revealed the procedural knowledge, conditional knowledge, declarative knowledge, planning, information management, monitoring, evaluating, and debugging strategies' impact on EFL academic writing. In a similar, dimension, Zhang and Qin (2018) confirmed that in the university context, EFL students could nurture writing performance willingly through the use of planning, monitoring, and evaluation strategies. Following a similar trend, Teng and Huang (2019) used 682 secondary school participants, revealed significant results on students' writing proficiency. This suggests that EFL students could utilise these writing strategies, improve their writing quality and reflect on their performances independently. Another study by Graham and

Harris (2000) suggested that EFL students employ self-regulatory strategies and achieve tremendous performance on their writing behaviours. Focusing on the primary school context, revealed that EFL learners could also employ considerable number of writing strategies, especially the planning, translating, resourcing, text-generating, revising or monitoring and evaluating and achieve significant proficiency in the English language writings (Bai, Hu, & Gu, 2014). To this end, the current paper employed **translation strategies** in understanding its impact on effective writing by the EFL international students during English Essay writing in Intensive English course at UUM

2.2 English Writing Strategies in EFL Context

Rivers and Temperley (1978) were among the pioneer scholars who published against teachers penalising ESL/EFL students' surface errors and emphasised on contextual and misleading expressions. Due to the progress of this approach, studies proved that EFL students started gaining skill on drafting, revising, and editing of writing process which gave them opportunity of discovering ideas and expressing meanings.

Several studies explored the questions of whether there were common strategies utilised by EFL students (e.g., Teng, Wang, & Zhang, 2022), whether there were differences between strategies used by EFL students of different proficiency levels (e.g., Ahmed, 2020; Coleman & Tuck, 2021) and whether task specification would affect the strategies used by students (e.g., Feng Teng, 2021; Suastra & Menggo, 2020). However, the Flower and Hayes (1981) classified strategies remained the consistent writing process mostly used by ESL and EFL writers. The paper also found the existence of variation among writers' approach to the writing task (Ardnt, 1987). Similar study on classification of strategies was also conducted by Haukås, Bjørke and Dypedahl (2018) where they categorized writer strategies into metacognitive and cognitive strategies. Following Wenden (1991) trend, Leki (1995) employed 10 broad categories for coping strategies that were usually utilised in writing tasks across the curriculum, while Riazi (1997) arranged strategies in his study into cognitive, metacognitive, social as well as search strategies. On the other hand, Boshier (1998) focused on the comparison of Students that has different educational qualifications and discovered the existence of differences in the degree of metacognitive awareness and the quantity and variety of problem-solving strategies.

Findings also showed the choice of writing strategies between the expert and the novice writers differs (Sasaki, 2000). It is found that experts utilise quite a longer time in planning general organisation and hold less frequently, while the novice writers consumed much lesser period of time on producing a less global plan by stopping more frequently (Sasaki, 2000). On the contrary, Wong (2005) discovered that writers mostly employ a broad range of cognitive, metacognitive, and affective strategies, and utilised a largely related variety of writing strategies in a diverse way. However, recent studies (e.g., Mu & Carrington, 2007) discovered that writers used rhetorical, metacognitive, cognitive, and social/affective strategies, and that almost all with the exception of rhetorical strategies do transferred across languages positively. Similarly, Hyland (2008) explored four different typologies of writing strategies which include: artefact-mediated, rule-mediated, community-mediated, and role-mediated strategies from a sociocultural perspective.

This paper adapted Flower and Hayes (1980 & 1981) Translation strategies (i.e., cognitive model of writing process) as underpinning theoretical framework. Flower and Hayes (1980a & 1981) proposed and highlighted four constructs, where three consisting of planning strategies, translation and reviewing strategies were served as Independent Variables (IV) while one which is the students writing performance served as the Dependent Variable (DV). The emergence of these three writing strategies (i.e., plan, translation, review) as part of the cognitive writing process was due to the dissatisfaction with the achievement made so far in the field of writing and the influence of the growth in the field of cognitive psychology, cultural environment, psychology, social contexts as well as linguists and research works within the 70s and 80s which questioned the product-oriented approach and considered writing as a practice of quite a number of processes (Britton, 1970; Halliday 1978, 1982a).

2.3 Translation Strategies

With the aid of translation strategies, writers use the ideas generated in the planning phase and interpret them into language or written pieces during the translation process. According to Flower and Hayes (1981:373), translation process is “*putting ideas into visible language.*” This is why they contended that the function of this translation strategy in writing process is to take material from memory under the guidance of the writing plan and then change it into acceptable written English sentences. In cognitive writing process, it is presumed that the text in memory is stored as propositions, even though it might not necessarily be stored as language (Hayes and Flower, 1980b).

Therefore, translation strategy could be rightfully referred to as “*the act of expressing the content of planning in written English.*” Although, one can clearly notice when writers shift from planning to translation stage in the process of producing text materials, nevertheless, it does not mean they had simply represented a comprehensive meaning of what they expressed in words. However, instead they developed a representation being encoded in certain particular form. This is why; Flower and Hayes (1981) maintained that the act of translation is an encoded representation of another form. Basically, written English is able to include huge new constraints and which usually forces the writer to produce, certify and sometimes revise that implication. For this instance, Flower and Hayes (1981) contended that translation strategy as an act mostly referred the writers back to planning process. To this end, it is safe to claim that both planning and translating strategies processes are interwoven and strengthen each other.

Moreover, Flower and Hayes (1981a) preferred to use the term “translate” over “transcribe” or “write” since it is established that information normally been generated at the level of planning process could certainly be represented in assorted symbol systems such as imagery instead of the use of language. In fact, the planning process represents the writers’ thought depicted in words; such representation is not likely to be in the elaborate syntax of written English. Therefore, the writer’s task is to translate a meaning (Flower and Hayes, 1981a). Accordingly, the study also shows that when writers move from planning to translate in the attempt to produce write-up, does not surely signifies that they are generating meaning that can be expressed in words. Instead they are attempting to create a representation being encoded in a single form. Meanwhile the translation of this mentioned encoding representation to form written English may add huge constraints, which sometimes compel the writer to write

appropriate English sentences. It is assumed that materials in memory such as grammar and propositions are stored, but possibly not as language (Hayes and Flower, 1981a).

3. Methodology

3.1 Research Design

Quantitative descriptive research design is used in the attempt to describe the impact of using translation strategies for effective essay writings. Descriptive study refers to a process where researcher described the characteristics of certain variables (Bhatti & Sundram, 2015). It is also part of the purpose of descriptive research to describe the relevant aspects of the variables of interest from an individual, organizational, industry to other perspectives. In this paper, the researcher focused on EFL International students English Essay Writings during English Intensive Course. In many situations, descriptive research plays important role in considering certain corrective steps (Bhatti & Sundram, 2015).

It is also part of the features of quantitative research to isolate analytical categories as accurately as possible (Cohen & Upton, 2007). This means that every data collected for quantitative research tend to provide the researcher with solid and most reliable information needed. Davies (2007, p. 11) attested this claimed, thus: the results derived from the quantitative research *“have certain ‘definiteness’ ... which make it possible for conclusions to be drawn to a specifiable level of probability.”* Hence, one can easily benefits from the current advance of computer software in analysing quantitative data and derive authentic results with mindfulness of time and ease.

The paper used Translation Strategies as Independent Variable (IV) affecting the students writing performance as Dependent Variables (DV). Meanwhile, the paper is not positivism as a methodology since it does not focus on the students' behaviour while writing being the primary objective of positivism methods. Basically, the paper focused on interpretation, descriptions and suggestions based on its findings over the students' writing problems. The study used writing strategy questionnaire (WSQ) for the data collection.

3.2 Participants

Purposive sampling (convenient) strategy was used in the selection of participants from Universiti Utara Malaysia (UUM). Purposive sampling is a non-probability sample strategy which conforms to certain criteria that involved two major types: judgement sampling and quota sampling (Bhatti & Sundram, 2015). In this paper, the students were conveniently sampled in accordance with their relevancy to the subject matter.

Thus, the paper aimed at understanding the impact of EFL students' use of translation strategies for effective essay writings in English language. These students are non-native speakers and their countries use English as a foreign language. This means they are admitted in UUM as foreigners (i.e., university in a country other than theirs). UUM as one of the most prestigious Malaysian Higher Institutions offers various programs both at undergraduate and postgraduate levels. Moreover, every EFL international student been admitted into UUM to undergo either undergraduate or postgraduate programs must sat for English Intensive Course and pass.

The rationale is that ESL/ EFL international students are normally expose to writing assignments in English with lesser consideration in their respective countries, while the Malaysian Ministry for Higher Education made it compulsory for these students to produce and pass quite a large number of rigorous writing activities. Until then they could not allow to obtain placement into the mainstream of the academic system. Hence, this paper selected 50 EFL international students (both male & female) from the UUM English Intensive Course program during 2019/2020 academic session and administered WSQ.

3.3 Research Instrument

This paper adapted Petric and Czarl's (2003) Writing Strategy Questionnaire (WSQ) as instrument for data collection. Petric and Czarl's (2003) originally designed WSQ with 38-items 5 point Likert scale questionnaire for measuring the writing strategies and published as *Validating a Writing Strategy Questionnaire*. However, in the attempt to achieve the objective of this paper the WSQ is modified. The questionnaire has two parts. The first part consists of 6 general questions about the demographic information about the participants. The first part of the WSQ contain questions regarding the participants' sex, English language status and the number of years spent in learning the English language. The part also sought information regarding the participants' prior knowledge of writing English or whether he/she had attended a course in writing in English before coming to his/her current institution (UUM) as well as the types of texts the participant generally write in English (to be selected from any of email letters, notes, essays, articles, reports, creative writings among others). first part of the questionnaire also contain question as to whether the participant enjoy writing in English (at this point 5 options are given for the participant to tick one that he/she seem most suitable).

The second part of the WSQ focused on writing process related to the different stages of writing in English before writing commences. The nature of the questionnaire in this part consist of multiple choice based on 5-point Likert scale questions about participants' sincere experiences and perceptions over their activities before writing English Essay during English Intensive Courses at UUM. The 5-point Likert scale contained how true the statement is about the participant's English writing activities' behaviour or perception. Hence, requires him/her to read very well and circle the number most suitable to what he/she does before writing the English Essay in the Intensive course. Although this paper focuses more on the first stage of the writing process employed by the participants, however, the 5-point Linkert scale is designed to ask participants to rate their own knowledge awareness, proficiency and ability of EFL writing process. To this effect, the WSQ 5-point Likert scale is arranged into 8 different questions under "before I start writing an Essay in English" stage. It is also part of the WSQ contents to rate whether the participants actually practice or do attempt to practice their EFL pre-writing activities.

The rationale of using Petric and Czarl (2003) WSQ toenailed with the strong view of several scholars (e.g., Ellis, 1994; Schmidt, 1994; Cohen & Upton, 2007; Chen, 2011) who stressed that WSQ provides self-report, techniques and perceptive behaviour of both novice and expert writers. It also provides the learners with conscious knowledge of how best to apply the writing strategies efficiently. This is another good reason the

paper has explored the impact of utilising translation strategies on effective English essay writings by the EFL international students. Part of the contents of this WSQ required the participants to recall the processes they normally use during writing English Essays as academic activities in school.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure

Before the commencement of data collection, permission was sought from the UUM relevant authority. The researcher arranged with the program facilitators and discussed the modality of the collection convenient for the participants involved. Afterwards the selected participants were briefed by both the facilitators and researcher. Then the Likert-scale WSQ was distributed to the students who volunteered to participate. Time spent to fill in each of the WSQ was roughly 20 minutes.

Age was not part of the criteria for the selection of the participants as all the students were adults. Although, convenient sampling technique was used, the selection of the participants was guided by the class facilitator (lecturer) as he has better idea of those suitable for the research. The researcher availed himself during the filling of the questionnaire in case his attention might be required, although no serious issue was experienced. The participants were controlled group and no sitting arrangement was required during the data collection. The only concern was on the nature of filling the WSQ.

There were 70 students who participated in the data collection, however due to some outliers found, 50 WSQ were successfully administered and analysed. This has become viable due to the absentees of some students during the data collection exercise. The researcher also handled the eventualities arose in the process by making adjustment where necessary.

3.5 Data analysis

In line with Creswell (2012) and others, the researcher imported the study data been derived from research WSQ into the Microsoft excel 2010 software and formatted the background information. Afterwards, the researcher had calculated the descriptive statistics of the demographics and the writing experiences as well as the WSQ in the attempt to view the responses of the questions therein. Subsequently the main part of the data was also imported into the SPSS software.

SPSS is a kind of program one employ if in need to compute statistical procedures easy and accurate to interpret. With the SPSS software, the researcher was able to calculate and analyse the frequency, percentages as well as the means for the students' demographics and their level of knowledge awareness and experiences of translation strategies during writing.

The researcher also employed the descriptive statistic in the calculation for the mean of the translation strategies, in writing English Essays. The paper then reports the highest means which is ranked in the attempt to secure the most frequent item used in the English Essay during intensive course at UUM. In sum, in the attempt to arrive at the average and the most frequent use of translation strategies used by EFL

international students while writing English Essay, the researcher also calculated the means and the standard deviation for the 14 questions designed in WSQ relating to the students' awareness and use of translation strategies while writing an Essay in English as supported in Petric and Czarl (2003).

4. Results

4.1 Results of the Analysis of the Students' Responses on Translation Strategies

In the attempt to investigate the most frequent writing strategies being used by EFL International students when writing English Essay in UUM English Intensive Course, quantitative data generated through WSQ was analysed using descriptive statistics. The WSQ been analysed contained fourteen sub-questions regarding the translation strategies while the student is writing essay in English, namely: **1.** I start with introduction, **2.** I stop after each sentence to read it again, **3.** I stop after a few sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea, **4.** I reread what I have written to get ideas how to continue, **5.** I go back to my outline and make changes in it, **6.** I write bits of the text in my native language and then translate them into English, **7.** I go for sure in grammar and vocabulary, **8.** I simplify what I want to write if I don't know how to express my thoughts in English, **9.** If I don't know a word in English, I write it in my native and later try to find an appropriate English word, **10.** If I don't know a word in English, I find a similar English word that I know, **11.** If I don't know a word in English, I stop writing and look up the word in the dictionary, **12.** I use a bilingual dictionary, **13.** I use a monolingual dictionary as well as **14.** I ask somebody to help out when I have problems while writing.

4.1.1 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses on Starting Writing process with the Introduction for Writing an Essay in English

Analysis of the WSQ data of this paper shows that EFL international students had responded positively. The findings revealed that majority of the students have the highest frequency and percentage of *starting writing process with the Introduction* for Writing an Essay in English. This can be seen in Table 1 below where 27 participants responded with "always true" with 54% validation and 100% cumulative.

This is followed by "usually true" with 14 respondents as having 28% validation and 46% cumulative which is equally a positive response, while there are as few as 6 responses over "somewhat true" partial view with 12% validation and 18% cumulative percentage of starting writing with introduction.

Table 1

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on Starting Writing process with the Introduction for Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0

Usually not true	1	2.0	2.0	6.0
Somewhat true	6	12.0	12.0	18.0
Usually true	14	28.0	28.0	46.0
Always true	27	54.0	54.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

On the contrary, the result presents only few respondents with negative responses of *starting writing process with the Introduction* for writing an Essay in English as only 1 respondent had responded with “usually not true” response and this is the least of all the responses with 2% at 6% cumulative. However, 2 respondents were found with total denial of ever *starting writing process with the Introduction* for writing in English at 4% each for both validation and cumulative.

4.1.2 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on Stopping after each Sentence to read it again while writing in English

Analysis of the WSQ data of this study shows that EFL international students also had positive responses. The study findings revealed that majority of the respondents has the highest frequency and percentage of *stopping after each Sentence to read it again while* writing an Essay in English. This can be seen in Table 2 below where 18 participants responded with “usually true” with 36% validation and 86% cumulative.

Table 2

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses on Stopping after each Sentence to read it again while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Usually not true	8	16.0	16.0	20.0
Somewhat true	15	30.0	30.0	50.0
Usually true	18	36.0	36.0	86.0
Always true	7	14.0	14.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This is followed with “somewhat true” by 15 respondents as having 30% validation and 50% cumulative which is equally a positive response, even though it could be view as partial assurance while there are 7 responses with 14% of certainty of agreement and assurance of *stopping after each Sentence to read it again while* writing an Essay in English at 100% cumulative. On the contrary, up to 8 respondents were found as responding with partial disagreement (usually not true) at 16% validation and 20% cumulative respectively. The least percentage of *stopping after each Sentence to read it again while* writing an Essay in English is found to be negative as only 2 respondents were able to claim of “never true” at 4% for each of the validation and cumulative.

4.1.3 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on Stopping after few Sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea while writing in English

Based on the WSQ data result of this study as shown in Table 3 below, the findings revealed that the responses of EFL international students has positive result. This is because “usually true” is the most frequently used response as 19 students from the total 50 respondents has partial agreement and opinion over *stopping after few Sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea while writing an Essay in English* by having 38% validation and 92 cumulative average.

Table 3

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses on Stopping after few Sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
Usually not true	8	16.0	16.0	22.0
Somewhat true	16	32.0	32.0	54.0
Usually true	19	38.0	38.0	92.0
Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In comparison with the four other scales, “somewhat true” was scaled second in terms of most frequent used response for having 16 respondents with 32% validation at 54% cumulative. Another response equally used by the students which is also positive is “always true” by having 4 respondents who responded with assurance that they *stop after few Sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea while writing in English*, although their percentage was low as 8%, yet their cumulative percentage was found to be complete for having 100%. This could infer why most EFL international students are slow in writing an essay in English.

On the other hand, the result presents 8 students with “usually not true” responses at 16% validation and 22% cumulative, while the least number of percentage of respondents were 3 who used “never true” response as their answers at 6% cumulative. This may implies that there is insignificant percentage of negative responses as regard to this item: “*stopping after few Sentences or a whole paragraph, covering one idea*” while writing an Essay in English. In other word, the percentage of the students who use this strategy is high.

4.1.4 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on rereading what is written to get ideas to continue while writing in English

Table 4 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students’ responses toward *rereading what is written to get ideas to continue* while writing an Essay in English.

Table 4

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses toward rereading what is written to get ideas to continue while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
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Never true	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Usually not true	6	12.0	12.0	14.0
Somewhat true	8	16.0	16.0	30.0
Usually true	23	46.0	46.0	76.0
Always true	12	24.0	24.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Table 4 indicates that frequency of the students who claim that they *rereading what they have written to get ideas to continue* while writing an Essay in English are higher than those who denied doing. This is evidently shows 23 respondents who used 46% “usually true” with 76% and those 12 that responded with “always true” at 24% validation and 100% cumulative. Similarly, there are as few as 8 respondents who equally have “somewhat true” answers which amount to 16% validation and 30% cumulative. In this sense, the total of 86% validation of positive responses are true about *rereading what is written to get ideas to continue* while writing an Essay in English.

4.1.5 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on going back to their outline and make changes in it while writing in English

Table 5 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students’ responses *on going back to their outline and make changes in it* while writing an Essay in English.

Table 5

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses on going back to their outline and make changes in it while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	16.0
Somewhat true	10	20.0	20.0	36.0
Usually true	22	44.0	44.0	80.0
Always true	10	20.0	20.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

As indicated in Table 5, the frequency of the students who claim that they *go back to their outline and make changes in it* while writing an Essay in English are higher than those who denied doing so. This is clearly presented by the responses of 22 students who used 44% “usually true” with 80% and those 10 that responded with “always true” as assurance at 20% validation and 100% cumulative. In addition, there are also 10 students who equally have “somewhat true” answers which amount to 20% validation and 36% cumulative. In this sense, the total of 84% validation of students with positive responses were found to be true about *going back to their outline and make changes in it* while writing an Essay in English.

4.1.6 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on writing bits of the text in their native languages and then translates them into English while writing in English

Table 6 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses *on writing bits of the text in their native languages and then translates them into English* while writing an Essay in English. From the table 6, it is shown that the “never true” response was the most frequent feedback *on the writing bits of the text in their native languages and then translates them into English* while writing an Essay in English by having 19 respondents from the total 50 students who participated. This indicates that the students' lack of engagement in the writing bits of the text in their language before translating them into English is high, with 38% each for validation and an average cumulative.

Table 6

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses on writing bits of the text in their language and then translates them into English while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	19	38.0	38.0	38.0
Usually not true	13	26.0	26.0	64.0
Somewhat true	7	14.0	14.0	78.0
Usually true	8	16.0	16.0	94.0
Always true	3	6.0	6.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The frequency distribution of the statement under this cluster as shown in Table 6 above revealed that the response “usually not true” was the second most feedback, with 13 respondents and 26% at 64% cumulative average. This may suggest that the EFL students are aware of the significance attached with the translation strategies, and that they are confident of using their initial knowledge and what they have been taught to maintain their writing standard.

4.1.7 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses towards going for sure in grammar and vocabulary while writing in English

Table 7 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses *on going for sure in grammar and vocabulary* while writing in English.

Table 7

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses towards going for sure in grammar and vocabulary while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	3	6.0	6.0	6.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	20.0
Somewhat true	14	28.0	28.0	48.0
Usually true	17	34.0	34.0	82.0
Always true	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

From the Table 7, it is shown that the “usually true” response was the most frequent feedback *on going for sure in grammar and vocabulary* while writing an Essay in English by having 17 respondents with 34% validation and 82% average cumulative

from the total 50 students who participated. This is followed by “somewhat true” responses from 14 students with 28% at 48% cumulative. This may also implies that the EFL students are quite aware of the importance attached with the use of good grammar and vocabulary as part of translation strategies, and that they are confident of using their initial knowledge and what they have been taught about the grammar and vocabulary to maintain their writing standard.

4.1.8 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English while writing in English

Table 8 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students’ responses on *simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English* while writing an essay in English.

Table 8

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses on simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	18.0
Somewhat true	14	28.0	28.0	46.0
Usually true	23	46.0	46.0	92.0
Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The statistical analysis presented in the Table 8 above has shown that “usually true” response was the most frequent feedback given by 23 of 50 EFL students over *simplification of what is intended to write when they do not know how to express their thoughts in English* while writing an essay in English. The most frequent percentage of their partial agreement was 46% at 92% cumulative. In comparison to the other scales under this strategy, “somewhat true” responses were ranked second with 14 students by having 28% at 46% cumulative. This means that the EFL students use their imagination and language backup in order to help them write. This also indicates that a fair number of EFL students are aware of the role of their initiation and confidence as part of translation strategies in successful writing.

4.1.9 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses toward writing on a native language and later attempt to find an appropriate English word while writing in English

Table 9 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students’ responses toward *writing on a native language and later attempt to find an appropriate English word* while writing an essay in English in the instance where the students lack knowledge of the English word.

Based on the Table 9, the statistical analysis presents “usually true” response as the most frequent feedback toward *writing on a native language and later attempt to find*

an appropriate English word while writing an essay in English, especially if they lack knowledge of the English word.

Table 9

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses toward writing on a native language and later attempt to find an appropriate English word while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Never true	9	18.0	18.0	18.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	32.0
Somewhat true	12	24.0	24.0	56.0
Usually true	16	32.0	32.0	88.0
Always true	6	12.0	12.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

The evidence of this result is clear when 16 EFL students have the highest valid percentage (32%) and 88% cumulative compared to the rest responses. This is followed by “somewhat true” responses from 12 students with 24% at 56% cumulative. This means first language play a significant role for quite a number of students when writing in English.

4.1.10 Frequency Distribution of Students' Responses toward finding a similar English word they know while writing in English

Table 10 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students' responses toward *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English in the instance where the students lack knowledge of the English word.

Table 10

Frequency Distribution of Students' responses toward finding a similar English word they know while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never true	2	4.0	4.0	4.0
Usually not true	5	10.0	10.0	14.0
Somewhat true	12	24.0	24.0	38.0
Usually true	17	34.0	34.0	72.0
Always true	14	28.0	28.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

In accordance with the statistical frequency distribution shown in Table 10 above, “usually true” response was found to be the most frequent feedback been used by EFL students toward *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English in the instance where the students lack knowledge of the English word. This is confirmed with the statistical results where 17 EFL students had used 34% partial agreement as the highest valid percentage and 72% cumulative average when compared with the rest percentage of responses. Similarly, additional 14 EFL students had used

“always true” as their responses which is also positive with 28% valid assurance of their opinion at 100% cumulative. This suggest that quite a number of EFL students put to use their knowledge of vocabulary and they equally realise its importance when writing in English in order to maintain their writing standard.

4.1.11 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on stop writing and looking up the word in the dictionary while writing in English

Table 11 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students’ responses *on stop writing and looking up the word in the dictionary* while writing an essay in English in the situation where the students lack knowledge of the English word.

Table 11

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses on stop writing and looking up the word in the dictionary while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never true	1	2.0	2.0	2.0
Usually not true	8	16.0	16.0	18.0
Somewhat true	15	30.0	30.0	48.0
Usually true	22	44.0	44.0	92.0
Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

the statistical representation of the frequency distribution in the Table 11 above, have shown that “usually true” as response was found to be the most frequent feedback been used by 22 EFL students toward *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English in the situation where they lack knowledge of the English word (with a valid percentage of 44% and 92% cumulative). On the other hand, uncertainty sort of agreement (i.e., somewhat true) responses of 15 EFL students was also found as second most frequent use towards *finding a similar English word they know* while writing an essay in English with 30% validation and 48% cumulative. This suggest that most EFL students usually resolve to the use of dictionary as a source of vocabulary building during writing and it plays important role when writing in English.

4.1.12 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on using a bilingual dictionary while writing in English

Table 12 provides in detail the frequency distribution of students’ responses *on using a bilingual dictionary* while writing an essay in English. From the Table 12, it is shown that the “usually true” response by 20 EFL students (valid 40%, cumulative 82%) as the most frequent feedback used on *using a bilingual dictionary* while writing an Essay in English. 10 EFL students were as the second most frequent users of bilingual dictionary while writing in English with 20% and 40% cumulative average.

Table 12

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses using a bilingual dictionary while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never true	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
Usually not true	7	14.0	14.0	22.0
Somewhat true	10	20.0	20.0	42.0
Usually true	20	40.0	40.0	82.0
Always true	9	18.0	18.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This suggests students’ partial engagement in the use of bilingual dictionary as a feedback and support being part of the translation strategies when writing in English.

4.1.13 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on using a monolingual dictionary while writing in English

Table 13 provides in detail, the frequency distribution of students’ responses *on using a monolingual dictionary* while writing an essay in English.

Table 13

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses using a monolingual dictionary while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never true	4	8.0	8.0	8.0
Usually not true	9	18.0	18.0	26.0
Somewhat true	19	38.0	38.0	64.0
Usually true	14	28.0	28.0	92.0
Always true	4	8.0	8.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

Based on the statistical presentation as shown in Table 13, most EFL students are in the habit of using monolingual dictionary while writing in English since 19 of them had used “somewhat true” as the most frequent feedback (valid 38%, cumulative 64%). In addition, 14 additional EFL students were also found as the second most frequent users of monolingual dictionary while writing in English with 28% and 92% cumulative average.

4.1.14 Frequency Distribution of Students’ Responses on asking help from someone when they have problems while writing in English

Table 14 provides in detail, the frequency distribution of students’ responses *on asking help from someone when they have problems* while writing an essay in English. This suggest that most EFL students lack complete self-reliance while writing in English and as a result required the assistance of their more competent colleagues or instructors at the time they were expected to employ their knowledge of the writing skill to write.

Table 14

Frequency Distribution of Students’ responses on asking help from someone when they have problems while Writing in English

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Never true	6	12.0	12.0	12.0

Usually not true	4	8.0	8.0	20.0
Somewhat true	14	28.0	28.0	48.0
Usually true	15	30.0	30.0	78.0
Always true	11	22.0	22.0	100.0
Total	50	100.0	100.0	

This may equally suggest that most students are aware of the significance of translation strategies; however some of them prefer not to use them.

4.1.15 Summary

To arrive at the overall detailed means, medians and modes of responses of EFL international students' Translation writing strategy while writing an essay in English during English intensive course, 14 different items of translation strategy WE was used. The response "I start with the introduction" was the most frequent one (WE1 mean = 4.2600, sum = 213). This may imply that majority of students chose to "*Start with introduction*" during English intensive course in UUM as their initial strategy. The second most frequent used was "*I reread what I have written to get ideas how to continue*" (WE4 mean = 3.7800, Sum = 189) and the subsequent "*If I don't know a word in English, I find a similar English word that I know*" (WE10 Mean= 3.7200, Sum = 186). Hence, the means and standard deviations of responses to translation strategies statements are measured in accordance with Oxford (1990). Specifically, the findings suggest the students' positive attitude towards writing in English and they require little motivation by their instructors to make productive and considerable progress.

5. Discussion

The central goal of this study was to understand the impact of using translation strategies for effective writings in English by EFL International Students in Universiti Utara Malaysia during Intensive English Course. In this attempt, the paper had limited its focus on the translation strategies being employed by the students when writing in English. The rationale was 1) to investigate the most frequent strategy being used of the writing strategies when writing English Essay in UUM Intensive English Course. To this effect, this section provides discussion based on the main question: To what extents are the EFL International Students employ the translation strategies when writing English Essays during UUM English Intensive Course?

With the aid of the responses generated from the WSQ, this study revealed outstanding results, thus: Although, the paper indicates negative results as most of the EFL students were not writing bits of the text in their native languages before translating them into English during English Essay Writing, however, the overall statistical analysis revealed that there is a positive used of translation strategies when writing an essay in English by EFL international students in UUM English intensive course as recommended by Flower and Hayes (1980 & 1981). Consistent to Maarof and Murat (2013), the findings of this study revealed that start *writing process with the Introduction* in writing an essay in English during English intensive course has the highest frequency and percentage compared with the other translation writing strategies. This may imply that majority of EFL students chose to "*Start with introduction*" during English intensive course in UUM as their initial strategy when they commence their essay writing in English. Similarly, the paper had also found that the second most frequent use of writing

strategy by EFL students during writing essay in English was “*rereading what they have written in the attempt to acquire the ideas on how to continue*”. This also corresponds with the findings of Maarof and Murat (2013), who argued that, in the attempt to avoid the ineffectiveness of thinking and having mental plan prewriting strategy in developing ideas, most students normally stopped while writing to reread either after each sentence or a few sentences covering one idea to help them continue writing. In addition, the study found that there are certain EFL students that “*if they do not know a particular word in English, they frequently find a similar one they know*”, although not much often compared with the above strategies. Hence, this suggests that the students’ positive attitude towards writing in English, they only require little push-up by their instructors to make productive and considerable progress. This is consistent with the opinion of Chien (2010), who maintained that there is a need for students to engage in more reviewing actions for it can enhance and improve the quality of writings.

6. Conclusions

This paper highlights the writing strategies that can be employed for assessment based research. The findings of this paper have also presents the potential of advance research investigations within the scope of EFL writing strategies. The findings of this research have also provided much insight in the terrain of teaching and learning writings. The position of the most frequently used translation strategies when writing English Essays in UUM during intensive English course were investigated, found and discussed in the paper. The findings of the paper also concluded that there are certain aspects of the writing strategies that seem to be neglected due to insufficient attention by EFL students, hence required teachers to pay more attention on them in order to improve the students’ awareness and use of all the necessary translation strategies during writings. In addition, the paper recommends future studies to cover other aspects of writing strategies. Therefore, the findings of this paper are not generalised. In fact, the paper used questionnaire, hence need to also conduct a qualitative research on the same topic to enable the use of open ended interviews for additional opinions over the impact of translation strategies as supplementary findings of this paper. This could confirm the efficiency of the process approach. It may also improve the knowledge of the writing strategies for the teaching English writing in schools of higher learning. The findings of this paper is intended to add value to the existing knowledge of EFL strategy research and may also assist both researchers and instructors in gaining much more understanding of the interface between EFL international students and writing strategies.

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