

PEDAGOGICAL TRANSLATION FOR VOCABULARY LEARNING: THE PARALLEL-TEXT APPROACH

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ABSTRACT

This study takes a fresh look at vocabulary learning from the lens of professional translation practice and proposes integrating parallel texts with translation tasks to foster vocabulary learning. The study adopts a quasi-experimental design to examine the effectiveness of using parallel texts in pedagogical translation to foster EFL learners' lexical gains and vocabulary retention. It compares learners' foreign language vocabulary gains as a direct result of pedagogical translation tasks completed under two conditions: (1) Translation tasks with parallel texts (the "*parallel-text approach*") versus (2) translation tasks without parallel texts. A total of 40 Chinese EFL sophomores in social sciences participated in this study. The study consists of two experiments with identical procedures to allow all participants to swap roles and experience vocabulary learning under both conditions. Qualitative and quantitative data were retrieved from learners' drafts, revisions, and post-tests. The potential benefits of using parallel texts in pedagogical translation tasks were revealed in both between-group and within-subjects analyses. Empirical evidence of the pedagogical value of parallel texts may help language educators to innovate and facilitate learners to rethink their strategies.

Key Words: pedagogical translation, parallel texts, lexical gains, vocabulary retention

INTRODUCTION

Translation has been a prevalent approach exploited to help second/foreign language (L2) learners link L2 target lexical items to their meaning and has often been reported as conducive to yielding vocabulary gains (Kang, 2015; Laufer & Nation, 2013; Sonbul & Schmitt, 2010). However, to date, translation as an approach to L2 vocabulary development has been primarily confined to the provision of first language (L1) translations to L2 learners, many of which primarily concern how intentional learning of new vocabulary through providing L1 translations compares with vocabulary gains yielded by monolingual approaches such as contextual gap-filling exercises and L2 definition (e.g., Joyce, 2018; Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004). Moreover, translation has often been treated as an approach for decontextualised vocabulary learning, where learners are simply exposed to explicit instruction of the L1 translations of the target words without relevant contexts (e.g., Prince, 1996; Webb, 2007). However, the effects of contextualised L1-L2 pedagogical translation on L2 vocabulary development have remained underexplored. Another area that merits investigation is whether parallel texts can be extended from strategic resources for translation trainees and practitioners (Carreres & Noriega-Sánchez, 2011) to foster L2 vocabulary learning in language classrooms. This study aims to contribute to the field of vocabulary learning and pedagogical translation by comparing the outcomes of translation-based tasks with and without the use of parallel texts.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Pedagogical Translation

A growing body of literature has given weight to the investigation into how pedagogical translation, a mode of translation practice intended for L2 learning, may benefit language learning for general L2 learners (Carreres & Noriega-Sánchez, 2011; Cook, 2010; Danan, 2010; Leonardi, 2010; Malmkjær, 1998; Newmark, 1981; Newson, 1998; Schjoldager, 2004; Zojer, 2009). As Delisle et al. (1999, pp.167-168) put it, pedagogical translation involves the use of exercises “designed to enrich vocabulary, to promote the assimilation of new syntactic structures, to verify comprehension and to assess the acquisition of new vocabulary.” Unlike translation for professional purposes, where the focus lies on the function of the text, translation

for language learning is more of a decoding-encoding task that emphasises the linguistic structures and the preservation of the source text's message (Schäffner, 1998). The potential benefits of such an approach to L2 learning range from enhancing L2 learners' consciousness of a target word, expanding learners' vocabulary in L2, improving learners' understanding of how languages work, consolidating L2 structures for active use, monitoring and improving the comprehension of L2 to fostering self-directed inquiry through observation (Gnutzmann, 2009; Joyce, 2018; Laufer & Girsai, 2008; Prince, 1996; Schäffner, 1998). A number of studies have investigated the potential benefits of pedagogical translation tasks by comparing them with monolingual language tasks such as writing and gap-filling exercises, and their empirical results suggest that pedagogical translation can be particularly helpful in concentrating learners' cognitive efforts on the syntactic processing on phrases and words (e.g., Källkvist, 1998, 2013a, 2013b; Kobayashi & Rinnert, 1992; Prince, 1996; Uzawa, 1996). For instance, Prince (1996, p.483) compared the outcomes of 48 French students in translation tasks versus context-oriented tasks (non-translation) for vocabulary learning, and the empirical results pointed to the superiority of pedagogical translation tasks in helping learners recall a word. Källkvist's empirical studies (2013a, 2013b) on the effects of translation on generating language-related episodes compared to non-translation tasks suggest that translation can help draw learners' attention to language use. A similar assertion was also reported in research that investigated the potential benefits of pedagogical translation through the lens of L2 learners. For example, Uzawa interviewed 22 Japanese L2 learners, and the majority acknowledged that translation tasks for language learning purposes (i.e., pedagogical translation) were more helpful than monolingual writing tasks in that they were forced to use expressions slightly out of their comfort zone. Similar insights were reported in work by Hsieh (2000), where 52 Taiwanese college students indicated that pedagogical translation helped extend their vocabulary knowledge. The results also align with the literature on cognitive processes in translation. For example, in utilising "pause" as a tool to examine the cognitive processing of 28 professional translators during translation versus monolingual writing tasks, Immonen (2011, pp.250-251) found that "in monolingual text production, clauses seem to carry the main weight of the syntactic processing and words the greatest load of word processing, while in translation, the weight of syntactic processing seems to be on phrases

and words, and the emphasis of word processing on words and compound words.”

Translation has been a prevalent approach exploited to help second/foreign language (L2) learners link L2 target lexical items to their meaning and has often been reported as conducive to yielding vocabulary gains (Kang, 2015; Laufer & Nation, 2013; Sonbul & Schmitt, 2010). However, to date, translation as an approach to L2 vocabulary development has been primarily confined to the provision of first language (L1) translations to L2 learners, many of which primarily concern how intentional learning of new vocabulary through providing L1 translations compares with vocabulary gains yielded by monolingual approaches such as contextual gap-filling exercises and L2 definition (e.g., Joyce, 2018; Laufer & Shmueli, 1997; Ramachandran & Rahim, 2004). Moreover, translation has often been treated as an approach for decontextualised vocabulary learning, where learners are simply exposed to explicit instruction of the L1 translations of the target words without relevant contexts (e.g., Prince, 1996; Webb, 2007). However, the effects of contextualised L1-L2 pedagogical translation on L2 vocabulary development have remained underexplored. Another area that merits investigation is whether parallel texts can be extended from strategic resources for translation trainees and practitioners (Carreres & Noriega-Sánchez, 2011) to foster L2 vocabulary learning in language classrooms. This study aims to contribute to the field of vocabulary learning and pedagogical translation by comparing the outcomes of translation-based tasks with and without the use of parallel texts.

Parallel Texts

With the rise of a variety of digital tools and resources available to L2 instructors and learners in the new era, effective approaches to L2 vocabulary development should be a constant exploration and open to cross-disciplinary perspectives. Insights from professional practice or training for translators, for example, may add to approaches to L2 learning, including L2 vocabulary development. Increasingly, studies have shown interest in how language resources supportive for translation trainees and practitioners may be applied to language pedagogy and support for L2 learners (Carreres & Noriega-Sánchez, 2011; González-Davies, 2004; Leonardi, 2010; Malmkjær, 2004; Pym et al., 2013; Sewell, 2004; Zojer, 2009). Carreres and Noriega-Sánchez (2011, pp.292-293), for example, argued that translator training and language teaching can benefit from mutual exchanges and that contextualised real-life translation activities or

professionally related exercises such as film subtitles and translating news releases or political speeches can be adapted to L2 classrooms to foster L2 learning. Gonzalez-Davies (2004) also proposed various authentic translation projects designed for translator training that may offer refreshing insights into L2 pedagogy, especially in terms of task design. Another powerful resource for professional translators that can benefit lexical competence is “parallel texts” (Nord, 2005, 2010; Floros, 2004; Leonardi, 2010). There are two common notions of parallel texts. In contrastive linguistics and corpus studies, parallel texts refer to translations of source texts. In the field of pedagogical translation, parallel texts refer to auxiliary resources that are “authentic, non-translated texts chosen from the target-culture text repertoire because they represent the genre the target text is expected to belong to” (Nord, 2010, p.9). These auxiliary texts from authentic resources provide translators with rich linguistic input ranging from lexical expressions, terminologies, and collocations to style and register. They are strategic resources for translation professionals and have been especially helpful in verifying or improving their linguistic choices (Biel, 2011; Nord, 2005, 2010; Zanettin, 2002). Given their helpfulness to translation practitioners, parallel texts may also facilitate L2 learners, at least on the lexical level. Unlike treatments such as explicit instructions, parallel texts promote more independent and autonomous learning because students will have to make an effort to search for relevant expressions and learn through observing how lexicogrammatical phenomena are used in context. From the perspective of second language vocabulary acquisition (SLVA), the advantages of parallel texts may also be traced to their capability to offer linguistic input (such as expressions of specific ideas or concepts) to L2 learners. As Pulido (2007, p.157) suggests, vocabulary development through reading “first involves noticing that particular word forms are unfamiliar and that there are gaps in one’s knowledge, followed by lexical inferencing through the context with one’s linguistic extralinguistic knowledge.” This aptly explains how L2 vocabulary learning may take place with the help of parallel texts as authentic and contextualised materials with rich linguistic information. However, despite the advantages of parallel texts as language input, the suitability and effectiveness of such an approach for L2 vocabulary learning remain underexplored.

The Theoretical Framework of the Parallel-text Approach

Regardless of the controversies over the effectiveness of different approaches for vocabulary learning, one thing that most researchers

do agree upon is that increased attention, noticing, manipulation and exposure to an L2 lexical item are virtually the main factors that facilitate L2 vocabulary learning (Ellis et al., 1994; Ellis & He, 1999; Hulstijn, 1992; Hulstijn et al., 1996; Newton, 1995; Schmitt, 2008). The importance of “attention” and “noticing” has remained a focus of many theoretical constructs in second language acquisition. Schmidt’s Noticing Hypothesis (1990), for example, suggests that L2 learning can be enhanced through conscious learning that involves noticing a target item and conscious processing of language input. From a different theoretical account, Swain’s (1985) Output Hypothesis asserts that L2 learning may be triggered when learners encounter difficulties, notice gaps and then try to modify their L2 output. Although with different foci, both Schmidt’s (1990) notion of “noticing” and Swain’s “noticing of the gap” (1985) have emphasised the importance of language learning tasks to raise learners’ awareness of the gap between what they want to say and what they are able to say as well as the importance of attention to L2 learning. To put it bluntly, the more attention given to new vocabulary and the more engagement learners have with a new lexical item, the greater the chances vocabulary gains and retention can be achieved (Craik & Lockhart, 1972; Schmitt, 2008; Hulstijn & Laufer, 2001). In the same vein, the “parallel-text approach” (i.e., an integration of translation tasks and parallel texts) is one that may create opportunities for learners to notice their L2 linguistic deficiency (through the translation process), which can in turn trigger learners’ conscious attention to L2 linguistic input.

Furthermore, in recent years there have been increasing voices heard over the need for L2 classrooms to leverage both incidental vocabulary learning and intentional vocabulary learning since both may contribute to L2 vocabulary instruction and one may be more suitable than the other depending on the educational context (Hunt & Beglar, 2002; Molle, 2021; Nation, 1990, 2001; Paribakht & Wesche, 1996; Schmitt & Schmitt, 2020; Wong et al., 2021). Incidental vocabulary learning involves providing extensive language input such as reading and listening materials to L2 learners, and the learning of new lexical items takes place as a by-product of learners’ participation in meaning-focused activities, while intentional vocabulary learning requires explicit instruction and deliberate effort to introduce certain lexical items (Hulstijn, 1992; Gass, 1999; Webb et al., 2020). The combined use of parallel texts and translation tasks may enable leveraging of both incidental and intentional learning as learners consciously search for the L2 forms of the target items from the

parallel texts after noticing their resource gap during the translation process. Intentional learning may take place during the “vocabulary treasure hunt” through parallel texts, while incidental vocabulary learning may also take place during the process where L2 learners make logical inferences, verify lexical items of interest, or acquire enhanced awareness of how words are used while reading contextualised and authentic texts.

The use of parallel texts with translation tasks is also one that mirrors the notion of contextualised vocabulary learning. Over the years, extensive studies have compared the different outcomes of learning vocabulary with context and without context, commonly differentiated as *contextualised vocabulary learning* and *decontextualised learning* (Nation, 2001). While decontextualised learning has advantages such as effectiveness in rapidly expanding a learner’s vocabulary size (Nation, 1995), contextualised vocabulary learning has been widely acclaimed for its superiority in encouraging better assimilation and word retention learning (McCarthy, 1990; Oxford & Scarcella, 1994), with contextualised word exposure particularly helpful in enriching L2 learners’ word knowledge and fostering the consolidation of less familiar words (Nation, 2001; Schmitt, 2008). Unfortunately, in existing literature, translation has been mostly limited to a means for decontextualised vocabulary learning, such as explicit instruction achieved by providing learners with L1 translations of the target words. Prince (1996), for example, compared the effects of using translation versus context for L2 vocabulary learning on 48 French students from a pharmacy faculty, and his findings suggest that translation was superior to context in terms of the quantity of new vocabulary acquired. However, in his two-phase experiment translation was used in contrast to context, where half of the subjects were exposed to 44 words in the target language along with their L1 translations (TL), while the other half were exclusively exposed to the L2 target items in L2 contexts (CL). The integration of parallel texts into translation tasks proposed in the present study, on the contrary, is in line with the call for contextualised vocabulary learning. Instead of providing L1 translations as explicit instruction in a decontextualised manner, contextualised translation tasks are adopted to draw learners’ attention to selected target items, and the centrality of context is also reflected in the L2 parallel texts offered as a treatment to learners.

The above theoretical concepts in second language acquisition (SLA) provide some ontological and epistemological grounds for using the parallel-text approach for L2 vocabulary learning. However,

whether and how parallel texts can benefit L2 vocabulary learning awaits further experimentation.

Objectives of the Study

The current quasi-experimental study aims to fill this literature gap by providing empirical evidence on the effectiveness of the parallel-text approach for L2 vocabulary learning. Particular interest lies in whether parallel texts can be extended from auxiliary resources for translation practitioners to strategic resources for L2 vocabulary development in language classrooms. Specifically, the following research questions guided the study:

1. To what extent do translation tasks benefit immediate vocabulary gains when parallel texts are provided to learners?
2. How do they compare with translation tasks without the use of parallel texts?

METHODOLOGY

This study adopted a quasi-experimental design (Creswell & Clark, 2007) to investigate the effects of L1-L2 translation tasks on L2 learners' immediate vocabulary gains and subsequent word retention under two conditions: (1) with parallel texts as treatment and (2) without parallel texts as treatment. The first condition is known as the parallel-text approach in the current study. The second is hypothesised as the general approach to translation tasks in many L2 classrooms, where learners are not provided with treatment when asked to express something from L1 to L2.

Context and Participants

The study was conducted with 40 second-year undergraduate social sciences students in the 2020-2021 fall term in a natural classroom setting at a university in Macao. The participants were low-intermediate EFL learners (19-20 years old)¹ undertaking university English courses with an identical course syllabus, course content and

¹ The proficiency levels were determined based on placement tests of their enrolled programme and their scores (ranging from 51-63%) in two vocabulary tests (2000-level) available on the Compleat Lexical Tutor website (Cobb, 2021).

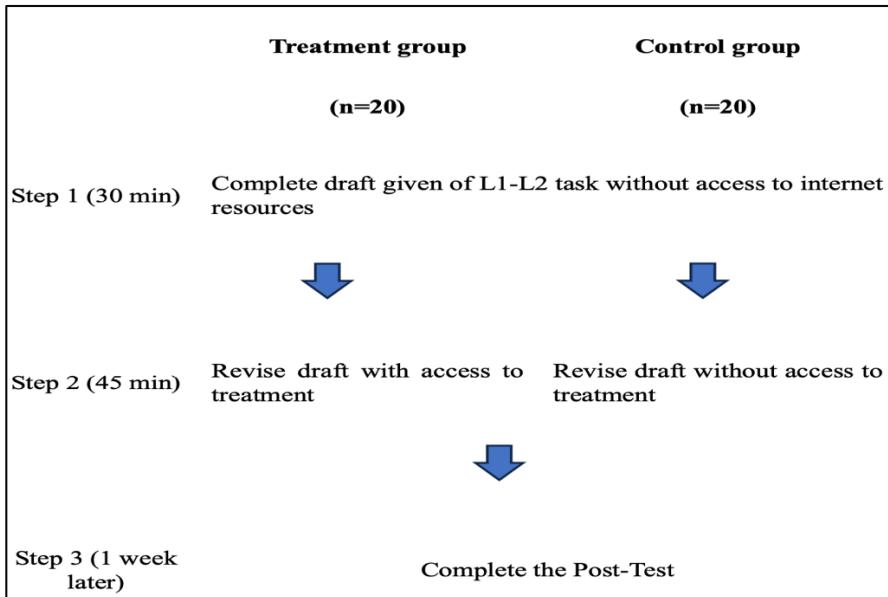
instructor. They all shared similar language backgrounds, with Chinese as their first language and English as their foreign language. The participants were notified about the goals and procedures involved in the study. They were clear that their participation was voluntary and understood that all their work collected for this study would remain confidential and anonymous. The names of the participants were replaced by S1-S40 to preserve anonymity.

Procedure

The current study adopted two identical experiments to examine differences between groups and within subjects. In Experiment I, S1-S20 and S21-S40 were assigned to the treatment group ($n=20$) and the control group ($n=20$), respectively. In Experiment II, the participants swapped roles, and S21-S40 were assigned to the treatment group, while S1-S20 were allocated to the control group. This experimental design allows for the analysis of task effects between groups and within participants

Figure 1

Procedure of the study



Each experiment included three steps, as illustrated in Figure 1. First, both the treatment group and the control group were assigned the same translation task and asked to produce a draft within 30 minutes. No dictionary or internet resources were allowed at this stage. Next, both groups were asked to revise their work within 45 minutes. The two parallel texts selected from the same genres were provided to the treatment group as a treatment for their revisions, while the control group was asked to make revisions. The treatment was a simple one, where the concerned group was provided with two parallel texts at the same time during each experiment and asked to revise their translation with the help of these rich linguistic resources. Both groups were allowed access to a dictionary at this stage, although it was not compulsory.² The function of this step was to allow participants to seek further clarification for expressions that may be unclear to them solely from the context. The access to dictionary consultation in the revision step was also a step that mirrors authentic practice of translation practitioners, who often would resort to a dictionary when they require further clarification of certain expressions that caught their attention. In the following week, the participants were asked to complete the post-test so that their immediate lexical gains (as shown in their revision) could be compared with their vocabulary retention (as shown in the post-test).

This process was repeated in Experiment II, where participants in the treatment group and those in the control group swapped roles. In other words, in the second experiment, participants exposed to parallel texts in the first experiment were no longer exposed to parallel texts and vice versa. The participants were asked to use the same dictionary in both experiments so that if any results emerged due to their dictionary consultation, the same trend might possibly be

² This step is not compulsory as different individuals may possess a different degree of understanding towards any expressions that caught their attention. However, to reduce the effects of this potential variable, both experimental groups were allowed to access a dictionary in both experiments. The rationale was that, in such a counterbalanced research design, if the outcomes were significantly affected by participants' access to a dictionary, they might most likely be reflected in a similar way when the same group of participants swapped roles and were assigned to the other experimental condition.

observed when they swapped roles and were assigned to another group in Experiment II.

Instruments

This study adopted three instruments, including two pedagogical L1-L2 translation tasks, two parallel texts selected for each translation task, and a post-test. The legal genre was adopted for several reasons. First, the participants all studied law as part of their undergraduate studies and therefore were likely to be well informed of this genre and interested in the topic, considering the relevance to their other courses. Despite their familiarity with the topic, L2 words in this genre are often unfamiliar or unknown to the participants as they are rarely exposed to L2 contracts. Second, the lexical terms in this genre often have near-equivalents in the target language and are often relatively less ambiguous than literary texts where the same word can be interpreted and translated in diverse ways. Third, legal documents such as contracts often contain similar boilerplates and relatively predictable lexical expressions, making it more feasible to search for available parallel texts (treatments) for the concerned translation tasks that contain L2 lexical expressions unfamiliar or unknown to learners.

Translation tasks

Two Chinese-English (L1-L2) translation tasks drawn from contextualised and authentic materials were designed to draw learners' attention to the form-meaning link for 15 target L2 lexical items anticipated to be unknown or unfamiliar to the participants,³ such as “產假” (maternity leave) and “租賃” (tenancy). The participants were given a short Chinese text (L1) composed of five syntactically simple sentences and asked to express them in English (L2), with particular attention to the underlined lexical items. The contents of both translation tasks (Task A for Experiment I and Task B for Experiment II) were adapted from authentic but straightforward legal documents and were modified where necessary to include the target vocabulary

³ The target words were presumed to be unknown to the participants based on their instructor's assessment of their lexical knowledge and a pilot test with another group of EFL learners of similar proficiency. In the case where the target words were eventually not unknown to the participants (i.e. if the participants had them correctly translated in their drafts), they would not be treated as a vocabulary gain, except in the case where participants revised the expressions to an equally appropriate lexical alternative.

while still resembling a contract. Each consists of five syntactically simple sentences, with the majority being simple sentences and one-fifth being compound sentences. This syntactic simplicity was necessary to enable participants to focus on the target vocabulary items and minimize unnecessary cognitive effort in processing complicated syntax. Similar word counts were maintained in both tasks. The target lexical items involved in both experiments were of a similar difficulty, as was reported by another group of EFL learners of similar proficiency levels in a pilot test.

Parallel texts

In the current study, parallel texts refer to texts in the target language (i.e., pure L2 input) which represent a similar repertoire (legal documents) as the tasks concerned. Two parallel texts were used as a treatment for the “translation + parallel texts” experimental group (in contrast to the “translation only” experimental group), as illustrated in Appendices 1C and 2C. In preparing the treatment for each experiment, legal documents were searched through Google using key words (the target words). Relevant samples of the concerned genre of the translation tasks (i.e., contracts) were gathered. Upon scrutiny, the two samples that contained the greatest number of the target lexical items were selected as a treatment for each task. The text selection was mainly based on the presence of the target words concerned in the present study. For example, in Experiment I, the translation tasks were extracts from L1 (Chinese) employment contracts, so two parallel texts were selected using keywords (i.e. target words such as “remuneration” and “probation”) from a variety of L2 (English) employment agreements⁴ available on Google. The same applied to Experiment II, where tenancy agreements⁵ were concerned. Due to authenticity, one parallel text may not contain all

⁴ Eventually the parallel texts for Experiment I were selected from employment agreements available at the U.S. Securities and Exchange Commission's Electronic Data Gathering, Analysis, and Retrieval system (<https://www.sec.gov/Archives/edgar/data/1173313/000101489716000457/exhibit103.htm>) and at TAFEP's website (www.fairemployment.sg).

⁵ Eventually the parallel texts for Experiment II were adapted from tenancy agreements available at a New South Wales government website (https://www.fairtrading.nsw.gov.au/_data/assets/pdf_file/0019/910180/Standard-Residential-Tenancy-Agreement-2020.pdf) and the Yukon government website (<https://yukon.ca/sites/yukon.ca/files/cs/cs-forms/cs-tenancy-agreement-template.pdf>).

target vocabulary items or may contain more items than the other text. Alternatively, the same target items may appear repeatedly in both parallel texts. This is also the rationale for including more than one parallel text. The principle for the selection was to ensure exposure of all target vocabulary items without compromising the authenticity of the context, and thus instead of any alteration to the parallel texts, the translation tasks were modified where necessary so that the fifteen target words could be “hunted” from the L2 parallel texts.

Post-tests

The content of the post-tests adopted for the current study was identical to that of the translation tasks, where the participants were presented with the same 15 target words as the translation tasks within their relevant context (simple sentences extracted from legal agreements) and were asked to express them in L2 (English). However, for convenience, L1 expressions of the target words were listed in a table, and the participants were asked to indicate their answers in the given space (see Appendices 3A and 3B).

Data Collection and Analysis

In the present study, only the target lexical items were examined. While vocabulary development and vocabulary gains can be associated with and gauged in many dimensions, this study mainly concerns the form-meaning link for the target lexical items. Each successful change of a target lexical item was treated as one lexical gain. Precisely, changes that fell into any of the following categories were measured as one lexical gain (with the rationales explained in parentheses):

(i) Lexical corrections: Each instance where the participants corrected a lexical mistake, such as an inaccurate or inappropriate lexical choice or a spelling mistake, was considered one lexical gain. Such changes indicate that the participants could differentiate right from wrong. For example, when 產假 was revised from a seemingly coined expression *born holiday* to *maternity leave*, it was considered a verbal correction and a lexical gain.

(ii) Lexicogrammar corrections: Each instance where the participants corrected their lexicogrammar inaccuracies, such as correction of word forms, was treated as one lexical gain. Such changes, to some extent, indicate an expansion of knowledge or enhanced understanding of the lexis concerned, such as in the case where the L2 expression for the verb “通知” was corrected from the

noun *notice* to the proper form *notify*.

(iii) Lexical improvement: Each instance where the participants replaced their lexical choices with an alternative that is more appropriate in the context was treated as one lexical gain, such as in the case where the L2 expression for “終止本合同” was revised from semantically acceptable terms *stop this contract* to “*terminate this contract*.”

(iv) Lexical alternatives: Each instance where the participants replaced their lexical choices with an alternative equally appropriate in the context is treated as one lexical gain. Such changes may be an indication of their attempt to use a more precise term to convey their intended message or an attempt to employ a variety of vocabulary, such as in the case where “規管” was revised from *regulated* to *governed* in the context “本僱傭合約由澳門法例規管” [This Employment Contract is governed by the laws of Macau].

Lexical gains were measured from two sets of data. The first was collected from both Experiment I and Experiment II (i.e., composed of the drafts and revisions completed by the participants) and was used to examine the impact of parallel texts on learners' immediate lexical gains. The participants' lexical choices in their drafts reflect their existing knowledge of the target items, while those in their revisions reflect their immediate lexical gains. It was hypothesized that the participants would improve their lexical choices in their revisions when necessary as they were told to, given that they had a second chance to work on the task. The second set of data, collected from the participants' post-tests, was used to examine the effect of parallel texts on L2 learners' subsequent vocabulary retention. This was analysed by comparing the lexical gains found in the participants' drafts and their post-tests. In both the revisions (first set of data) and the post-tests (second set of data), the maximum score was 15. Each successful change of a target lexical item, including (i) lexical corrections, (ii) lexicogrammar corrections, (iii) lexical improvement, and (iv) lexical alternatives as illustrated earlier, was considered a lexical gain and scored 1. Incorrect responses including spelling errors scored 0. The assessment and scoring were carried out by two experienced language instructors (the researcher and another EFL professional), and inter-rater reliability was 100%. Data analysis for both sets of data was conducted in two dimensions: Between-group results were compared to examine the effects of parallel texts between groups. Within-subject results were examined to investigate whether the same task effects were found within the same subjects. Qualitative analysis was conducted during assessment of lexical gains, but the

results were mainly evaluated quantitatively.

FINDINGS

The Impact of Parallel Texts on L2 Learners' Immediate Lexica Gains

Between-group results

Table 1 shows the lexical gains of the treatment group and the control group that were manifested in their revisions in both experiments. In Experiment I, the number of lexical gains found in the revisions of the treatment group ($M=14$, $SD=1.12$) exceeded that of the control group ($M=10.95$; $SD=2.76$). The lexical gains between the two groups were further compared using two-tailed independent sample t-tests ($n=20$), and the results show that the difference in lexical gains between the treatment group and control group in Experiment I was statistically significant, $t(25)=3.72$, $p<.001$. Similar findings were observed in Experiment II. Again, lexical gains found in the revisions of the treatment group ($M=14.15$; $SD=.93$) outnumbered that of the control group ($M=11.8$, $SD=2.76$). The difference between the two groups was also statistically significant, $t(25)=3.72$, $p<.001$.

Table 1

Lexical gains in revisions between groups

		Sum	Mean	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Experiment I	Treatment Group (S1-20)	280	14	1.12	3.72	$p<0.001$
	Control Group (S21-40)	219	10.95	2.76		
Experiment II	Treatment Group (S21-40)	283	14.15	0.93	3.72	$p<0.001$
	Control Group (S1-20)	236	11.8	2.76		

Note. Mean refers to the average score of all participants in the corresponding group.

Within-subject results

Meanwhile, one of the characteristics of this present study is that the participants had the opportunity to experience two different

conditions: Receiving parallel texts as treatment (when placed in the treatment group in one experiment) and not receiving parallel texts as treatment (when assigned to the control group in another experiment). This experimental design aims to minimize variables that may otherwise influence the results due to individual differences. The same tendency was found when comparing the outcomes of the same groups of participants in different conditions. Overall, the same group of participants tended to attain more lexical gains in their revisions when given parallel texts as treatment (see Table 2), and the differences between the two conditions (i.e., with treatment versus without treatment) found in both groups of participants were also statistically significant across experiments, $t(19) = 3.88, p < .001$.

Table 2

Lexical gains in revisions within participants

Participants	Experiment	Inclusion of parallel texts as treatment	Sum	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value
S1-20	I	Yes (Task A)	280	14	1.12	3.88	<i>p</i> <0.001
	II	No (Task B)	236	11.8	2.30		
S21-40	I	No (Task A)	283	14.15	0.93	3.88	<i>p</i> <0.001
	II	Yes (Task B)	219	10.95	2.76		

The Impact of Parallel Texts on L2 Learners' Subsequent Vocabulary Relation

Between-group results

Table 3 shows the lexical gains found in the post-tests by both groups in the two related experiments, which are used to measure the participants' subsequent vocabulary retention. Overall, a considerable number of lexical gains were found in the post-tests by both groups, which is a good sign for L2 vocabulary development.

Table 3*Lexical gains in post-tests between groups*

		Sum	Mean	SD	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i> -value
Experiment I	Treatment Group (S1-20)	225	11.25	1.68	3.62	<i>p</i> <.001
	Control Group (S21-40)	163	8.15	2.70		
Experiment II	Treatment Group (S21-40)	240	12	1.41	3.60	<i>p</i> <.001
	Control Group (S1-20)	185	9.25	1.99		

However, in both experiments, the number of lexical gains found in post-tests completed by the treatment group still exceeded those in the post-tests by the control group, with significant statistical differences: in Experiment I, $t(32)=3.62$, $p<.001$ and in Experiment II, $t(34)=3.60$, $p<.001$. This suggests that translation tasks with parallel texts (the parallel-text approach) may have advantages over translation tasks without parallel texts in terms of facilitating word retention.

Nevertheless, a comparison of Table 1 and Table 3 reveals that the lexical gains in the post-tests in both experiments were generally lower than the lexical gains demonstrated in the participants' revisions. For example, while a total of 280 and 283 lexical gains were found in the revisions of the treatment groups in Experiment I and Experiment II, respectively, lexical gains in the post-tests completed by the corresponding treatment groups dropped to 225 and 163, respectively. Results of a paired sample t-test show that the difference in lexical gains found in the revisions versus post-tests by the same groups of participants was statistically significant ($p<.001$) in both experiments. The same tendency was found in the control groups in both experiments, with lexical gains declining from 219 in their revisions to 163 in their post-tests in Experiment I and dropping from 236 in their revisions to 185 in their post-tests in Experiment II. This reflects a lower percentage of vocabulary retention compared to their immediate vocabulary gains. Statistical significance was again found between their revisions and post-tests ($p<.001$).

Within-subject results

A comparison of lexical gains found in the post-tests of the same group of participants under different conditions (with treatment versus without treatment) shows that participants exhibited better vocabulary retention when given parallel texts as treatment, as compared to the absence of such treatment, with a statistically significant difference (Table 4).

Table 4*Vocabulary retention in post-tests within-subjects results*

Participants	Experiment	Inclusion of parallel texts as treatment	Sum	Mean	SD	<i>t</i> (df)	<i>p</i> -value
S1-20	I	No	225	11.25	1.68	3.88(19)	<i>p</i> <0.001
	II	Yes	185	9.25	1.99		<i>p</i> <0.001
S21-40	I	Yes	240	12	1.41	3.88(19)	<i>p</i> <0.001
	II	No	163	8.15	2.70		<i>p</i> <0.001

DISCUSSION**Impact of the Parallel-text Approach on Immediate Lexical Gains**

This present study set out to investigate whether and in what way the use of parallel texts may promote lexical gains when used as a treatment for pedagogical translation tasks. The first research question posed in this study concerns the effects of the parallel-text approach on L2 learners' immediate vocabulary gains. The interest lies in the number of lexical gains in the revisions of participants in the treatment group versus those attained by the control group. The results were examined in three dimensions: (1) lexical gains of the two groups in Experiment I, where S1-S20 participated in translation tasks with treatment and S21-40 were not given the treatment, (2) lexical gains of the two groups in Experiment II, where S21-S40 participated in the translation tasks with treatment and S1-S20 without the treatment, and (3) lexical gains of the same group of

participants across different conditions. Results analysed in all three dimensions show a consistent trend. In terms of lexical gains, no matter which group participants were in, the treatment group consistently outperformed the control group in attaining lexical gains. This suggests that parallel texts may be helpful in drawing L2 learners' attention to lexis and conducive to yielding lexical gains.

Impact of the Parallel-text Approach on Word Retention

The second research question of this study examines the effect of the parallel-text approach on L2 learners' subsequent word retention. Similar to the findings of the first research question, it was found that participants who worked on L1-L2 translation with parallel texts exhibited a greater level of L2 word retention compared to those who worked on translation tasks without parallel texts, and this was true regardless of which group of participants were involved. Consistent findings were observed when the results of the same group of participants under different conditions were compared. However, compared to immediate lexical gains, fewer lexical gains were found in both groups' post-tests compared to their revisions. This implies that the treatment may be more beneficial for immediate lexical gains than subsequent vocabulary retention. Overall, the findings show that the parallel-text approach has a clear advantage in creating awareness of the form-meaning relationship of L2 vocabulary. Translation tasks with parallel texts as treatment may be more conducive to immediate vocabulary gains and vocabulary retention compared to translation tasks without parallel texts as treatment.

Considering the earlier literature review on the importance of noticing (Swain, 1985; Schmitt, 1990), it may be justifiable on both theoretical and empirical grounds to consider the combined and complementary impact of the L1-L2 translation tasks and parallel texts on L2 learners' conscious attention and L2 vocabulary development. After producing L2 output as required in their translation tasks, learners may notice the linguistic gap between their L1 and L2, and remedy such a linguistic deficiency in their revisions, and they may develop more substantial conscious attention to L2 input when given access to the treatment/dictionary consultation. Furthermore, the significantly more lexical gains found in the treatment group in this study point to the superiority of parallel texts as L2 input to enrich learners' L2 vocabulary. These authentic L2 contextual inputs may also have created better opportunities for learners to recognize deficiency or inappropriateness of their initial expression and capture the correct form for the target items when an

inference can be made from the context. On the other hand, learners who lacked exposure to authentic L2 context may not have recognised any lexical inaccuracy or inappropriateness there may have been in the first place, or they may have been misled by the variety of choices available in dictionaries. The higher level of lexical gains found in the treatment group may also be a result of stronger motivation to seek progress or deepen engagement in the search for lexical improvement.

Implications of the Study

Below are some implications of findings from this study for L2 vocabulary learning and pedagogical translation. First, when it comes to vocabulary learning, the use of translation has often been confined to providing the translated meaning of target words in contrast to L2 definitions or utilized in a decontextualised manner (e.g., Prince, 1996). This study shows how translation can be exploited beyond such limitations. It shows that translation may not necessarily contrast with “learning through context,” nor does it have to be done at the expense of contextualised vocabulary learning. For instance, the significantly higher level of immediate lexical gains and word retention manifested in work by the treatment group may possibly be attributed to advantages of contextualised vocabulary learning such as an expansion of L2 vocabulary knowledge, consolidation of unfamiliar words and contribution to word retention (Nation, 2001).

Second, the present study demonstrates the feasibility of exploiting translation tasks in a way that encourages learners to embark on a “vocabulary treasure hunt,” which creates opportunities to trigger learners’ conscious attention to their resource gaps (Schmidt, 1990; Swain, 1985), intentional learning and incidental learning (Hulstijn, 1992; Gass, 1999; Nation, 2001) while leveraging benefits from L2 contextualised input (Nation, 2001) and practical practice of professional translators (Nord, 2010). Third, although the use of translation was intended for L2 vocabulary learning in the present study, it is interesting to note how some participants were able to improve their lexical choice by replacing their original version from a seemingly word-to-word translated L2 expression with a more accurate/appropriate vocabulary that suits the context, such as in the instances where “試用期” was corrected from “*try period*” to *probation period* or where “租客” was corrected from *lease person* to *tenant*. These findings mirror the view of Leonardi (2010) that L2 learners often naturally assume the existence of one-to-one correspondence between L1 and L2, a plausible reason why awkward expressions such as *baby holiday*, *try period* or *lease person* (which

were meant to be *maternity leave, probation period* and *tenant*) were found of the participants' first attempt to express the terms in L2. In fact, the findings accord with what Malmkjær (1998) suggested earlier that if translation tasks are used in L2 classrooms and with proper instruction, it may soon be apparent to L2 students that there is no such thing so simple as word-to-word equivalence at all times.

Limitations of the Study

Nevertheless, a few caveats and limitations of the present study should be noted. First, this study seeks to establish L2 learners' form-meaning understanding of the target vocabulary items. Whether the lexical knowledge obtained through this approach can be fully extended to deepened lexical understanding that allows the learners to make informed lexical choices in verbal or written communication in L2 is yet to be explored. Another limitation of this study is that dictionary consultation may have played a more facilitative role in contributing to L2 learners' lexical gains if the participants were not required to resort to the same dictionary in both experiments, an experimental design that was considered essential to minimize variables arising from benefits obtained from different dictionaries. Alternatively, it can be debatable whether the significantly more lexical gains found in the treatment group were mainly attributed to their exposure to L2 parallel texts, their exposure to the parallel texts plus verification via dictionary consultation or just dictionary consultation, although the rationale is that if dictionary consultation were the main factor leading to lexical gains, there would not have been significantly fewer lexical gains when the participants were placed in the control group without access to L2 parallel texts. Future studies may extend this investigation by monitoring how participants achieve their lexical gains using think-aloud protocols or examining whether the same results hold in contexts other than legal documents. Third, although it has been anticipated that the parallel-text approach can create opportunities for both intentional and incidental vocabulary, whether the lexical gains were attributed to intentional vocabulary learning, incidental vocabulary learning, or an integration of both was beyond the scope of the present study, but this may merit future research. Moreover, in this study, only two parallel texts were included in the treatment for each experiment as the two texts sufficiently covered all target words concerned. Future studies may consider incorporating more parallel texts as treatment in scenarios where the target words cannot be found within two texts.

CONCLUSION

Overall, the study shows the parallel-text approach may benefit L2 vocabulary development in terms of yielding more immediate lexical gains and word retention, despite its clearer advantage in establishing an immediate understanding of the form-meaning link of L2 vocabulary. In addition to contributing to the limited literature on the use of translation for L2 vocabulary, the present study provides empirical evidence of the underexplored potential benefits of parallel texts. It offers innovative insights for L2 vocabulary development and EFL language pedagogy that may inform future scholarly inquiry in avenues of pedagogical translation.

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ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The author would like to thank the anonymous reviewers of the Taiwan Journal of TESOL for their constructive comments to help improve earlier versions of this paper.

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PUBLISHING RECORD

Manuscript received: May 4, 2022; Revision received: August 14, 2022; Manuscript accepted: August 15, 2022.

APPENDIX

Appendix 1A: Translation Task A

I) **DRAFT: Express the following sentences in English. Pay special attention to the underlined lexical items. DO NOT use dictionary at this stage. [25 minutes]**

1. 僱員有權獲取 20,000 澳門元基本報酬及相等於 3,000 澳門元的津貼。
2. 甲乙雙方可在試用期內隨時終止本合同，而均無須作出任何的預先通知。
3. 僱員可享有 90 日產假，但須至少提前三個月通知雇主。
4. 雇主有責任按照本合同規定支付賠償金。
5. 本僱傭合約由澳門法例規管。

II) **REVISION: Express the following sentences in English. Pay special attention to the underlined lexical items. Dictionary is allowed. Upon completion, underline all the changes you have made. [30 minutes]**

1. 僱員有權獲取 20,000 澳門元基本報酬及相等於 3,000 澳門元的津貼。
2. 甲乙雙方可在試用期內隨時終止本合同，而均無須作出任何的預先通知。
3. 僱員可享有 90 日產假，但須至少提前三個月通知雇主。
4. 雇主有責任按照本合同規定支付賠償金。
5. 本僱傭合約由澳門法例規管。

Appendix 1B: Reference Translation⁶ (Target text)

The following Chinese-English translation is NOT provided to any of the participants, but simply attached in this Appendix as a reference for non-Chinese language readers. The underlined expressions are hidden agenda for the researcher.

Target Text

1. The employee is entitled to receive a basic remuneration of MOP 20,000 and an allowance equivalent to MOP 3,000.
2. Both parties may terminate this contract within the probation period at any time and are not required to give any advance notice.
3. The employee shall be entitled to 90 days of maternity leave and must notify the employer at least three months in advance.
4. The employer is liable to pay compensation in accordance to the provision of this contract.
5. This Employment Contract is governed by the laws of Macau.

⁶ The translation is adapted from https://www.dsal.gov.mo/en/standard/download_laborlawtemp.html.

Appendix 1C: Parallel Texts for Task A

Extracts of Parallel Text 1 for Task A⁷

Sample of Employment Agreement

This sample contract is designed to help you draft an employment agreement. It includes all the essential elements of a typical contract. You may modify it to suit your specific needs and situations. Keep in mind that this document is a starting point and not a finished product. You need to make sure that the actual agreement reflects the relationship between you and your employee. This sample contract may also be download from TAFEP’s website at www.fairemployment.sg

This Employment Agreement dated this (date) day or (month) 20xx is made between:

(herein after referred to as “the employer”)

Address of employer:

and

(herein after referred to as “the employee”)

Address of employee:

⁷ Some targeted lexical items that can be found in the context are highlighted here for readers’ reference. The parallel text provided to the subjects, however, do not include any highlighted items. Due to length limit, only extracts of the parallel text are shown here. Full content is available at: <https://www.lawonline.com.sg/Documents/EC.pdf> (Accessed: 28 March 2021).

1. Commencement of Employment

This employment contract will begin on _____ and continue until terminated as set out in clause 14 (below).

2. Place of Work

3. Job Description

3.1 Job Title _____
(e.g. Teacher, Security Officer, Security Supervisor, Driver, Cleaning Specialist, child minder, gardener, etc.)

3.2 Duties _____

4. Remuneration

4.1 The employee's basic salary should be paid in cash/by cheque or through GIRO on (date) \$ _____ per month/day/week

4.2 The employee shall be entitled to the following allowances/payment in kind (if any):

4.2.1 A weekly/monthly/ fixed transport allowance or reimbursement (based on days worked) at a rate of _____ per day \$ _____

4.2.2 A weekly/monthly/ fixed meal allowance or reimbursement (based on days worked) at a rate of _____ per day \$ _____

4.2.3 A weekly/monthly fixed laundry allowance of \$ _____

*Extracts of Parallel Text 2 for Task A*⁸

Employment Agreement (Sample)

THIS AGREEMENT made as of the _____ day of _____, 20__, between [name of employer] a corporation incorporated under the laws of the Province of Ontario, and having its principal place of business at _____ (the “Employer”); and [name of employee], of the City of _____ in the Province of Ontario (the “Employee”).

WHEREAS the Employer desires to obtain the benefit of the services of the Employee, and the Employee desires to render such services on the terms and conditions set forth.

IN CONSIDERATION of the promises and other good and valuable consideration (the sufficiency and receipt of which are hereby acknowledged) the **parties** agree as follows:

1. Employment

The Employee agrees that he will at all times faithfully, industriously, and to the best of his skill, ability, experiences and talents, **perform** all the duties required of his position. In carrying out these duties and responsibilities, the Employee shall comply with all Employer policies, procedures, rules and regulations, both written and oral, as are announced by the Employer from time to time. It is also understood and agreed to by the Employer that his assignment, duties and responsibilities and reporting arrangements may be changed by the Employer in its sole discretion without causing

⁸ Full content available at:

<https://sehub.stanford.edu/sites/default/files/SampleEmploymentContract.pdf>
(Accessed: 28 March 2021).

termination of this agreement.

2. Position Title

As a _____, the Employee is required to perform the following duties and undertake the following responsibilities in a professional manner.

- (a) –
- (b) -
- (c) –
- (d) –
- (e) Other duties as may arise from time to time and as may be assigned to the employee.

3. Compensation

- (a) As full compensation for all services provided the employee shall be paid at the rate of _____. Such payments shall be subject to such normal statutory deductions by the Employer.
- (b) *(may wish to include bonus calculations or omit in order to exercise discretion).*
- (c) The salary mentioned in paragraph (1)(a) shall be reviewed **on an annual basis**.
- (d) All reasonable **expenses** arising out of employment shall be **reimbursed** assuming same have been authorized proper to being incurred and with the **provision** of appropriate receipts.

Appendix 2A: Translation Tasks

TASK B: 租約合同

I) **DRAFT:** Express the following sentences in English. Pay special attention to the underlined lexical items. **DO NOT use dictionary at this stage. [20 minutes]**

1. 租客須於租賃的開始日期繳交首月租金。
2. 租客不得對物業進行任何的改動或加建。
3. 租客不得轉讓或分租物業。
4. 租客須保養及維修單位內所提供的家電。
5. 租約到期時租客須將物業交吉，而業主可從保證金裡扣除任何未支付的租金。

II) **REVISION:** Express the following sentences in English. Pay special attention to the underlined lexical items. **Dictionary is allowed. Upon completion, underline all the changes you have made. [30 minutes]**

1. 租客須於租賃的開始日期繳交首月租金。
2. 租客不得對物業進行任何的改動或加建。
3. 租客不得轉讓或分租物業。
4. 租客須保養及維修單位內所提供的家電。
5. 租約到期時租客須將物業交吉，而業主可從保證金裡扣除任何未支付的租金。

Appendix 2B: Reference Translation⁹

The following Chinese-English translation is NOT provided to any of the participants, but simply attached in this Appendix as a reference for non-Chinese language readers. The underlined expressions are hidden agenda for the researcher.

Target Text (77 words)

1. The tenant is required to the first month's rent at the commencement of the tenancy.
2. The tenant must not assign or sublet the Premises.
3. The Tenant must not make any alteration or addition to the Premises.
4. The Tenant shall repair or maintain appliances supplied in the premises.
5. At the end of the Tenancy the Tenant shall vacate the Premises and the Landlord may deduct any unpaid rent from the security deposit.

⁹ The translation is adapted from https://www.dsal.gov.mo/en/standard/download_laborlawtemp.html.

Appendix 3A

Post-test for Task A: Express the underlined parts in English.

Write your answer on the given space

1. 僱員有權獲取 20,000 澳門元基本報酬及相等於 3,000 澳門元的津貼。
2. 甲乙雙方可在試用期內隨時終止本合同，而均無須作出任何的預先通知。
3. 僱員可享有 90 日產假，但須至少提前三個月通知雇主。
4. 雇主有責任按照本合同規定支付賠償金。
5. 本僱傭合約由澳門法例規管。

<u>有權</u> 獲取	<u>產假</u>
<u>報酬</u>	<u>提前</u>
<u>相等於</u>	<u>通知</u> (*v)
<u>津貼</u>	<u>有 (法律) 責任</u>
<u>甲乙雙方</u>	<u>規定</u>
<u>試用期</u>	<u>賠償</u>
<u>終止合同</u>	<u>由...規管</u>
<u>通知</u> (*n)	

Appendix 3B

Post-test for Task B: Express the underlined parts in English.

Write your answer on the given space

1. 租客須於租賃的開始日期繳交首月租金。
2. 租客不得對物業進行任何的改動或加建。
3. 租客不得轉讓或分租物業。
4. 租客須保養及維修單位內所提供的家電。
5. 租約到期時租客須將物業交吉，而業主可從保證金裡扣除任何未支付的租金。

<u>租客</u>	<u>保養</u>
<u>租賃</u> (期)	<u>維修</u>
<u>開始</u> (*n)	<u>家電</u>
<u>物業</u>	<u>交吉</u> (物業)
<u>改動</u> (物業)	<u>業主</u>
<u>加建</u> (物業)	<u>保證金</u>
<u>轉讓</u>	<u>扣除</u>
<u>分租</u>	