

**AN ANALYSIS OF THE ABILITY OF EFL STUDENTS TO TRANSLATE
OPINION ARTICLES FROM AN ENGLISH-LANGUAGE DIGITAL NEWSPAPER**

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the ability of EFL students in translating opinion articles from English-language digital newspapers and identifies the translation strategies they employ. Translating opinion texts is considered challenging due to the use of persuasive language, idiomatic expressions, and cultural nuances, which require both linguistic competence and strategic decision-making. This research employed a descriptive quantitative design involving 30 students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu who had completed at least one translation course. Data were collected through a translation test using an opinion article from The Jakarta Post and a questionnaire based on Baker's (1992) taxonomy of translation strategies. The students' translations were evaluated using Nababan's (2012) Translation Quality Assessment, focusing on accuracy, acceptability, and readability. The results show that students' overall translation ability is at a moderate level, with an average score of 59.63. Most students are categorized as fair (50%), followed by good (37%), poor (10%), and excellent (3%). Among the assessment aspects, accuracy is the most problematic, while acceptability and readability are relatively better. The findings indicate that although students can produce natural and understandable translations, they still face difficulties in conveying meaning accurately, especially in handling abstract ideas and complex arguments. In terms of strategies, students tend to use meaning-oriented approaches, particularly paraphrasing, followed by generalization and loan words. In conclusion, students demonstrate moderate translation competence but need improvement in accuracy, deeper text comprehension, and the use of varied strategies.

Keywords: EFL students, translation ability, translation strategies, opinion articles.

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis kemampuan mahasiswa EFL dalam menerjemahkan artikel opini dari surat kabar digital berbahasa Inggris serta mengidentifikasi strategi penerjemahan yang digunakan. Penerjemahan teks opini dianggap menantang karena adanya bahasa persuasif, ungkapan idiomatis, dan nuansa budaya yang memerlukan kompetensi linguistik serta kemampuan pengambilan keputusan secara strategis. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kuantitatif dengan melibatkan 30 mahasiswa Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas Islam Negeri Fatmawati Sukarno Bengkulu yang telah menempuh mata kuliah

penerjemahan. Data dikumpulkan melalui tes penerjemahan menggunakan teks opini dari The Jakarta Post serta kuesioner berdasarkan taksonomi strategi penerjemahan Baker (1992). Hasil terjemahan mahasiswa dinilai menggunakan Translation Quality Assessment dari Nababan (2012) yang mencakup aspek akurasi, keberterimaan, dan keteracaan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kemampuan penerjemahan mahasiswa berada pada tingkat sedang dengan nilai rata-rata 59,63. Sebagian besar mahasiswa berada pada kategori cukup (50%), diikuti kategori baik (37%), kurang (10%), dan sangat baik (3%). Dari ketiga aspek penilaian, akurasi menjadi aspek yang paling bermasalah, sedangkan keberterimaan dan keterbacaan menunjukkan hasil yang lebih baik. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa mampu menghasilkan terjemahan yang alami dan mudah dipahami, namun masih mengalami kesulitan dalam menyampaikan makna secara akurat, terutama pada konsep abstrak dan argumen kompleks. Dalam hal strategi, mahasiswa cenderung menggunakan pendekatan berorientasi makna, khususnya parafrase, diikuti generalisasi dan peminjaman. Kesimpulannya, kemampuan penerjemahan mahasiswa berada pada tingkat sedang, namun masih perlu ditingkatkan pada aspek akurasi, pemahaman teks, dan variasi strategi penerjemahan.

Kata kunci: mahasiswa EFL, kemampuan penerjemahan, strategi penerjemahan, artikel opini.

A. Pendahuluan

In the era of globalization, the ability to translate texts from English into Indonesian has become increasingly important, especially for students of English as a Foreign Language (EFL). Translation is not only a process of transferring language but also a complex activity that involves understanding meaning, context, and cultural nuances. One type of text that presents particular challenges is opinion articles, which often contain persuasive language, abstract ideas, and implicit meanings. These characteristics require students

to possess not only linguistic competence but also strategic competence in order to produce accurate and natural translations.

However, in reality, many students still face difficulties in translating opinion texts effectively. Based on preliminary observations, students tend to produce translations that are understandable but lack accuracy, especially when dealing with complex arguments, idiomatic expressions, and culturally bound terms. This indicates that students' translation ability is still developing and not yet optimal. According to

translation theory, a good translation should fulfill three main aspects: accuracy, acceptability, and readability (Nababan, 2012). In addition, Baker (1992) emphasizes the importance of using appropriate translation strategies to solve problems that arise during the translation process.

Several previous studies have shown that students often rely on limited strategies, such as paraphrasing and generalization, while more complex strategies are rarely used. This condition highlights the need to further investigate how students translate opinion texts and what strategies they apply in the process. Empirical data are needed to provide a clearer picture of students' translation competence and to identify the main difficulties they encounter.

Therefore, this study focuses on analyzing the ability of EFL students in translating opinion articles from English digital newspapers and identifying the translation strategies they use. The objectives of this study are to determine the level of students' translation ability based on the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability, as well as to identify the dominant strategies employed by

the students. The findings of this study are expected to provide both theoretical and practical contributions, particularly in improving translation teaching and learning, and in helping students develop more effective translation skills when dealing with complex texts such as opinion articles.

B. Metode Penelitian

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design to analyze students' ability in translating opinion texts from English digital newspapers and to identify the translation strategies they used. The participants of this study were 30 students of the English Education Study Program who had completed at least one translation course.

The data were collected using two instruments: a translation test and a questionnaire. The translation test used an opinion article taken from *The Jakarta Post*, while the questionnaire was developed based on Baker's (1992) classification of translation strategies. The students' translation outputs were evaluated using Nababan's (2012) Translation Quality Assessment (TQA), which focuses on three aspects: accuracy, acceptability, and readability.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics by calculating the mean scores and percentages to determine students' level of translation ability. Meanwhile, the questionnaire data were analyzed to identify the dominant translation strategies used by the students.

C. Hasil Penelitian dan Pembahasan

The findings of this study indicate that the overall ability of students in translating opinion articles is at a moderate level, with an average score of 59.63. As presented in Figure 1, the distribution of students' scores shows that 50% of students are categorized as fair, 37% as good, 10% as poor, and only 3% as excellent. This distribution is also visually illustrated in Figure 1, which clearly shows that the majority of students are concentrated in the fair and good categories.

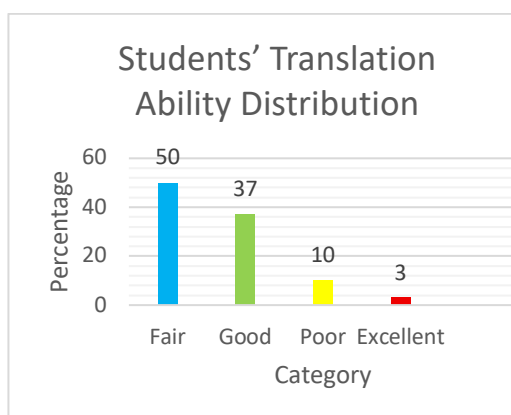


Figure 1. Students' translation ability distribution

Based on the assessment using Nababan's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA), the results in demonstrate that students achieve relatively higher scores in acceptability and readability compared to accuracy. This finding suggests that students are generally able to produce translations that are natural and easy to understand in the target language. However, accuracy remains the most problematic aspect, indicating that many students still struggle to convey the exact meaning of the source text.

This result supports Nababan's (2012) theory, which emphasizes that accuracy is the most essential component in translation quality, as it reflects the correctness of meaning transfer. The difficulties in achieving accuracy are particularly evident when students deal with abstract ideas, complex arguments, and culturally bound expressions, which are common in opinion texts. These challenges often lead students to simplify or misinterpret the original message.

The results of this study indicate that students' ability in translating opinion articles from English digital newspapers into Indonesian is still at a moderate level. Based on the findings,

the majority of students were categorized in the Fair category, accounting for 50% of the participants, followed by 37% in the Good category, 10% in the Poor category, and only 3% in the Excellent category. These findings suggest that most students are generally able to understand and transfer the main ideas of the source text; however, their translations still contain several weaknesses related to accuracy, vocabulary selection, grammatical structure, and contextual meaning. Many students tended to translate texts literally without fully understanding the implicit meanings and argumentative aspects commonly found in opinion articles. As a result, some translations sounded less natural and failed to convey the exact message of the original text. In terms of translation quality, readability and acceptability appeared to be relatively better than accuracy. Most students were able to produce translations that were understandable and grammatically acceptable in Indonesian, indicating that they had sufficient knowledge of target language structures. Nevertheless, high readability did not always guarantee accurate meaning transfer because several students simplified

complex ideas in order to make the translation easier to read.

Furthermore, the findings from the questionnaire revealed that students employed various translation strategies based on Baker's taxonomy. The most dominant strategy used by students was Translation by Paraphrase Using a Related Word, which reached 23%, followed by Translation by a More General Word (20%). These strategies indicate that students preferred practical and familiar approaches when facing difficulties in finding direct lexical equivalents. In addition, Translation by a More Neutral or Less Expressive Word and Translation by Paraphrase Using Unrelated Words each accounted for 13%, while Translation Using a Loan Word or Loan Word Plus Explanation and Translation by Omission each reached 10%. Meanwhile, Translation by Cultural Substitution accounted for 7%, and Translation by Illustration became the least frequently used strategy at only 4%. The dominance of paraphrasing and generalization strategies demonstrates that students tended to prioritize readability and clarity rather than maintaining detailed lexical accuracy.

Overall, the findings reveal that students still experience difficulties in translating complex and argumentative texts because opinion articles require not only linguistic competence but also critical reading skills, vocabulary mastery, and contextual understanding. Therefore, students need more intensive translation practice and better understanding of translation strategies in order to improve their translation accuracy, acceptability, and readability simultaneously.

E. Kesimpulan

This study concludes that EFL students' ability in translating opinion articles from *The Jakarta Post* is at a moderate level. Most students fall into the fair and good categories, indicating that their translation competence is still developing. Based on Nababan's translation quality assessment, students perform relatively well in terms of readability and acceptability, meaning their translations are generally natural and understandable. However, accuracy remains the main challenge, as students often struggle to convey the exact meaning of the source text, particularly when dealing with abstract ideas, technical terms, and complex arguments.

In terms of translation strategies, students tend to use meaning-oriented

approaches, especially paraphrasing and generalization, while strategies such as borrowing are used for unfamiliar terms. More complex strategies, such as illustration and omission, are rarely applied, indicating that students prefer simpler and safer strategies. This suggests a need for improving both strategic competence and confidence in applying a wider range of translation techniques.

Based on these findings, students are encouraged to enhance their translation accuracy by improving their comprehension of source texts and expanding their vocabulary and strategy use. Teachers are recommended to emphasize not only readability and acceptability but also accuracy, as well as to provide explicit instruction and practice in various translation strategies. Future researchers are suggested to explore different text types and research designs, including qualitative approaches, to gain deeper insights into students' translation processes and to examine the relationship between translation strategies and translation quality more comprehensively.

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