

# PROMOTING TRANSLATION-BASED STRATEGY AS A MEDIATORY ROLE FOR READING COMPREHENSION SKILL IN SENIOR HIGH SCHOOL

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## **Abstract**

This study investigates the role of Translation-Based Strategy (TBS) as a mediatory tool in enhancing reading comprehension among senior high school EFL students. Employing a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, the research involved 72 participants selected through purposive sampling at a public boarding school in Batu. Quantitative data were collected through reading tests and questionnaires, while qualitative data were gathered via interviews. The results of the regression analysis ( $F = 7.978$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) demonstrate a statistically significant relationship between TBS and students' reading comprehension. Qualitative findings further reveal key challenges faced by students, including structural and contextual differences between English and Indonesian, difficulty in sentence organization, and limitations of translation tools. Despite these challenges, TBS proves to be a valuable scaffold for developing vocabulary, understanding sentence structures, and improving contextual meaning in texts. The findings support the integration of translation as an effective pedagogical strategy in EFL reading instruction and recommend combining TBS with critical reading skills to maximize its impact.

**Keywords:** Translation-Based Strategy, reading comprehension, EFL

## INTRODUCTION

Reading is one of the skills that students must master, and it can provide extraordinary insights. One of the key competencies in language instruction, both in the use of first language (L1) and second language (L2) contexts, is reading. It is essential for basic-level language learners and serves as a primary input for advanced learners for a variety of purposes (Grabe & Stoller, 2020). The process of reading comprehension involves interaction between the text and the reader's basic understanding (Yunus et al., 2020). This comprehension stems from the connection between written words and how content is activated beyond the message or text. The interplay of reader, text, and task features in a sociocultural setting is known as reading comprehension (Elleman & Oslund, 2019). More than that, students need to understand the content, ideas, and messages contained in the text. Reading and comprehending academic texts in a language that is not in daily use is often perceived as difficult, complex, and time-consuming. Based on Putri et al., (2023), Limited vocabulary understanding is often at the root of the difficulties students face when learning to read. This is further exacerbated by their lack of reading experience. Both become major obstacles in the learning process, so efforts are needed to enrich students' vocabulary and encourage them to read more often.

One important aspect of students' reading comprehension is reading strategies, which enable them to understand texts more purposefully and efficiently. Teachers can guide students to develop their reading comprehension with reading strategies. So, students can obtain information and get the correct meaning in each reading. However, many students face obstacles to comprehending texts because they do not know effective ways or strategies to develop their comprehension. Various strategies can be implemented to help develop students' reading comprehension. Students need to be trained or guided in the use of various reading strategies so that they can understand how to apply them to achieve an effective understanding of academic material (Banditvilai, 2020). One strategy that can be used is Translation-based.

One of the reasons why translation is important as a tool in second language learning is that it is a classroom activity. It is strongly advised that translation be employed as a

goal of learning outcomes, even if it is regarded as an outdated technique and should only be used to supplement instruction. This point of view backs up the idea that the target language should be used in the classroom for both communication and instruction by the teacher and students (Alaboud, 2022).

Globally, Translation-Based Strategies (TBS) have been widely applied in EFL contexts. In Iran, Rouhani and Modarresi (2023) distinguished between Translation-Based Instruction, which emphasizes text-oriented activities, and Meaning-Focused Instruction, which involves communicative tasks like reading comprehension and discussions. In the Indonesian context, Novita and Mustafha (2019) found that using translation as a pedagogical tool is effective in teaching English for Specific Purposes (ESP), significantly improving students' learning outcomes and helping them expand their vocabulary. This shows that Translation-Based Strategies (TBS) can support the understanding of complex materials. Similarly, Mahmud and Wahdani (2024) concluded that translation helps students focus and engage more effectively with English texts, making it a practical method for overcoming reading comprehension challenges.

In addition, students are encouraged to explore the meanings of words with similar meanings or synonyms, which deepens their understanding of language complexity. While previous research has demonstrated the effectiveness of Translation-Based Strategies (TBS) in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) reading, there remains limited investigation into their application for improving reading comprehension at the senior high school level. Therefore, this study focuses on how TBS can serve as an effective mediatory tool in enhancing context-based reading comprehension skills among high school EFL learners.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Research Design**

In this study was gathered using a mixed method. This method was selected because the researcher will concurrently gather and examine both quantitative and qualitative data. According to Cresswell (2005), the mixed method is a research methodological technique that combines quantitative and qualitative data collection, analysis, and combination in a single study or set of studies. This approach seeks to offer a more thorough and profound comprehension of

the study issue under investigation. Therefore, mixed methods were chosen to produce findings that can not only be generalized, but also provide a deep and thorough understanding of the phenomenon under study.

This study employed explanatory sequential design as part of a mixed methods approach. According to Ivankova et al., (2006), In an explanatory sequential design, the researcher first gathers and examines quantitative data. The subsequent step, which involves gathering and analyzing qualitative data, is guided by the findings of this quantitative data analysis. Additionally, the second step involved the collection and analysis of qualitative data in the form of text. The qualitative method provides deeper insights into why and how students experience difficulties in comprehending texts using Translation-based Strategy. The quantitative results from the first step are explained or detailed by this qualitative data. To make the two stages of this research interconnected at the intermediate stage, the second phase, the qualitative analysis, relies on the findings of the quantitative phase.

## **SETTING AND PARTICIPANT**

This study involved 72 students out of a total of 432 students at a public boarding school in Batu, who were selected through purposive sampling technique based on the criteria of being regular class students. The aim was to assess the effect of the Translation-Based Strategy on the ability to comprehend reading texts. In addition, qualitative data was obtained through interviews with two students selected based on the quantitative results-one with the highest score and one with the lowest score-in order to dig deeper into their experiences and perceptions regarding the strategy.

## **RESEARCH INSTRUMENT**

The study uses three research instruments: a reading test, a questionnaire, and an interview guide.

1. Reading Test: Designed to assess students' reading comprehension skills in a foreign language, particularly their ability to understand both explicit and implied meanings and apply Translation-based Strategies effectively.
2. Questionnaire: Adapted from Liao (2002), it initially contained 28 items but was modified to 25 items to better suit the study's context. The reliability test showed a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.792, indicating good reliability. The questionnaire was translated into Indonesian to ensure clarity and was categorized into five themes: Translation for Comprehension, Translation in Speaking & Writing, Use of Translation Tools, Translation for Grammar & Vocabulary, and Translation and Learning Independence.
3. Interview Guide: Consisting of 10 self-developed questions, the interviews aimed to gather deeper qualitative insights into the participants' experiences and challenges in using Translation-based Strategies. The interviews were conducted in Bahasa Indonesia to ensure full understanding and accurate responses.

## **DATA ANALYSIS**

After data collection, the researcher summarized questionnaire responses to gain an overall understanding of participants' answers. For the first research question—whether Translation-Based Strategies significantly affect students' reading comprehension—participants' Likert scale scores were analyzed using SPSS IBM version 2.0. Descriptive statistics and regression analysis were applied to determine the significance of the strategy's impact.

For the second research question—whether students find Translation-Based Strategies challenging in understanding foreign language texts—data was analyzed qualitatively through interviews. The researcher reviewed audio recordings and transcripts to ensure accurate representation of participants' experiences and insights.

## FINDINGS

### *The Regression Analysis of Translation-based Strategy in Students' Reading Comprehension*

| ANOVA <sup>a</sup> |            |    |             |       |                   |
|--------------------|------------|----|-------------|-------|-------------------|
| Model              |            | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.              |
| 1                  | Regression | 1  | 667.225     | 7.978 | .006 <sup>b</sup> |
|                    | Residual   | 70 | 83.638      |       |                   |
|                    | Total      | 71 |             |       |                   |

a. Dependent Variable: Reading Score

b. Predictors: (Constant), Translation-based Strategy

Based on the ANOVA results, it can be concluded that there is a significant relationship between Translation-Based Strategy and students' reading comprehension. The regression analysis yielded an F-value of 7.978 with a p-value of 0.006 ( $p < 0.05$ ), indicating that the regression model is statistically significant. Additionally, the regression coefficient for Translation-Based Strategy is 5.909 with a p-value of 0.006, confirming a positive and significant influence on reading comprehension. In terms of hypothesis testing, these results support the rejection of the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ), which states that Translation-Based Strategy has no significant effect on students' reading comprehension, and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis ( $H_a$ ), which asserts that it does. Thus, there is strong statistical evidence that Translation-Based Strategy plays a significant mediating role in enhancing reading comprehension among senior high school students, making it an effective instructional approach.

To explore students' challenges in using Translation-Based Strategies (TBS) for reading comprehension, two students were interviewed—one with the highest score and one with the lowest. The analysis revealed three key themes of difficulty:

### *Structural and Contextual Differences Between English and Indonesian*

Students reported that translating English texts into Indonesian often led to contextual mismatches, making it hard to grasp the original meaning. Word-for-word translation without considering sentence context caused confusion and misinterpretation.

### *Difficulty in Sentence Organization*

Both students faced trouble reorganizing translated sentences to retain the original meaning. Complex vocabulary and sentence structures made it challenging to maintain coherence between English and Indonesian versions, especially when trying to preserve the author's intent.

### *Limitations of Translation Tools*

Although translation apps (e.g., Google Translate) were helpful, students found them limited in accuracy. The tools often failed to capture nuance and required multiple rounds of retranslation and manual adjustments, leading to inefficiency and frustration.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings of this study highlight the significant role of Translation-Based Strategy in enhancing senior high school students' reading comprehension. This strategy involves three systematic stages: Text Identification and Initial Context Understanding, Word-for-Word Translation, and Sentence Rearrangement and Reorganization. These stages support students in grasping the original meaning of texts and facilitate their comprehension by connecting vocabulary and sentence structures between English and Indonesian.

The results of the regression analysis ( $F = 7.978$ ,  $p = 0.006$ ) confirm that Translation-Based Strategy has a statistically significant effect on reading performance, supporting the hypothesis that such strategies can serve as an effective mediating tool in reading comprehension. This aligns with Rushwan (2017b) research, which showed that translation enhanced ESP students' comprehension, particularly in understanding technical terminology. Similarly, Mahmud and Wahdani (2024) found that this strategy fosters an enjoyable learning environment and helps students connect meaning across languages. Molina and Hurtado Albir

(2004) also emphasized that translation enhances comprehension through strategies such as identifying key concepts and differentiating core and supporting ideas.

Despite its benefits, students encountered several challenges in applying the strategy. These include structural and contextual differences between English and Indonesian, difficulties in sentence organization, and limitations in translation tools. These findings are supported by previous studies (Pham et al., 2022; Arono & Nadrah, 2019; Khayyal, 2022), which noted that vocabulary limitations, cultural differences, and complex grammatical structures hinder translation accuracy. Additionally, sentence restructuring difficulties arise due to syntactic differences between the two languages, requiring students to not only translate but also adapt meaning without altering the essence of the original text (Malmkjær & Windle, 2011; Al-Nakhalah, 2013).

Another key challenge is the limitation of digital translation tools, which often fail to capture semantic nuances or cultural context (Nugraeni & Ahmad, 2024; Utami, 2024). While helpful, such tools are prone to grammatical and lexical errors. Therefore, combining translation technology with linguistic and cultural knowledge, dictionary use, and collaborative practices—such as group discussions—can lead to more accurate and contextually appropriate translations.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the quantitative and qualitative findings from questionnaires and interviews, this study confirms that Translation-Based Strategy significantly enhances students' reading comprehension. Addressing the first research question, the results demonstrate that translation strategies—particularly word-for-word translation—serve as a foundational tool in helping students bridge their understanding between English and their native language. This approach supports vocabulary recognition and sentence decoding, enabling students to connect meaning effectively within a text.

In response to the second research question, the study identifies three main challenges in the implementation of Translation-Based Strategy: structural and contextual differences between English and Indonesian, difficulties in sentence organization, and limitations in translation tools.

Students often struggle with grammatical mismatches and rely on digital translation tools that may misinterpret idiomatic expressions and context, requiring additional manual refinement.

Despite these obstacles, Translation-Based Strategy proves valuable as a scaffolding tool rather than a standalone method. To enhance its effectiveness, it should be complemented with contextual inference, paraphrasing, and critical reading strategies. Overall, this study contributes to a deeper understanding of how translation aids EFL learners in reading comprehension and underscores the importance of integrating translation with other analytical approaches in English language instruction.

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