

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

Translation is one of the essential components in language learning. Generally, translation refers to the act of conveying meaning from one language into another. According to Newmark (1988), translation is the process of transferring information and meaning from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL), and it is considered an educational tool. Similarly, Cherrington (2002) emphasizes that translation plays an important role in language learning since both aim at effective communication. Although some argue that translation has become outdated due to the availability of automatic tools such as Google Translate, DeepL, or AI-based platforms, translation remains a fundamental skill in language learning, particularly for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students.

Translation offers many benefits for students. Bahri & Mahadi (2016) point out that translation helps students acquire vocabulary and grammatical structures. Furthermore, Titford (1982) argues that translation can improve second language skills to a near-native level. Considering these benefits, translation has become an essential skill that must be mastered by EFL students.

For EFL students, mastering translation skills is not only a matter of linguistic proficiency but also an important

asset for their academic and professional success. Translation courses are usually included in the curriculum because translation supports language acquisition as well as communication skills (Kosone, Malone, & Young, 2007). These courses typically cover both theoretical and practical aspects. Theoretically, students are introduced to definitions, concepts, strategies, and translation theories; practically, they are trained to translate various types of texts. The main goal of these courses is to equip students to apply translation strategies effectively and to handle various translation challenges.

Among the topics covered in translation courses, translation strategies receive particular attention. Translation strategies refer to specific techniques used to solve translation problems and produce appropriate equivalents in the target language. These strategies can be applied to language units ranging from words, phrases, clauses, to sentences. The ability to select the most suitable strategy is crucial for EFL students to produce accurate, natural, and contextually appropriate translations.

In Indonesia, the shift toward digital news consumption is striking. According to the 2025 Reuters Institute Digital News Report, 79% of Indonesians obtain their news via the internet including websites, social media, apps, podcasts, and AI chatbots and 57% rely on social media as a news source, with 40% considering it their main channel. Among young

adults (18–24 years old), social media serves as the primary gateway to news for half of them. Coupled with the high internet penetration rate of 80.7% (approximately 229 million users), and the prominence of digital news platforms such as Detik.com (used weekly by 50% of respondents), Kompas online (39%), and Tribunnews online (28%), it is evident that digital opinion texts in Indonesian media reach a vast and varied audience. This context underscores the importance of analyzing translation strategies for opinion texts, which increasingly serve as influential tools of public discourse.

In practice, students are often assigned to translate various types of texts. One of the most important and challenging types is opinion articles from digital newspapers. Unlike general news articles, opinion texts are characterized by persuasive language, idiomatic expressions, rhetorical devices, and cultural references. Anderson (1997) explains that opinion articles are designed to express personal viewpoints while persuading readers, making them rhetorically complex and ideologically loaded. These characteristics make opinion articles valuable yet demanding materials for translation training.

Producing a high-quality translation of opinion articles is not an easy task. Bryanetya, Hartono, and Yuliasri (2019) state that a good translation must meet three main criteria: accuracy, acceptability, and readability. However, EFL

students often face difficulties in achieving these standards due to limited understanding of rhetorical strategies and cultural nuances. Recent empirical studies reinforce this challenge. Basri and Lubis (2023) found that most EFL students relied heavily on literal translation strategies, resulting in target texts that sounded unnatural. Kusumaningrum (2023) noted that students often struggle to render persuasive and rhetorical features, especially when idioms and cultural references are involved. These findings align with Pym's (2003) view that translators must develop strategic competence to navigate linguistic and cultural mismatches effectively. Similarly, Baker (1992; 2018) emphasizes the importance of employing strategies such as generalization, cultural substitution, paraphrase, omission, or loan words to overcome non-equivalence in idiomatic and lexical translation. Molina and Albir (2002) further expand this by introducing 18 micro-strategies, ranging from adaptation and borrowing to modulation and variation.

The growing use of machine translation tools such as Google Translate and ChatGPT further complicates the issue. While such tools can accelerate translation tasks, they often fail to capture pragmatic and ideological subtleties (Al Rousan et al., 2025), highlighting the irreplaceable role of human decision-making in nuanced translation tasks.

Despite these developments, studies focusing on EFL students' translation of opinion news articles particularly from digital newspapers remain scarce. Most prior research as centered on literary or narrative genres, leaving a gap in understanding how students approach journalistic opinion texts that are both time-sensitive and culturally loaded. Additionally, the digital medium itself presents unique challenges such as hyperlinking, real-time updates, and embedded cultural contexts (Newman et al., 2025), which have yet to be thoroughly examined in translation studies.

Based on the problems stated above, this research addresses two main questions: how EFL students' ability in translating opinion articles from English digital newspapers can be described, and what translation strategies are most frequently employed by EFL students in dealing with the linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical challenges found in opinion news text translation.

Research on translation strategies used by EFL students is important because translation skills play a significant role in their academic and professional success. This study can also show the extent to which students are able to apply the theories they have learned in translation courses, especially when dealing with persuasive, ideologically charged, and culturally nuanced opinion articles from digital newspapers. Thus, the study emphasizes not only theoretical knowledge but also

practical competence in translating complex opinion texts. Considering these factors, this research is considered both relevant and necessary.

The research is expected to provide theoretical contributions by offering insights into how EFL students apply translation strategies, as well as practical contributions for improving translation pedagogy to be more effective and applicable.

Based on the background of the study, this research identifies several problems related to EFL students' translation of opinion news texts, including the lack of effective translation strategies in rendering idiomatic, persuasive, and culturally nuanced expressions, as well as the gap between translation theories learned in class and their practical application in authentic digital texts. Therefore, this study is limited to the translation works of students from the English Education Department who have successfully completed a minimum of one formal translation course, as they are assumed to possess adequate theoretical knowledge and foundational translation competence.

The focus on opinion articles from *The Jakarta Post* is deliberately chosen because it is a reputable English-language digital newspaper in Indonesia that presents locally relevant yet globally oriented issues, rich in persuasive language, ideological viewpoints, and cultural references that pose

significant challenges for EFL learners. This research aims to analyze students' translation ability in terms of accuracy, acceptability, and readability based on Nababan's (2012) translation quality rubric, and to identify the most frequently used translation strategies in overcoming linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical difficulties. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to EFL translation studies and practically to students, lecturers, and curriculum developers.

B. Identification of the Problems

Based on the background above, several problems can be identified:

1. EFL students often lack adequate translation strategies to accurately render idiomatic and persuasive expressions in opinion articles.
2. There is a gap between translation theories taught in class and their practical application in real-world digital opinion articles.
3. Cultural and ideological nuances in opinion articles are frequently lost or misinterpreted during the translation process.

C. Limitation of the Research

This research is limited to analyzing the translation works of students from the English Education Department who have completed at least one translation course, as they are

assumed to possess basic theoretical knowledge and practical experience in translation. The study focuses on the students' ability to translate opinion articles taken from the English-language digital newspaper *The Jakarta Post*.

The data are restricted of the recent opinion articles published in the opinion section of *The Jakarta Post* that are issued in 2021-2026, selected to ensure the use of up-to-date issues, contemporary language use, and consistency in publication time. Furthermore, this research examines the translation strategies employed by the students in overcoming linguistic and cultural challenges, particularly in translating idiomatic expressions, persuasive language, ideological viewpoints, and culturally bound references.

D. Research Questions

Based on the problems stated above, the research questions are formulated as follows:

1. How is students' ability to translate opinion articles from English digital newspapers?
2. What translation strategies are most frequently used by EFL students in handling the challenges of translating opinion articles from English digital newspapers?

E. Objectives of the Research

The objectives of this research are:

1. To analyze the students' ability in translating opinion articles from English digital newspapers, focusing on the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability based on Nababan's (2012) translation quality rubric.
2. To identify and describe the most frequently used translation strategies employed by EFL students in overcoming linguistic, cultural, and rhetorical challenges when translating opinion articles from English digital newspapers.

F. Benefits of the Research

1. Theoretical Benefits

This research is expected to enrich the literature on translation studies, particularly in the context of opinion news text translation by EFL learners. It provides insights into the application of translation strategies and the assessment of translation quality.

2. Practical Benefits

For Students: The study helps students evaluate their own translation performance and recognize strategies to improve translation accuracy and naturalness.

For Lecturers: The findings provide empirical data on students' translation difficulties, which can inform more effective teaching methods.

For Curriculum Developers: The results may guide the design of translation courses that include authentic materials and practical strategy-based tasks.

G. Definition of Key Terms

1. Translation: The process of transferring meaning from a source language (SL) into a target language (TL) accurately and naturally (Newmark, 1988).
2. Opinion Articles: A journalistic article expressing the author's personal opinion and persuasive argument about current issues, commonly found in the opinion section of digital newspapers (Anderson, 1997).
3. Digital Newspapers: An online-based newspaper that publishes news, opinion articles, and other journalistic content through digital platforms, allowing readers to access up-to-date information in real time via websites or mobile applications (Franklin, 2014).