

FOSTERING STUDENTS' CRITICAL THINKING THROUGH READING TEXTS WITH MORAL VALUES

Afwah Mumtazah

Department of English Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
mumtazahafwah07@gmail.com

Mumu Abdurrohman

Department of English Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
mumuabdurrohman1@gmail.com

Muhammad Aminuddin

Department of English Education, Faculty of Tarbiyah and Teacher Training, UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung, Bandung, Indonesia
aminuddin@uinsgd.ac.id

Abstract

Reading comprehension plays a key role in developing language skills, enabling students to interact with various texts and understand their meanings well. In addition, translation skills are also very important in the language learning process, as they aid intercultural communication and understanding. Thus, reading and translation activities in the English classroom provide students with the opportunity to practice both their receptive and productive language skills, encouraging a balanced approach to language learning. UIN Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung conducted this study to explore the significance of integrating reading comprehension and translation in the development of students' English language skills. The study used qualitative methods by using interviews as the main instrument and involved eight 6th-semester students from the English Education Department to be sampled. Based on the result, integrating reading comprehension with translation skills is essential to achieving language proficiency. It is illustrated from the interview results that students apply the process of integrating the two skills in reading comprehension. Strong reading comprehension allows students to understand the context and nuances of the text, which is essential for accurate translation. Moreover, when students can comprehend texts deeply, they can better interpret and convey the original message in another language. This integration ultimately leads to more accurate and contextually appropriate translations, making it a vital component of language education.

Keywords: Reading Comprehension, Translation Ability, English Education Students, Qualitative Research

INTRODUCTION

In linguistic studies, several key factors play an important role, one of which is reading comprehension. Ediger (2014) explains that reading is considered an interactive and socio-cognitive process that involves the text, the reader, and the social context in which reading activities take place. Thus, reading comprehension is closely related to the field of linguistics.

Reading comprehension is the ability to understand and interpret written text. It involves processing and analyzing the words and sentences in a text to reveal meaning, draw inferences, and relate them to an individual's knowledge and experience. Good reading comprehension skills are important for academic success, effective communication, and critical thinking. Pham

(2017) states that reading comprehension is the act of understanding and interpreting connected text, which requires both understanding of words and critical thinking.

Dupuis (1992) states that reading is the primary source of information in learning situations because the information obtained from this activity can broaden the reader's knowledge and perspective of thinking. By engaging students in various activities and reading comprehension strategies, teachers can help them become more critical and understanding readers. Students can learn to reflect on the meaning of the reading text, draw conclusions, and connect the information they acquire with the knowledge they already possess.

In addition, by regularly practicing and applying reading comprehension strategies, students can improve their ability to respond to and retell information, as well as develop their skills in constructing arguments and explaining ideas in a clearer and more structured manner.

Reading comprehension is very important, as it enables a person to understand, interpret, and assess the information contained in a written text. Kartawijaya (2022) states that reading comprehension is considered to be a crucial language skill in the instruction and acquisition of English. Reading comprehension is a fundamental skill that is essential for academic success, effective communication, and critical thinking. Strong reading comprehension skills enable individuals to comprehend complex texts, make connections between ideas, and draw conclusions based on evidence.

Reading comprehension is a reading activity that aims to understand, remember, and review the text to capture the main idea after reading. According to Zwan and Singer (2003), reading comprehension includes the ability to capture and understand the content of the text. It means that reading comprehension not only involves understanding the literal meaning of words but also includes making inferences, drawing conclusions, and relating information to existing knowledge.

According to Kucukoglu (2013), there are several methods to improve reading comprehension skills, namely: Predicting, which involves encouraging students to predict what will happen next in the text, is effective for engaging them and honing critical thinking skills. Visualizing, which helps students create mental images of the text while reading, is a powerful way to improve their comprehension and engagement. By visualizing story elements such as events, settings, and characters, students can better connect with the content and remember it. Making connections, which encourages students to relate the text to their personal experiences, helps deepen their understanding and engagement with the material. Summarizing, which teaches students to identify and summarize key points as well as important details from the text, is an essential skill for understanding the overall meaning and significance of the material. Questioning, which encourages students to ask questions about the text, helps them to engage and develop curiosity and critical thinking actively. Summarizing, which teaches students to conclude, also helps develop these skills.

Translation is a complex skill that involves more than just language proficiency. It requires a deep understanding of cultural nuances, context, and the purpose of communication, making it a valuable asset in a globalized world. Translation involves the ability to transfer written or spoken language from one language to another. It requires a deep understanding of both languages and their nuances, as well as the cultural context in which they are used.

Saroukhil et al. (2018) define translation as the attempt to convey the meaning of a concept from one language to another. Translation ability can also include the capability to accurately convey meaning and tone from the original language to the target language.

In addition, translation provides concrete examples of language use in context, helping students understand the practical application of their lessons. It also contributes to the development of communication skills and cultural understanding. However, it is important to remember that while translation is a useful tool in language learning. Its use must be balanced with other methods. Over-reliance on translation can hinder the development of fluency and natural expression in the target language. Students also need to practice speaking, listening, reading, and writing in the target language to develop their language skills thoroughly (Maximilian, 2020).

Prošić-Santovac and Savić(2021) points out that a language can take center stage in a country's foreign language education even if it is not the official language of the country. This can happen because the language may be important for trade, business, or cultural exchange, as is the case with English, which is widely used in global communication, technology, and international business.

For EFL students, this means they have the opportunity to learn and practice the language in a variety of contexts, both inside and outside the classroom, as well as access resources such as language exchanges, cultural events, and opportunities to study or work abroad. The language can also be a valuable skill for their future careers, opening up opportunities for international travel, employment, and collaboration. Yang (2015) adds that to achieve successful intercultural exchange, it is important to build good understanding and relationships with individuals from different cultural backgrounds through appropriate and effective verbal and nonverbal communication.

Castles, Rastle, and Nation (2018) explain that understanding and interpreting the content of a book is necessary to grasp the meaning of the words and sentences. When tailoring reading comprehension activities for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, it is important to consider their language proficiency level and adjust the difficulty of the text accordingly. The key is to design reading comprehension activities that match the language proficiency level of EFL learners and provide adequate support to help them develop their reading and translation skills.

The conclusion of this study discusses the theoretical basis that supports the importance of reading comprehension and translation skills for EFL students. It outlines the importance of implementing effective strategies to improve reading comprehension skills, including the use of various comprehension practices and techniques. In addition, the book also highlights the role of translation in language learning, various techniques to improve translation skills, and activities that can be used to improve translation skills. By providing a thorough overview of these key areas, this literature review forms the basis for the research conducted, which aims to investigate how important the integration of English language learners' reading comprehension and translation skills is in achieving language proficiency.

METHOD

This study applied a qualitative research design with the aim of exploring students' understanding and responses to the importance of combining reading comprehension and translation skills in reading texts. In a qualitative approach, an in-depth understanding of the core concept or process of analysis becomes the main focus in studying a central phenomenon or issue (Creswell, 2012).

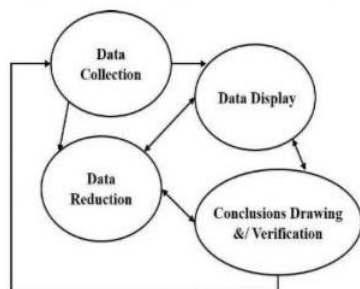
This study interviews to collect data from 6th-semester students of the English Education Department at Universitas Islam Negeri Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. The researcher interviewed eight students regarding their perspectives on the integration of reading comprehension in translation classes. Qualitative data was collected and analyzed through interviews to understand why the integration of reading comprehension and translation skills is crucial in improving linguistic skills.

The interview questions and insights gained came from three experts in the field of reading comprehension and translation, namely Ismail (2017) and Sun et al. (2021). Each expert provided different views on combining these skills, which resulted in five main statements emphasizing that the integration of reading comprehension and translation skills will prepare students with essential skills for effective language use in real-life situations.

Data drawn from the interview transcripts were analyzed using thematic analysis or other qualitative methods to identify the main themes, factors, and reasons underlying the perceptions of the importance of this integration in improving students' language proficiency. Referring to Miles and Huberman (1994), a data analysis model was used to analyze data collected through qualitative methods.

This approach helps the author organize information, identify important parts, and understand their meaning, like following a map to explore and understand new territory. With this approach, writers can ensure that their findings are clear and reliable.

This process includes several steps, as shown in the figure below:



This research applied data reduction to the information collected through interviews, documenting the process thoroughly and systematically. In addition, the research sorted and summarized the most relevant information and focused on the most significant aspects. The interview process involving coding also contributed to the reduction of the amount of data. During the coding stage, data were reduced by identifying themes and patterns in participants' responses.

The researcher coded the participants' statements according to key themes after thorough citation and interpretation. This process involved identifying the main ideas and patterns that emerged from participants' responses, classifying them, and conducting a structured and systematic analysis.

The final stage involves drawing provisional conclusions based on the analyzed data and checking to ensure accuracy and consistency. Researchers are encouraged to use a hands-on approach to inferring during the data collection process. Verification is done by reviewing the conclusions and comparing them with relevant sources to ensure their validity.

In the conclusion section, the study analyzed the collected data to identify key themes and the relationships between these themes. The research carefully reviewed the data to find relevant information, which helped in forming in-depth conclusions and better understanding the research findings. The second step in the inference process is to integrate the themes, patterns, and relationships that have been discovered.

FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

This study utilized interviews as a data collection method. The data were obtained from 6th-semester students of the English Education Department of the State Islamic University Sunan Gunung Djati Bandung. A total of eight students were interviewed to gather information about their views on participation in translation classes, particularly on the incorporation of reading comprehension and translation skills, and the importance of integrating the two skills.

A. Interview Question Results

Based on the interviews conducted, this study explores students' perceptions regarding the incorporation of reading comprehension with their translation skills. By listening to the students' experiences and views directly, the interview results can be explained in detail as follows:

On the first question about how to develop your reading comprehension and translation skills, participants' responses revealed that a variety of approaches were applied to achieve proficiency in integrating both skills. Many students shared insights into their methods, with some common themes emerging. For example, Student 1 emphasized reading practice often combined with translation, which helps in memorizing and learning vocabulary. Likewise, Student 2 underlined the habit of jotting down unfamiliar words or phrases during reading sessions and utilizing tools such as Google or bilingual dictionaries for better comprehension. This proactive approach to vocabulary expansion was also supported by Student 4, who emphasized the importance of researching unfamiliar words to improve reading and translation skills. In addition, Student 7 highlighted the importance of reading extensively to discover new vocabulary naturally, thus enriching comprehension and translation skills.

In addition, the students emphasized the importance of engaging extensively with English texts to develop their skills. Student 3 focused on reading English content to improve their comprehension, while Student 5 switched from reading in Indonesian to reading English books regularly. In addition, Student 6 prioritized understanding the main idea of the text first, before delving into details and context, which supported more effective translation.

Although the approaches used varied, there was agreement among the participants on the importance of consistent practice, active engagement with texts, and exposure to diverse materials to improve reading comprehension and translation skills.

In the opinion of students for question 2, integrating reading comprehension and translation skills in the English Language Education Study Program at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati is highly valued. Students, such as Student 1 and Student 3, feel that this approach is

beneficial for improving language acquisition and proficiency, and appreciate the practical strategies taught by lecturers. They highlighted the effectiveness of learning through reading and translation in deepening language comprehension. In addition, Student 8 emphasized the importance of combining both methods for optimal learning outcomes, while Student 4 found the translation course very helpful in honing their skills.

Furthermore, students' strategies in translating and understanding English reading texts reflect their creativity and adaptability in dealing with language challenges. Some students prefer to use translation apps or websites for assistance, while others rely on traditional methods such as noting unfamiliar words or utilizing contextual clues. These diverse approaches emphasize the importance of providing a variety of tools and techniques in the curriculum to cater to students' individual learning preferences.

Based on question 3, the main barriers to integrating reading comprehension and translation skills, as expressed by students, include limited vocabulary and time. Students such as Students 1, 2, 3, and 4 noted that vocabulary was a big challenge, hindering the comprehension and translation of unfamiliar words. This vocabulary gap interfered with their effectiveness in understanding and translating the text.

In addition, the time constraints expressed by Student 5 and Student 8 hindered the thorough practice needed to master this skill. The pressure to translate within a tight time limit was also a significant obstacle to students' learning progress. On the other hand, Student 6 expressed the challenge of dealing with texts with unclear contexts, which complicates the translation process. Understanding cultural nuances and references is essential for accurate translation, but vague contexts can hinder such understanding. In addition, personal motivation, as expressed by Student 7, can affect the integration of these skills. To overcome these barriers, a holistic approach is needed that includes strategies to expand vocabulary, provide sufficient time for practice, provide clarity of textual context, and increase students' intrinsic motivation in reading comprehension and translation skills.

According to the students' responses to question 4, taking the translation class has brought significant improvements in their reading comprehension skills. Many students, such as Students 1, 2, 3, 5, 6, and 7, revealed that they now have a deeper understanding of the text and a better ability to translate with context in mind, rather than just translating word for word. They attributed this progress to the techniques and approaches taught in translation classes, which improved their mastery of terminology and overall understanding of the text. In addition, Students 4 and 8 emphasized that translating complex texts, such as laws, has helped them develop broader skills and understanding. Overall, students agreed that translation classes not only improved their translation skills but also deepened their understanding of English reading texts.

Based on the students' answers to question 5, they applied various strategies to ease the translation process and improve comprehension of the English text. Some students, such as Student 1, broke down complex sentences into small parts for better understanding, while others, such as Student 5, noted down unfamiliar words for future reference. In addition, Student 3 and Student 4 make use of translation apps or websites, although they emphasize the importance of adapting the translation to the context. Contextual clues were also very important for some students, such as Student 6, who used them to understand the meaning of unfamiliar words, making the translation process easier. In addition, strategies such as reading slowly and

focusing on understanding each word before putting them together, as Student 7 did, helped to gain a clearer understanding, especially for difficult words. Overall, students use a variety of strategies that suit their learning styles and preferences, aiming to facilitate the translation and comprehension of English reading texts.

B. Discussion

This research produced several findings that have been described in the previous section. Therefore, these findings will be referred to in the discussion. The discussion that will be explored is how important it is to integrate reading comprehension and translation skills in developing the English language skills of 6th-semester students at UIN Sunan Gunung Djati. In addition, the findings will be analyzed together with relevant theories.

Combining reading comprehension and translation skills is crucial for language learners, as indicated by the participants' responses. They apply various methods, such as frequent reading while translating, taking notes on unfamiliar vocabulary, and using tools such as dictionaries and translation apps. This integration is very important as it supports Kartawijaya's (2018) opinion that reading comprehension is indispensable for understanding, interpreting, and evaluating written information. By incorporating translation, students can better understand and remember new vocabulary and concepts. This well-rounded approach ensures that students are not just passively absorbing information, but are actively engaging and applying their new language skills, making it vital for language acquisition.

In addition, the students emphasized the importance of consistent practice, active engagement with texts, and exposure to diverse materials. The integration of translation practice is valuable as it helps students achieve fluency. Through the practice of translating texts, students are encouraged to understand the material in depth, which in turn improves their overall reading comprehension. This process of integrating translation and comprehension contributes to students' development of fluency.

When students practice translating texts, they are encouraged to understand the material in depth, which in turn improves their overall reading ability. This process helps build connections between ideas, develops critical thinking skills, and allows students to read more complex texts with more confidence. The integration of these skills is important for developing comprehensive language abilities. In addition, according to Kendeou (2020), addressing vocabulary limitations and unclear contexts by breaking down complex sentences and using contextual clues highlights the importance of variety in comprehension practice. Catts (2009) adds that reading different types of texts develops thinking skills and appreciates different perspectives. Students' different approaches in overcoming vocabulary challenges demonstrate the value of varied comprehension. Reading diverse materials not only improves reading skills but also improves translation skills by exposing students to different languages and cultures. Combining reading comprehension and translation is essential for developing the language skills needed in school and everyday life.

In addition, translation helps to connect students' mother tongue with the target language, facilitating the understanding and learning of new language elements. Schmitt (2008) emphasizes the importance of translation in learning the structure and vocabulary of a new language. Students' use of translation apps and bilingual dictionaries shows how important translation is in the language learning process, as these tools provide quick access to definitions

and usage examples essential for understanding context and nuance. Translation helps students better understand grammar, sentence structure, and vocabulary, which are crucial for effective communication. Maximilian (2020) adds that while translation is very useful, it needs to be balanced with other methods to avoid dependency and improve fluency.

Overall, combining reading and translation skills is essential for developing proficient language users, improving text comprehension, critical thinking skills, and preparation for the practical application of language skills. Addressing vocabulary and time challenges with varied practices reinforces the importance of this integration, and by incorporating these practices in the curriculum, educators can prepare students to navigate and interpret complex texts, thus improving their overall language skills.

In the fifth interview, students mentioned two main strategies: using translation apps and taking notes on unfamiliar words. Many students rely on translation apps or websites to understand and translate English texts, as these tools make it easy to translate unfamiliar words or phrases quickly. However, they also recognize the need to adapt the translation to the context to ensure accuracy. It shows that students appreciate the convenience of technology but remain aware of its limitations.

In addition, many students made notes on unfamiliar words they encountered during reading, with the aim of looking up the meaning of these words later. This activity helps them to expand their vocabulary and improve their reading comprehension. This method demonstrates a balanced approach, combining the benefits of technology with traditional note-taking practices to support the development of reading and translation skills.

The development of comprehension and translation skills is a crucial aspect of the language acquisition process. Reading comprehension skills help students to capture and understand the meaning of texts in depth, expand vocabulary, and build connections with existing knowledge. Meanwhile, translation skills provide concrete examples of how language is used in practical contexts, enhance understanding of language applications, and aid in the development of communication skills and cultural competence.

From the above discussion, we need to think that translation is a useful tool; it is important to use it in balance with other methods. Over-reliance on translation can hinder the development of fluency and natural expression in the target language. Therefore, speaking, listening, reading, and writing exercises are also very important to develop all-around language skills. By integrating these two aspects effectively, students can achieve better and more comprehensive language acquisition.

This can be supported by appropriate support to improve their reading and translation skills. This involves several important aspects. Firstly, reading activities should be designed according to students' language proficiency level, ranging from simple texts for beginners to more complex materials for advanced students. In addition, providing appropriate support, such as active reading techniques, comprehension strategies, and targeted translation exercises, is essential to help students overcome challenges and deepen their understanding. This support also includes constructive feedback from the teacher as well as the use of technology that can facilitate the learning process. With an integrated and customised approach, students will be better equipped to develop effective reading and translation skills, which will ultimately strengthen their overall language proficiency.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that combining reading comprehension skills with translation skills is the key to achieving optimal language proficiency. In-depth reading comprehension helps students understand the context and nuances of the text thoroughly, which is essential for producing accurate translations. By understanding the gist and details of the text, students can translate more effectively and avoid literal translation errors that do not reflect the true meaning.

In addition, a deep understanding enables students to interpret better and convey the original message in the target language. The integration of reading comprehension and translation strengthens critical thinking skills and helps students connect ideas effectively, giving them confidence in reading and translating more complex texts.

This process also contributes to the development of the ability to accurately assess and convey meaning, making it an essential element in language learning. Thus, reading comprehension and translation skills complement each other and are essential for forming skilled language users. Therefore, the simultaneous development of these two skills is essential for achieving higher English language competence.

This research confirms that combining reading comprehension with translation skills is a highly effective strategy for achieving language proficiency. A deep understanding of the text helps students capture important contexts and nuances, allowing them to translate more precisely and avoid literal translations that do not match the actual meaning. This process not only improves translation accuracy but also strengthens students' ability to interpret and convey messages in the target language more effectively.

The development of these skills contributes to the strengthening of critical thinking skills, as well as providing confidence in dealing with more complicated texts. With the integration of reading comprehension and translation, students can build more comprehensive and skilful language abilities. Both support each other in forming competent language users and understanding the language more deeply. Therefore, developing these two skills simultaneously is a crucial step to achieve higher and effective language competence.

It can be concluded that reading comprehension and translation skills are two crucial elements in mastering English. They complement each other and are essential for the development of comprehensive language skills.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Brassell, D., & Rasinski, T. (2008). Comprehension that works. *Shell Education*.
- Calis, E., & Dikilitas, K. (2012). The use of translation in EFL classes as L2 learning practice. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 46, 5077–5080. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2012.06.389>
- Castles, A., Rastle, K., & Nation, K. (2018). Ending the reading wars: Reading acquisition from novice to expert. *Psychological science in the public interest*, 19(1), 5-51.
- Catts, H. W. (2009). The narrow view of reading promotes a broad view of comprehension. *Language, Speech, and Hearing Services in Schools*, 40(2), 178-183.

- Creswell, J. W. (2012). Mixed-method research: Introduction and application. In G. Sykes, B. Schneider, & D. N. Plank (Eds.), *Handbook of educational policy* (pp. 455–472). *Academic Press*.
- Dupuis, M. M. (1992). Content area reading. *Prentice-Hall*.
- Ediger, A. (2014). Teaching second/foreign language literacy to school-age learners. In M. Celce-Murcia, D. Brinton, & M. Snow (Eds.), *Teaching English as a second or foreign language* (4th ed., pp. 154–169). *National Geographic Learning*.
- Hatim, B., & Mason, J. (2004). *Translation: An advanced resource book*. *Routledge*.
- Ismail, H., Syahrurah, J. K., & Basuki, B. (2017). Improving the students' reading skill through translation method. *Jurnal Ilmiah Mahasiswa Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris*, 2(4), 143–155.
- Kartawijaya, S. (2018). Improving students' writing skill in writing paragraph through an outline technique. *Curricula: Journal of Teaching and Learning*, 3(3), 152–158. <https://doi.org/10.22216/curricula.v3i3.3648>
- Kendeou, P. (2020). Reading comprehension. In *Oxford Research Encyclopedia of Education*. Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.013.993>
- Küçükoğlu, H. (2013). Improving reading skills through effective reading strategies. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 70, 709–714. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.01.113>
- Maximilian, A. (2020). Translation ability, reading habit, and reading skill in vocational school students in Indonesia: A correlation. *Journal of English Teaching and Applied Linguistics*, 1(2), 30–44. <https://doi.org/10.36655/jetal.v1i2.155>
- Miles, M. B., & Huberman, A. M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2nd ed.). *Sage*.
- Pham, C. T. K. (2017). Reading comprehension and translation performance of English linguistics students of Hung Vuong University: A correlational study. *International Journal of English Language & Translation Studies*, 5(3), 79–85.
- Prošić-Santovac, D., & Savić, V. (2021). English as a foreign language in early language education. In *Handbook of early language education* (pp. 1-26). *Springer International Publishing*.
- Saroukhil, M. A., Ghalkhani, O., & Hashemi, A. (2018). A critical review of translation: A look forward. *International Journal of Education and Literacy Studies*, 6(2), 101-110.
- Schmitt, N. (2008). Instructed second language vocabulary learning. *Language teaching research*, 12(3), 329-363.
- Sun, Y., Wang, J., Dong, Y., Zheng, H., Yang, J., Zhao, Y., & Dong, W. (2021). The relationship between reading strategy and reading comprehension: A meta-analysis. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 12, Article 771460. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2021.771460>
- Yang, P. (2015). Intercultural nonverbal communication competence: Meeting body language challenges in facilitating and working with students from culturally diverse backgrounds in the Australian higher education context. *Journal of Communications Research*, 7(1), 23–42.
- Zwaan, R. A., & Singer, M. (2003). Text comprehension. In *Handbook of discourse processes* (pp. 89-127). *Routledge*.