

AN ANALYSIS OF TRANSLATION TECHNIQUES AND TRANSLATION ORIENTATIONS USED BY THE FIFTH SEMESTER STUDENTS OF NOMMENSEN HKBP UNIVERSITY IN TRANSLATING NARRATIVE TEXT FROM ENGLISH TO INDONESIAN

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Abstract

This study examines the translation techniques and orientation applied by fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at HKBP Nommensen University in translating the narrative text *The Legend of Lake Toba* from English into Indonesian. Using a descriptive qualitative design supported by quantitative data, the study analyzed 24 students' translations based on Molina and Albir's (2002) translation techniques and Nida's (1964) theory of formal and dynamic equivalence, following Miles and Huberman's (1994) interactive model. The findings reveal ten translation techniques with 2,016 total occurrences. Literal Translation was dominant (65.63%), followed by Modulation (19.84%) and Amplification (8.09%), while other techniques appeared in minimal percentages. The predominance of Literal Translation indicates a strong source-oriented approach, particularly formal equivalence. Overall, students tend to prioritize structural accuracy over communicative naturalness, suggesting the need to strengthen their understanding of translation orientation and the balanced application of translation techniques in narrative texts.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis teknik dan orientasi penerjemahan yang digunakan oleh mahasiswa semester lima Program Studi Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris Universitas HKBP Nommensen dalam menerjemahkan teks naratif *The Legend of Lake Toba* dari bahasa Inggris ke bahasa Indonesia. Penelitian ini menggunakan desain deskriptif kualitatif yang didukung data kuantitatif. Data diperoleh dari hasil terjemahan 24 mahasiswa dan dianalisis berdasarkan klasifikasi teknik penerjemahan Molina dan Albir (2002) serta teori kesepadanan formal dan dinamis Nida (1964) dengan model analisis interaktif Miles dan Huberman (1994). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan sepuluh teknik penerjemahan dengan total 2.016 kemunculan. Literal Translation menjadi teknik yang paling dominan (65,63%), diikuti Modulation (19,84%) dan Amplification (8,09%), sedangkan teknik lainnya muncul dalam persentase yang lebih kecil. Dominasi Literal Translation menunjukkan kecenderungan mahasiswa mempertahankan struktur dan pola leksikal bahasa sumber, yang mencerminkan orientasi pada bahasa sumber, khususnya kesepadanan formal. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa mahasiswa lebih menekankan ketepatan struktur daripada keluwesan komunikatif.

INTRODUCTION

Language functions as the primary medium for conveying ideas, knowledge, and cultural values. Usman (2025) states that language is not a physical entity, but a voluntary system of symbols created and used by humans to communicate. This perspective emphasizes that language is fundamentally a symbolic and meaning-making system, which allows individuals to construct and exchange thoughts within social and cultural contexts. In cross-linguistic communication, translation therefore becomes a crucial bridge that enables meaning to move from one linguistic system to another. In the context of globalization, Heinzmann & Ehrsam (2024) stated that English has become a dominant international language used in academic, technological, and cultural exchanges. Consequently, university students, particularly those enrolled in English Education programs, are required not only to comprehend English texts but also to reconstruct their meanings naturally and accurately in Indonesian.

Translation, however, is not merely a mechanical transfer of words. Sipayung (2021) emphasizes that translation involves conveying meaning, message, and nuance embedded in the source text (SL). Similarly, Jupri & al., (2024) define translation as rendering the meaning of a text into another language in accordance with the author's intention. These perspectives underline that translation requires interpretative competence and strategic decision-making. As Baker (2018) explains, translators constantly negotiate between semantic equivalence and pragmatic effect, ensuring that the translated text functions appropriately in the target context. In translation studies, Molina & Albir (2002) propose eighteen translation techniques that serve as analytical categories to describe how meaning is transferred at the micro-level. These techniques are not neutral choices; they reflect broader translation orientation. Nida & Nida (1964) distinguish between formal equivalence, which emphasizes structural and lexical fidelity to the source language, and dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes naturalness and equivalent effect in the target language. Venuti (2017) further frames this distinction through the concepts of foreignization and domestication, highlighting how translation choices reflect ideological and stylistic positioning. Thus, examining the distribution of translation techniques allows researchers to infer whether a translation tends to be source-oriented or target-oriented.

Narrative texts present particular challenges in translation because they combine chronological structure, stylistic elements, cultural references, and expressive language. Recent studies emphasize that translating narrative texts requires reconstructing narrative flow, tone, and cultural resonance rather than merely transferring lexical meaning (Albir & Alves, 2018; Baker & Pérez-González, 2023; and Widiastuti, 2024) argues that narrative translation demands functional adjustment to ensure readability and coherence in the target language. Furthermore, Li (2018) and Herman (2019) note that student translators often struggle with reformulating figurative expressions and syntactic patterns in narrative discourse, leading to rigid translations influenced by source-language structures. Excessive reliance on literal translation may preserve form but reduce naturalness and stylistic quality in the target text.

Preliminary observation of fifth-semester students at HKBP Nommensen University indicates a strong tendency toward literal translation when translating narrative texts. Students frequently retain English clause structures and lexical patterns, resulting in rigid expressions in Indonesian. For instance, *"Long ago, there lived a young farmer in a small village"* is sometimes rendered as *"Lama yang lalu, ada tinggal seorang petani muda di sebuah desa kecil,"* reflecting structural transfer rather than stylistic adaptation. This pattern suggests a dominant source-oriented tendency, particularly formal equivalence, despite students having completed Translation I and Translation II courses.

Several previous studies have examined translation techniques in different contexts. Rasita (2023) found that literal translation dominated undergraduate thesis abstracts, indicating structural fidelity to the source language. Anggara (2023) reported that borrowing and literal translation were predominant in translating fantasy novels, reflecting preservation of source-text terminology. Estetika & Gusthini (2024) similarly identified literal translation as dominant in public sign translation. In contrast, Sianturi (2024) found communicative translation to be dominant among junior high school students translating narrative texts, indicating a more target-oriented approach. Sun (2022) theoretically argues that literary translation requires a balance between source-oriented and target-oriented strategies to maintain both cultural authenticity and readability.

Although these studies provide valuable insights, most of them focus primarily on identifying translation techniques or evaluating translation quality. Limited research systematically maps the relationship between translation techniques and translation orientation through segment-level analysis, particularly in narrative texts translated by university students. In other words, previous research tends to describe *what techniques are used*, but rarely analyzes *how the distribution of those techniques reveals orientation patterns*.

This study addresses that gap by analyzing translation techniques at the segment level and mapping their frequency to identify dominant orientation tendencies. By examining the translation of a narrative text ("The Legend of Lake Toba") produced by fifth-semester students, this research aims to answer two questions:
(1) What translation techniques are used by the students?
(2) What translation orientation is reflected in their translations?

The analysis is based on Molina and Albir's (2002) classification of translation techniques and Nida's (1964) concept of formal and dynamic equivalence. Through segment analysis supported by expert validation, this study does not merely identify techniques but interprets their distribution to reveal structural tendencies in students' translation behavior.

Theoretically, this study contributes empirical evidence demonstrating how the dominance of certain techniques—particularly literal translation correlates with source-oriented tendencies in narrative translation. Methodologically, it integrates qualitative segment analysis with quantitative frequency mapping to provide a systematic representation of translation patterns. Practically, the findings are expected to inform translation pedagogy by highlighting the need to develop greater awareness of balancing structural accuracy and communicative naturalness in narrative texts.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a descriptive qualitative design with quantitative support. Qualitative research aims to explore and interpret meanings attributed by individuals to a particular phenomenon (Creswell, (2012). In line with this approach, the present study sought to describe the translation techniques used by students and to analyze how these techniques reflected their translation orientation. The study did not involve hypothesis testing or variable manipulation; instead, it examined students' translation products in their natural academic context. Although qualitative in nature, quantitative calculations were incorporated to determine the frequency and percentage of each translation technique. This integration strengthened the analysis by providing measurable evidence of dominant patterns in students' translation practices.

1. Research Subjects and Research Object

The participants were 24 fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at HKBP Nommensen University, Medan, in the 2025/2026 academic year. They were selected purposively because they had completed Translation I and Translation II courses, indicating that they had acquired foundational theoretical knowledge and practical experience in translation.

The object of this study was the students' written translations of the English narrative text *The Legend of Lake Toba* into Indonesian. The text was selected due to its clear narrative structure and embedded cultural elements, which allowed for a comprehensive analysis of both procedural choices and orientation tendencies in translation.

2. Instrument and Data Collection

In qualitative inquiry, the researcher functions as the primary instrument (Creswell, 2012). The researcher was responsible for collecting, identifying, classifying, and interpreting the data based on relevant theoretical frameworks. Data were obtained through documentation analysis.

Arikunto (2006), documentation refers to written materials used as data sources, while Setyadi (2006) explains that formal documents may include students' academic work. In this study, the formal documents analyzed were students' written translation products.

Each participant was instructed to translate the narrative text individually within ninety minutes. Dictionaries were permitted to assist lexical accuracy while maintaining independent decision-making. Upon completion, all translation scripts were collected and prepared for systematic analysis.

3. Unit of Analysis: Segment-Based Analysis

This study applied segment analysis as the analytical framework. The unit of analysis consisted of translation segments at the word, phrase, and sentence levels. Each Target Language (TL) segment was systematically compared with its corresponding Source Language (SL) segment to identify the translation technique applied. The identification and classification of techniques were based on Molina and Albir's (2002) taxonomy of eighteen translation techniques. This segment-based approach ensured analytical precision and consistency in examining procedural choices throughout the entire text.

4. Data Analysis Procedure

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), comprising data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification.

1. Data Condensation

The researcher examined each translation segment and classified it according to Molina and Albir's (2002) framework. All identified instances were recorded in a structured data sheet containing the SL segment, TL segment, and the corresponding technique. Frequencies were calculated to determine dominant techniques.

2. Data Display

The classified data were organized into tables presenting frequencies and percentages. Subsequently, the techniques were interpreted in relation to translation orientation. The orientation analysis referred to Nida's (1964) distinction between formal equivalence (source-oriented) and dynamic equivalence (target-oriented), supported by Venuti, (1995) concepts of foreignization and domestication. Techniques such as literal translation, calque, and borrowing were categorized as source-oriented, whereas modulation, amplification, and adaptation were categorized as target-oriented.

3. Conclusion, Drawing, and Verification

The final stage involved interpreting the overall patterns to answer the research questions concerning the types of techniques employed and the dominant translation orientation reflected in students' work.

To enhance credibility and analytical rigor, expert validation was conducted. A translation studies expert reviewed selected classified segments to evaluate the appropriateness and consistency of technique identification. Revisions were made where necessary to ensure alignment with theoretical criteria. This validation process minimized subjective bias and strengthened the trustworthiness of the findings.

Through these systematic procedures, the study provides a theoretically grounded and empirically supported description of students' tendencies in applying translation techniques and orientation in translating narrative texts from English into Indonesian.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents the findings of the segmented analysis of students' translations of the narrative text, *The Legend of Lake Toba*. The analysis applies Molina and Albir's (2002) classification of translation techniques at the micro-linguistic level and interprets translation orientation based on Nida's (1964) framework of formal and dynamic equivalence. The presentation integrates quantitative distribution with qualitative exemplification in order to demonstrate how repeated procedural choices at the segment level construct broader translation tendencies.

1. Distribution of Translation Techniques

The segmented analysis of 84 units across 24 student translations produced 2,016 translation decisions. Ten techniques were identified. The distribution is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage of Translation Techniques

No	Translation Technique	Frequency	Percentage
1	Literal Translation	1,323	65.63%
2	Modulation	400	19.84%
3	Amplification	163	8.09%
4	Reduction	50	2.48%
5	Omission	30	1.49%
6	Established Equivalent	25	1.24%
7	Borrowing	9	0.45%
8	Discursive Creation	8	0.40%
9	Adaptation	6	0.30%
10	Generalization	2	0.10%
	Total	2,016	100%

As shown in Table 1, literal translation overwhelmingly dominates the dataset (65.63%), far exceeding other techniques. Modulation (19.84%) and amplification (8.09%) follow at a considerable distance, while the remaining techniques appear in marginal proportions.

This distribution indicates that students' translation behavior is strongly oriented toward structural transfer from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). Although various techniques are theoretically available, their practical application remains heavily concentrated on literal rendering.

2. Segment Analysis of Translation Techniques

a. Literal Translation: Predominant Structural Transfer

Literal translation is defined by Molina and Albir (2002) as the direct transfer of lexical and syntactic elements while conforming to TL grammar. Its dominance in this study reflects strong adherence to form-based equivalence.

Data 1

SL: He was kind but lonely

TL: *Dia baik tetapi kesepian*

The clause structure and lexical items are transferred directly with minimal grammatical adjustment. No conceptual reformulation occurs. This example clearly reflects formal equivalence (Nida, 1964).

Data 2

SL: The guardian spirit of Lake Toba

TL: *roh penjaga Danau Toba*

The nominal phrase is reproduced structurally and semantically without reinterpretation. The translator prioritizes structural fidelity over stylistic adaptation.

The consistent reliance on literal transfer suggests that students perceive translation primarily as linguistic substitution rather than communicative re-expression. This tendency strongly signals a source-oriented approach.

b. Modulation: Conceptual Adjustment

Modulation involves a change in perspective or conceptual framing (Molina & Albir, 2002).

Data 3

SL: They had a boy

TL: *Mereka dikaruniai anak laki-laki*

The possessive construction is reformulated into a passive structure implying blessing. While the core meaning remains intact, the conceptual perspective shifts. This reflects dynamic equivalence (Nida, 1964), as the expression is adapted to Indonesian cultural and narrative norms.

Although modulation appears in nearly one-fifth of the data, it remains secondary compared to literal translation. This suggests emerging flexibility but not a dominant orientation shift.

c. Amplification: Explicitation Strategy

Amplification occurs when implicit information in the SL is made explicit in the TL.

Data 4

SL: To deliver lunch to his father in the fields

TL: *Mengantarkan bekal makan siang untuk ayahnya yang sedang bekerja di ladang*

The addition of *yang sedang bekerja* clarifies contextual information implied in the SL. This explicitation enhances narrative clarity and aligns with Indonesian storytelling conventions.

However, its limited frequency (8.09%) indicates that reader-oriented expansion is applied selectively rather than consistently.

d. Reduction and Omission: Compression of Meaning

Reduction and omission reflect semantic compression.

Data 5 (Reduction)

SL: The water rose higher and higher

TL: *Air pun naik*

The repetition, intensifying the event, is removed. Although the event remains intact, the dramatic escalation is weakened.

Data 6 (Omission)

SL: Amazed

TL: —

The deletion eliminates emotional nuance, reducing expressive depth.

These strategies demonstrate a tendency to simplify rather than reproduce expressive intensity, potentially affecting narrative impact.

e. Established Equivalent: Conventional Rendering

Data 7

SL: Long ago

TL: *Pada zaman dahulu*

This translation reflects a culturally established equivalent commonly used in Indonesian folklore. It demonstrates sensitivity to TL narrative conventions.

f. Discursive Creation: Semantic Deviation

Data 8

SL: You foolish boy!

TL: *Anak egois!*

The lexical shift from *foolish* to *egois* alters the semantic content. This unpredictable reformulation illustrates discursive creation. However, it also shows deviation from equivalence, affecting characterization.

g. Generalization and Borrowing

Data 9 (Generalization)

SL: In the northern part of Sumatra

TL: *Di suatu pulau di Sumatera*

Specific geographical information is generalized, reducing precision.

h. Borrowing

Data 10

SL: Splash!

TL: *Splash!*

The proper noun is retained directly, preserving SL lexical form.

These techniques appear minimally and do not substantially influence the overall orientation pattern.

B. Translation Orientation

The identified techniques were further categorized according to orientation. Literal translation and borrowing were classified as source-oriented, while the remaining techniques were categorized as target-oriented.

Table 2. Distribution of Translation Orientation

No	Translation Orientation	Frequency	Percentage
1	Source-Oriented	1,332	66.07%
2	Target-Oriented	684	33.93%
	Total	2,016	100%

The predominance of source-oriented strategies (66.07%) confirms that students generally applied formal equivalence, preserving structural and lexical features of the source text. This quantitative pattern reinforces the dominance of literal translation and demonstrates a systematic relationship between procedural choice and translation orientation. The findings suggest that students prioritize semantic accuracy and structural faithfulness over communicative naturalness.

In narrative texts, which rely heavily on stylistic flow, emotional engagement, and cultural resonance, dynamic equivalence often plays a crucial role. However, the relatively limited use of target-oriented strategies indicates that students are still in a developmental stage of translation competence. Their reliance on formal equivalence may reflect a cautious strategy to avoid semantic deviation, yet it may also reduce narrative fluency and cultural adaptation.

By integrating segment-based technique analysis with orientation mapping, this study extends previous research that treated these aspects separately. The findings demonstrate that micro-level procedural dominance—particularly literal translation—directly shapes macro-level orientation tendencies. Thus, translation orientation is not merely a theoretical abstraction but emerges concretely from repeated procedural patterns.

The expert validation process confirmed the consistency of technique classification and orientation grouping, thereby strengthening the credibility of the findings. Minor discrepancies were discussed and revised to ensure alignment with theoretical criteria.

Overall, the results reveal an imbalance between structural accuracy and communicative naturalness in students' translations. While students demonstrate awareness of multiple translation techniques, their strategic application

remains predominantly source-oriented. This suggests the need for pedagogical approaches that emphasize strategic flexibility, encouraging students to evaluate when structural fidelity is appropriate and when narrative function requires adaptive reformulation.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to identify the translation techniques used by fifth-semester students of the English Education Study Program at HKBP Nommensen University in translating a narrative text from English into Indonesian and to determine the translation orientation reflected in their work.

The findings reveal that ten translation techniques were applied in the students' translations. Among them, literal translation overwhelmingly dominates (65.63%), followed by modulation (19.84%) and amplification (8.09%), while the remaining techniques appear in relatively small proportions. This distribution indicates that although students demonstrate awareness of various translation procedures, their practical performance remains strongly centered on structural transfer from the source language.

In terms of translation orientation, the analysis shows that 68.40% of translation units reflect a source-oriented approach (formal equivalence), whereas only 31.60% demonstrate a target-oriented tendency (dynamic equivalence). This confirms that students prioritize structural accuracy and lexical correspondence rather than communicative naturalness and stylistic adaptation in the target language.

Overall, the results suggest that students' translation competence is still predominantly form-based. While theoretical knowledge of translation techniques has been acquired, the ability to apply these techniques strategically, particularly in culturally embedded narrative texts, requires further development. The imbalance between structural fidelity and communicative effectiveness highlights the need to strengthen orientation awareness in translation pedagogy.

Based on these findings, several suggestions can be proposed. First, translation instruction should place greater emphasis on the functional dimension of translation, encouraging students to balance accuracy with naturalness, especially in narrative texts that demand cultural sensitivity and stylistic flexibility. Classroom activities may incorporate comparative analysis of source-oriented and target-oriented translations to enhance critical awareness of orientation choice.

Second, future research may expand the scope by involving larger samples, different text types, or comparative analysis across academic levels to examine whether orientation tendencies shift as students gain more translation experience. Further studies may also integrate process-based methods, such as think-aloud protocols or interviews, to explore the cognitive factors influencing students' translation decisions.

In conclusion, this study contributes to translation studies by providing empirical evidence of students' dominant orientation patterns in narrative text translation. The findings offer valuable insights for improving translation teaching practices and for guiding future investigations into the development of translation competence in higher education contexts.

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