

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

This chapter introduces the foundation of the research. It presents the background of the study, which explains the main problems, the significance of the topic, and the rationale for conducting the research. It also outlines the research questions, objectives, hypotheses, and scope of the study. Altogether, this chapter provides an overview of why the study is conducted and what it aims to achieve.

A. Background of the Study

In translation studies, recent research emphasizes that translation is not only about transferring words between languages but also about conveying meaning, purpose, and context. Nakhli explains that translation involves more than linguistic substitution; it also requires understanding how language functions within a cultural and communicative situation. This means that translators must consider the pragmatic aspects of a text, its intention, audience, and context to produce an accurate and meaningful translation. A good translation, therefore, depends not only on linguistic competence but also on the translator's ability to interpret the message critically and adapt it appropriately to the target language and culture.¹

Translation is not only about changing words from one language to another, but also about transferring meaning and purpose from the source

¹ Habiba Nakhli, "Pragmatic Aspects of Translation," JPDA 1, no. 1 (2022): 30.

language (SL) to the target language (TL).² In this process, translator must analyze the content deeply and make critical decisions about how ideas are expressed in both languages. As Machida explains, when learners are translating, they tend to notice what makes sense and what doesn't, which pushes them to think more carefully about linguistic structures, meaning, and cultural aspects. In this way, critical reading skills supports translation because it helps translators read actively, evaluate information, interpret meaning beyond surface understanding and analyse texts effectively.³ Therefore, translation and critical reading are connected because both require deep comprehension, analysis, and interpretation of text.

Critical reading is an important skill that helps students understand, evaluate, and respond to text more deeply, it is not only about knowing what a text says but also thinking about how and why the writer says it.⁴ However, many students often confuse critical reading with reading comprehension, even though they are different. Reading comprehension means understanding the surface meaning of a text, for example, knowing facts, ideas, and information written clearly in the passage.⁵ Critical reading, on the other hand, requires readers to interpret the writer's intention, identify

² Jeremy Munday, Sara Ramos Pinto, and Jacob Blakesley, *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, 5th ed. (Routledge, 2022), 8.

³ Sayuki Machida, "Translation in Teaching a Foreign (Second) Language: A Methodological Perspective," *Journal of Language Teaching and Research* 2, no. 4 (2011): 740.

⁴ Catherine Wallace, *Critical Reading in Language Education* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2003), 42.

⁵ Narcisa Medranda-Morales, Victoria Dalila Palacios Miele, and Marco Villalba Guevara, "Reading Comprehension: An Essential Process for the Development of Critical Thinking," *Education Sciences* 13, no. 11 (2023): 2.

bias, evaluate arguments, and recognize hidden meanings.⁶ A student with good reading comprehension can summarize the main idea, while a student with good critical reading skills can also analyze how the writer uses language, tone, and perspective to influence readers. This shows that while reading comprehension focuses on understanding what the text says, critical reading focuses on evaluating how and why it communicates that message. These specific abilities in critical reading are known as Critical Reading Skills (CRS). CRS includes skills like making inferences, detect bias, identifying the author's purpose and tone, telling facts from opinions, and judging arguments.⁷ In translation, these skills are very important because translators need to fully understand a text before they can transfer its meaning into another language.

Although previous studies have explored the relationship between critical thinking and translation ability (Azin & Tabrizi)⁸, or between reading comprehension and translation (Köse)⁹, there is still a limited number of studies that specifically investigate the correlation between critical reading skills and translation ability. Most existing research focuses on broader cognitive skills, such as critical thinking, or on general reading

⁶ Ferdi Akın, Özlem Koray, and Koray Tavukçu, 'How Effective Is Critical Reading in the Understanding of Scientific Texts', *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 174, no.1 (2015): 2445.

⁷ Muhammad A Al Roomy, "Investigating the Effects of Critical Reading Skills on Students' Reading Comprehension," *Arab World English Journal* 13, no. 1 (2022): 366.

⁸ Nooshin Azin and Hossein Heidari Tabrizi, 'The Relationship between Critical Thinking Ability of Iranian English Translation Students and Their Translation Ability', *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 6 no. 3 (2016): 546-547.

⁹ Serhan Köse, "A Study on the Correlation between Reading Comprehension and Translation Skills of ELT Students", *Ankara University Journal of Faculty of Educational Sciences (JFES)*, 43 no.1 (2010): 237-239.

comprehension. It is crucial to clearly understand why critical reading is a distinct and more relevant skill in this context. Critical Thinking (CT) is a general, broad cognitive ability that applies to problem-solving across various life situations, not exclusively to reading.¹⁰ Reading Comprehension (RC), on the other hand, is the foundational skill focusing primarily on understanding the text's literal meaning and main ideas, often viewed as a receptive or passive act.¹¹ Critical Reading (CR) is the unique skill that serves as the bridge between the two, as it is the active application of Critical Thinking within the process of reading.¹² Critical Reading can be defined as a very high-level comprehension involving analysis, distinguish between facts and opinions, make inferences, make generalization, writer's bias, and the author's purpose and tone, which is an essential learning skill for students.¹³ These deeper analytical skills are directly needed in translation, where translators must understand not only what the text says, but how and why it communicates its message in that way, ensuring linguistic mediation is both accurate and contextually appropriate.

Moreover, most existing studies on this topic have been conducted in non-Indonesian contexts, such as Thailand (Sriwantaneeyakul), which

¹⁰ Mawaddah Hidayati, Rita Inderawati, and Bambang Loeneto, 'The Correlations among Critical Thinking Skills, Critical Reading Skills and Reading Comprehension', *English Review: Journal of English Education*, 9 no. 1 (2020): 69.

¹¹ Syaadia Arifin, 'The Role of Critical Reading to Promote Students' Critical Thinking and Reading Comprehension', *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Pengajaran*, 53 no. 3 (2020): 318.

¹² Hidayati, Inderawati, and Loeneto, "The Correlations among Critical Thinking Skills, Critical Reading Skills and Reading Comprehension," 70.

¹³ Muhammad A Al Roomy, 'Investigating the Effects of Critical Reading Skills', 369.

focused on Thai-English translation¹⁴, Iran (Azin & Tabrizi) which investigated English-Persian translation¹⁵, and the Middle East (Saud), which explored Arabic-English and vice versa translation¹⁶, leaving a gap in research focusing on Indonesian EFL learners. These language pairs involve unique structural and cultural dynamics that differ significantly from the challenges posed by English-Indonesian translation. For example, Indonesian has more flexible word order compared to English's strict Subject-Verb-Object structure. These differences mean that Indonesian EFL students face unique challenges when translating, and their critical reading skills may interact with translation ability differently than students from other linguistic backgrounds. Therefore, this study aims to fill that gap by examining the correlation between critical reading and translation ability between sixth-semester students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung.

B. Research Questions

Base on the background of the study above, the research question of this study is as follows:

Is there any significant correlation between students' critical reading skills and their translation ability?

¹⁴ Suttawan Sriwantaneeeyakul, 'Critical Reading Skills and Translation Ability of Thai EFL Students: Pragmatic, Syntactic, and Semantic Aspects.', *English Language Teaching*, 11 no. 4 (2018): 1.

¹⁵ Azin and Tabrizi, "The Relationship between Critical Thinking Ability," 541–548..

¹⁶ Wafa Ismail Saud, 'The Relationship between Critical Thinking and Translation Ability of EFL Undergraduate Students', *International Journal of Social Sciences & Educational Studies*, 7 no. 3 (2020): 20.

C. Research Objectives

Based in the research question stated previously, the objective of this study is as follows:

To investigate whether there is a significant correlation between students' critical reading skills and their translation ability.

D. Formulation of Hypothesis

Based on the research objective stated above, the hypotheses of this study are formulated as follows:

1. Null Hypothesis (H_0): There is no significant correlation between students' critical reading skills and their translation ability.
2. Alternative Hypothesis (H_1): There is a significant correlation between students' critical reading skills and their translation ability.

E. The Significance of Study

1. Theoretical

This study provides evidence about whether critical reading is truly an important part of translation ability. Many translation experts believe that good translators need to analyze texts deeply, not just understand words.¹⁷ However, we do not have enough empirical studies that test this belief with real students. If this study finds a strong correlation between critical reading and translation ability, it supported the idea that critical reading should be considered a foundational skill

¹⁷ Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (Hertfordshire: Prentice Hall International, 1988):1-5.

in translation competence models. This finding would encourage translation researchers to pay more attention to how students read and analyze texts before they translate.

2. Practical

The results of this study can help teachers design better courses. If critical reading skills are strongly related to translation ability, teachers should include more critical reading activities in their translation classes. For example, instead of only teaching vocabulary and grammar rules, teachers can train students to identify the author's purpose and attitude in a text, find hidden meanings and implications, evaluate the strength of arguments, detect bias in the writer's language choices. These activities helped students become better translators because they learn to think deeply about texts, not just decode words. Curriculum designers can also use these findings to integrate critical reading instruction more explicitly into translation training programs.

For students learning English, this study shows that translation success depends on more than just knowing many words or understanding grammar rules. Students need to develop the habit of reading critically, questioning what they read, analyzing how writers create meaning, and evaluating information carefully. Understanding this relationship may motivate students to practice critical reading actively, which not only improve their translation skills but also their overall English proficiency and academic performance.

In summary, this study contributes to both theory and practice by clarifying the role of critical reading in translation and providing practical guidance for language education.

F. Scope and Limitation of the Study

This study focused on investigating the correlation between critical reading skills and translation ability among sixth-semester EFL students at UIN Sayyid Ali Rahmatullah Tulungagung, an Islamic university in Indonesia. The research was limited to these two variables and did not include other factors that might have affected translation performance, such as vocabulary mastery, grammatical knowledge, or general reading comprehension. Translation ability is limited to English-to-Indonesian direction using authentic news texts.

G. The definition of Key Terms

1. Critical Reading

Critical reading is the process of engaging with a text actively and thoughtfully. It involves looking deeper than the literal meaning to understand what the author wants to say, why the text was written, and how ideas are presented. When reading critically, readers analyze arguments, identify bias, recognize assumptions, and interpret implied messages. They also question the text and compare it with their own knowledge and experiences. In language learning, critical reading helps students understand how language carries meaning and influences readers, which is an important foundation for good translation.

2. Critical Reading Skills

Critical reading skills are the specific abilities needed to read critically. These include distinguish between facts and opinions, make inferences, make generalization, identify the writer's tone, identify the writer's purpose, identify the writer's bias of reading texts from the text. In this research, critical reading skills refer to the students' ability to examine English texts carefully, understand deeper meanings, and judge the reliability of the information-skills that strongly support accurate translation.

3. Translation

Translation is the process of transferring a message from a source language (English) into a target language (Indonesian) while keeping the original meaning and intent. It is not simply replacing words but understanding the context, culture, and purpose of the text. A good translation expresses the message naturally in the target language and uses appropriate vocabulary, grammar, and style.

4. Translation Ability

Translation ability refers to how well students can understand English texts and reproduce their meaning correctly in Indonesian. It includes both language knowledge and the skill to interpret the text clearly and accurately. Students with strong translation ability can handle explicit and implicit meanings, figurative language, and cultural references while producing translations that sound natural and accurate.