

TRANSLANGUAGING STRATEGY IN IMPROVING DESCRIPTIVE WRITING ON EFL LEARNERS' LOW LITERACY

UMAR¹⁾, ERSA ANITA AULIA²⁾, SRI ARFANI³⁾

¹⁾ Universitas Teknologi Sumbawa, ²⁾ Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Sumbawa,

³⁾ Universitas Bina Sarana Informatika Jakarta

umar@uts.ac.id

ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini berfokus pada strategi pembelajaran yang digunakan dosen dalam mengajar menulis deskriptif dalam mengatasi Pembelajaran di Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Sumbawa. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah; 1) untuk mengetahui tantangan yang dihadapi oleh pembelajar bahasa Inggris dengan literasi rendah dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis deskriptifnya, dan 2) persepsi pembelajar bahasa Inggris dengan literasi rendah mengenai penggunaan strategi translanguaging dalam meningkatkan keterampilan menulis deskriptifnya. Penelitian ini merupakan penelitian kualitatif. Peneliti menggunakan dua instrumen untuk memperoleh data yang dibutuhkan yaitu: observasi dan wawancara. Berdasarkan data yang diperoleh dari instrumen kedua yang digunakan, diperoleh temuan sebagai berikut. Pertama, Tantangan yang dihadapi oleh pembelajar EFL dengan literasi rendah memiliki lima kategori; pertama, keterbatasan kosa kata, kedua tata bahasa dan struktur kalimat yang kompleks, ketiga bahasa yang digunakan, keempat, sumber belajar, dan kelima, strategi yang digunakan. Bahasa yang digunakan guru memiliki tantangan besar dalam proses pembelajaran menulis deskriptif siswa Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Sumbawa. Kedua, Persepsi pembelajar bahasa Inggris dengan literasi rendah memiliki tiga kategori; pertama, proses pembelajaran, kedua, motivasi belajar, dan ketiga, mempertahankan bahasa asli. Persepsi siswa tentang penerjemahan yang digunakan memiliki kontribusi positif dalam proses belajar mengajar menulis deskriptif siswa Sekolah Tinggi Agama Islam Sumbawa.

Kata kunci: *translanguaging, strategi, meningkatkan, menulis deskripsi, literasi rendah*

ABSTRACT

This study focuses on the learning strategies used by lecture in teaching descriptive writing in overcoming Learning at Sumbawa Islamic High School. The purpose of this study were; 1) to find out the challenges faced by EFL learners with low literacy in improving their descriptive writing skills, and 2) the perceptions of EFL learners with low literacy regarding the use of translanguaging strategies in improving their descriptive writing skills. This research is qualitative research. Researchers used two instruments to obtain the required data, namely: observation and interviews. Based on the data obtained from the second instrument used, the following findings were obtained. First, The challenges faced by EFL learners with low literacy has five category; **first**, limitation of vocabulary, **second** complex grammar and sentence structures, **third** language used, **fourth**, learning resources, and **fifth**, strategy used. Language used by the teacher has the huge challenge in their learning process of descriptive writing of students of Sumbawa Islamic High School. Second, The perceptions of EFL learners with low literacy has three category; **first**, learning process, **second**, learning motivation, and **third**, maintaining native language. The perception of the learners regarding used translanguaging has positive contribution in teaching and learning process of descriptive writing of students of Sumbawa Islamic High School.

Key words: *translanguaging, strategy, improving, descriptive writing, low literacy*

INTRODUCTION

English have four skills that students have to understand, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. As stated by Seventilofa (2021) there are four skills that we must master in English, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This is in line with the idea of Elli Marlina (2023) that mastering English means mastering the whole skills namely reading, speaking, listening and writing. One of skills to mastering is writing. In today's

globalized world, the ability to communicate effectively in English is crucial for individuals seeking to thrive in various academic and professional domains. However, for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners with low literacy skills, developing proficiency in writing poses a significant challenge. These learners often struggle with expressing their thoughts, ideas, and experiences in writing, particularly in descriptive writing tasks. To address this issue, educators and researchers have been exploring innovative pedagogical approaches, such as the use of translanguaging strategies, to enhance EFL learners' descriptive writing abilities. It needs more strategies and methods in to gain maximal result to improve their abilities in English learning. As state by Pathul Indriana (2018) that teaching a language is a multidimensional task which requires different techniques and methods compared with teaching other subjects. This is in line with Nur and Rizki (2023) that in the process of learning activities, educators use methods, modes, and media as innovations to develop education.

Translanguaging is a language practice that encourages multilingual individuals to fluidly and strategically use their full linguistic repertoire, including their first language and other languages they are proficient in, to facilitate communication and meaning-making. It challenges the traditional notion of monolingualism and recognizes the valuable resources multilingual learners possess. In line with Putrawan (2022) that translanguaging in English as a second/foreign language (ESL/EFL) classrooms is known to help learners achieve their English proficiency. By harnessing the power of translanguaging, teachers can create a supportive learning environment that promotes language development and empowers EFL learners with low literacy. Teachers will find some difficulties in learning process if the classroom multi languages and characters of students. In line with Kurniawati (2023) that teaching becomes challenging activity by the teacher due to the different students' characteristics and with different intelligence.

The potential benefits of adopting a translanguaging approach in teaching descriptive writing are manifold. Firstly, by valuing and incorporating learners' first language, translanguaging promotes a positive language learning identity, encouraging learners to feel more confident and motivated in expressing themselves in writing. Secondly, it allows learners to access their entire linguistic repertoire, enabling them to draw on vocabulary, grammar structures, and cultural nuances that may not be readily available in their second language, English. This, in turn, can lead to richer and more nuanced descriptive writing. Lastly, translanguaging facilitates a deeper understanding of the writing process and enhances metalinguistic awareness as learners navigate between languages, reflecting on language choices, and making deliberate linguistic decisions.

The purposes of this study were to find out the challenges faced by EFL learners and their perceptions with low literacy in improving their descriptive writing skills. By leveraging the learners' existing linguistic knowledge and allowing them to draw on their first language or other languages they are comfortable with, translanguaging offers a scaffold that can bridge the gap between their limited English proficiency and the desired level of descriptive writing competence. This research seeks to explore how translanguaging practices can be integrated into the EFL classroom and how they impact the learners' writing outcomes, including vocabulary use, sentence structure, coherence, and overall quality of their descriptive compositions.

Formulation of the Problems:

This study tried to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the challenges faced by EFL learners with low literacy in improving their descriptive writing skills?
2. What are the perceptions of EFL learners with low literacy regarding the use of translanguaging strategies in improving their descriptive writing skills?

The results of this study are expected to give some benefits:

1. Teachers or educator;
Inform educators about the potential of translanguaging as a valuable tool to enhance learners' ability to express their thoughts, ideas, and experiences in writing.
2. Students;
By incorporating translanguaging strategies, learners can leverage their existing linguistic knowledge and resources, which can contribute to overall language proficiency development.

RESEARCH METHOD

Based on the problems, the researchers investigate the potential of translanguaging strategies in improving descriptive writing on EFL learners with low literacy; this study employed a qualitative methods research design. The characteristics of qualitative research are that it has the natural setting as the direct source of data and researcher becomes the key instrument in the study. According to Sugiyono (2008) that in qualitative study, the data collected is mostly in the form of words of pictures rather than number. In line with Satori (2011) revealed that qualitative

research was carried out because researchers want to explore phenomena that can be quantified descriptive in nature such as the process of a rare work, the formula of a recipe, notions of a diverse concept, the characteristics of a goods and services, images, styles, ordinances of a culture, physical models an artifact and so on. Furthermore, Creswell (2008) qualitative research as an approach or search to explore and understand a central phenomenon.

Data collected through classroom observations, and questionnaires to provide a comprehensive understanding of the impact of translanguaging practices on learners' writing development. The data obtained were analyzed comprehensively. The subject of the study was 12 students of Sumbawa Islamic High School. The technique of implementing the strategy is to provide a sample of descriptive writing text, then ask to students to write short essay relate to descriptive writing. Then they were asked whether by using this strategy their descriptive writing had improved or not, whether with this strategy their understanding of the text was easier to understand or not.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This research was conducted for two months. Study taught using of translanguaging strategies in improving their descriptive writing skills.

1) The challenges faced by EFL learners with low literacy in improving their descriptive writing skills.

Based on the result of questionnaire from 12 students, the researchers gain the data as follow:

S (1): "I have problems about my limited vocabulary". So, I can't write well.

S (2): "Less of grasp of complex grammar and sentence structures". It is big problems for me.

S (3): "Low vocabulary". It makes difficulties in writing.

S (4): "My challenge is language instruction used". I can understand during learning process.

S (5): "Language used too complex". Difficulties follow the process.

S (6): "Language used too complex". I can understand well.

S (7): "Language used too complex". Problems in arrange sentences

S (8): "Lack of vocabulary". I have difficulties to make sentences.

S (9): "Instructional language used too complex".

S (10): "Lack of learning resources". Make lazy to learn.

S (11): "Boring study strategies". It makes boring to write.

S (12): "Monotonous learning strategy". It makes me not motivation to write.

Based on the result of questionnaire from 12 students above, the researchers classify into 5 categories answer; **First** category was about limitation of vocabulary. It gained from S (1), S (3) and S (8). English vocabulary has main role to increase writing ability. If students lack of vocabulary, they will find difficulties in create their writing. It was found in every level grade of student, even in university level. In line with Susanto (2017) that improving vocabulary skill among English language learners (ELLs) is a challenge faced by many universities. **Second** category was about complex grammar and sentence structures. It gained from S (2). The learners found some difficulties in arrange sentences if they have not enough ability in grammar. There are many aspects are considered in writing, such as organization of writing, grammar, punctuation, capitalization, and diction, are often scored in assessing writing. According to Koçak (2019) that with regard to integrating grammar in writing instruction, the most important point for teachers is to decide what kinds of grammar focus are appropriate and relevant for students' needs. **Third** category was about language used. It gained from S (4), S (5), S (6), S (7), and S (9). In teaching and learning process, language used by the teacher or lecturer influence learner's motivation. As a media transfer knowledge, language used in classroom must easy understand by the learners. Language used Language is often viewed as a vehicle of thought, a system of expression that mediates the transfer of thought from teacher to learners (Finegan, 2008). **Fourth** category was about learning resources. It gained from S (10). In educational, learning resources must be developed before being used by the teachers in the classroom. Learning resources influence toward learning process and students understood. The purpose of utilizing teaching and learning resources in class is to assist the teacher with the presentation and transmission of educational content and the student's achievement. In line with (Rachel Bosibori Okongo., et all, 2015) that availability of teaching learning resources therefore enhances the effectiveness of schools as they are the basic resources that bring about good academic performance in the students. **Fifth** category was about strategies used by lecturer in teaching descriptive writing. It gained from S (11) and S (12). Strategies in learning to write English are one of the important factors to be recognized by students. There are many factors that influence the successful of teaching and learning, such as students' learning strategies and teachers' techniques in teaching English. In line with Noviyenty (2018) that students who use effective strategies which make them comfortable in using English to communicate will be able to solve many problems in English.

Based on the result above, it can be conclude that the most challenge by learners were language used by the teachers or lectures.

- 2) The perceptions of EFL learners with low literacy regarding the use of translanguaging strategies in improving their descriptive writing skills.

Based on the result of questionnaire from 12 students, the researchers gain the data as follow:

S (1): “It can help bridge comprehension gaps and enhance my overall writing”.

S (2): “. It allows me to express ideas more accurately and creatively”.

S (3): “It can facilitate me in learning and motivation”.

S (4): “I become more open to embracing the approach”.

S (5): “It allows me to draw on my native language to express ideas more effectively”.

S (6): “It boosting my confidence in writing”.

S (7): “It can preserve my cultural identity and maintain a connection to my native language while learning English”.

S (8): “It fosters a more inclusive and nurturing learning environment”.

S (9): “It is easy to understand during learning process”.

S (10): “It makes me motivate to write”.

S (11): “Help full during learning descriptive writing”.

S (12): “It can facilitate learning and motivation”.

Based on the result of questionnaire from 12 students above, the researchers classify into 3 categories answer. **First** category was about learning process. It gained from S (1), S (2), S (4), S (8), S (9) and S (11). Learning process is proses of transfer knowledge by teacher to the learners in a formal and informal system. In line with Afzal Sayed Munna (2021) that teaching and learning process can be defined as a transformation process of knowledge from teachers to students. **Second** category was about learning motivation. It gained from S (3), S (6), S (10), and S (12). Motivation has a very important role in the continuity and success of learning carried out by each student. In line with Adetya. D. W, et all., (2020) that learning motivation means the overall driving force within students that can generate, guarantee, and provide direction for learning activities, in order to achieve the expected learning goals. **Third** category was about maintaining native language. It gained from S (5), and S (7). The impact and influence of mother tongue on second language learning cannot be denied. The use of mother tongue in teaching and learning EFL, the students can maintenance their own native language and learner easy follow the teacher explain. So they can easy improve their English skills. In line with Nguyen (2003) that the mother tongues enables students to understand concepts, lexical or grammatical or academic terms.

Based on the result above, it can be conclude that learning process has influence in teaching and learning descriptive writing.

CLOSING

Conclusion

Based on the data analysis and findings in the previous chapter, it can be summarized that in the process of teaching descriptive English writing;

- 1) The challenges faced by EFL learners with low literacy has five category; **first**, limitation of vocabulary, **second** complex grammar and sentence structures, **third** language used, **fourth**, learning resources, and **fifth**, strategy used. Language used by the teacher has the huge challenge in their learning process of descriptive writing of students of Sumbawa Islamic High School.
- 2) The perceptions of EFL learners with low literacy has three category; **first**, learning process, **second**, learning motivation, and **third**, maintaining native language. The perception of the learners regarding used translanguaging has positive contribution in teaching and learning process of descriptive writing of students of Sumbawa Islamic High School.

Suggestion

If someone wants to improve descriptive writing in low literacy EFL learners then use the translanguaging strategy.

REFERENCES

- Aan Komariah, Djam'an Satori. (2011). *Metode Penelitian Kualitatif*. Bandung: Alfabeta
- Adetya Dewi Wardani1 Imam Gunawan, Desi Eri Kusumaningrum, Djum Djum Noor Benty, Raden Bambang Sumarsono, Ahmad Nurabadi, L. H. (2020). Student learning motivation: a conceptual paper. *Advances in Social Science, Education and Humanities Research*, 275–278.

- Afzal Sayed Munna, M. A. K. (2021). Teaching and learning process to enhance teaching effectiveness: a literature review. *International Journal of Humanities and Innovation (IJHI)*, 4(1), 1–4.
- Creswell, John W. (2008). *Educational Research, Planning, Conducting, and Evaluating Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches*. London: Sage Publications.
- Elli Marlina, M. (2023). English learning strategies used by the students in english education departement in solving their learning difficulties. *Jurnal Ganec Swara*, 17(2), 673–678.
- Finegan, E. (2008). *Language: Its Structure and Use* (Fifth Edit). Thomson.
- Koçak, A. (2019). An analysis of recognition of compound complex sentences for fossilized errors in teaching writing. *International Journal of Curriculum and Instruction*, 11(1), 256–268.
- Kurniawati, K. L. (2023). An analysis of teacher's strategies of teaching speaking in junior high school. *JIIP (Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan)*, 6(2), 875–880.
- Noviyenty, L. (2018). Strategies in learning and techniques in teaching english speaking. *English Franca*, 2(1), 35–48.
- Nguyen T. T. H & Khuat. T. T. N. (2003). Learning Vocabulary through Games. *Asian EFL Journal*, 5(4).
- Nur, A. K. W. A. P. P. M. K. M., and Rizki, K. S. (2023). Project-based learning role analysis to improve student's writing skills in elementary school. *JIIP (Jurnal Ilmiah Ilmu Pendidikan)*, 6(1), 94–98.
- Pathul Indriana, S. S. (2018). Improving students' reading comprehension by using mind mapping to the second semester students of manajemen informatika departement of stimik mataram. *Ganec Swara*, 12(1), 30–36.
- Putrawan, G. E. (2022). Translanguaging practices in efl classrooms: evidence from indonesia. *Journal CaLLs*, 8(1), 69–86.
- Rachel Bosibori Okongo, Gladys Ngao, Naftal K. Rop, W. J. N. (2015). Effect of availability of teaching and learning resources on the implementation of inclusive education in pre-school centers in nyamira north sub-county, nyamira county, kenya. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(35), 132–141.
- Seventilofa, I. G. N. O. (2021). Enhace vocabulary skill through reading repetition (repeated reading). *Jurnal Ganec Swara*, 15(1), 1013–1017.
- Sugiyono. (2008). *Metode Penelitian Kuantitatif, Kualitatif dan R & D*. Bandung. Alfabeta
- Susanto, A. (2017). The teaching vocabulary: a perspective. *Jurnal KATA*, 1(2), 182–191.