

Mapping the Techniques: A Systemic Literature Review of English to Indonesian Translation Practices

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Abstract: This study presents a systematic literature review of research on translation techniques employed in translating texts from English into Indonesian, focusing on articles published between 2020 and 2025. A total of 30 peer-reviewed studies were analyzed to identify dominant translation techniques, their application across different text types, and the theoretical frameworks guiding these studies. The results indicate that literal translation is the most commonly used technique, particularly in academic, legal, and news texts where fidelity to the source is prioritized. In contrast, modulation, transposition, and adaptation frequently appear in literary and audiovisual translations to accommodate linguistic and cultural differences. While many studies refer to established taxonomies such as those by Molina and Albir (2002) and Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), few engage deeply with broader translation theories. Additionally, formal translation quality assessment (TQA) methods are underutilized, limiting evaluative insights into the effectiveness of different techniques. The review reveals a fragmented research landscape that largely focuses on descriptive analysis rather than comparative or theory-driven approaches. This study highlights the need for future research to incorporate stronger theoretical foundations and robust evaluation models to enhance translation quality and advance academic understanding. The findings also underscore the importance of considering text type and cultural context in translation practice, offering valuable implications for translators, educators, and researchers working in the English–Indonesian language pair.

Keywords: Translation techniques, English to Indonesian translation, systemic literature review, translation theory.

INTRODUCTION

Translation plays a vital role in global communication, enabling the exchange of ideas, culture, and knowledge across languages and societies. As globalization continues to bridge gaps between nations, the demand for accurate and effective translation becomes increasingly significant. English, as a dominant global language, is frequently translated into other languages, including Indonesian. Indonesia, being the fourth most populous country in the world and a rapidly growing economy, necessitates high-quality English–Indonesian translation in fields ranging from education and literature to technology and diplomacy (Nababan, 2008). Understanding how meaning is transferred across these two languages involves examining the translation techniques that have been developed and utilized by scholars and practitioners (Herman & Rajagukguk, 2019).

Translation techniques are the specific methods translators use to tackle linguistic and cultural differences between the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). These techniques can influence not only the readability of the translated text but also its cultural fidelity and semantic accuracy (Saputra *et al.*, 2022). Scholars such as Molina and Albir (2002) have proposed systematic classifications of these techniques, aiming to provide a framework for understanding and evaluating translation practices. Applying these classifications to English–Indonesian translation allows researchers to explore whether certain

techniques are more effective or more commonly used in particular contexts or text types.

The English and Indonesian languages differ significantly in terms of grammar, syntax, word order, and cultural context (Herman, 2017). For instance, English relies heavily on verb tenses, while Indonesian uses time adverbs and contextual cues instead of conjugation (Sneddon, 2010). These structural and cultural disparities pose unique challenges in translation. Thus, the selection of translation techniques can vary greatly depending on the nature of the source text and the translator's objectives. Previous studies have shown that translators often need to balance fidelity to the source text with naturalness in the target language (Nida & Taber, 1969). Consequently, the analysis of translation techniques between English and Indonesian reveals insights into both linguistic and cultural adaptation.

Over the past two decades, numerous studies have been conducted on English–Indonesian translation, ranging from analyses of literary texts to technical manuals, films, and academic documents. These studies often focus on identifying which techniques are used and evaluating their effectiveness in different contexts. However, the findings are scattered across various journals, theses, and conference proceedings, making it difficult to see overarching trends or draw generalized conclusions. A systematic literature

review (SLR) is therefore needed to synthesize existing research, highlight dominant translation techniques, and identify gaps in the literature that future studies can address.

A systemic literature review is a structured and replicable method for identifying, evaluating, and synthesizing all available research on a particular topic (Kitchenham & Charters, 2007). In the context of translation studies, this method helps to aggregate knowledge across multiple studies, allowing for a deeper understanding of the field's development. By applying this method to the study of English–Indonesian translation techniques, this paper aims to present a comprehensive overview of what techniques have been used, in what contexts, and how they have been evaluated by researchers.

Furthermore, the literature on translation techniques often intersects with theories such as Skopos theory (Vermeer, 1989), which emphasizes the purpose of the translation, and equivalence theory, which focuses on the degree of similarity between the source and target texts (Baker, 2011). Understanding which theories underpin the choice of translation techniques can deepen the analysis and provide theoretical grounding for empirical findings. By analyzing how these techniques align with or diverge from prevailing translation theories, this review contributes to the academic discourse on translation strategy.

Therefore, the aim of this paper is to conduct a systemic literature review on translation techniques used in English to Indonesian translation. Specifically, this study seeks to: (1) identify the most frequently used translation techniques, (2) examine the contexts in which they are applied, and (3) evaluate their effectiveness based on existing research. The findings are expected to contribute to both academic scholarship and practical translation work by offering a synthesized understanding of current practices and potential areas for further research.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation techniques have been a central concern in translation studies, particularly as scholars aim to bridge gaps between languages and cultures. These techniques are defined as micro-level procedures used to address specific problems encountered during the transfer of meaning from a source language (SL) to a target language (TL) (Chesterman, 2016; Herman, 2016; van Thao *et al.*, 2020). They differ from translation strategies,

which operate at the macro-textual level. Understanding these techniques is essential for assessing the quality, fidelity, and naturalness of translated texts. Within the English–Indonesian language pair, this understanding becomes even more critical due to structural and cultural differences that influence how meaning is conveyed.

Much of the theoretical groundwork for analyzing translation techniques has been shaped by functionalist and descriptive approaches. Toury (1995), for instance, emphasized the importance of identifying regularities in translation behavior and introduced the notion of translation norms. These norms influence translators' choices, including their use of specific techniques. Similarly, Nord (1997) advanced the functionalist model by highlighting the role of communicative purpose and intended audience, both of which often determine whether a translator opts for a more literal or adaptive technique (Sinambela *et al.*, 2024). In Indonesian contexts, where audience expectations and cultural nuance are highly variable, these theoretical perspectives offer valuable insight.

Several empirical studies have applied these frameworks to English–Indonesian translation. Susanto and Putranti (2019) examined the translation of English political speeches into Indonesian, identifying the dominance of modulation and transposition as techniques used to achieve rhetorical impact while maintaining ideological equivalence (Sinaga, *et al.*, 2020; Ngongo, *et al.*, 2024). In another study, Lestari (2021) analyzed children's literature and noted that adaptation and cultural substitution were common, especially when translating culturally bound terms unfamiliar to Indonesian readers. These studies underscore how the choice of technique often reflects not only linguistic challenges but also socio-cultural considerations.

A growing body of work has also focused on non-literary and technical texts. Ardi (2020) explored English–Indonesian translations of medical leaflets and found that literal translation was the most frequently used technique due to the need for terminological precision. However, when addressing idiomatic expressions or contextual nuances, translators shifted to techniques such as amplification or modulation to enhance clarity. Similarly, Hartono and Silalahi (2018) analyzed Indonesian translations of legal documents and emphasized the use of established equivalence and

linguistic compression to maintain both accuracy and legal formality.

Despite these contributions, the literature remains fragmented and lacks comprehensive synthesis. Most studies are case-based and focus on specific text types or translation products without offering comparative insights across genres. Moreover, the majority of these studies do not systematically evaluate the effectiveness of the techniques they identify, and few use established translation evaluation models such as the ones developed by Williams (2004) or TQA rubrics adapted for Indonesian language contexts. This creates a gap in understanding how technique selection correlates with translation quality in a measurable way.

Another issue in the literature is the underrepresentation of Indonesian scholars in global translation discourse. While research is emerging in local journals and university theses, many of these are written in Indonesian and remain inaccessible to the broader academic community. As a result, the visibility of English–Indonesian translation research is relatively low compared to other language pairs, and global theories often go untested in Indonesian-specific contexts (Yuwono, 2022; Herman *et al.*, 2024). This presents an opportunity for systematic reviews to consolidate local findings and position them within global translation studies.

In light of these gaps, a systemic literature review offers a valuable methodology for organizing and evaluating existing studies on translation techniques from English into Indonesian. By synthesizing findings across various contexts and disciplines, this review aims to identify patterns, highlight underexplored areas, and propose directions for future research. This approach contributes to a more cohesive understanding of the field and supports evidence-based improvements in both translator training and practice.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employs a Systemic Literature Review (SLR) design to analyze and synthesize research on translation techniques used in translating texts from English into Indonesian. The SLR method is chosen for its structured and replicable approach to reviewing existing literature, enabling a comprehensive understanding of trends, patterns, and gaps in current research (Siddaway, Wood, &

Hedges, 2019). Unlike narrative reviews, the SLR follows a transparent process involving clearly defined research questions, selection criteria, and data analysis protocols.

Data Source

The primary data for this study consists of peer-reviewed journal articles, conference proceedings, and academic theses published between 2020 and 2025. These were sourced from reputable academic databases, including:

- Google Scholar
- Scopus
- ScienceDirect
- Taylor & Francis
- Sinta (Indonesia's national research index)
- Garuda Ristekbrin (Indonesian academic repository)

The inclusion of both international and local databases ensures the representation of both global perspectives and Indonesian-specific contexts in the field of translation studies.

Instrument

The main research instrument is a data extraction form developed to capture relevant information from each selected article. The form includes the following fields:

- Title and author(s)
- Year of publication
- Type of text analyzed (literary, audiovisual, academic, etc.)
- Theoretical framework used (if any)
- Identified translation techniques
- Evaluation method (if any)
- Key findings and conclusions

This instrument ensures consistency in data collection and enables cross-study comparison.

Data Collection Method

The data collection process followed four main stages:

- Identification: Keywords such as “translation techniques,” “English to Indonesian translation,” “translation strategies,” and “translation analysis” were used to search the databases.
- Screening: Titles and abstracts were screened to remove duplicates and irrelevant studies (e.g., those not involving English–Indonesian translation or not focused on techniques).
- Eligibility: Full texts were reviewed to ensure that only studies published between 2020–2025 and explicitly analyzing translation techniques were included.

- Inclusion: Studies meeting all criteria were retained for analysis. A total of 30 articles were selected based on relevance, quality, and availability of full text.

Data Analysis Method

The selected studies were analyzed using content analysis and descriptive coding techniques. First, translation techniques mentioned in each article were identified and categorized using the typologies proposed by Molina and Albir (2002), Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), or the authors' own frameworks. The frequency and context of each technique were recorded and compared across studies.

Next, the techniques were grouped according to:

- Text types (e.g., academic, literary, audiovisual)
- Dominant technique(s) per text type
- Presence or absence of translation quality assessment (TQA)

The analysis also included identifying recurring theoretical frameworks and evaluation methods, if

any. Emerging patterns, trends, and research gaps were noted to inform the discussion and conclusions of the study.

RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the systematic literature review conducted on 30 selected studies published between 2020 and 2025. The analysis focused on identifying the most commonly used translation techniques from English into Indonesian, the types of texts analyzed, and the theoretical frameworks employed in the reviewed literature.

Distribution of Text Types and Dominant Techniques

The 30 articles reviewed covered a range of text types, including literary texts, audiovisual materials, academic papers, legal documents, and popular media. The table below summarizes the number of studies per text type and the most frequently applied translation techniques in each category.

Table 1. Text Types and Dominant Translation Techniques

Text Type	No. of Studies	Dominant Techniques Identified
Literary texts	9	Modulation, Adaptation, Cultural Substitution
Audiovisual (e.g., subtitles)	6	Reduction, Transposition, Equivalence
Academic texts	7	Literal Translation, Transposition, Amplification
Legal documents	4	Established Equivalence, Modulation
Popular media/news	4	Literal Translation, Borrowing, Calque

Frequency of Translation Techniques

Across the 30 studies, 12 major translation techniques were repeatedly identified and coded

based on their frequency of appearance. The most frequently applied techniques are shown in the bar chart below.

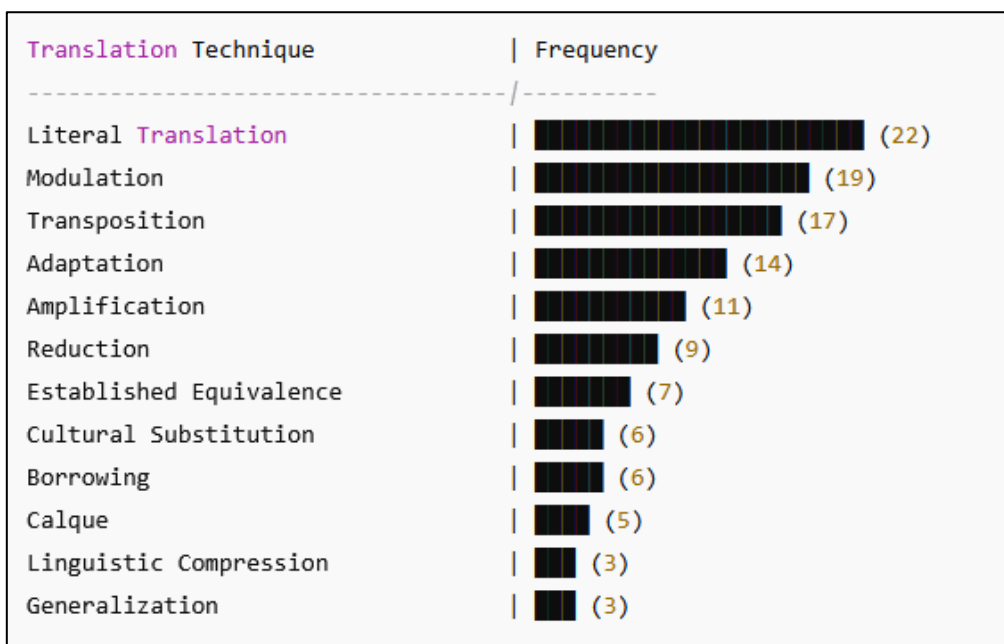


Figure 1. Frequency of Translation Techniques Identified in 30 Studies

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORKS USED

Out of the 30 reviewed articles, only 18 explicitly mentioned the theoretical framework used to guide

their analysis. The remaining 12 either used an implicit framework or did not specify one.

Table 2. Theoretical Frameworks in Reviewed Studies

Theoretical Framework	No. of Studies Using It	Example Techniques Associated
Molina & Albir (2002)	10	Modulation, Transposition, Amplification
Vinay & Darbelnet (1995)	4	Borrowing, Calque, Literal Translation
Newmark's Semantic/Communicative (1988)	3	Adaptation, Literal Translation
Skopos Theory (Vermeer, 1989)	1	Cultural Substitution, Adaptation
None Specified / Not Theorized	12	Various

This finding indicates that while most studies referenced established taxonomies of translation techniques, fewer grounded their analysis in broader translation theories such as Skopos, equivalence, or functionalist models.

The systematic review of 30 studies published between 2020 and 2025 revealed several important trends in the use of translation techniques from English into Indonesian. Overall, literal translation emerged as the most frequently applied technique, appearing in 22 of the studies. This technique was especially dominant in the translation of academic texts and news articles, where clarity, precision, and fidelity to the source text are critical. However, literal translation was not applied uniformly across all genres, as more dynamic techniques were commonly used in other text types.

In literary and audiovisual translations, the dominant techniques shifted to include modulation, transposition, and adaptation. These methods were employed to address linguistic and cultural differences between English and Indonesian, allowing translators to adjust meaning, tone, or structure while preserving the original intent. Cultural substitution and reduction were also observed in texts involving culturally specific references or time-constrained formats, such as subtitles. This indicates that translators adapt their techniques based on genre-specific demands and reader expectations.

The review also found that while many studies referenced established typologies—especially those proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) and Vinay and Darbelnet (1995)—only a limited number were grounded in broader translation theories. Out of the 30 articles, only 18 clearly stated their theoretical framework. The

functionalist approach, including Skopos Theory, was rarely applied, suggesting that theory-driven analysis remains underutilized in the context of English–Indonesian translation research.

A notable finding is the infrequent use of formal translation quality assessment (TQA) methods. Only eight studies incorporated structured evaluation models to measure the effectiveness of translation techniques. The most commonly used model was Nababan's (2012) framework, which evaluates translations based on accuracy, acceptability, and readability. Despite the relevance of such tools, most studies remained descriptive rather than evaluative, indicating a research gap in assessing the outcomes of different translation techniques.

Finally, the review highlights a degree of fragmentation in the literature. Many studies focused on narrow or isolated cases, with little cross-comparison or generalizability. There is also an apparent underrepresentation of comparative studies across genres or translator profiles. This points to an opportunity for future research to adopt more systematic and theory-driven methodologies, while also integrating robust evaluation models to assess translation quality in a more comprehensive way.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this systematic literature review provide a nuanced understanding of how translation techniques are applied in English–Indonesian translation across various text types. One of the most prominent observations is the consistent dominance of literal translation in the reviewed studies, especially in academic, legal, and news texts. This reflects a tendency among translators to prioritize accuracy, faithfulness to the source text, and clarity, particularly in genres

where precision is critical. However, while literal translation offers consistency and directness, it can also lead to awkward or unnatural expressions in the target language if not balanced with more adaptive techniques.

The use of modulation, transposition, and adaptation in literary and audiovisual texts illustrates a more dynamic and creative approach to translation. These genres often require translators to bridge stylistic, cultural, and emotional gaps between English and Indonesian. For instance, adaptation and cultural substitution are commonly used when source-language elements have no direct equivalents in Indonesian culture. These techniques align well with functional and communicative approaches to translation, where the emphasis is on preserving the intended impact of the original rather than its literal form (Nord, 1997; Newmark, 1988).

Despite the diversity of techniques observed, a significant portion of the reviewed studies did not engage deeply with translation theory. Although many adopted established taxonomies such as those proposed by Molina and Albir (2002) or Vinay and Darbelnet (1995), fewer studies explicitly grounded their analysis in broader theoretical frameworks like Skopos theory, equivalence theory, or descriptive translation studies. This reflects a broader trend in translation research in Indonesia, where applied case studies often take precedence over theory-driven analysis. The limited theoretical integration restricts the depth of insight that can be drawn from these studies and limits their contribution to the global discourse in translation studies.

Another notable gap in the literature is the underutilization of translation quality assessment (TQA) frameworks. While identifying techniques is useful, without structured evaluation it is difficult to determine which techniques actually produce better quality translations. The fact that only eight out of thirty studies used any kind of TQA model—mostly Nababan's (2012) framework—suggests that many studies focus more on description than evaluation. Incorporating quality assessment tools such as House's (2015) model or Williams' (2004) criteria-based assessment would enable more rigorous evaluation of the effectiveness of specific translation techniques.

The review also highlights a fragmented research landscape. Many studies are isolated in scope—

limited to a single text, genre, or technique—and lack comparative analysis. This limits generalizability and fails to provide a broader understanding of translation practices across different contexts. Moreover, there is a noticeable absence of studies that consider the translator's background, such as training, experience, or institutional setting, which are known to influence technique selection (Pym, 2012).

Despite these limitations, the findings have important practical implications. For educators and trainers, the frequent use of certain techniques such as modulation or transposition in specific genres suggests that these methods should be emphasized in translation pedagogy. For translators, especially novice ones, understanding the text-dependent nature of technique selection can help guide better decision-making in practice. Additionally, the lack of TQA integration highlights the need for quality control mechanisms in professional translation settings.

In summary, while the reviewed literature reveals valuable insights into the techniques used in translating from English to Indonesian, it also exposes important areas for growth. There is a clear need for more theoretically grounded, evaluation-oriented, and comparative research to deepen our understanding of translation practices and improve the quality of both academic and professional translations in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to systematically review and synthesize existing research on translation techniques used in English–Indonesian translation between 2020 and 2025. The findings reveal that while a wide range of techniques are employed, literal translation remains the most frequently used across text types, particularly in academic and legal contexts. In contrast, modulation, transposition, and adaptation are more common in literary and audiovisual translations, where cultural and stylistic considerations play a larger role. These patterns suggest that text type significantly influences technique selection, highlighting the need for genre-sensitive approaches in both research and practice.

Despite the diversity of techniques identified, the review found a general lack of theoretical grounding and structured evaluation in many of the analyzed studies. Although translation taxonomies such as those by Molina and Albir and Vinay and Darbelnet are frequently cited, broader theoretical

frameworks like Skopos theory or functionalist models are rarely applied. Additionally, only a small number of studies incorporated formal Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) methods, which limits the field's ability to determine the actual effectiveness or appropriateness of the techniques used.

In conclusion, while there is growing interest in English–Indonesian translation techniques, much of the research remains descriptive and fragmented. Future studies should aim to integrate stronger theoretical foundations, evaluate translation outcomes more rigorously, and compare findings across text types and translator profiles. Doing so will enhance the academic value of translation studies in Indonesia and contribute to the development of best practices in professional translation and translator education.

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