



EFL students' perceptions of self-created glossaries in Translation Class

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Abstract

This study investigates EFL students' perceptions of self-created glossaries as a strategy to enhance vocabulary mastery for translation tasks in an Indonesian-English translation class at Universitas Negeri Padang. The research focus on four aspects of perception, namely attractiveness, perceived effectiveness, relevance, and perceived motivation, and also explores the strategies students used in developing their glossaries. The participants were 25 students enrolled in the 2024/2025 Indonesian-English Translation class who completed weekly glossary assignments. Data were collected through a questionnaire consisting of 20 closed-ended and one open-ended item and analyzed using descriptive quantitative and thematic approaches. The results indicate that students generally held positive perceptions of the self-created glossaries ($M = 2.94$ on a 4-point scale). Students who applied more varied and systematic strategies, such as contextual vocabulary selection and organized structuring, reported higher levels of perceived usefulness and motivation. These findings suggest that self-created glossaries can effectively support vocabulary learning, and enhance students' preparation for translation activities.

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INTRODUCTION

Translation is a complex linguistic activity requiring not only language proficiency but also analytical and cultural competence. Nida & Taber (1982) define translation as the process of reproducing the closest natural equivalent of a message from the source to the target language, both in meaning and style. Bell (1991)

emphasizes that translation involves replacing a text in one language with an equivalent text in another, preserving both content and context. These perspectives highlight that translation entails not just linguistic substitution but also critical interpretation and creativity.

In the context of EFL learning, vocabulary mastery is one of the main determinants of translation quality. Nord (2018) underscores that a translator must thoroughly comprehend the source text, analyze its communicative context, and possess extensive vocabulary knowledge in both languages. Studies by Waro (2019) and Kulsum (2020) confirm that learners with stronger vocabulary mastery produce more accurate and natural translations, while limited vocabulary often results in imprecise or awkward output.

However, vocabulary development remains challenging for many EFL students. Hulstijn (2001) notes that learners struggle not only with memorizing words but also with applying them contextually. Shin & Kim (2023) found that insufficient exposure to topic-specific vocabulary negatively affects translation performance. These issues emphasize the need for strategies that help learners acquire and retain vocabulary relevant to translation, yet their success largely depends on how students perceive and engage with those strategies.

Previous studies have explored a range of vocabulary-learning strategies, such as the Vocabulary Self-Collection Strategy (Maghfuri, 2015; Rahman et al. 2019; Simbolon et al. 2020) and the use of digital (Naldi & Tiarina, 2024; Sari & Aminatun, 2021; Zahra & Hanifa, 2024). While these studies reported students' positive perceptions toward vocabulary learning tools, most focused on general vocabulary acquisition, not for translation purpose as discussed in this study. Moreover, although the Indonesian-English translation class at the Department of English Education, Universitas Negeri Padang, has implemented a vocabulary enhancement strategy through self-created glossaries, the perceptions of EFL students toward this practice remain underexplored. In their research, Pérez & Díaz (2022) found that many learners tended to view glossaries merely as static word lists rather than dynamic tools for building contextual understanding, suggesting that students' perceptions play a crucial role in determining how glossaries are used as vocabulary-learning tool in translation classrooms.

Responding to this research gap, this study investigates EFL students' perceptions and strategies in creating self-created glossaries, a personal vocabulary lists developed in preparation for translation tasks. Specifically, this study aims to: (1) explore how EFL students perceive the use of self-created glossaries in enhancing their vocabulary mastery for translation purposes; (2) identify the strategies students employ in developing their glossaries; and (3) examine how students' strategies in creating glossaries relate to their levels of perception toward the activity.

METHOD

This study employed a descriptive quantitative design supported by qualitative data to explore students' perceptions and strategies in using self-created glossaries. The quantitative data were collected through closed-ended questionnaire items, while qualitative insights were gathered from one open-ended question. Following Creswell (2012), closed-ended items were used to measure students' perceptions across four

dimensions namely attractiveness, perceived effectiveness, relevance, and perceived motivation were adapted from Horton (2003). Open-ended responses were thematically analyzed to identify common strategies employed in creating glossaries.

The participants of this study were 25 fourth-year English Education students at Universitas Negeri Padang enrolled in the Indonesian-English Translation course during the July-December 2024 semester. A total sampling technique was used, as all students in the class participated in the activity of creating weekly self-created glossaries to support their translation assignments. Each participant was assigned an anonymous numerical code to maintain confidentiality.

The instrument of this study was questionnaire, consisted of 20 closed-ended items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree) and one open-ended item asking students to describe their glossary-creating strategies. The instrument was validated by a lecture in language education to ensure content validity, and internal consistency was verified with a Cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.926, indicating high reliability. The validated questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Findings and Data Analysis

1. Students' Perceptions of Self-Created Glossaries on Vocabulary Mastery for Translating Text

Quantitative analysis indicated that students generally held positive perceptions toward the use of self-created glossaries in supporting vocabulary mastery for translation. The overall mean perception score was 2.94 on a 4-point scale, classified as "positive." Among the four dimensions, relevance scored the highest ($M = 3.02$), followed by motivation ($M = 2.96$), attractiveness ($M = 2.92$), and effectiveness ($M = 2.87$).

Table 1. Data Description

No.	Indicator	Mean
1	Attractiveness	2.92
2	Perceived-Effectiveness	2.87
3	Relevance	3.02
4	Perceived Motivation	2.96
Average		2.94
Category		Positive

As shown in Table 1, relevance obtained the highest mean score (3.02) suggesting that students perceive the self-created glossaries as relevant with their needs for translating specific text. This was followed by perceived-motivation (2.96), attractiveness (2.92), and perceived effectiveness (2.87). The total mean score, **2.94** suggest that the majority of students had positive perceptions about creating and using their own glossaries, with very few expressing negative perception. Out of 25 participants, the majority fell into the positive and very positive categories, indicating

that students generally perceived the self-created glossary as a helpful learning tool for vocabulary and translation activities.

1.1 Students' Perceptions of the Attractiveness Aspect

The first aspect of perception discussed in this study is attractiveness. This aspect is measured using five statements, which aimed to identify how appealing students found the activity of creating their own glossaries in relation to translation tasks.

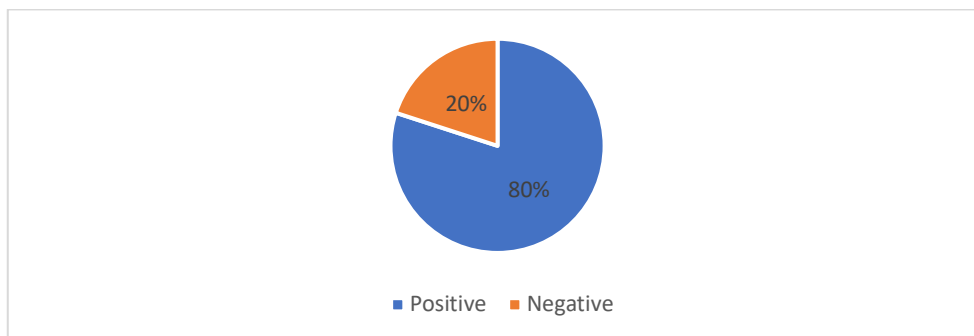


Figure 1. Students' Perceptions on Attractiveness Aspect

Figure 2 presents students' perceptions on the attractiveness aspect of self-created glossary. The majority of students (80%) had a positive perception, meanwhile the minority of students (20%) had a negative perception. The findings indicate that students generally perceived the self-created glossaries as an attractive learning tool. Small number of students perceived the task as monotonous or less enjoyable, which may be influenced by their individual strategies in creating the glossaries. Despite these variations, the strong positive responses across most items confirm that the self-created glossaries were perceived as an appealing and motivating activity in the context of vocabulary learning for translation.

1.2. Students' Perceptions on the Perceived-Effectiveness Aspect

The second aspect discussed in this research is the perception of the effectiveness of self-created glossaries, six statements were used to measure how students perceived the self-created glossaries contributed to their vocabulary in supporting their translation task.

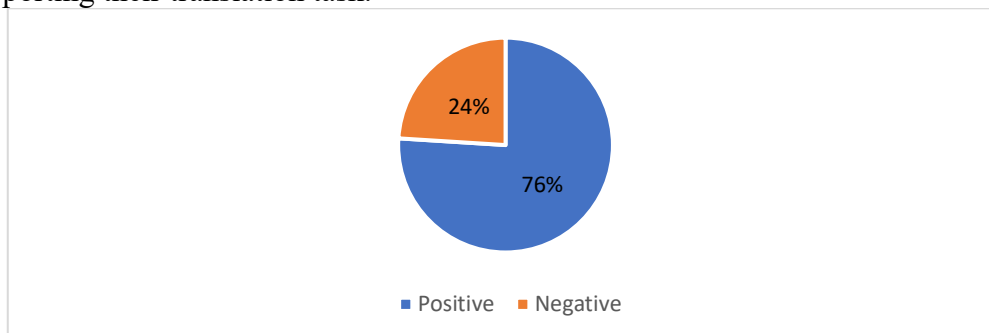


Figure 2. Students' Perceptions of the Perceived-Effectiveness Aspect

Figure 2 shows that the majority of students (76%) had a positive perception on the perceived-effectiveness aspect of self-created glossary, meanwhile the minority of students (24%) had a negative perception. This shows the students' perception of the effectiveness of self-created glossaries on their vocabulary mastery for translating text was generally positive.

1.3. Students' Perceptions of the Relevance Aspect

The third aspect is measured using four statements, focuses on vocabulary in students' glossaries, whether it aligned with needs for translation or not. The distributions of students' perceptions of this aspect are presented in figure 3.

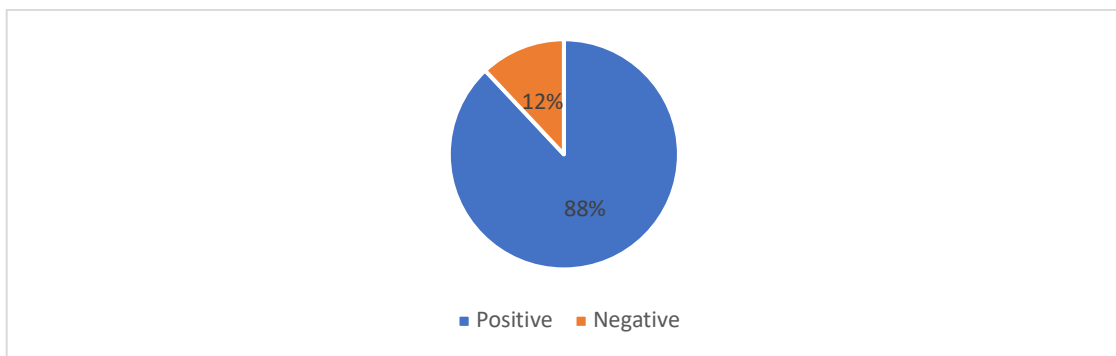


Figure 3. Students' Perceptions of the Relevance Aspect

Figure 3 illustrates that the majority of students (88%) had positive perception meanwhile the minority of students (12%) had negative. This shows that students generally perceived their self-created glossaries as closely aligned with the needs of translation, and also indicating that students were selective and purposeful in compiling vocabulary in their glossaries, ensuring that the vocabulary they recorded was not only accurate but also appropriate for the translation tasks.

1.4. Students' Perceptions of the Perceived Motivation Aspect

The last aspect is perceived motivation, which measured by five statements. This aspect explored how the activity of creating glossaries motivated students in learning translation process, particularly in managing the vocabulary in specific topic for translating text. The results of students' responses are displayed figure 4.

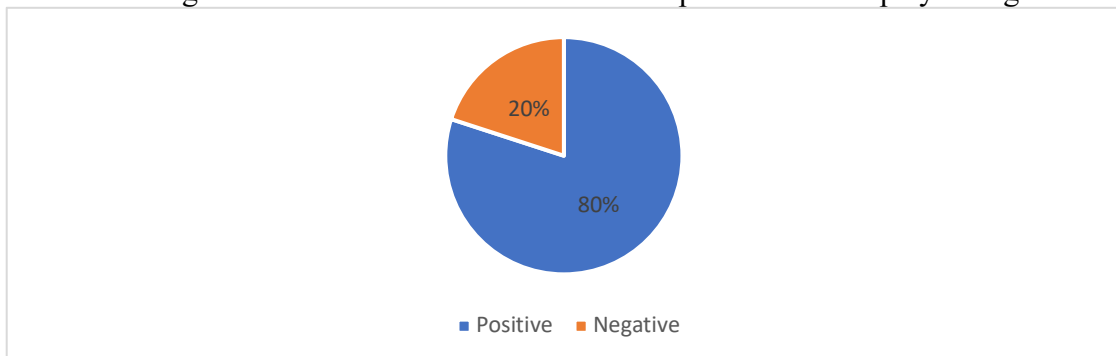


Figure 4. Students' Perceptions of the Perceived-Motivation Aspect

Figure 4 illustrates students' perceptions on the perceived-motivation aspect of self-created glossary. The majority of students (80%) had a positive perception, meanwhile the minority of students (12%) had a negative perception of this aspect. The findings on perceived motivation show that students viewed self-created glossaries as a positive factor in sustaining their motivation in translation. The results also suggest that creating glossaries encouraged students to actively engage with unfamiliar words, maintain their interest through regular practice, and develop greater independence by reducing reliance on dictionaries

2. Students' Strategies in Creating Glossaries

After reviewing and analyzing all students' responses on open-ended question, several themes were identified. These include how they selected vocabulary, the sources of their vocabulary, the ways they organized their entries, the additional notes they provided, and the supporting practices they used to enhance the quality of their glossaries. Meanwhile, some students showed little strategy or effort, and one student even stated that they did not make a glossary at all.

The most frequent strategy use by student was Contextual Vocabulary Selection, indicating that many students chose vocabulary related to the translation topic or text context. This was followed by Organizational Strategy, where students arranged their glossaries systematically for clarity and easier use. Some students also applied Resource-Based Strategies and Additional details, such as consulting dictionaries, websites, or AI tools and adding definitions, synonyms, or example sentences to enhance understanding. A few students demonstrated Planning Strategy, preparing by researching the topic before selecting vocabulary, which reflects higher learning awareness and preparation before translation.

The following bar chart presents the percentage distribution of strategies used by students across five aspects.

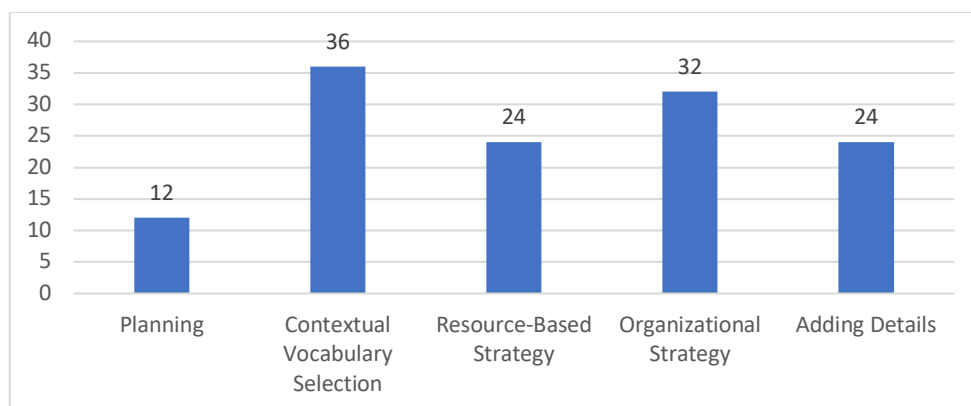


Figure 5. Students' Strategies in Creating Glossaries (in Percentage)

The percentage of strategies students use when creating their own glossaries is shown in Figure 1. Planning (12%), Contextual Vocabulary Selection (36%),

Resource-Based Strategy (24%), Organizational Strategy (32%), and Additional details (24%), were the five main themes that appeared from the students' responses. This result showing that one student can have more than one strategy in creating glossary.

3. Students' Strategies in Creating Self-Created Glossaries Based on Their Perception Categories

To illustrate how students' perception levels relate to the strategies they used in developing self-created glossaries, the results from both the quantitative and qualitative analyses were integrated. This integration helps identify patterns showing whether students with higher perception scores tend to employ more diverse and complex strategies than those with lower perception levels. Table 3 presents the summary of students' perception categories, their average scores, and the dominant strategies observed within each category.

Table 3. Integration of Students' Perception Levels and Strategies in Creating Glossaries

Category	Number of Students	Average Score	Dominant Strategies
Very Positive	5	3.58	Contextual Selection, Planning, Organizational, Additional Details
Positive	16	2.92	Resource-Based, Organizational, Additional Details
Negative	4	2.10	Low/No Strategy Awareness

Table 3 summarizes the relationship between students' overall perception categories and the dominant strategies they used in creating glossaries. The majority of students (16 out of 25, or 64%) were classified under the positive perception category, with an average score of 2.92. These students commonly employed resource-based, organizational, and detail-adding strategies, indicating an active but moderately varied engagement in glossary construction. Meanwhile, five students (20%) demonstrated very positive perceptions, achieving the highest average score of 3.58. These students tended to use more complex and metacognitive strategies, such as planning, contextual vocabulary selection, and systematic organization, suggesting deeper awareness and intentional learning behaviors. Conversely, four students (16%) showed negative perceptions with an average score of 2.10, characterized by low or no strategy awareness. This group generally viewed the glossary task as less engaging or repetitive, which may reflect limited motivation or lack of understanding of the glossary's pedagogical value. Overall, the data reveal a clear pattern: the higher the perception level, the more varied and strategic the students' approach to glossary creation.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study revealed that most students perceived the self-created glossary positively as a vocabulary learning tool to support their translation practice.

This finding aligns with previous studies indicating that self-created glossaries can enhance vocabulary retention and contextual understanding. As Nation (2013) emphasizes, vocabulary learning strategies that involve active engagement, such as organizing, categorizing, and self-monitoring, lead to stronger vocabulary mastery. Similarly, Pérez & Díaz (2022) found that glossaries promote both linguistic accuracy and consistency in translation, although some students may perceive them as repetitive or time-consuming. The present study extends these findings by showing that students' attitudes toward glossaries are shaped not only by the outcomes of their work but also by their learning experience, whether they find the process creative, relevant, or monotonous.

Regarding the attractiveness aspect, most students found the self-created glossary appealing because it allowed them to express creativity and personalize their learning experience. They enjoyed selecting vocabulary, organizing it in their own preferred format, and seeing their weekly progress. This sense of ownership made the learning process more meaningful and engaging. These findings support Oxford's (2013) view that learners experience greater enjoyment and involvement when they are given autonomy and control over their learning tasks. Similarly, Pérez and Díaz (2022) also noted that when students have opportunities to develop their own glossaries, they tend to perceive the activity as both beneficial and motivating.

For the effectiveness aspect, students perceived the glossaries as helpful for improving comprehension and retaining new vocabulary, as reflected in the high mean score (2.87) in this category. Students reported that rewriting definitions and organizing vocabulary enhanced their understanding of word meanings and made it easier to apply vocabulary during translation tasks. This supports Nation's (2013) claim that active vocabulary processing strengthens word retention. Nevertheless, a few students found that the glossary did not always help them use certain words accurately, which supports Alahmadi (2019) finding that vocabulary learning strategies yield varied outcomes depending on learners' consistency and effort. Thus, the effectiveness of the glossary depended largely on how actively and purposefully students applied it.

The relevance aspect received the highest perception score (3.02), showing that students viewed their glossaries not merely as lists of words but as practical resources that supported translation practice. The words students selected were directly related to the translation topics, making their glossaries meaningful and context-based. They also noted that adding example sentences and technical terms helped them understand vocabulary use in authentic contexts. This finding reinforces the concept of situated learning proposed by Lave & Wenger (1991) which emphasizes that knowledge becomes meaningful when applied in real contexts. Similarly, Pérez and Díaz (2022) observed that translation-specific glossaries help improve accuracy, consistency, and topic familiarity.

As for the motivation aspect, many students mentioned that creating glossaries encouraged them to be more active in their learning process, the total mean score for this aspect is 2.96. They felt more interested in collecting and organizing words before translation tasks, which made them less dependent on dictionaries or translation tools. This aligns Zimmerman (2002) concept of *self-regulated learning*, where autonomous strategies enhance intrinsic motivation and engagement. In the context of this study,

students' motivation stemmed from their sense of ownership and control in constructing the glossary. However, the level of motivation varied; while some students found the activity engaging, others considered it merely a routine classroom task.

The open-ended responses provided further insights into the strategies students used in creating their glossaries. Five main themes emerged: (1) Contextual (2) Vocabulary Selection, (3) Resource-Based Strategy, (3) Organizational Strategy, (4) Additional details, and (5) Planning Strategy. The most frequently used strategy was Contextual Vocabulary Selection, where students focused on choosing vocabulary relevant to the translation topic, unfamiliar words, or terms they found essential for the text. This shows that students were not simply listing random words but consciously selecting vocabulary based on context. These findings echo Adam & Magfirah (2022), who found that students often select and study words appearing in specific academic or thematic contexts to make learning more meaningful and task-oriented.

The Resource-Based Strategy involved students' use of multiple resources such as dictionaries, websites, or AI tools to verify meanings and expand understanding, this appeared as the most dominant strategies. This finding resonates with Kurniawan et al. (2021)), who noted that Indonesian EFL students frequently rely on dictionaries and digital tools due to their accessibility and reliability. The combination of traditional and digital sources in this study reflects how students integrate human and technology-assisted learning.

The Organizational Strategy referred to how students structured their glossaries alphabetically or in tables to ensure clarity and ease of use. Velardi et al. (2006) emphasized that a well-organized glossary enables easy retrieval of terms and supports learning efficiency. Students' emphasis on neatness and structure indicates that they viewed glossaries not only as learning tools but also as references to revisit during translation practice.

The Additional Details Strategy, which included synonyms, example sentences, and grammatical notes, demonstrated deeper engagement with vocabulary learning. These elaboration techniques align with Richards & Schmidt (2013) concept of memory strategies, which involve creating associations or contextual examples to reinforce meaning. This also supports Craik & Lockhart (1972) depth-of-processing theory, which posits that elaborative encoding, such as linking new words with contexts, promotes better recall. In this study, students who provided additional details showed more advanced vocabulary learning maturity.

The Planning Strategy, although less frequently applied, showed an important dimension of metacognitive awareness. Students who researched topics beforehand or set weekly vocabulary goals displayed self-regulated learning behaviors as proposed by Zimmerman (2002), which include planning, monitoring, and evaluating one's own learning. These students demonstrated how advance preparation could strengthen vocabulary acquisition and translation performance. Similarly, Fraidan & Fakhli (2024) found that planning and goal-setting contribute significantly to vocabulary retention and motivation.

The integration of students' perception scores and their strategies showed that those with higher perception levels tended to use more varied and complex strategies in creating their glossaries. These students demonstrated planning, contextual

selection, organization, and elaboration, reflecting a combination of metacognitive and cognitive engagement. This finding supports Oxford's (2013) theory of language learning strategies, which posits that learners with higher motivation tend to employ diverse strategies to regulate their learning. Similarly, Zimmerman's (2002) model of self-regulated learning explains that students with higher self-efficacy and positive beliefs about their learning tasks display better planning, monitoring, and evaluation behaviors, patterns also evident in this study.

Students with very positive perceptions viewed the glossary not merely as an assignment but as a meaningful tool to enhance vocabulary mastery and translation accuracy. This aligns with Anugraheny (2021), who found that students with positive attitudes toward vocabulary journals demonstrated greater learner autonomy and used deeper learning strategies such as reflection and contextual analysis. Meanwhile, students with moderately positive perceptions mainly used simpler strategies, such as organizing glossaries alphabetically or relying on online dictionaries. They recognized the usefulness of the glossary but did not fully integrate it into their learning process. This aligns with Griffiths (2008), who stated that strategy use varies according to learners' motivation and experience.

Conversely, students with negative perceptions applied minimal or no strategies, indicating low engagement and motivation. This finding aligns with Dörnyei (2014) theory of motivation in second language learning, which emphasizes that students' attitudes toward learning tasks strongly influence their willingness to use strategies. When students perceive a task as irrelevant or ineffective, they tend to disengage. Similarly, Oxford (2013) noted that low strategy use is often linked to low emotional involvement and weak belief in the usefulness of the task. This supports Een (2021) view that students' perceptions are shaped by how effectively they experience a strategy's benefits in their learning process.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that self-created glossaries were perceived as generally attractive, affective, relevant, and motivative for students' vocabulary mastery for translating text. These perceptions are not only influenced by the glossaries itself, but also by how students create their glossaries. The integration between perception scores and strategies also shows a clear pattern. Students with higher perception scores often used clearer and more organized strategies such as planning, vocabulary selection, elaboration, and contextual enrichment. Meanwhile, students with lower perception scores tended to use fewer strategies or did not apply any clear strategy at all. This suggests that students who were more active and strategic in making their glossaries also perceived it as more useful for their learning. Conversely, students who lacked strategy tended to perceive the glossaries less positively.

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