

STUDENTS' PERCEPTION OF THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE IN TRANSLATION FOR LEISURE AND EVENTS COURSE

Fitrotul Maulidiyah, S.Pd., M.Pd.*

Abstract

This study aims to identify the perceptions of students of D4 in English for the Tourism Industry Study Program at the State Polytechnic of Malang on the use of Google Translate (GT). Twenty-one students were selected as the research participants. The instruments used were questionnaires and interviews. The questionnaires and interviews were about the students' perceptions regarding the students' frequency of using GT, students' agreement or disagreement regarding the use of GT, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of using GT. The qualitative-descriptive analysis found that most respondents indicated a relatively high dependency on the use of GT in completing their translation assignments. The results revealed that all participants sometimes used GT and felt confident. Even though using GT provided several disadvantages, some students still believe GT offered more advantages than disadvantages. However, most students stated that they edited the translation results from GT before submitting them.

Keywords:

Google Translate, machine translation, translation.

Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi persepsi mahasiswa Program Studi D4 Bahasa Inggris untuk Industri Pariwisata di Politeknik Negeri Malang terhadap penggunaan Google Translate (GT). Subjek penelitian ini terdiri atas 21 mahasiswa. Instrumen penelitian yang digunakan adalah kuesioner dan wawancara. Kuesioner dan wawancara ini mengenai persepsi mahasiswa terkait frekuensi penggunaan GT, setuju atau tidaknya mahasiswa terkait penggunaan GT, serta kelebihan dan kekurangan penggunaan GT. Berdasarkan analisis deskriptif kualitatif, hasil penelitian menyatakan bahwa sebagian besar responden penelitian menunjukkan ketergantungan yang cukup besar terkait penggunaan GT dalam menyelesaikan tugas penerjemahan mereka. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa seluruh peserta kadang-kadang menggunakan GT dan mereka merasa percaya diri. Walaupun penggunaan GT memiliki beberapa kekurangan, beberapa mahasiswa

*Dosen Politeknik Negeri Malang, fitrotulmaulidiyah@polinema.ac.id, Jl. Soekarno Hatta No. 9 Kota Malang 65141

masih merasa GT memiliki lebih banyak kelebihan dibandingkan kekurangan. Namun, sebagian besar mahasiswa menyatakan bahwa mereka menyunting hasil penerjemahan dari GT sebelum mengumpulkan tugas tersebut.

Kata kunci:

Google Translate, mesin penerjemahan, penerjemahan.

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is the transmission of a thought in a language to another language. It is a process that guides from written source language text into the target language (Pinchuck, 1977; Wilss, 1982; Newmark, 1991). It is also a bridge to understanding knowledge, science, textual material, and others. According to Arono and Nadrah (2019), many learners practice translation to understand a text written in a foreign language. Today, many machine translation tools are emerging to help people translate any text instantly. Google Inc., Google's development work, introduced Google Translate (GT) by the end of 2008. Google Translate helps people automatically translate texts or web pages from one language into another.

Technologies are fundamentally designed to meet humans' needs, and along with constant changes in the world, technological changes are inevitable. Thus, people need to adapt to them in their daily life. Even so, technologies are not developed to replace humans but to assist them in improving daily productivity. In translation, for instance, technologies are developed to aid translators in simplifying their everyday tasks and meeting the growing demands of the clients. Because of the increased demands, the practice of translation directionality has also shifted.

Despite the negative critiques from traditional scholars, the need for non-native translators is sometimes unavoidable. In professional practice, translators need to adapt and fully gain leverage of translation technologies such as machine translation (MT) and computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools in order to meet their client's demands and

deadlines. The reason is that the use of CAT tools has become a distinctive feature of the translation scene. It also helps translators with digital translation memory, phrase dictionaries, and other terminology-related databases, which enhance translation efficiency, accuracy, and productivity (Ali, 2019). Consequently, post-editing (PE) has become integral to translator training and professional practice to boost their productivity and improve the quality of their translation tasks (Sismat, 2016).

Post-editing (PE) is the process by which a human translator corrects a text that a machine translation system has automatically translated. Furthermore, PE is defined as the process of correcting fuzzy matches from the translation memories. Nowadays, professional translation practice involves post-editing outputs from machine translation and translation memories to produce better-quality translation much more effectively (Sismat, 2016).

Diploma 4 in English for Tourism Industry Study Program at State Polytechnic of Malang is a study program that offers several translation courses specializing in the tourism industry. Students need to take these translation courses as these are compulsory for them. Thus, students always take translation courses, at least one course each semester. They start taking translation courses in the second semester, the Introduction to Translation course, followed by other translation courses in the subsequent semesters, including the Translation for Leisure and Events course, offered in the fourth semester. In addition, students are introduced to the use of machine translation and various computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools to complete their translation assignments. This knowledge is needed as the students are expected to be professional translators who can use CAT tools during the completion of the translation project.

The preliminary study conducted by the researcher found that the students' translation results indicated the use of machine

translation, as some of the translation results were too literal. Additionally, some words and phrases were not translated accurately, which might cause misunderstanding when the lecturer observes and evaluates the translation results. This issue might be caused by the frequent use of machine translation, or, in this case, GT, but without the proper post-editing.

Despite the easy access to GT, several students still find some problems in using it, which causes poor translation results. This circumstance leads to different perspectives on using Google Translate in teaching and learning. Therefore, this study aims to identify and describe the students' perception of using Google Translate in the Translation for Leisure and Events course. The students' perception is needed to know further actions which the lecturers should take to tackle problems related to the use of GT in the other translation courses.

2. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research utilizes the descriptive qualitative design that was deemed an appropriate mode of inquiry for this research to provide information about the students' perception of the use of GT. This study follows the design's characteristics in ways that give a complete and detailed description of interest in natural settings without manipulation and is inductive (Gay, 1987; McMillan & Schumacher, 1993; Bogdan & Biklen, 2007). The descriptive-qualitative design was implemented as the data obtained from the research were described in words rather than in numbers.

The research participants were twenty-one students of class 2A in D4 in English for the Tourism Industry Study Program at the State Polytechnic of Malang. Data were obtained from the students' perceptions related to the GT usage frequency, agreement or

disagreement towards the use of GT, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of the use of GT.

In order to collect data, the researcher utilized questionnaires and interviews as the research instruments. The questionnaires adapted the ideas from the instruments of previous studies conducted by Paramaswari, Maryam, and Ilangko (2014) and Susanto (2017). These questionnaires were then modified to suit the objectives of this research.

The questionnaires comprised ten questions about the frequency of the use of GT. In addition, the interview consisted of five questions about the advantages and disadvantages of using GT, namely: (1) Do you use GT? (2) How do you use GT? (3) How do you feel when using GT? (4) Do you agree that GT provides many advantages? If so, what are they? (5) Do you agree that GT provides too many disadvantages? If so, what are they?

The process of data collection consisted of some stages; namely (1) modifying the questions for the questionnaires and interview; (2) distributing the questionnaires to the research participants and conducting the interview with the research participants; (3) asking the research participants to fill in the questionnaires; and (4) collecting all the questionnaires that the research participants had answered.

After the data collection procedures were completed, the next step was data analysis. In analyzing the data, the researcher carried out several data analysis procedures, which were: (1) reading all of the research participants' responses, (2) sorting the data, (3) organizing, coding, and analyzing the data, and (4) elaborating the analysis of the data to obtain the findings of the research.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

This part describes the findings and discussions of this research. The findings were explained based on the data from the questionnaires

delivered to the students in the Translation for Leisure and Events course. Research participants were required to choose among five options available. The questionnaire options were presented as a Likert scale ranging from 1 – 5 (1 means never and 5 means very often). The items in the questionnaires were about the perception of the frequent use of GT and when the students usually use GT when completing the translation assignments. The questionnaire items were written more thoroughly in Table 1.

The data presented in this research were obtained from the questionnaires filled in by students of class 2A of the Translation for Leisure and Event course. The students were asked to choose one option (out of five available choices) that best described their preference by putting a check (✓) mark on their choice. Table 1 below presents the results of the questionnaires which the students have filled in.

Table 1. Results of Questionnaires

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1	Total Percentage
1	I use machine translation (Google Translate) to check the meaning of unknown words.	14%	43%	38%	5%	0%	100%
2	I use Google Translate to check collocations.	0%	14%	43%	43%	0%	100%
3	I use Google Translate to check synonyms.	5%	24%	33%	24%	14%	100%
4	I use Google Translate to translate a phrase.	0%	10%	38%	48%	5%	100%
5	I use Google Translate to translate a sentence.	5%	38%	38%	19%	0%	100%
6	I use Google Translate to translate a clause.	0%	19%	67%	10%	5%	100%

No	Items	5	4	3	2	1	Total Percentage
7	I use Google Translate to translate a paragraph.	0%	38%	38%	19%	5%	100%
8	I use Google Translate to translate parts of an essay/article consisting of two paragraphs or more.	0%	43%	19%	33%	5%	100%
9	I use Google Translate to translate a whole essay/article.	5%	24%	29%	24%	19%	100%
10	After translating using Google Translate, I edit the result of the translation.	67%	24%	5%	5%	0%	100%
Average Percentage		10%	28%	35%	23%	5%	100%

5 : always

4 : often

3 : sometimes

2 : rarely/seldom

1 : never

From Table 1, it can be seen that ranging from always (5) to never (1) options, students tend to choose “always,” “often,” and “sometimes” for item 1, which is to use GT to check the meaning of unknown words (95%). Furthermore, the tendency to use GT to check collocations is 14% for the option of “often” and 43% for “sometimes.” However, the percentage of students who rarely use GT to check collocations is similar to that of students who sometimes use GT to check collocations. Next, for the purpose of checking synonyms, 5% of the students said that they always use GT, 24% of them often use GT, 33% of them

sometimes use GT, 24% of them seldom use GT, and 14% of them never use GT.

In order to translate a phrase, no student chose the option "always" to use GT when they were given translation assignments. Meanwhile, 10% of them often use GT, 38% sometimes use GT, 48% seldom use GT, and 5% use GT to translate a phrase. Furthermore, students also use GT to translate a sentence and a clause. In translating a sentence, 5% of them use GT, 38% of them often use GT, 38% sometimes use GT and 19% seldom use GT. However, it seems that no student chose the option "never" in relation to the use of GT, or in other words, all of the research participants used GT at least once to translate a sentence.

Concerning the translation of a clause, 19% of the students often use GT, 67% of them sometimes use GT, 10% seldom use GT, and 5% never use GT. Moreover, not a single student has been found who chooses "always" to use GT to translate a clause. This result is similar to the result of item 7, which is about translating a paragraph. No student chooses the option "always" in using GT to translate a paragraph. Meanwhile, 38% of them often use GT, followed by the same percentage for the option "sometimes." There is 38% of them sometimes use GT when translating a paragraph. Next, 19% of the students seldom use GT, and 5% of them never use GT in translating a paragraph.

There are very low tendencies indicated on discourse levels (paragraph, parts of an essay/article consisting of two paragraphs or more, and a whole essay/article). The percentage shows that more than 50% of the students translate parts of an essay/article consisting of two paragraphs or more (43% of the students often use GT, 19% of the students sometimes use GT, 33% of the students seldom use GT and 5% of the students never use GT). In addition, more than 50% of them use GT to translate a whole essay/article (5% of the students always

use GT, 24% of the students often use GT, 29% of the students sometimes use GT, 24% of the students seldom use GT and 19% of the students never use GT). One result which must also be taken into consideration is that a high percentage of the students (67%) stated that they always edit the result of the translation, in contrast to no student mentioned that they never edit their translation.

4. ADVANTAGES OF USING GOOGLE TRANSLATE

Based on the interviews conducted with the students of the Translation for Leisure and Events course, the students shared their positive perceptions of general advantages of the use of Google Translate: (1) all participants have utilized Google Translate; (2) using GT helps them translate all kinds of translation assignments; (3) using GT is a much easier and efficient way to translate texts, and (4) using GT has been able to assist the students in any time and at any place.

The students' responses further proved these advantages. Some similar responses were written conclusively so that they would be distinct. The students' responses were illustrated below:

R.1

I use Google Translate for all kinds of translation assignments, for example, to translate words, phrases, sentences, paragraphs, etc. Using GT speeds up my work to translate, and it is more time-efficient.

R.2

I use GT to find the meaning of words or vocabulary that I do not know or am not familiar with. GT helps me find the meaning of words or vocabulary that I do not know, or am familiar with, so much faster.

R.3

I use GT to translate paragraphs and find the synonyms of some words. GT is very helpful, and it provides many advantages, for example, to save time in order to understand a sentence or ideas in paragraphs.

R.4

I use GT to translate words and sentences, sometimes paragraphs too. GT provides an advantage, it is very simple to use, and there is a choice of other meanings of a word, so I can also improve my vocabulary.

R.7

I use GT to translate sentences I don't understand, but more often, to translate paragraphs. GT provides an advantage because it can help our activities in learning, especially in translation.

R.9

I use GT to translate words that are difficult to understand. Both words and sentences. Using GT was fun, extremely easy, fast, and very helpful. This makes me understand the meaning of sentences I don't understand.

R.10

I use GT to understand the meaning of a difficult sentence. I enjoy and feel very much helped by GT. GT provides advantages because I can access it anytime and anywhere.

R.1, R.2, R.3, R.4, R.7, R.9, and R.10 were the samples of students' perceptions towards the advantages of using GT to finish their translation assignments in the Translation for Leisure and Event course. It shows that they show a positive perception towards the use of GT. Hence, it could be inferred that the students take advantage of using GT in completing their translation assignments, whether it is in finding the meaning of unknown words, phrases, clauses, sentences, or even paragraphs. Furthermore, GT offers more time efficiency in finishing the assignment as well as flexibility as it can be accessed anywhere and anytime. They believe that using GT is easy and practical. They find it to be very useful, and it is free to use.

5. DISADVANTAGES OF USING GOOGLE TRANSLATE

Despite the advantages, students also find GT to be disadvantageous. It could be revealed from the interviews that students stated that GT tends to make them lazier and more dependent. Besides, the translation results provided by GT are too literal.

The samples of participants' responses toward the disadvantages of using GT could be observed below.

R.1

GT also has a disadvantage. It makes me lazy to work by myself because it thinks faster than my brain. It makes me lazier to do the translation work manually.

R.3

GT also has a disadvantage as it leads to dependency, so lazy to improve the ability of students to translate. Also, I become lazy to understand the contextual meaning of the difficult words or sentences.

R.5

I often feel not confident with my own translation. But then the translation results from GT are sometimes ambiguous and confusing. So, it must be re-checked so that the translation results match with the original meaning of the source texts.

R.6

When I use GT, I still have to pay attention and correct the sentence generated from GT because not every translation translated by GT is accurate, especially when it comes to idioms and two-word verbs. Using GT makes us dependent so much, so I have to be careful.

As presented by the data above, R.1, R.3, R.5, and R.6 were the samples of students' perceptions toward the disadvantages of using GT. It could be said that they show negative perceptions towards the use of GT. According to these students, GT is unhelpful because of several reasons. The most popular reason generated from the interviews is that GT provokes their laziness as well as leads them to be more dependent, especially when it is related to completing their translation assignments.

The findings about the use of GT show that the participants frequently use it to translate text on the discourse level. The results are in line with research conducted by Kharbach (2016) that students can also use GT to know the meaning of a word. A low percentage is shown by the translation of phrases using GT. It reflects Josefsson's research (2011), as cited in Sukkhwan (2014), that GT is quite supportive for phrases. The results reveal that students still need the help of GT to

translate phrases, sentences, clauses, paragraphs, and even a whole essay or article. Students are not supposed to use GT during the translation course even though they edit the results generated by GT. Moreover, Medvedev (2016) also found that the results of GT are not accurate when it comes to long texts, and this is also proven by the results obtained from the interviews conducted with the research participants.

Meanwhile, on the agreement and disagreement of using GT, the findings support Kumar's (2012), as cited in Sukkhwon (2014) for his survey carried out to 60 EFL students related to their dependency on MT in learning English. It was found that 75% of the students comprehend the concepts taught in English Language Teaching classrooms by using GT. Pena's survey (2011), as cited in Baker (2013), on the advantages of GT in language learning, indicated a similar result too. In the result, students' positive experiences revealed that when the students learn efficient and effective ways to learn new vocabulary, they would also learn how to write much faster too.

6. DISCUSSIONS

Students agree that GT provides them with some advantages related to translation learning. This finding supported the survey conducted by Groves and Mundt (2015), stating that GT is a free web-based machine translation and easy to use. Furthermore, Medvedev (2016) also mentioned that GT could be utilized both inside and outside the classroom. As what had been stated by Pena (2011), as cited in case (2015), GT gives students a guide of what to write. This is in line with the interview results, where the students mentioned that GT is a useful tool in helping them understand unknown words or sentences. However, they also think that they have to edit the translation results (post-editing) since the translation results generated by GT are not always correct. The translation results of GT are literal, and for some

assignments, they stated that they need to paraphrase and elaborate the translation results of some types of source texts.

Pena (2011), as cited in Baker (2013), also stated that students need to revise the translation results generated by GT as they are not always accurate. The translation results by GT are literal, and they sometimes cannot translate idiomatic expressions accurately. Therefore, post-editing is suggested to be carried out. If students only copy the results from GT directly, students will not be independent of GT, and they cannot sharpen their ability to translate. This finding supported Harris's research (2010), as cited in Baker (2013), that the result of the use of online translators is the loss of a "valuable opportunity of learning how the language functions." They believed that if they used GT frequently, they would be lazy to think and recall their knowledge, even on the easiest tasks. They thought that if they excessively used GT, they could not learn a language independently, in this case English, because they would always need GT's assistance. This finding supported research by Clifford et al. (2013), as cited in case (2015), which stated that GT has no advantage to the learning process because it will only bring about the students' dependency.

7. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

Based on the findings and discussion of the research, it could be concluded that from the frequent use of GT by the students, the data illustrate (demonstrate?) that students have quite a high tendency to use GT to find the meaning of unknown words and synonyms. However, related to finding the meaning of collocations, students only sometimes use GT. For higher levels—finding the meaning of phrases, clauses, and sentences, they have a moderate tendency to use GT. It is also interesting that the results revealed that students also use GT at discourse levels to find the translation of paragraphs, parts of an essay consisting of two paragraphs or more, and whole essay/article.

Next, related to the agreement and disagreement regarding the use of GT, the findings indicated that most research participants showed a high dependency on GT in completing translation assignments given in the Translation for Leisure and Events course. They frequently utilize GT to search for meanings due to their needing help in understanding some words and sentences. All of the research participants agreed that the multiple semanticity of English words has become a serious problem for them. They have difficulty in choosing the most suitable meanings for given situations. As a result, this has led them to depend highly on GT to find equivalent terms.

Subsequently, the students shared their positive perceptions of the general advantages of using GT. The advantages of using GT mentioned by the students are (1) GT is easy and practical to use; (2) using GT helps them translate many kinds of translation assignments; (3) using GT is time-efficient, and (4) GT is very useful and could be used anytime and anywhere.

Eventually, in spite of its advantages, the use of GT also comes with some disadvantages (drawbacks?). GT provokes students' laziness and leads to students' dependency. It is also still flawed in providing accurate translation models for many expressions. GT is generally considered an important tool in translation learning among students, although using GT itself is not suggested to be continuously used by the translation lecturers (... students. However, the continued use of GT itself by translation lecturers is not suggested). The results also revealed that all research participants used GT to help them finish translation assignments at different frequency levels. They used it quite often, and some students felt confident with its translation results.

Even though using GT also comes with several disadvantages, students still believe that it has more advantages. GT continues developing its features to provide more translation alternatives that the students can choose from. However, students still believe that they

need to do post-editing after using GT to help them translate some assignments more accurately.

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