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Google Translate as an Alternative Tool for Assisting Students in Doing Translation : A Case Study at Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia

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Abstract

The paper examines the use of Google Translate as an Alternative tool for assisting students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia to translate and develop their knowledge and skills in doing Translation. The participants of the study were 36 students at the Applied Linguistic of Doctoral Program at Universitas Negeri Jakarta who had registered of the year 2017. Based on literature review, analysis of the collecting data, and an assessment of the course content and activities inside and outside the learning process, the findings suggest that most Applied Linguistic of Doctoral Program students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta recognize Google Translate as an Alternative tool for doing references book translation. In fact, some students reported that they could optimally ,benefit from self-learning if they were assisted to use Google Translate effectively. Moreover, using Google Translate for doing classroom tasks and reference books translation encourage students to study independently, and to shape their own strategies for solving language problem.

Keywords : *Google Translate, Alternative Tool, Translation, Assisting Student*

INTRODUCTION

Since the advent of the Grammar-Translation method in the mid-nineteenth century, researchers have long investigated the use of translation as a methodology for learning language skills such as reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary (Richards, 2001). The emergence of new electronic tools and technology has changed greatly from the previous methodology. At present the presence of technology is a new way for students and language teachers to explore learning in the field of language (Tabatabaei & Gui, 2011; Roche, 2010). Some scholars (Dagiliene, 2012; Cook, 2010) believe that because of the needs and realities of today's global world, there is an advancement in the translation approach for language learning and teaching.

In recent years, a technology that has helped students to develop their language

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learning skills is Google Translate, or GT. Indeed, millions of people around the world use this service for translating every day and more language students use it for language learning purposes. However, the advantages and potential of new technologies for language learning have recently been explored by several researchers (Groves & Mundt, 2015; Jin & Deifell, 2013; Garcia & Pena, 2011; Josefsson, 2011). Meanwhile, some teachers expressed doubts about the way we prepare the students to discuss this technology both inside and outside the classroom (Davis, 2006; Watkins, 2004).

Google Translate is a free machine translation service provided by Google Company to translate text and messages from one language to another. Currently it can be accessed via a web interface along with an application smart phone / interface and application programming interface that can be accommodated into new software. In 2016 GT supports more than 100 languages (Google Translate, 2016). Google Translate is based on Machine Statistics Translation, which works by analyzing hundreds of millions of pairs of natural bilingual texts (Koehn, 2009). This natural partner can serve as an authentic example of the use of language from the available languages.

In a study related to the writings of a group of novice students who have low language fluency Garcia & Pena (2011) found that these students could benefit from using machine translation more than students who had high fluency and there was evidence that they preferred to use it even though contrary to the will of their instructor. Interestingly, they found that using machine translation also helped beginner students to communicate better among themselves.

Josefsson (2011) studied the strategies and attitudes of several vocational training students for translation in language learning. He concluded that as a supporting tool on students' mobile phones, Google Translate was better than traditional dictionaries with higher speed and accuracy especially for translations of collocations, phrases, and technical words. Regarding reading comprehension from the passages they are working on, it also provides a general core of the meaning of the text. Students are consciously aware of their own learning when they use Google Translate which leads to the production of more coherent texts by students. However, he found Google Translate proved to be less useful for providing grammar solutions.

Another study conducted by Jin & Deifell (2013) showed that as an online dictionary, Google Translate is the second most online tool used by language learners because of its ease. Even so, they concluded

that learners generally use Google Translate as a complement to the online dictionary because of a lack of grammatical explanations. The findings of their study confirm that students believe that using online tools such as Google Translate accelerates their reading and writing skills in foreign languages while reducing their learning anxiety. However, the researchers treated the new findings carefully because the online dictionary failed to provide clear explanations to students and generally ignored the context.

Recently Groves & Mundt (2015) emphasized the implications of using machine translation technology such as Google Translate to perform tasks and assignments in second language learning. In a study of sample English students for academic writing, they asked participants to write essays in their own mother tongue and then this essay was translated using Google Translate, the essay had many weaknesses and errors, understood and approached the minimum level requested by most institutions in university admission. In fact, the study authors believe that Google Translate can have a major influence on teaching languages for academic purposes both for students and their teachers; hence instructors in the field of language need to work with, not against, this technology.

Applied linguistics doctoral students at the Jakarta State University in 2017 follow the learning process with English-language reference books. While not all of the student's background comes from English education or not all have good ability in understanding English. So that this becomes an obstacle in understanding lecture reference books that speak English.

Students used Google Translate in translating lecture reference books. Students of the applied linguistics doctoral program at the State University of Jakarta underwent three semesters to complete the theory. For three semesters there are 12 courses taught. Each subject has English-language reference books. Each student meeting must present each topic in the syllabus based on the reference books. Of course this is not easy for a number of students who have limitations in English. So the effort to understand these books is done by translating them using google translate.

Current research aims to investigate the use of Google Translate as a complementary tool in assisting Jakarta State University's Applied Linguistics doctoral students in translating English-language reference books.

Therefore the following research question was asked:

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1. What is the student's perspective on using Google Translate as a tool in translating English books?

2. Do students use other translation machines other than Google Translate in translating English books?

3. Does Google Translate translate according to student needs?

METHOD

This is a case study research that investigates the use of Google Translate as a tool that helps students translate English-language reference books. Students are asked to fill in the questionnaire provided. This study uses a qualitative approach with descriptive methods. All answers to the questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive statistical software. Scientific research consists of 15 questions.

The participants in this study were 38 students of the applied linguistics doctoral program at Jakarta State University who had different backgrounds. The instrument in this study was developed by researchers and research subjects were asked to fill 15 items in question, 5 questions in the form of Likert scale and 10 questions in the form of subjective information or experience in using Google Translate as an alternative tool for learning to translate. Subjective questions will also be very important in exploring how important Google Translate is in their learning activities.

RESULT

The results of the survey are illustrated in table 1. In the column percentage shows that 48.5% of students make Google Translate the main choice in translating English reference books. More than 50% of students admit to using Google Translate only to help with translation.

While the percentage is quite fantastic, 75.8% of students admit that they have edited Google Translate's translation results. So students argue that Google Translate is very helpful for student translation activities during the lecture process.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for the Google Translate Usage Questionnaire

Item	N	Percentace	Google Translate Use
Q1	36	48.5%	Yaes
Q2	36	60.6%	Yes

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Q3	36	63.6%	Yes
Q4	36	75.8%	Yes
Q5	36	42.4%	Never
Q6	36	69.7%	Yes
Q7	36	72.7%	Yes
Q8	36	54.5%	Yes
Q9	36	36.4%	Sometimes
Q10	36	63.6%	Yes

To answer the second research question, researchers used the percentage graph as follows:
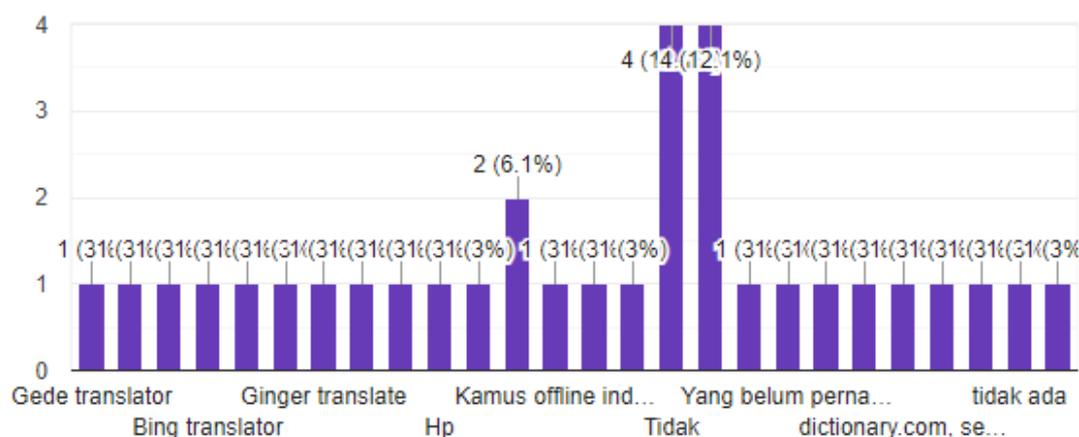

Figure 1. Percentage of use of other translation machine

From the graph shows that almost 15% of students do not use other translation machines except Google Translate. On average only 3% use translation engines other than Google Translate. This indicates that Google Translate is still more familiar to all students

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While for the third research question, the researcher collected research data as follows:
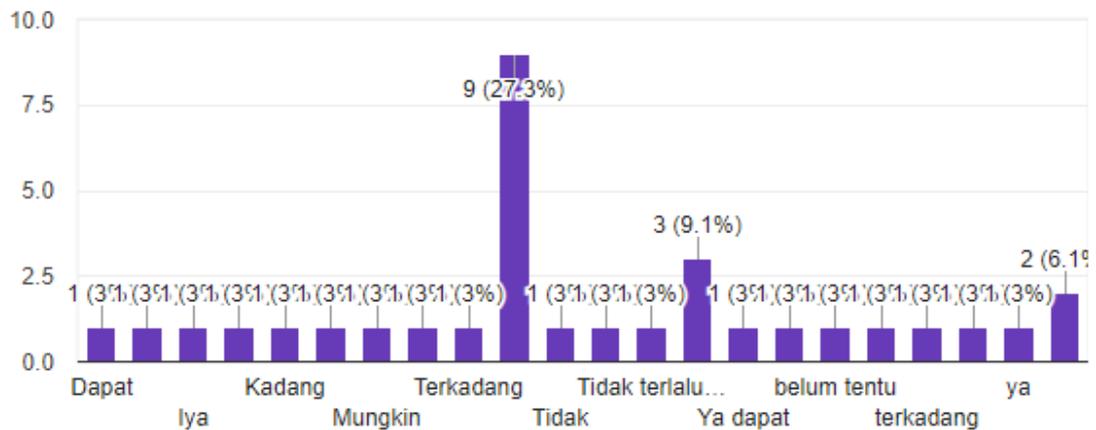

Figure 2. Percentage of Use of Google Translate as needed

The percentage of the graph above shows that around 27.3% admit that Google Translate cannot translate according to the needs of students. Only 9.1% think Google Translate can translate according to student needs. While the average student still gives a relative answer.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

In accordance with what Dagiliene (2012) and Cook (2010) have mentioned about the rise of the translation approach as a result of the needs of the modern world, this research can further support that translation technology can be useful for foreign language learners. It also supports several previous studies (Groves & Mundt, 2015; Garcia & Pena, 2011), which states that Google Translate can be very helpful for beginners in learning the basics of new languages especially for writing skills. Furthermore, this study corroborates the findings of Josefsson (2011) that Google Translate may not be the right tool for grammar learning.

Based on the findings mentioned above there is strong evidence that Google Translate can be used as a complementary tool to assist students in translating English-language lecture reference books for

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several reasons. First, most students still use Google Translate as a tool that provides convenience in translation. Second, the findings are based on the actual experience of students as active Google Tranlate users. Third, the results are positive that the aspects of using Google Translate are based on the basic assumptions and principles of constructivism (Gilakjani, et al. 2013; Juniu, 2006; Kim, 2005), which emphasizes that learners build their own world of understanding and knowledge, reflecting their approach itself to solve problems, and grow the ability to learn for life.

However, to eliminate the problems mentioned by participants further research is needed to provide tangible evidence and practical frameworks in which mechanisms and methodologies for integrating new technologies in translation, including Google Translate, can be the right alternative for students who are not skilled in English to understand English literature.

In conclusion, this study shows that using Google Translate as an alternative tool for students of applied linguistics doctoral programs is a wise strategy in increasing knowledge and understanding various English-language literature. Doctoral program students are quite aware and responsible for improving scientific insight so they also use technology as an alternative tool in helping them translate English-language reference books.

Besides that, it is also important to consider the limitations of Google Translate. First, the use of Google Translate only as a tool is not merely the primary choice for understanding English-language literature. Second, the use of Google Translate certainly has limitations because not all things can be translated correctly by the translation engine. Once again the users of the translation engine, Google Translate, must edit the results of the translation in order to find the exact meaning of the reading.

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Appendix A. Usage Questionnaire Google Translate

Sub-Skala	**Petunjuk:** Beri centang atau lingkaran untuk satu pilihan dari 4 pilihan yang ada. 1 = Tidak Pernah, 2=Jarang, 3=Kadang-kadang, 4=Ya. Tidak ada jawaban benar atau salah, semua pilihan jawaban dari 1 sampai 10, dan jawaban 11 sampai 15 sangat dihargai. Terimakasih!	Tidak pernah	Jarang	Kadang-kadang	Ya
	Google translate menjadi pilihan utama dalam menerjemahkan buku-buku referensi berbahasa Inggris	1	2	3	4
	Google translate digunakan hampir semua mahasiswa dalam menerjemahkan	1	2	3	4
	Google translate hanya membantu dalam penerjemahan	1	2	3	4
	Mahasiswa mengedit kembali hasil terjemahan google translate	1	2	3	4
	Mahasiswa sama sekali tidak mengedit hasil terjemahan goole translate	1	2	3	4
	Google translate sangat membantu dalam menerjemahkan	1	2	3	4
	Google translate membantu kegiatan penerjemahan mahasiswa	1	2	3	4
	Google translate adalah mesin penerjemahan populer di kalangan mahasiswa S3	1	2	3	4
	Google translate tidak cukup membantu dalam memahami teks terjemahan	1	2	3	4
	Google translate memberi kemudahan dalam menerjemahkan buku-buku referensi perkuliahan	1	2	3	4
11. Apakah anda menggunakan google translate untuk menerjemahkan tugas kuliah anda?					
12. Apakah google translate sangat penting dalam menerjemahkan buku-buku referensi yang berbahasa Inggris?					
13. Apakah google translate membantu anda secara baik dalam menerjemahkan?					
14. Apakah google translate dapat menerjemahkan sesuai dengan kebutuhan anda?					
15. Mesin penerjemahan lain yang digunakan dalam menerjemahkan adalah?					