



Tendency of Using Google Translate during Online English Class: Students' Concern

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ABSTRACT

In English as foreign language (EFL) classroom, using all-English materials is considered effortful due to the circumstances in which English is not basically used in student's daily inquiries. Yet the obligation to accomplish online tasks and practices during online class due to Covid-19 pandemic sometimes force students to instantly consult machine translation, in this case is Google Translate. When the tasks are fully written in English, it is considered that they tend to intensively use Google Translate once they encounter with unfamiliar words or something they know nothing about. Through a participatory observation, this present study descriptively examines how students tend to use Google Translate during the class. 34 first-year students of non-English department currently taking English course are involved in this study. The results briefly highlight the students' intentional tendency of Google Translate in respects to accomplish English tasks efficiently. Find the translation results of technical vocabulary, accomplish writing tasks, and access to direct assistance are elaborated as the findings along detail concerns of utilizing the tool.

Keywords: *Google Translate; English as Foreign Language; Online English Tasks; Translation Aspects; Students' Tendency*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language learning becomes more and more valuable and pivotal in nowadays sustainable society. Even in Indonesian in which English is taken as foreign language, it still beneficial for students since language competencies are becoming more demanding. As being proficient in certain level of English offers great opportunities to the world, conducting English as foreign language learning in tertiary context is significantly important [1]. English as foreign language (EFL, hereafter) class is set to facilitate students learn English in a particular context to grasp the nature of language as a means of communication [2]. Therefore, even though English is commonly used in educational and professional business setting only, EFL classes are provided with full-English materials and instructions in order to familiarize students with the actual setting of language use [3]. That is why teacher-students interaction during the class plays important roles to make the

students stay engaged in the learning activities [4]. However, as the Covid-19 pandemic spread all over the world, it alters almost all teaching learning process, including the students' learning activities and their interaction.

The pandemic outbreak has shifted teaching learning activities from classical or classroom-based activities into virtual or online activities. Online EFL class actually is not as simple as how it sounds, instead it comes with some challenges that may lead to effortful learning activities [5]. In term of teaching learning activities, it should be conducted online through online learning platform or learning management system (LMS). Formerly, teacher directly explain the materials and shows on-site demo to the students in front of the classroom while the students may observe it physically during the activities. It goes the same for teacher-student's interaction. Direct, physical communication among students and the teacher allow them to engaged more on the activities as well as enhance students'

communication skills. However, online EFL class demand the students to join the class virtually through particular applications and devices connected to internet connection in which it may effortful for them to comprehensively accomplish the materials and the tasks [6].

Apart from alteration in providing activities for students, having online class offers benefit for students as they are able to access information throughout the internet. Equipped with smartphone or PC with internet connection allows them not only to access tasks and materials provided by teacher, but also any online resources in the internet including online dictionary. According to initial discussion with the students, online dictionary or in this case is Google Translate is the application students mostly visit during the class. With its simplicity and open access as well as compatibility in translating words from many languages in just one click, it is no wonder that students are comfortable with this tool [7], [8]. Moreover, machine translation is considered beneficial for students to be used in certain phase of learning activities, such as preparing for the materials, understanding certain parts of the materials, preparing tasks' responses, assisting in having interaction, understanding teacher's feedback, etc. [9].

The problem is the results of Google Translate may not be definitely accurate, especially when it comes to longer sentences with some words associated with certain field or context [10]. Observing submitted students' written works and students' behaviour in interacting during the class, there is an indication that students are assisted with Google Translate in their learning that is indicated from similar errors in their tasks' responses [11], [12]. Moreover, there is a sign that students use Google Translate during the class as they tend to ask for additional time before providing responses during a discussion. Some previous studies assert that employing Google Translate in a language learning may be beneficial yet it requires good assistance [10], [13], [14]. However, describing narratively to what extend students tend to use Google Translate to assist them in an EFL class is not much of attention. Therefore, this present study aims to explore students' tendency in using Google Translate in online classes. It focuses on finding for what purposes students employ this machine translation tool in an English online class.

Table 1 Results of Student's tendency in using Google Translate

The use of Google Translate in EFL online Class	Students' implementation
Finding the translation version of technical vocabulary	Translating difficult words in the instructions Translating words related to students' field of study in the materials or task practices
Accomplishing writing tasks (tasks with written responses)	Presenting their ideas in English Completing grammatical-related aspects in their writing
Providing assistance in a discussion	Rechecking the instructions given Rechecking the words to respond

2. METHOD

Explanation on how students utilize Google Translate during online EFL class becomes the main subject of this study. In order to explore the phenomenon according to its actual situation, descriptive qualitative approach is employed in this observational study. This study takes place in a private university in Indonesia and it involves 34 first-year students of non-English department who are currently taking an English course conducted online. The data are collected through observation and interview (group discussion). The initial data collection technique is selected to practically obtain data on how students employ Google Translate during the class. Things related to how students answer the teacher's questions, provides written and oral responses, complete tasks and practices, and common errors noticed from students' works are some aspects to observe. Meanwhile, the later data collection technique allows the researcher to confront the observation results from the students' point of view. Once the data are collected, the data are analysed through three steps: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Such data analysis technique is considered the most common way in analysing qualitative data as it allows the researcher to work on the data objectively in their natural setting [15]. The results, then, are descriptively displayed in a narrative way in order to provide thorough explanation on the research questions.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

The analysis on students' tendency in using Google Translate are mainly conducted through observation on students' online learning activities and their tasks' responses during the class. Group discussion, then, takes place to elaborate the more on the findings in-depth. From data analysis, it is revealed that students utilize Google Translate for three considerations. First, students tend to use Google Translate to find the Indonesian meaning or the English version of technical vocabularies they encounter probably for the first time. Second, Google Translate is mostly used to help students accomplish writing tasks (written responses). Last but not least, students tend to use the tool to assist them in discussing a task (Table 1).

Detail elaboration of aforementioned findings are presented in discussion section as follows.

3.2. Discussion

The first finding reported that students tend to use Google Translate to find the Indonesian meaning of technical words in the texts they read, the tasks they are supposed to do, or even in the teacher's instructions. Basically, technical vocabulary refers to words associated with certain topics or field of study. The present English class is designed as English for Specific (ESP) class, a mandatory subject for students of Communication Science Department in the institution. As the subject is set specifically for Journalism and Public Relations field, the materials and the tasks or practices include specific vocabulary and topics associated with the aforementioned field. For most students who never had encountered with such topics, they may have no idea about some words closely related to the subject. From the observation on students' work and discussion during the class, they found it difficult to provide direct response when the questions have certain technical words in it. It took quite long time to answer but from the camera, it can be seen that they are busy typing and looking at their screen. Thus, it can be stated that instead of asking the teacher, they tend to access online machine translation tool to provide them the quick translation version of words they need to know. Moreover, during the group discussion, students stated that it is more convenience for them to consult Google Translate instead of asking the teacher about the meaning of a word. They claimed that there is a possibility of making mistake while asking or even making them more confused, they choose to directly click the tool.

Google Translate is a well-known translation application that offers direct translation from many languages in many languages. Such image, in some cases, reassure language users in employing it [8]. In term of present EFL class, students assert that being able to understand the English words in their first language as many as possible offers them opportunity to better comprehend the materials and understand the instructions. Thus, tasks and practices given during the class can be accomplished well and students may obtain good achievement. Practically, there is a significant correlation between students' self-esteem towards learning materials and their achievement when certain learning aids are involved [16]. It proved that using learning aids including Google Translate actually may be beneficial. That is why there is a tendency of using the tool found in online English class.

The second finding revealed from this present study in concerning the use of Google Translate to assist students accomplish writing tasks or tasks requiring written responses. In an English class, writing may become one of most difficult task to complete as it

requires students to brainstorm their ideas, construct their ideas into sentences, consider grammatical rules and contextualization, and select vocabulary properly [17]. Writing a sentence to complete a task or writing a whole paragraph share similar difficulties as well as challenge similar abilities. That is why from the observation of students' writing, the most common error found in students' works are related to grammar and vocabulary use. In some works, students fail to fit the grammatical rules even for simple sentence. As for longer sentences or paragraphs, it is quite hard to catch the point as students' sentences are composed separately. The overuse of prepositions and vocabulary that seems does not match the context are several indications that students employ Google Translate [17], [18], in this case is in transferring their ideas from Indonesia to English. As the tool is categorized as human assisted statistical machine translation, the results provided depend on the quality of source language input or typed to the system [13].

Referring to the group discussion results, more than half students insist that using Google Translate helps them completing writing task easily as they could find the English terms of any words they should include in their writing. Simply, they can instantly transfer their ideas from Indonesia to English in a form of sentence or paragraph. Among these students, some of them confess that not knowing the English version of a word becomes their biggest concern. As the results they tend to use Google Translate. Regarding this issue, employing Google Translate in assisting writing tasks offers beneficial for students yet it put their works at risk at the same time [19]. Google Translate is may provide best translation results in term of words or phrase. When the input is in a form of long sentences or even paragraph, the results may not as accurate and natural as human translation as it fails to adjust the context and fit the grammatical rules required in the task [10]. Therefore, adjusting the results is necessary in order to obtain the accurate, natural writing. Unfortunately, students are sometimes being not aware of this. Besides, it seems that their current proficiency level and cultural background limit them from being able to make certain translation adjustment. Previous study on students' awareness of difficulties in learning showed that students' lack of cultural related items contribute to their learning attitude [20].

The last finding in this study is regarding the assistance provided by google translate in the class discussion. Interactive communication among class members is one indicators representing the successful of language learning [3]. It indicates that the teaching and learning process is able to stimulate and facilitate students' competency to use language as communication means. However, language barriers in which students fails to understand the context, find the equivalences of words in their language, and to reconstruct their ideas into target language may hinder students in presenting

good language skills [1]. As in the present setting, students tried to utilize Google Translate to assist them finding the closest equivalences of words in their language to make them be able to provide expected responses. As the class is conducted online, it is convenience for them to access the tool when they are discussing the materials and the tasks or having questions and answer session. From the observation, it is revealed that students have the tendency to operate online translation machine tools during the discussion time as most of them tend to ask for more extra time before giving their responses. “Wait miss”, “wait a minute miss”, and “yes miss, wait” are some expressions they usually use when they are asked to answer a question or complete a task item orally.

In the group interview, half of students stated that discussing a task or materials under a topic they are not familiar with makes them nervous and afraid of giving wrong answers. As the results they could not directly state their response as they need to translate it first. Also, some of them prefer to ask the teacher to slowly repeat the questions while making sure they get the point by checking it on the online dictionary. In many cases of EFL learning, being able to efficiently grasp the information, read the context, and provide response to a certain questions requires not only vocabulary mastery and grammatical comprehension, but also the ability to manage learning process and ability to employ best learning strategies [20]. In this case, consulting online machine translation tools such as Google Translate can be considered as one of learning strategies employment [11]. Of course, proper consideration and teacher’s guideline in utilizing it are necessary in order to obtain best assistance for smooth communication.

4. CONCLUSION

The main concern of this study is to explore to what extend students have Google Translate involved in their online learning. The findings show that students of EFL class are indicated employ Google Translate for various phase of learning or objectives reported in this study. The tool’s well-known image for providing one-click translation results convince the students to rely on this app as learning assistance. Referring to the discussion, it is reported that students tend to use Google Translate to find the translation of certain words, accomplish writing tasks, and provide direct assistance. Moreover, as students are indicated utilize the results without proper adjustment due to their background and level of competencies, some common errors are noticed in their works that may affect their learning achievement.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researchers should say thank you to Research and Community Service Institution Universitas

Muhammadiyah Ponorogo for the supports given in carrying out this study. All researchers are also grateful towards the supports of all parties involved in this study so that this study could be accomplished comprehensively.

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