

Students' Views on the Use of Google Translate in English Language Learning

Fuva Wersa Yolifi¹, Afrianto², Masyhur³

Universitas Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia

¹ fuva.wersa5805@student.unri.ac.id, ² afrianto.a@lecturer.unri.ac.id, ³ masyhur@lecturer.unri.ac.id

Abstract

This study explores students' views on the use of Google translate in English Language Learning, focusing on students' perception on the use of Google translate and how they see it. The primary issue identified is that many students rely on Google Translate when encountering difficulties with vocabulary and long texts. Compared to other translation applications, Google Translate is widely favored among students because it offers helpful features. The research employs a mixed-method approach, combining questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for data collection. The population of this research is third-year English students, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at the University of Riau using random cluster sampling, 38 students were selected from 118 population. The analyzing data using descriptive statistical and qualitative analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994). The findings reveal that students generally hold positive views on using Google Translate with an average total score 66.77 in which score classification is 57-95. The participants have positive views about Google Translate, which is the application is very helpful in learning English, for completing assignments and language development.

Keywords: View; Google Translate; English Language Learning

INTRODUCTION

In this current era, technology has a big impact in the world of education. Technology has developed into a very helpful tool in the world of education. Technology helps many processes of learning. This complies with the Tondeur et al opinion in (Lestari, 2018) who state that now, digital technology is utilized in educational institutions to enhance learning. It can be used as a device for information access or as a device for learning, supporting assignments and learning activities. Technology Artificial intelligence, or AI, advances dramatically every year. Its existence, together with its evolving characteristics, capabilities, and appearance, is having an increasing effect on a variety of facets of human life, including education. Artificial Intelligence (AI) is starting to play a role in learning activities in schools and universities (Mulianingsih et al., 2020). Artificial Intelligence (AI) has become an important contributor to the development and advancement of educational technology. Where learning is helped a lot by applications. One of popular application is Google Translate.

Another translation application that commonly used by students with AI are ChatGPT, Quillbot, DeepL, and Microsoft translator. ChatGPT is an AI that can ask and answer anything, including translating. Quillbot is an AI that has a translation feature with the disadvantage of not being able to check pronunciation and not have camera features when compared to Google Translate. Then, there is DeepL which DeepL is a translation application very similar to google translate with the drawback that there is no handwriting feature, it cannot be offline and there's no tap to and only 32 languages available. Another application is Microsoft Translator which can only translate using the application, cannot using the website. Therefore, Google Translate has more complete features than the other applications. There are 100 languages available. Google

Translates' features include handwriting, camera feature, pronunciation feature, translate by voice record, tap to, offline dictionary, can enter all document files and websites, and can be opened without downloading the application or with website. Google Translate is highly favored and stands as the leading Machine Translation service. It has the capacity to store over 200 billion words, offering users the most extensive selection of words and phrases, which contributes to its popularity among students (Setiawan, A., & Axelina, M., 2023)

Google Translate is an automatic machine translation application that can translate vocabulary, paragraphs, help with language pronunciation, etc. Google Translate has been widely used by many students, because it helps the learning process. Many researchers have previously investigated how useful Google Translate is. Google Translate is capable of translating text phrase by phrase, clause by sentence, and even discourse (Alam, 2020).

Most students English Department at the University of Riau use Google Translate services as a learning support. They have difficulty translating a word, sentence or text. They also utilize it to verify pronunciation and synonyms. If students are having trouble with vocabulary, they can translate from English to Indonesian or from Indonesian to English using Google Translate. To support this research, the researcher collected several studies similar that have been conducted by other researchers. One of previous research was conducted by Sagita et al. (2021). The results of this research demonstrate that students view Google Translate favorably when learning English. They take use of it as a dictionary, for translation, to look up synonyms and antonyms, and to verify pronunciation. Another previous research was conducted by Wei (2021). According to the research finding indicate that most students have a favorable opinion of using Google Translate for language learning. The majority of them agree that Google Translate is convenient and helpful in their language learning process, and they use it frequently. Previous studies used a quantitative approach with structured questionnaires for numerical data. In contrast, this study combines questionnaires and interviews, allowing for deeper, qualitative insights that add context and enrich understanding of the topic.

METHOD

In this research, the type of research is survey research that combines a quantitative and qualitative method to further explore the required data. Better known as the mixed method. Mixed method research is a method of investigation combines qualitative and quantitative research (Sugiyono, 2013). The data collected from questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. The analyzing data using descriptive statistical and qualitative analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994). This research took place at the English Department, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education, University of Riau, Pekanbaru. This research was carried out in May, 2024. The population of this research is third-year English students, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education at the University of Riau, which means they are currently in their sixth semester. The department is divided into three classes (A, B, and C), with the total number of students being 118 active students. The researcher used cluster random sampling. Based on the technique sampling, the researcher employed a random selection process using an online lottery to determine the class. Class 6C chosen as the sample. This class consists of 38 students. Additionally, three students who frequently use Google Translate, as identified through a frequency-of-use question, were selected as informants for the interview phase.

The descriptive interpretation of the mean score is based on Hadiyanto (2019) as shown in the table 1. The table categorizes average scores into five levels: very low, low, medium, high, and very high. If the average score falls within the high range, it indicates a positive student perception. Conversely, a low average score reflects a negative perception of each statement. The researcher grouped the results to determine students' views on using Google Translate in English language learning were generally positive or negative using a formula:

$$\bar{x} = \frac{\sum x}{N}$$

\bar{x} : Mean score

$\sum x$: Total row score

N : The total number of samples

Table 1. Interpretation of Mean Score

No.	Mean Score	Descriptive Interpretation
1	1.00 – 1.80	Very Low
2	1.81 – 2.60	Low
3	2.61 – 3.40	Medium
4	3.41 – 4.20	High
5	4.21 – 5.00	Very High

After analyzing the average score for each question and summing them, the researcher categorized the results to determine whether students' views on using Google Translate in English language learning were positive or negative. The researcher then classified students' perception per indicators categories as follows (Rahma et al., 2021):

Frequency of Using Google Translate

3 x 5 = 15 Maximum score

3 x 3 = 9 Neutral

3 x 1 = 3 Low score

Table 2. Level of Perception Indicator 1

Level of Perception	Score
Positive	9-15
Neutral	3-9
Negative	0-3

Agreement on Google Translate Use

6 x 5 = 30 Maximum score

6 x 3 = 18 Neutral

6 x 1 = 6 Low score

Table 3. Level of Perception Indicator 2

Level of Perception	Score
Positive	18-30
Neutral	6-18
Negative	0-6

Accuracy of Google Translate

5 x 5 = 25 Maximum score

5 x 3 = 15 Neutral

5 x 1 = 5 Low score

Table 4. Level of Perception Indicator 3

Level of Perception	Score
Positive	15-25
Neutral	5-15
Negative	0-5

Behavior Patterns of Using Google Translate

5 x 5 = 25 Maximum score

5 x 3 = 15 Neutral

5 x 1 = 5 Low score

Table 5. Level of Perception Indicator 4

Level of Perception	Score
Positive	15-25
Neutral	5=15
Negative	0-5

Next, the questionnaire data is interpreted using percentage calculations. This calculation is used to compare the frequency of each response option in the questionnaire. The percentage is derived by dividing the frequency of each answer by the total number of respondents and then multiplying by 100%. The formula is:

$$P = \frac{f}{N} \times 100\%$$

P: Percentage answer of each statement

f: Frequency of each respondent's answer

N: Number of respondents

The researcher concluded students' views on the use of Google Translate in English language learning by analyzing the percentage of responses for each statement in the questionnaire.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Students' View on the Use of Google Translate in English Language Learning

The data in this part were collected using a questionnaire focused on students' views the use of Google Translate in English language learning.

Table 6. General Questions of Using Google Translate

No.	Items	Yes	No
1.	The number of students using Google Translate for English learning	38 (100%)	0
2.	The availability of Google Translate app on students' mobile phones, laptops, or PCs.	25 (65%)	13 (35%)
3.	Students' opinion that Google Translate is better compared other translation tools.	22 (58%)	16 (42%)

Table 6 shows that all students (100%) use Google Translate for learning English, with 65% (25 out of 38) installing the app on their devices, indicating its accessibility in their academic routines. Additionally, 58% of students prefer Google Translate over other translation tools, highlighting its usefulness and reliability in supporting their English learning. This is in line with research by Chan and Ang (2017), which found that among students in higher education, Google Translate is one of the most popular language-learning programs.

Table 7. Frequency of Using Google Translate

No.	Items	Never	Seldom	Sometimes	Often	Always	Mean	Interpretation
4.	The frequency of using Google Translate for English learning generally	0	5 (13%)	7 (19%)	18 (47%)	8 (21%)	3.78	High
5.	The frequency of using Google Translate for preparing an English presentation (e.g. Oral Presentation, Role Play, Speech)	0	11 (29%)	7 (19%)	12 (31%)	8 (21%)	3.52	High
6.	The frequency of using Google Translate for English written task	1 (3%)	6 (15.5%)	8 (21%)	15 (39.5%)	8 (21%)	3.60	High
Total								Positive
10.9								

Table 7 shows that 68.4% of students frequently or always use Google Translate to enhance their English skills. Additionally, 60.5% use it for written assignments, while 52.6% use it for preparing presentations. This suggests that students rely more on Google Translate for writing tasks than oral presentations, emphasizing its importance in their academic work, especially in written assignments. The outcomes confirmed the findings of Jolley and Maimone (2015) analysis, which said that writing tasks accounted for the largest proportion of students utilizing machine translation technologies, with translation and presentations following closely behind.

Table 8. The Agreement of Using Google Translate

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Interpretation
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7.	Google Translate is simple to use	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	16 (42%)	17 (44%)	4.23	Very High
8.	Google Translate is comfortable to use in English learning activities	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	9 (24%)	16 (42%)	10 (26%)	3.84	High
9.	Google Translate can be used to help me read materials in English	1 (3%)	1 (3%)	4 (10%)	20 (53%)	12 (31%)	4.07	High
10.	Google Translate can be used to help me write in English	0	2 (5%)	6 (16%)	18 (48%)	12 (31%)	4.05	High
11.	Google Translate can be used to help me listen words and sentences in English	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	4 (10%)	15 (39.5%)	15 (39.5%)	4.05	High
12.	Google Translate can be used to help me speak in English	1 (3%)	2 (5%)	8 (21%)	16 (42%)	12 (31.5%)	4.00	High
Total								Positive
24.24								

Table 8 shows that 86.8% of students find Google Translate easy to use, and 68.4% feel comfortable using it for learning English. Notably, 84.2% know how to use it to enhance their reading skills, while 78.9% reported it helps with writing, listening, and speaking. These results highlight students' confidence in using Google Translate to support their learning across the four main English skills. From the perspective of the students in Wei (2021) research, it is obvious they are pretty sure that Google Translate can assist them in learning the four primary English language abilities (Wei, 2021).

Table 9. Accuracy of Google Translate

No.	Items	Very Inaccurate	Inaccurate	Somewhat	Accurate	Very Accurate	Mean	Interpretation
13.	Google Translate translates an entire text in English accurately	1 (3%)	4 (10%)	17 (44%)	15 (39.5%)	1 (3%)	3.28	Medium
14.	Google Translate translates an entire paragraph in English accurately	1 (3%)	7 (19%)	11 (29%)	17 (44%)	2 (5%)	3.31	Medium
15.	Google Translate translates sentences in English accurately	3 (8%)	4 (10%)	8 (21%)	18 (47%)	5 (13%)	3.47	High
16.	Google Translate translates short phrases in English accurately	0	4 (10.5%)	8 (21%)	19 (50%)	7 (15.5%)	3.76	High
17.	Google Translate translates single words in English accurately	1 (3%)	5 (13%)	8 (21%)	14 (36.7%)	10 (26.3%)	3.71	High
Total								Positive
17.53								

Table 9 shows students' opinions on the accuracy of Google Translate. Most students (68.4%) believe it accurately translates short phrases. This percentage drops to 63.1% for sentences and 60.5% for single words. At the paragraph level, only 50% think it provides accurate translations. Furthermore, 44.7% feel that Google Translate is only "somewhat accurate" when translating entire texts. Comparably, in the study done by Wei (2021) also perceived Google Translate to be more effective in translating sentences, single words and short phrases, as compared to paragraphs and entire texts.

Table 10. Behavior Patterns on Using Google Translate

No.	Items	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree	Mean	Interpretation
18.	100% don't rely on Google Translate.	0	8 (21%)	11 (26.9%)	13 (34.2%)	6 (15.7%)	3.44	High
19.	Dissatisfaction with using Google Translate for all language skills.	1 (3%)	16 (42.1%)	10 (26.3%)	9 (23.6%)	2 (5%)	2.86	Medium

20.	Dissatisfaction with using Google Translate for in supporting mastery in English components.	3 (8%)	13 (34.2%)	12 (31.5%)	8 (21%)	2 (5%)	2.81	Medium
21.	Makes them less motivated to learn English.	4 (10.5%)	15 (39.4%)	11 (26.9%)	6 (15.7%)	2 (5%)	2.65	Medium
22.	Makes them lazy about learning English components. (pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar)	10 (26.3%)	12 (31.5%)	12 (31.5%)	1 (3%)	3 (8%)	2.34	Medium
Total								Neutral
14.1								

Table 10 shows that 50% of students agreed or strongly agreed that they don't fully rely on Google Translate, with 26.9% neutral and 21% disagreeing. Additionally, 44.7% expressed satisfaction with using it for all language skills, and 42.1% agreed it supports mastery of pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Half of the students disagreed that Google Translate reduces their motivation, and 57.8% disagreed that it makes them lazy. Overall, students find Google Translate helpful for improving their English skills, but they don't depend on it entirely. While some remain neutral about its effectiveness, most believe it supports learning without reducing motivation.

Students' View on the Use of Google Translate in English Language Learning

The data in this part were collected through interview to gain insights into students' views on the use of Google Translate in English language learning. It aimed to strengthen the quantitative data by providing more in-depth insights.

Table 11. The Benefits of Google Translate

Themes	Sub-themes
The Benefits of Using Google Translate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Translating words and texts b) Checking pronunciation c) Reading sentences, text and images d) Checking basic words, whether they are verbs, adjectives, adverbs or nouns e) Providing synonym recommendations f) Checking phonetic symbols g) Connecting to other applications for automatic translation h) Easily to access and use

I like using Google Translate because it is very helpful in translating words and text, sis. Apart from that, it is easy to access and use so it doesn't make it difficult for me to use it. (Interview, P1)

For listening, I check the pronunciation using Google Translate, sis. This feature can help me to speak English with appropriate pronunciation, sis. (Interview, P2)

Google Translate has an image or file feature where we can translate only through files or photos. So, we don't need to type long, sis. (Interview, P1)

..Google Translate has a feature that can check whether the basic word is a verb, noun, adj or adverb, sis. (Interview, P1)

I like using Google Translate because it's easy to access, sis, and if we translate a word, another word with the same meaning will appear, sis. (Interview, P2)

But there's one more advantage, sis. If we type an English word the phonetic symbols immediately appear, sis. I use it when doing phonology assignments, this feature is very helpful, sis. (Interview, P2)

...Then Google Translate can also connect to other applications. If we press the translation option in another application, Google Translate will automatically interpret it, sis. (Interview, P3)

As table 11 presents that the students find Google Translate highly useful for various reasons. Primarily, they use it for translating words and text, as it offers quick and easy service. Pronunciation feature helps them learn correct English pronunciation, while the camera tool enables translations of text from images, such as posters and documents, making it convenient for real-world use. Additionally, students value Google Translate’s ability to identify basic word types (verb, noun, adjective, etc.), suggest synonyms, display phonetic symbols, and integrate with other apps for automatic translations. Overall, Google Translate is praised for easy accessibility and range of features that support language learning.

Table 12. The Weaknesses of Google Translate

Themes	Sub-themes
The Weaknesses of Google Translate	a) Limited number of words b) Offline unavailability c) Translation quality
The weaknesses of Google Translate only translates words, with a maximum limit of 5,000 words, sis. So, when I want to translate more words than that, I have to translate them more than once, sis. (Interview, P1) I don't think there are any problems, maybe the problem is that the network is not good so Google Translate is not detected to translate, sis. (Interview, P2) As for the problem with Google Translate, sometimes I find meanings that are not in sync when I want to translate several sentences or texts, Sis. (Interview, P3)	

As interview presents above, Google Translate can only translate 5,000 words in one translation, this limitation often becomes an obstacle for them. Google Translates’ limitation of not being able to translate paragraphs or text offline shows they feel frustrated with dependence

on an internet connection. They reported often word-by-word translations do not match the overall context, resulting in inaccurate or confusing meanings. It is not recommended to only depend on this translation engine for longer texts with extensive vocabulary (Aziez & Hidayat, 2019). According to García & Pena (2011) referenced in Baker (2013), said that because Google Translates' translations aren't always accurate.

Table 13. Student's View on the use of Google Translate in English language learning

Themes	Sub-themes
Student's View on the use of Google Translate in English language learning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Help in Learning with all the complete features b) Help for develop four skills language c) Useful in doing assignments

Google Translate really helped me, not only in translating words, but also sentences and text. There is also a pronunciation check feature, this feature can be used not only limited to 1 word, but can be used on sentences or text too, sis. Google translate also provides an image or file input feature which makes it easier for users to use it by simply entering an image or file, users no longer need to bother typing long text. Then there is a feature to check basic words, including verbs, nouns, adjectives or adverbs too, sis. Access is easy to use because there is no need to download the application first, users can access it via the website. (Interview, P1)

In my opinion, Google Translate is very helpful in learning English with all the complete features provided making it easy for us to access it for writing, reading, listening and speaking, sis. (Interview, P2)

In learning English, Google Translate is very useful in helping me in doing assignments, such as phonetic symbols assignments, searching for adj, verb, noun, adverb, because it is easy to access, no need to download an application, there is also a website available, sis. (Interview, P3)

As interview presents above, the three participants have positive views about Google Translate, which is the application is very helpful in learning English, for completing assignments and language development. According to study by Yuliani (2021), English students use Google Translate as a helpful tool for their assignments. Similarly, Margiana & Syafryadin (2023) found that most students consider Google Translate beneficial for the learning process.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes the third-year English students at the University of Riau have a positive view of using Google Translate for learning English. Most find it convenient and helpful, frequently using it on their mobile devices or laptops. The benefit from Google Translate features, such as word and text translation, pronunciation checks, camera translation, grammar identification, synonym suggestions, and phonetic symbols for phonology tasks. While they recognize the limitations of Google Translate translates longer texts and asynchronous translations, they do not discourage to using it. Importantly, students do not feel fully dependent on Google Translate and they unbelieve it makes them lazy or less motivated. Overall, they are satisfied with Google Translate's role in supporting their learning and assignments.

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