PROBLEMS IN THE APPLICATION OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE AS A LEARNING MEDIA IN TRANSLATION

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Abstract

This paper is concerned with the problems in the application of Google Translate as a translation tool. The discussion focuses on the identification of the problems faced by the translators. This research was conducted by using the descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Some theories supporting this research were proposed by Munday, Imre, and also Ghasemi and Hasemian. The data sources in this research were taken from the questionnaires given to students of English Literature Department of USU. From the analysis, it was found that the biggest problems often faced by the students of English Literature Department of USU were the inaccuracy and mismatch of the meaning translated which reached 31%, followed by the inaccuracy of the language structure in the translation result which reached 30%. On the other hand, the findings also showed that the best solution to deal with these problems was to make self-corrections and check the meaning of some suspected words in the dictionary and make the best choice according to the context. With the same percentage of 29%, it could be concluded that the two solutions were claimed to be the best and most efficient for the students. The conclusion was that the use of Google Translate as a learning media in translation could be accepted and applied in the classroom. Based on the results of this analysis, it was revealed that students had already known how to solve the problems of using Google Translate.

Keywords: Google Translate, machine translation, source text, target text.

1. Introduction

Technology at this time has played a very important role in the daily life and has a great impact to every possible field, especially in translation. Newmark (2013) as cited in (Harida & Zafitri, 2017) states that no global communication would occur without translation. Based on the statement it is concluded that the rapid development of cross-language and information communication from all over the world at this time made translation skills increasingly needed. Ignorance of the source language which is a barrier in understanding the information will also be eliminated.

Translation as one of the important subjects in English Literature Department is defined as the academic discipline related to the study of the theory and the phenomenon of translation (Munday, 2012). In this subject, students are required to be able to carry out the process of changing the original written text (source text or ST) in the original spoken language

(source language or SL) into written text (target text or TT) in a different verbal language (target language or TL).

Many translator machines today are present and offer the best features to help users in doing the translation. One of the examples is Google Translate. Google Translate is known as the most widely used online translation tool recently. Based on that statement, it can be concluded that this machine is used by almost all circles, especially students at the university. Developed by Google Corp., Google Translate is a free translation service that provides instant translations in hundreds of different languages (source: translate.google.com). It can translate words, sentences, and web pages among the combinations of our supported languages. The features in Google Translate include some interesting features, such as instant translation, highlighting words and phrases, diction selection, pronunciation preview, and others. These features are combined in one user interface.

Although Google Translate has provided such advanced features, many students still cannot produce a qualified translation. Moreover, the user is still not quite sure whether the translation results from Google Translate already have the correct grammar or not. These conditions were also experienced by the students of English Literature Department of USU. The students will rely on this machine translation to help them do their assignment. Such a condition is very reasonable to be considered. If Google Translate is presented to students without any thorough explanation, it might be a boomerang for them. But, on another hand, Google Translate is also helpful for the students in terms of learning English as well as translation. Then, how to deal with those two sides of Google Translate? For this reason, it is very important to know the potential feature of GT and consider the bad impact of using GT for the students so that it can be maximally utilized without getting any disadvantages.

Based on the explanation above, it is deduced that problems of using Google Translate are important to be analyzed as they represent the weakness of Google Translate itself. Thus, the study focuses only on analyzing the problems of using this Machine Translation faced by the students of English Literature Department of USU. The object of research was so chosen because almost all of them use Google Translate as a translation aid tool which helps them do their assignment.

2. Literature Review

Recently, translation study has become more sophisticated with the involvement of technology used as the translation tool. Translation study has been explained as a scientific discipline that studies practice and theory in translation (Munday, 2012). In addition to its multilingual nature, translation studies are also known in the interdisciplinary studies, because they establish relationships with several other branches of science such as linguistics, cultural studies, philosophy, and information sciences.

A translation study subject matter has been presented in a framework called "Holmes / Toury Map" (Munday, 2012) putting forward the whole framework, explaining what translation studies are included. He divides translation study into 2 main objects namely "Pure" and "Applied". This framework is then presented by leading Israeli translation scholars (Toury, 1995: 4) as in the figure below.

Figure 2.1. "Holmes's Map" of Translation Studies (from Toury, 1995, p. 10) cited from (Munday, 2012, p. 12)
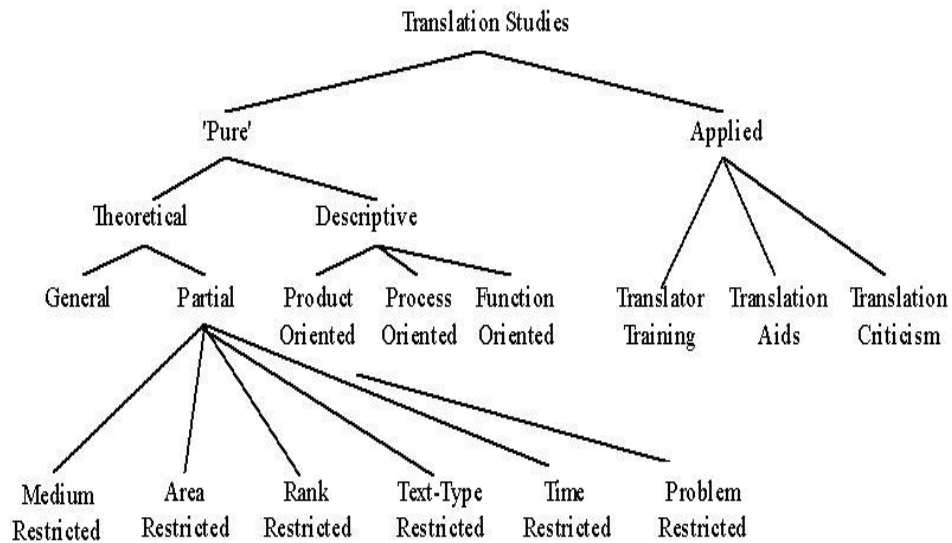
Based on the figure, "pure" translation studies consist of 2 main objectives namely descriptive translation studies and translation theoretical. Beside that "pure" translation studies main objective, Holmes also explains about "applied" translation studies deeply. The applied translation studies consist of 3 branches such as translator training, translation aids, and translation criticism. The figure of the applied translation itself can be seen in the following chart.

Figure 2.2. Design of Applied Translation Studies adapted from (Munday, 2012, p. 12)
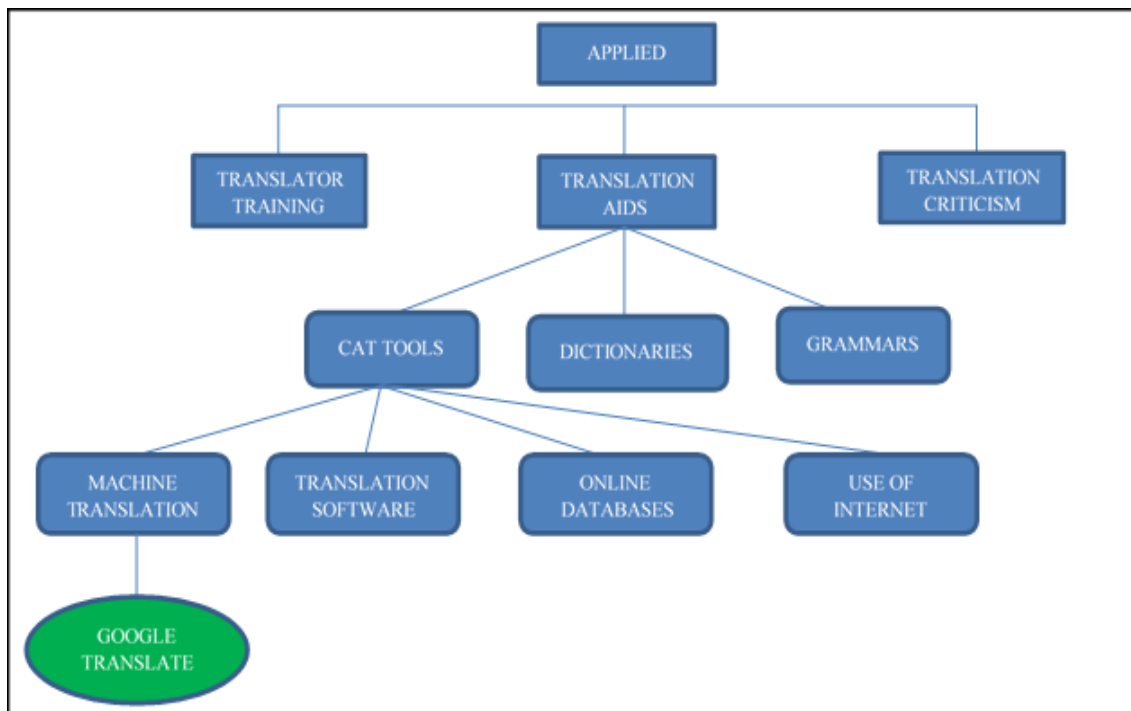
Based on the figure, this study will focus on Google Translate as part of the applied translation. Google Translate known as a translation engine provides translation services for up to 90 languages, not only translating words, but also phrases, parts of a text, or the Web page. By using Statistical Machine Translation system, in translating text, Google Translate works by looking for patterns in hundreds of millions of documents to help decide on the best translation by detecting patterns in documents that have been translated by human translators (Karami: 2014).

With a history that began in 2001, Google's machine translation system uses a translation system based on Ruled Based Machine Translation (Karami, 2014). Starting with only six languages, namely English, French, German, Italian, Portuguese, and Spanish (English to other languages) and the beginning from 2004 other languages were added. After that in 2006, then Google Translate followed the statistical translation model in SMT to do word translation. SMT uses a collection of bilingual text writings which is a database of sentences in the source and target languages.

3. Research Method

This study is descriptive qualitative research with the case study approach. The qualitative research method is defined as a multi-method in focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matters (Bashir et al., 2008). The case study approach is known as an inquiry design found in many fields, especially evaluation, where researchers develop an in-depth analysis of a case, often a program, event, activity, process, or one or more individuals (Creswell, 2014). In this research, an in-depth analysis of the problems usually experienced by the students in using Google Translate and the solutions to the problems were investigated and analyzed. To answer the research problems, firstly the participant selection phase was conducted by using an online placement test as an instrument. The placement test consists of 50 multiple-choice questions with the purpose to assess the competency of the population on the mastery of English, especially English Grammar. This placement test was conducted on a predetermined population. Second, after the sample was gained, they were asked to translate the text given from Bahasa Indonesia into English. Then, they were asked to complete a questionnaire distributed to the participants by using the online platform of Google Form after the translation test.

The participants of this research were students of the English Literature Department USU from Class A & B Batch 2017 with several predetermined criteria: they have passed the translation class until the third stage and have passed and fulfilled the minimum score of the placement test at least 80%. From all the populations that participate in this research 10 students have met the above criteria, involving students from the university level as participants in this study. The text selection used in the translation stage focused on text abstract which was a solid form of a longer text is a very familiar scientific text at the university level. The selected abstract is entitled "*MITOS KECANTIKAN DALAM CERPEN-CERPEN DWI RATIH RAMADHANY*", consisting of 121 words and this text was selected by meeting certain criteria in selecting texts for research purposes. In determining the appropriate and suitable examples of text to be translated by participants, there are 2 analytical tools used to measure the legibility and complexity of the text, namely the Flesch-Kinkaid Reading Ease and Flesch-Kinkaid Grade Level.

Table 3.1. Measurement Results of Text Readability and Complexity

Title	Total Sentences	Total Words	Average words per sentence	Average syllables per word	Flesch Reading Ease Score	Flesch-Kincaid Grade Level
Mitos Kecantikan Dalam Cerpen-Cerpen Dwi Ratih Ramadhany	4	128	369	2.45	-32.5	25.7

In the procedure of data collection, the researchers provide several steps of collecting the data.

1. Doing the participant selection phase by using an online placement test through an online test platform called Socrative.
2. Translating the text from Bahasa Indonesia into English by using Google Translate as the tool.
3. Answering the questionnaire about how to use Google Translate optimally in the Google Form.
4. Collecting the answer from the questionnaire
5. Identifying the problems in using Google Translate based on the questionnaire.
6. Putting the data into the pie charts.

Because the data were collected from the Google Form questionnaire, the process of condensing the data was automatically done by Google Form. After all the respondents have finished filling out the questionnaire, the entire data were automatically transferred to excel format, so that it simplified the data processing for further analysis by researchers.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the data that has been obtained, several factors have been identified as problems in using Google Translate in the translation process. Based on the results of the questionnaire, it was revealed the factors which caused the biggest obstacles in using Google Translate.

Figure 4.1. The diagram of the problems in using Google Translate
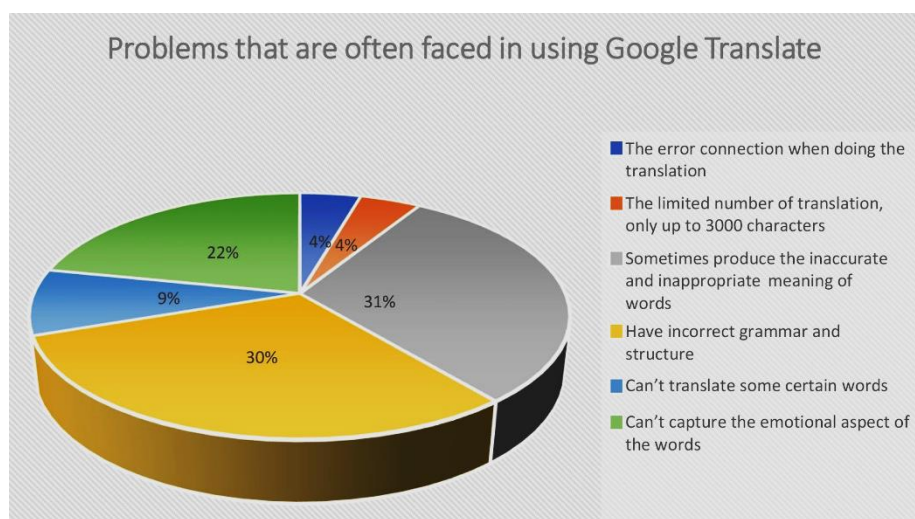
Based on the picture above, the inaccuracy of the meaning of words in the translation process is the biggest factor that contributes up to 31% of the total factors that users often face in using Google Translate as a translation tool. As the biggest factor, inaccurate meaning is always the main reason why translators never rely on Google Translate as a translation aid. This is because it can affect the result of the text that will be translated later.

From those analysis results, it can be concluded that Google Translate is an imperfect machine translator with a low level of accuracy and many errors that are basic and trivial. Google Translate is rarely used by many people, especially translators. The inaccuracy occurs because in carrying out the translation process, Google Translate cannot meet the criteria and parameters as described in the study. Therefore, just a slight change in the meaning of the translation results will certainly affect the quality of the translation results. So, based on these conclusions, it becomes clear that the inaccuracy of the meaning of the resulting words is the biggest obstacle experienced by users of this translating machine, according to the results in the diagram.

5. Conclusion

After analysing the data, the finding shows that the biggest problem faced by the students of the English Literature Department USU is the inaccuracy and inappropriateness of meaning translated by Google Translate reaching 31%, followed by inaccuracy in the structure of the language in the translation reaching 30% in second place. These two factors also become the reflection of the biggest weakness of Google Translate until now.

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