

HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS' PERCEPTION ON THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE FOR READING COMPREHENSION

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Abstract: *This study aimed to investigate students of SMAN 12 Pekanbaru perception of Google Translate use for reading comprehension. Random sampling technique was applied to decide the sample. There were 81 students as the participants. The instrument used was a questionnaire categorized into 5 components of perception such as students' purposes of using GT, the use of GT, accuracy of GT, benefits of using GT and drawbacks of using GT for reading comprehension. The findings indicated that senior high school students of SMAN 12 Pekanbaru have a positive perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension. It showed that students put positive perception of the purposes, use, benefits, and accuracy of Google Translate. While students have negative perceptions of the drawbacks of using Google Translate. Hence, the students are suggested to not fully rely on Google Translate and find another source to develop their proficiency in reading comprehension alongside Google Translate.*

Key Words: *Perception, Google Translate, Reading Comprehension*

PERSEPSI SISWA SMA TERHADAP PENGGUNAAN GOOGLE TRANSLATE UNTUK PEMAHAMAN MEMBACA

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui persepsi siswa SMAN 12 Pekanbaru terhadap penggunaan Google Translate untuk pemahaman bacaan. Teknik pengambilan sampel secara acak. Sampel pada penelitian ini berjumlah 81 siswa. Instrumen yang digunakan adalah kuesioner dengan 5 indikator persepsi yaitu tujuan siswa menggunakan GT, penggunaan GT, keakuratan GT, manfaat penggunaan GT dan kelemahan penggunaan GT untuk pemahaman membaca. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa siswa SMAN 12 Pekanbaru memiliki persepsi positif terhadap penggunaan Google Translate untuk pemahaman bacaan. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa siswa mempunyai persepsi positif terhadap tujuan, kegunaan, manfaat, dan keakuratan Google Translate. Sedangkan siswa memiliki persepsi negatif terhadap kelemahan penggunaan Google Translate. Oleh karena itu, siswa disarankan untuk tidak sepenuhnya bergantung pada Google Terjemahan dan mencari sumber lain untuk mengembangkan kemahiran mereka dalam pemahaman membaca selain Google Translate.

Kata Kunci: Persepsi, Google Translate, Pemahaman Membaca

INTRODUCTION

English is one of the international languages used by many people in the world. Nowadays, the use of English has become wider as everyone gets interested in learning it. English is used not only in education, but also in business, technology, work, and much more. Thus, it is necessary and useful to learn English for a better future in any field of career.

In this modern era, technology has become a part of human beings. Many activities can be done more easily because of the technology presence. Mobile devices are an example of technology used to improve and ease human work. Mobile devices can help people to communicate with each other. In education, mobile devices have a great role in learning activities. It can help people to browse or search for information they need through websites. It is also used to find learning material in foreign languages like English.

In the past, people who learned foreign languages utilized a dictionary to search words in the target language (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017). Recently, language learners tend to use technology such as online translation systems on their smartphones to translate or search words they are not familiar with. By using a free online machine translator (FOMT), people do not have to bring a dictionary anymore. It is more efficient to use FOMT anywhere and anytime we want.

Machine Translator (MT) is an automatic conversion of text from one language to another. Hutchins (2003) said MT is a computerized system that is responsible for translation production with or without the assistance of humans. Various free online translation systems have been developed. Some machine translation systems on the internet are Google Translate, Bing Translator, and Yahoo! Babelfish. Sukkhwan (2014) stated that Google Translate (GT) is the most popular tool among other machine translators. Google Translate is available on the website and has become a smartphone application as well. Google Translate allows people to translate text or audio into 103 languages. Since 10 years after launching, around 500 million people have used Google Translate and it has translated more than 100 million words a day (Turovsky, 2016).

Several researchers have discovered the benefits of Google Translate. Sukkhwan (2014) on her study found that students used Google Translate to learn vocabulary, complete their exercises in English, help them understand sentences and text, and also to translate English idioms and proverbs. It also has free access and instant (Medvedev, 2016). However, machine is not everything to help human to think. This is because all instant stuff like Google Translate as a machine translator has limitations (Sagita & Jamaliah, 2021). Google Translate has several weaknesses and drawbacks. It may not be useful to learn grammar (Josefsson, 2011), and constitutes cheating, a limited number of vocabularies and idioms (O'Neill, 2012), poor translation, and makes students lazy (Murtisari, Widiningrum, Branata, & Susanto, 2019). Not only those drawbacks, GT sometimes gives inappropriate word meanings (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017).

Based on personal experiences and observations, the researcher believes that GT application has both positive and negative aspects. While GT can be helpful in providing assistance when encountering unfamiliar words or phrases, its reliability is not entirely trustworthy due to occasional inaccuracies in context. The researcher recognizes the convenience of GT for quick translations, yet remains cautious about relying solely on its outputs for critical or nuanced translations. Therefore, while GT can be a useful tool for basic understanding, the researcher advocates for a balanced

approach that combines technology with human judgment, particularly in situations requiring precise and contextually accurate translations.

According to a short interview with some second-year students of SMAN 12 Pekanbaru, the researcher found that students of SMAN 12 Pekanbaru have experienced using Google Translate. They consider GT as a tool to translate a language into another language. When they encounter a difficult English word, they search it on Google Translate. Due to its fast performance in translating text, students do not need to memorize the meaning of unknown or forgotten words. They can easily know the information or knowledge of written text only by translating it through GT.

However, everyone has a different perception of something. It might be positive or negative towards the particular object or problem. The perception is affected by their experience and environment. Students also do the same. Their perception is based on their learning experiences and surrounding environment. Students' perception is significant when considering what students need in learning. According to Chen and Hoshower (2003), students' perception is necessary for success in learning. Under this condition, students' perception towards GT is needed to be discovered and hoped to bring broader insight if students consider this tool essential for English learning.

In previous research (Pham et al, 2022) the focus was on university students' perceptions of the use of Google Translate (GT) in their learning process. The research results show that students generally have a positive perception of the use of GT in learning, although there are several problems such as grammatical and semantic errors which can cause wrong understanding. However, there has been not many researches that specifically explore Google Translate on the development of high school students' reading comprehension abilities.

Furthermore, there is some urgency why research on student perceptions of using Google Translate, especially for reading skills, needs to be carried out. Nowadays, Google Translate has become an important tool in learning English for many students. However, it is important to understand how students use these tools in comprehending reading texts. Understanding how students view and use Google Translate in reading can provide great insight into how this tool impacts their learning. Furthermore, this research can help identify the benefits and drawbacks of using Google Translate. It is important to understand its positive impact in improving reading comprehension as well as its potential negative impacts such as dependency or reduced motivation to learn. Conducting research at SMAN 12 Pekanbaru will provide a deeper understanding of how students at the school use Google Translate in their reading comprehension activities.

By understanding students' perceptions of the use of Google Translate for reading skills, this research can provide valuable insights for the development of more effective English learning methods and pay attention to the role of technology in the process. Hence, the researcher intended to find out how senior high school students use GT for reading comprehension in SMAN 12 Pekanbaru.

METHODOLOGY

This study was a quantitative research. The kind of quantitative research that the researcher used is a survey. Creswell (2009) explained the survey offers a quantitative description of opinions, trends, or attitudes of certain populations by studying the

sample. The survey can take information from a large sample. It applied descriptive design to get and explain the perception of Google Translate that is being observed. This research was conducted in the academic year of 2022/2023 in the beginning of even semester.

The population of this research was 424 students in 11th grade in SMAN 12 Pekanbaru in Riau, Indonesia. This survey study used random sampling technique. In deciding the total sample, the researcher utilized a formula made by Slovin (1960) with 10% margin error. So, the total sample was 81 students.

The instrument used was a questionnaire to collect the data. The research was conducted through a questionnaire consisting of 25 statements on five indicators of students' perception of Google Translate use for reading comprehension such as students' purposes of using GT, the use of GT, accuracy of GT, benefits of using GT and drawbacks of using GT for reading comprehension. The questionnaire was adapted from Maulidiyah (2018); Axelina and Setiawan (2021); Wei (2021); Pham et al. (2022); and Septinaria et al. (2022). The questions are likert-scale questions in five options starting from "Strongly Agree", "Agree", "Neutral", "Disagree", and "Strongly Disagree". The questionnaire has been validated by 2 validators. The validators are English lecturers and have master degree in English Education

The questionnaire was distributed directly through print-out to the respondents. Finally, the students' responses were logged into Ms. Excel to accumulate whole responses. Then, it was analyzed using SPSS (Statistical Packages for Social Sciences) Version 25. The total score and mean were calculated to category the result. Based on Chaihiranwattana and Nookua (2010), each question of perception is divided into range 1.00-1.80 (Very Negative), 1.81-2.60 (Negative), 2.61-3.40 (Neutral), 3.41-4.20 (Positive), and 4.21-5.00 (Very Negative).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

This study aims to explore students' perception on the use of GT for reading comprehension. Their perceptions were examined using five indicators: students' purposes of using GT, the use of GT, accuracy of GT, benefits of using GT and drawbacks of using GT for reading comprehension. Results of each indicators is summarized on the following figure:

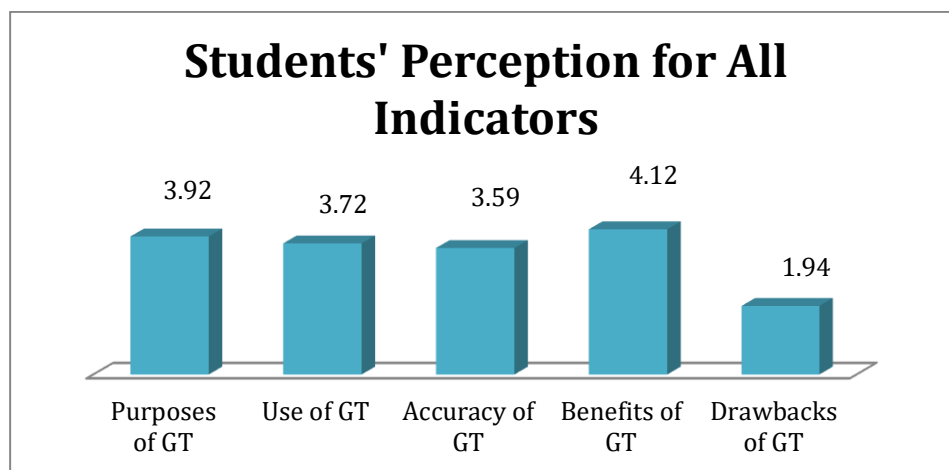


Figure 1. Students' Perception on Google Translate Use for Reading Comprehension

Figure 1 shows students' perception of GT use for reading comprehension based on 5 indicators. It can be seen that 4 of 5 indicators are in the range 3,41 – 4,20 such as 3,92 for the purpose of using GT, 3,72 for the use of GT, 3,59 for the accuracy of GT, and 4,12 for the benefits of GT. It means that the result of the indicator is categorized as a positive perception. Meanwhile, only drawbacks that has 1.94 which considered as a negative perception. The average of all indicators percentage is 3,46%. So, it can be concluded that students have a positive perception of Google Translate use for reading comprehension.

After analyzing the data, the result are presented in Table 1 until Table 5 to each indicators. There are 5 statements with 5 options for each statement.

Table 1. Distribution of Students' Perception on the Purposes of Using GT for Reading Comprehension

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Score	Mean	Interpretation
1	I use GT to understand English text	2	1	15	38	25	326	4.02	Positive
2	I use GT to enrich my vocabulary	1	0	17	48	15	319	3.94	Positive
3	I use GT to save my time in reading than using a dictionary	1	4	22	38	16	307	3.79	Positive
4	I use GT to improve my reading skill	2	1	16	46	16	316	3.90	Positive
5	I use GT to make me enjoy reading English text	2	5	8	47	19	319	3.94	Positive
Mean							317.4	3.92	Positive

Table 1 shows that all statements results are in the range 3,41 – 4,20 which means students put positive perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension based on the purpose of using GT.

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Perception on the Use of GT for Reading Comprehension

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Score	Mean	Interpretation
6	I use GT to translate a whole text when I read English text	2	7	21	36	15	298	3.68	Positive
7	I use GT to translate a paragraph when I read English text	2	5	18	44	12	300	3.73	Positive
8	I use GT to translate a sentence when I read English text	2	1	21	45	12	307	3.79	Positive
9	I use GT to translate a phrase when I read English text	1	4	35	39	2	280	3.46	Positive
10	I use GT to translate a word when I read English text	2	1	17	40	21	320	3.95	Positive
Mean							301	3.72	Positive

Table 2 shows that all statements result are in range 3,41 – 4,20 which means students put positive perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension based on the use of GT.

Table 3. Distribution of Students' Perception on the Accuracy of GT for Reading Comprehension

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Score	Mean	Interpretation
11	GT is accurate to translate a whole reading text	7	17	12	39	6	263	3.25	Positive
12	GT is accurate to translate a paragraph of a reading text	2	17	13	46	3	274	3.38	Positive
13	GT is accurate to translate a sentence	1	9	22	43	6	287	3.54	Positive

	a reading text								
14	GT is accurate to translate a phrase a reading text	2	12	11	51	5	288	3.56	Positive
15	GT is accurate to translate a word a reading text	0	2	5	47	27	342	4.22	Very Positive
Mean							290.8	3.59	Positive

Table 3 shows that all statements result are in range 3,41 – 4,20 which means students put positive perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension based on the accuracy GT.

Table 4. Distribution of Students' Perception on the Benefits of GT for Reading Comprehension

No.	Items	SD	D	N	A	SA	Score	Mean	Interpretation
16	GT is free	0	5	11	41	24	327	4.04	Positive
17	GT is easy to use	0	0	4	41	36	356	4.40	Very Positive
18	GT has complete features	0	3	24	37	17	311	3.84	Positive
19	GT is able to translate quickly the reading text and give quick understanding	0	2	15	42	22	327	4.04	Positive
20	GT is accessible on both smartphones and computers	0	0	8	40	33	349	4.31	Very Positive
Mean							334	4.12	Positive

Table 4 shows that average statements result are in range 3,41 – 4,20 which means students put positive perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension based on the benefits GT.

Table 5. Distribution of Students' Perception on the Drawbacks of GT for Reading Comprehension

No.	Items	SA	A	N	D	SD	Score	Mean	Interpretation
21	GT makes me lazy to memorize English word after reading English text	25	42	8	6	0	157	1.94	Negative
22	GT reduces my attempt in reading English text	20	47	10	4	0	160	1.98	Negative
23	GT makes me not focus reading English text	22	48	7	3	1	156	1.93	Negative
24	GT leads to dependency so it's hard for me to read English text without GT	19	56	4	2	0	151	1.86	Negative
25	GT can not translate idioms and proverbs when I read English text	13	56	10	2	0	163	2.01	Negative
Mean							157.4	1.94	Negative

Meanwhile, Table 5 shows that all statements result are in range 1,81 – 2,60 which means students put negative perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension based on the drawbacks GT.

Discussion

Based on the result of this research, it was found that senior high school students of SMAN 12 Pekanbaru have a positive perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension. It supports studies on the positive perception GT use for reading comprehension (Maulidiyah, 2018; Axelina & Setiawan, 2021; Wei, 2021; Pham et al., 2022; and Septinaria et al., 2022) which revealed that the results were positive perception towards Google Translate.

Benefits of GT gets the highest mean which is 4.12 which can be categorised as a positive perception. Most students argued GT has several benefits such as being free, having complete features, and being accessible on both smartphones and computers. In addition, it is also able to translate quickly. These findings were in line with Septinaria, Yulia, and Lastri (2022) and Maulidiyah (2018) discovered GT is easy to access, free, and able to translate quickly. Besides that, another benefit of GT as easy to use. In line with this, Wei (2021) reported that students perceived GT is easy to use.

Meanwhile, the lowest mean is 1.94 for drawbacks of GT which is determined as a negative perception. Although GT has benefits, students realized that GT also has some drawbacks. Based on the result, most of the students admitted GT reduces their attempt to read English text. This was supported by Septinaria et al. (2022) who found out GT decreases students' effort to read English text. Not only that, GT can not translate idioms and proverbs which was similar to the findings of Pham, et al. (2022). Then, students believed GT leads to dependency and makes them lazy to memorize English words especially after they read English text. As what had been stated by Axelina and Setiawan (2021), GT causes laziness and dependency.

Next, the students stated that they use GT to understand English text, improve their reading skills, and make them enjoy reading English text. It reflects Maulidiyah's research (2018) which showed that students used GT to understand English text in their textbooks and websites. As mentioned in Wei (2021), students acknowledged the use of GT for learning English skills including reading. Then, increasing vocabulary is another purpose of using GT. Most of the students agreed that they use GT to increase their vocabulary which was also revealed in Septinaria, Yulia, and Lastri's research (2022). Next, students stated they use GT to save time than using a dictionary. These findings similar to the study conducted by Axelina and Setiawan (2021) which revealed that GT saves time.

The result shows that the students are likely to use GT to translate both short and longer texts when they read English text. The highest tendency was students who chose GT for translating words. Meanwhile, the lowest tendency was phrase level. This was supported by Axelina and Setiawan (2021) that students had experienced using GT at word level, phrase, and even discourse level (paragraph and entire text). In their research, data also indicated low percentages of using GT for translating a phrase.

Dealing with the accuracy of GT translation results, the majority of students stated that GT is very accurate in translating word level. Another level which is phrase and sentence got a higher score than paragraph and text accuracy. It means students argued GT is better used for words, phrases, and sentences than longer text. A similar finding was Wei (2021) which found out students as the respondents are aware of the GT limitation in translating longer text like sentences, paragraphs, and entire text.

In this research, the positive opinions of SMA 12 Pekanbaru students regarding the use of Google Translate for reading comprehension reflects the reality of the use of technology in the context of modern education. As students in this digital era, they are familiar with various technological tools, including Google Translate, to facilitate their learning process. In addition, these results are also in line with previous research findings which show a positive trend in perceptions of the use of Google Translate for reading comprehension. However, it is important to note that although student perceptions tend to be positive, there are still several aspects that need to be considered regarding accuracy and the advantages and disadvantages of using Google Translate.

Furthermore, the researcher recognizes the importance of understanding that use of Google Translate is not always same among students. Result showed that some students may face challenges in using the tool. From the implications of previous research, it can be concluded that despite students' positive perceptions of the use of Google Translate for reading comprehension, the research results show that excessive reliance on the tool can hinder the development of students' reading comprehension skills. This is in line with the finding that the use of Google Translate tends to reduce students' efforts to understand texts independently and increases the tendency to rely on

the tool exclusively. Furthermore, these findings provide encouragement to explore teaching strategies that integrate the use of Google Translate as an assistive tool, while maintaining a focus on developing independent reading skills. This could include approaches that encourage students to use Google Translate as an additional reference source, rather than as a replacement for their own reading comprehension efforts. Thus, it is important for educators and curriculum developers to design learning strategies that accommodate the existence of digital tools, while still strengthening students' abilities to read and understand texts critically and independently.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusion

It was found that senior high school students of SMAN 12 Pekanbaru have a positive perception on Google Translate use for reading comprehension. The findings indicated that students put positive perception of the purposes, use, benefits, and accuracy of Google Translate. While students have negative perceptions of the drawbacks of using Google Translate.

Recommendations

From the conclusion, the researcher would like to offer some recommendations:

1. Students are suggested to not fully rely on Google Translate and find another source to develop their proficiency in reading comprehension alongside Google Translate. Using another source like a dictionary in learning especially reading leads to increase students' attempts to read so that they learn English better than just translating in Google Translate.
2. Teachers are recommended to encourage students to use another language-learning tool so that students will not be dependent on translation tool like Google Translate.
3. For further research, this research can be a reference to do research on students' perceptions of using Google Translate for reading comprehension to explore deeper aspects of student perceptions, including usage trends, preferences, and evaluations of the tool's effectiveness in aiding reading comprehension.

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