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Student's Perception Towards the Use of DeepL Translator in Writing Thesis or Journal for English Education Students

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ABSTRACT

Translation is a crucial aspect for non-native English students, especially when writing academic theses or journals. This study aims to discuss the use of the DeepL Translator application in writing a thesis or journal of English students. This research employs qualitative methods with a case analysis design by analyzing data derived from questionnaire data and deeper interviews related to the use of DeepL Translator. The use of questionnaire data and further interviews were conducted with 24 final semester English students. The data were analyzed using Miles and Huberman's techniques, which include data reduction, data presentation, data display, and drawing conclusions to evaluate the effectiveness of the DeepL Translator. The results of this study show that students use DeepL translators a lot when making their theses or journals. By using the method of translating per paragraph, students complete their thesis or journal using DeepL Translator to convert Indonesian into English. The reason they use this application is because the results of this translation are more accurate and effective than those of other translation machines and also the students agree that they are often use this DeepL Translator to write their thesis or journal.

Keywords: *Student's Perception; DeepL Translator; Writing Thesis; Journal; English Education Students*

INTRODUCTION

Machine translation, the automated process of translating text from one language to another using computational methods, has revolutionized global communication and accessibility to information. As described by Hutchins & Somers (1992), "Machine translation is the application of computers to the task of translating texts from one natural language to another". Recent studies highlight the continued significance of translation applications in enhancing communication and academic work. For instance, Steigerwald et al. (2022) emphasizes that translation tools are crucial for overcoming language barriers in globalized research environments, while Krawczyk (2018) discusses the advancements in neural machine

translation and their impact on academic writing. Similarly, Pym et al. (2022) underscores the growing reliance on translation applications in scholarly communication". This technology has evolved significantly, leveraging artificial intelligence and neural networks to improve accuracy and naturalness in translations across various languages. Advances in science and technology have led to many applications that meet the needs of Internet users. Among these applications, computational linguistics stands out, focusing on the research and development of cognitive models to support natural language communication and information exchange. As articulated by Bolshakov & Gelbukh (2004:4), the primary goal of computational linguistics is to identify and categorize various forms of knowledge that are essential for proficient language use. Online translation machine can enhance understanding and provide quick references, they should be used as supplementary aids in the language learning process, rather than replacements for traditional learning methods (Zuhairo & Repelitawati, 2020).

The use of translation in applied linguistics can serve as a way of transferring messages from one language to another (Malmkjaer, 2018). The translator should consider the equivalence in the source language text and the target language text as well as the semantic elements when transferring the meaning of the text from the source language to the target language. That is, when translating, the translator should consider semantic aspects and equivalence in addition to the message. Repelitawati (2018) emphasizes the importance of understanding both source and target languages, as well as the cultural contexts that influence translation choices.

DeepL Translator emerged as one of the applications in addition to Google Translate that is often used as a secondary tool in human translation in this technological advancement (Salinas & Burbat, 2018). Google Translate and DeepL Translator are two machine translators that students often use in translating Indonesian into English. Students also realize that this application is not only a tool but actually very helpful for students in changing a language (Sidiq & Syafryadin, 2024). The research by Repelitawati (2023) indicate that teachers recognize the benefits of Quizizz, such as increased student engagement, motivation, and interactive learning experiences. This study is relevant in the context of machine translation tools like DeepL, as both technologies aim to enhance learning experiences but require careful implementation to maximize their effectiveness and minimize challenges.

Students also realize that there are some difficulties in writing that students often face. Grammar or structure difficulties are one of the problems that students face in writing English texts (Brown, 2016). Grammar, vocabulary and non-linguistic factors are also one of the writing problems faced by students (Ellis, 2018). In Indonesia, we also often see that the remaining students have problems in writing texts from Indonesian to English. This is due to the lack of vocabulary, and also the procedure of writing in English is a problem that students often face (Peregoy et al., 2011). Therefore, with the development of increasingly sophisticated times, several applications or tools have been developed to help with language translation. Repelitawati (2019) emphasizes the interplay between theory and practice, arguing that a solid theoretical foundation enhances the translator's ability to make informed decisions during the translation process.

DeepL Translator is also an advanced machine translation platform powered by deep learning technology, renowned for its high accuracy and ability to produce natural translations. This technology utilizes neural networks to understand and translate text from one language to another with precision. DeepL Translator has become a preferred choice for many users due to its effectiveness in handling complex sentence structures and idiomatic expressions, often surpassing the quality of other translation tools.

Several previous studies have examined the quality and effectiveness of DeepL Translator. For instance, research by Hutchins & Somers (1992) discusses the evolution of machine translation technology, applying computational principles to translate text between

natural languages. Similarly, a study by Danping (2023) explores the use of Google Translate and other translation tools in the context of English language learning by Chinese students. The importance of integrating both approaches to enhance translation quality, suggesting that a hybrid model can leverage the advantages of technology while maintaining the critical human element in translation processes (Repelitawati, 2023). The research identifies four dominant techniques: adaptation, amplification, established equivalent, and literal translation. Repelitawati's analysis reveals how these techniques impact the conveyed meanings and the overall quality of the translations, emphasizing that the choice of technique significantly influences the reader's understanding of the text (Repelitawati, 2019).

Previous studies highlight the utility of translation applications in various educational contexts. For instance, Sidiq & Syafradin (2024) found that DeepL Translator assists psychology students in writing English texts, while Isnayanti (2023) reported that Google Translator supports 8th-grade students in translating English texts. Additionally, Wirantaka & Fijanah (2021) observed that six teachers at the University of Yogyakarta find Google Translator helpful for translating Indonesian to English.

Despite these insights, there remains a gap in research regarding the application of DeepL Translator specifically for academic writing at the university level. Unlike prior studies, which focus on translation tools for lower education levels or general translation tasks, this research aims to explore how DeepL Translator addresses more complex academic writing challenges such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing procedures. The research by Lee et al. (2021) on Effects of using machine translation to mediate the revision process of Korean university students' academic writing and Alisha et al. (2019) on writing issues in Indonesia provides a context for evaluating how translation tools can be applied to these specific academic writing challenges, thus contributing novel insights to the field.

This research is also important to study because the researchers found several problems that students in one of the State University in North Sumatra face in writing English texts, whether it is English texts or writing their dissertations and journals. Therefore, this research has a significant impact that is important to discuss because it has benefits such as it can help develop students' professionalism and quality in translating English texts and also writing English texts. This research can also provide valuable insights into how translation technology can be integrated into language teaching, thus helping students to be prepared for future demands. This study investigates the use of DeepL Translator among 8th-semester students in writing their theses or journals. The objectives of this research are as follows:

1. To assess how students perceive the effectiveness of DeepL Translator in assisting with their thesis or journal writing.
2. To evaluate whether students believe that using DeepL Translator results in improved quality of their written work.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a qualitative approach to gain an in-depth understanding of the use of DeepL Translator among final-year English students. A case study design is employed to investigate how these students utilize translation methods, particularly focusing on their experiences with DeepL Translator in translating texts for their theses and journals (Ugwu & Eze, 2023). The qualitative method allows for a detailed exploration of the participants' subjective experiences and perceptions, facilitating a comprehensive analysis of their use of translation tools (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).

Participants and Data Sources

The participants in this study are 24 final-year students from the English Education Department at the Islamic University of North Sumatra. These students were selected as data sources due to their relevant experience in using DeepL Translator for academic writing.

Data Collection Techniques and Instruments

Data were collected using a combination of questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was designed to gather information on students' experiences with DeepL Translator, including its perceived effectiveness and impact on their thesis and journal writing. The interviews aimed to extract deeper insights into the students' use of the application, focusing on detailed aspects of their translation practices. The data collection process was conducted voluntarily, with no coercion from the researchers.

Indicators for Research Instruments

The research instruments included specific indicators such as:

- a. Effectiveness of DeepL Translator: Perceptions of accuracy and usefulness in academic writing.
- b. Quality of Translations: Students' assessment of how well DeepL Translator improves their written texts.
- c. Challenges and Limitations: Difficulties encountered when using DeepL Translator.

Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis technique is the process of systematically collecting data to facilitate researchers in reaching conclusions. According to Miles & Huberman (1994), analysis consists of three streams of activities that occur simultaneously, namely: data reduction, data presentation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. The four streams in more detail are as follows:

a. Data Reduction

This stage involves reducing and simplifying raw data into a more focused and decipherable form. The data reduction process may include selecting important facts, grouping data into relevant categories, and developing concepts that emerge from the data. The main purpose of data reduction in this research is to make the data easier to manage and more efficient to interpret.

b. Data Presentation

After the data has been reduced, the next step is to present the data in a form that can be understood and interpreted by the reader. The presentation of this data is done using pie chart techniques and descriptive narratives. Presenting this data allows the reader to understand the context and complexity of the data and gain a deeper insight into the problems being studied.

c. Data Display

Data display is a crucial step that follows data reduction and holds equal importance in the analytical process. By organizing and compressing information, researchers can derive clearer and more informative insights, aiding in conclusion drawing and action-taking. This process helps researchers grasp the current social context within their study and decide on subsequent actions.

d. Draw conclusions/Verify

The final stage of the data analysis process is to draw conclusions or verify findings. Conclusions drawn should be based on strong evidence from the data. This verification process involves testing conclusions against raw data and relevant theory. By performing these four streams of activities simultaneously, researchers can produce in-depth, systematic, and reliable data analysis in qualitative research. A strong analysis allows the researcher to make a

meaningful contribution to the understanding of the phenomenon under study and to present the findings in a convincing and informative way to the reader.

Validity of The Data

To ensure the validity of the data, the study incorporates strategies recommended by Miles and Huberman (1994), including triangulation of data sources and methods, member checking (validating findings with participants), and peer debriefing (discussing findings with other researchers). These strategies help in verifying the accuracy and reliability of the research outcomes. This reference underscores the importance of safeguarding informant privacy in similar contexts, where ensuring the security and comfort of informants in disclosing sensitive data is paramount to maintaining the integrity and success of the study (Dworkin, 2009).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

This study involved 24 final-year English students from the Islamic University of North Sumatra. Data were collected through questionnaires and in-depth interviews to assess the impact of DeepL Translator on their thesis and journal writing.

Results from the Questionnaire

The questionnaire results indicated that DeepL Translator is highly valued by students for its effectiveness and efficiency. A significant majority (87%) of respondents reported that DeepL Translator significantly enhances their ability to complete thesis and journal writing. They noted that the tool provides accurate translations and is easy to use, which contributes to improved translation quality. Additionally, (75%) of participants highlighted that DeepL Translator saves time, allowing them to complete translation tasks more quickly compared to traditional methods.

Results from the Interviews

In-depth interviews provided further insights into students' experiences with DeepL Translator:

Perceived Helpfulness

Students consistently reported that DeepL Translator was a valuable aid in their writing.

Respondent 1:

"I often use DeepL Translator because it helps me to translate languages I don't know".

Respondent 2:

"This application is quite good, that's why I often use this application to help me complete my assignments".

Respondent 3:

"This application helps me to translate languages because it is very easy to translate to other languages, so this application helps me a lot to do my final assignment".

Based on the above results, the participants have their own experiences in making their thesis or journal using DeepL Translator. Each of them said that this application really helped them in translating their thesis and journal into English. This statement is also supported by some questioner data results from this study that respondents are greatly helped by the existence of this application that translates Indonesian into English.

Accurate Translation Results

DeepL Translator has accurate final results. According to the respondents, DeepL Translator can detect the lack or excess of a sentence that they want to translate. So for those

who are not too familiar with the way of grammar can be helped by DeepL Translator in composing the sentence they want to translate.

Respondent 1:

"Yes, that's why I often use Deep Translator, because the results are accurate. It doesn't translate according to Indonesian grammar".

Respondent 2:

"The results are accurate, I think this is the most accurate language translation application I have ever used".

Respondent 3:

"The results are accurate, I don't use grammar anymore to check the translation results".

Based on the above statements, the respondents said that this application has accurate translation results that can help them translate their thesis and journal into English without having to check the grammar application again. This is supported by a statement in one of the results of the questionnaire data distributed, where the respondent said that DeepL Translator has accurate results when it is to be translated and often uses it to translate some English sentences that they do not know.

Save Time

DeepL Translator is one of the results of technological developments that are able to translate languages using online networks. Based on the results of the questionnaire data and also the results of the interviews conducted, the students also said that this application saves time in translating or can be called shortening time.

Respondent 1:

"DeepL Translator is very helpful for me because it is practical and also saves time in translation".

Respondent 2:

"DeepL This translator helps me to translate my thesis and journal, because it can be accessed anywhere".

Respondent 3:

"It takes a long time to translate from Indonesian to English."

From the above results, the students said that DeepL Translator has a fairly fast translation result. To get the translation results from DeepL Translator, the students do not need a long time. The results come out the way they want. This is also the same from the results of the questionnaire data distributed that the reason they like this DeepL Translator is because of the instant translation results, so they often use this DeepL Translator in their daily lives whether it is to translate a new word or used to translate their thesis and journals.

The results from both the questionnaire and interviews demonstrate that DeepL Translator is an effective tool for students. It enhances translation accuracy, facilitates efficient writing, and saves time, making it a valuable asset for students working on their theses and journals. The positive feedback underscores the tool's role in improving academic writing and streamlining the translation process.

Discussion

Based on the results of the study, the use of DeepL Translator proved to be very helpful for students in academic writing, including in writing theses and scientific journals. This translation tool not only improves the efficiency of the writing process, but also the quality of the final scientific work produced by students. Studies show that DeepL Translator is able to translate texts with a high degree of accuracy, which helps students understand and organize

English texts better. In addition, students reported that the app made it easier for them to access international literature without experiencing significant language barriers, thus increasing the depth and scope of their research. The translation accuracy provided by DeepL Translator also helps students convey their ideas clearly and effectively without worrying about grammatical errors or confusing sentence structures (Steigerwald, 2022). However, it is important to address this potential over-reliance on technology by ensuring that students also develop their own language skills through an integrated approach to education. It is also argued by Fabbro & Pavesi, (2016) that in addition to assisting students in translating their writing, students also tend to translate without considering the accuracy of the translation.

With the advancement of this technology, machine translation has indeed become one of the popular tools among academics (Iswara, 2024). It not only facilitates the process of translating texts between languages, but also helps in understanding literature and research from different parts of the world quickly and accurately. Its widespread use in academia opens up opportunities for cross-cultural collaboration and deeper knowledge exchange, which were previously difficult to achieve without the help of this technology, but it must be ensured that students must always consider other things.

The use of the Translation Engine not only helps with the final paper, be it a journal or thesis, but is also used by other students in writing that uses English. This also agrees with Danping's research (2023) that students who became the researcher's onbbject in this study agreed that the translation machine helped students a lot in doing assignments.

This study reveals that students employ various methods for translating English texts, ranging from word-by-word translation to translating entire sentences or paragraphs. Sujarwo (2020) concurs, noting that students adapt their translation methods based on their needs. DeepL Translator is identified as a significant tool in this context, offering several advantages over other translation applications.

Advantages of DeepL Translator:

a. Accuracy

DeepL Translator is known for its high accuracy in translating various languages, providing clear and contextually appropriate translations (Huang et al., 2022).

b. Writing Enhancement

It includes features that improve writing correctness by correcting grammar and spelling errors, and enhancing the clarity and naturalness of translated texts (Smith & Jones, 2021).

Disadvantages of DeepL Translator:

c. Language Limitations

Although highly accurate, DeepL Translator may not support as many languages as other translation tools like Google Translate, which offers broader language coverage (Kumar, 2021).

d. Contextual Nuances

While effective, DeepL Translator may still struggle with highly nuanced or idiomatic expressions, which could affect the quality of translation in complex texts (Lee & Thompson, 2020).

Comparatively, previous research highlights that tools such as Google Translate offer extensive language options and are widely accessible but may lack the nuanced accuracy provided by DeepL Translator (Isnayanti, 2023). This research contributes to the advancement of machine translation technology by demonstrating that DeepL Translator not only facilitates efficient cross-language communication but also enhances the overall quality of translated texts. This positions DeepL Translator as an innovative and current solution in the field of translation technology.

CONCLUSION

Based on the explanation above show that this technology has a significant positive impact. DeepL Translator assists students in accelerating the process of translating texts from Indonesian to English with a high degree of accuracy, enabling them to access international literature sources without significant language barriers. Students' positive responses to the ease of use and the quality of the translation results indicate that this technology is instrumental in improving the efficiency with which they complete their academic assignments.

However, the use of DeepL Translator also poses challenges, particularly in relation to the potential for over-reliance on technology in foreign language learning. Students need to be reminded of the importance of actively developing foreign language skills in order to understand the nuances of language and cultural contexts that may not be fully captured by machine translation. Therefore, an integrated approach to the higher education curriculum that combines the use of technology with hands-on foreign language learning is essential to ensure that students are not only reliant on technology, but also able to develop comprehensive communication skills.

Overall, the use of DeepL Translator offers significant benefits in supporting students' academic writing processes. However, it is crucial to strike a balance between leveraging technology and fostering comprehensive foreign language skills. To maximize the potential of this technology and enhance the quality and authenticity of students' thesis and journal writing, several implications for foreign language education should be considered. Educators should integrate translation tools like DeepL Translator into their curriculum as supplementary resources, while emphasizing the importance of developing fundamental language skills such as grammar, vocabulary, and writing techniques. Additionally, incorporating practical exercises that combine technology with traditional language learning methods can help students effectively utilize translation tools without compromising their language proficiency.

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