

OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES GOOGLE TRANSLATE AS A TOOL IN TECHNOLOGY ENHANCED LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Abstrak: Berbagai aspek kehidupan telah berubah secara signifikan oleh kemajuan teknologi digital, termasuk metode pembelajaran bahasa yang ditingkatkan teknologi (TELL). Dengan menggunakan Google Translate sebagai alat pembelajaran bahasa, penelitian ini mengkaji peluang dan tantangannya. Metode deskriptif kualitatif digunakan, dengan wawancara mendalam dengan lima responden yang dipilih secara purposif. Untuk memastikan validitas data, wawancara semi-terstruktur digunakan untuk mengumpulkan dan menganalisis analisis tematik dengan triangulasi sumber. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa Google Translate memiliki banyak manfaat, terutama dalam hal meningkatkan pemahaman kosakata, struktur kalimat, dan kepercayaan diri saat berbicara dalam bahasa asing. Karena praktis dan cepat, fitur teks adalah yang paling sering digunakan. Namun demikian, ada banyak tantangan yang muncul. Ini termasuk potensi ketergantungan yang dapat mengganggu pemikiran kritis dan penguasaan bahasa secara mandiri, serta terjemahan yang tidak akurat dari kalimat-kalimat kompleks. Selain itu, responden menunjukkan sikap penting terhadap penggunaan Google Translate dengan mempertimbangkan konteks penggunaan bahasa dan memverifikasi hasil terjemahan melalui sumber lain. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa teknologi dapat membantu pembelajaran. Oleh karena itu, Google Translate memiliki potensi besar sebagai alat pembelajaran bahasa jika digunakan secara tepat, kritis, dan terintegrasi dalam strategi pembelajaran yang mendukung penguasaan keterampilan bahasa secara menyeluruh.

Kata Kunci: Fitur Google Translate, Pemahaman Kosakata, Kepercayaan Diri Dalam Pembelajaran Bahasa, Akurasi Terjemahan, Strategi Penggunaan Teknologi.

Abstract: Various aspects of life have been significantly altered by advances in digital technology, including technology-enhanced language learning methods (TELL). Using Google Translate as a language learning tool, this study examines the opportunities and challenges. A descriptive qualitative method was used, with in-depth interviews with five purposively selected respondents. To ensure the validity of the data, semi-structured interviews were used to collect and analyze thematic analyses by triangulating sources. The results show that Google Translate has many benefits, especially when it comes to improving vocabulary comprehension, sentence structure, and confidence when speaking

in a foreign language. Because it is practical and fast, the text feature is the most commonly used. Nevertheless, there are many challenges that arise. These include potential dependencies that can interfere with critical thinking and independent language mastery, as well as inaccurate translations of complex sentences. In addition, respondents showed an important attitude towards using Google Translate by considering the context of language use and verifying the translation results through other sources. This shows that technology can help learn. Therefore, Google Translate has great potential as a language learning tool if used appropriately, critically, and integrated in learning strategies that support the mastery of language skills across the board.

Keywords: *Google Translate Features, Vocabulary Comprehension, Language Learning Confidence, Translation Accuracy, Technology Usage Strategies.*

INTRODUCTION

Many aspects of human life have been changed by digital technology, including education, particularly language learning. In the last ten years, technological advances have changed the way learning is done. Technology-enabled language learning (TELL) offers new opportunities for learners and teachers to access broader, interactive, flexible, and collaborative learning resources. Artificial intelligence (AI)-based applications and media are now being used as learning aids. Google Translate is one of the real examples of how technology helps language learning. (Tolayuk & Aras, 2026: 88)

Google Translate, a web-based application developed by Google, is one of the most popular machine translation platforms that allows users to instantly translate images, text, and conversations into over 130 languages. The app is also known for its speed and ease of use, as well as its support for over 130 languages, making it one of the largest translation engines in the world. Google Translate is often used by students learning English as a foreign language (EFL) because it greatly helps them understand vocabulary, sentence structure, and the meaning of texts in foreign languages. (Mannahali & Angreany, 2025: 2)

However, while Google Translate offers a lot of convenience, it also has some challenges. One of the main problems is that translations are not yet completely accurate, especially for complex sentences, figurative expressions, or the cultural nuances of a particular language. Over-reliance on these tools can also hinder the development of critical thinking and language skills of learners, such as writing and understanding

language structures independently. This raises concerns that the use of technology without supervision can reduce the quality of education.

Instead, research shows that Google Translate helps learners learn different languages. While some studies highlight its negative impact on learners' cognitive development, others emphasize its benefits as a useful and effective learning aid. These conflicting findings suggest that further research is needed. This is especially true when it comes to using Google Translate wisely and integrated in the right learning strategies.

Based on the introduction, this article aims to examine the opportunities and challenges of Google Translate as a technology-enabled language learning tool. It is hoped that this research can help us understand how this technology can be used appropriately without neglecting the main goal of language learning, which is the mastery of comprehensive language skills. This research is also expected to help educators design learning strategies that are in accordance with technological developments.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Digital technology has significantly changed language learning. The technology-supported language learning method (TELL) utilizes technology as a tool in the learning process. Machine Translation (MT) is a type of automatic translation that uses computers and software to perform routine operations. The machine operates automatically during the translation process. Text that comes from a source in a particular language is converted into text that is desired in another language by the system. Google Translate is one example of machine translation. (Untara & Setiawan, 2020: 93)

In addition, internet-based technology allows learners to access materials anytime and anywhere through various platforms such as websites, apps, and social media. This makes students freer and more independent, as well as increasing the intensity of their training. (Sahnan, 2024: 92)

Google Translate is not just a translation tool, it also offers many features that can help improve students' English skills. By taking advantage of these features, English learning can become more varied and more actively engaged learners, making them more motivated and diligent. (Saefullah, 2024: 41)

The use of Google Translate shows that using this app as a learning aid can enrich English vocabulary. The use of learning aids in the learning process can increase students' interest, encourage them to act, and even have a psychological impact on them. (Bayu, 2020: 65).

The main challenge with using Google Translate when learning English is that the translations are often inaccurate. Many learners realize that Google Translate translations sometimes contain a lot of errors, especially in long sentences or paragraphs. Such translations are often inaccurate, too rigid to use, or out of context. (Nursyahida, 2025: 4135)

The limitations of Google Translate in Vocabulary Learning, there are several obstacles in its use because students are very dependent on Google Translate. Whenever they come across a new word, they always rely on Google Translate. As a result of this dependency, students have difficulty learning vocabulary because they only use Google Translate to look up the meaning of words or phrases without understanding their meaning in depth. (Hutagalung et al., 2024: 13)

In using google translate there are some things that need to be improved, such as the ability to translate more local languages, better accuracy for certain contexts (such as technical terms or expressions) as well as additional features such as text to voice and grammar explanations. (Arif et al., 2024: 30)

Google Translate results don't always match the original context and intent of the text. (Putri & Lessy, 2024: 202)

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative methodology with in-depth interviews. This method was chosen to further understand students' perceptions, experiences, and perspectives regarding the use of Google Translate as a language learning tool. The research subjects consisted of 5 respondents using Google Translate, who were selected through purposive sampling techniques based on criteria relevant to the research objectives.

To facilitate the analysis process, semi-structured interviews are used to collect data; Although the researchers created the question guidelines, they still gave respondents the freedom to express their opinions broadly. These interviews are conducted both in person and online, and then and recorded. The focus of the questions is the experience of using Google Translate, the advantages or prospects of language learning, the barriers faced, and the impact on language skills such as reading and writing.

Thematic analysis is used to examine the data collected. It includes the process of transcription, data encoding, theme grouping, and inference. To ensure the validity of the data, this study used the source triangulation method by comparing the answers of several respondents and checking group members to ensure that the results of the interviews and the researchers' interpretations were appropriate. It is hoped that the results of research with this method will provide an accurate picture of the opportunities and problems of using Google Translate in language learning.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

There were some important findings about the use of Google Translate in language learning from the five respondents: First, all respondents stated that the text feature was used most often. This is due to its ease, speed, and practicality in translating words and sentences. Some respondents also said that additional features such as voice were used, but not as often as text because it required a more stable connection.

Second, all respondents admitted that Google Translate helped them a lot to understand difficult vocabulary and sentences. The app allows users to immediately learn the meaning of words, provides translation alternatives, and provides examples of word usage in sentences, which helps respondents understand the context and enrich their foreign language vocabulary.

Third, all respondents said that using Google Translate boosted confidence. Because they have tools to check the meaning of words or sentences that they haven't understood, they are more likely to write, read, and try to use a foreign language.

Fourth, all respondents stated that they had experienced translation errors, especially in terms of sentences that were idiomatic or had double meanings. One of the most

common examples is the phrase "break a leg," which literally means "break a leg," even though the actual meaning is "good luck." In addition, words with double meanings such as "bank" also often result in misinterpretations if not used correctly.

Fifth, respondents showed a critical attitude when handling the mistake. They do not rely entirely on Google Translate translations. Instead, they can verify the translation by comparing it with other dictionaries, searching for examples of usage on the internet, understanding the context of the sentence, and simplifying or re-editing the translation results to better match the actual intent.

The results show that Google Translate is very helpful for technology-based language learning or technology-enhanced language learning (TELL). Users tend to use practical and effective technology to meet their learning needs, according to the dominance of text features.

Results showing that vocabulary is easy to understand are in line with the idea that technology-assisted language learning can improve the language acquisition process by providing quick access to linguistic information. Google Translate is not just a translation tool but a learning resource that helps users understand the structure and use of language in certain situations.

In addition, the increased confidence of respondents suggests that technology can serve as a barrier to language learning. With the help of translation, users feel safer to experiment with foreign languages, which supports the theory that technology can reduce language anxiety.

However, translation errors point to technological limitations, especially in the understanding of context, idioms, and figurative meanings. As such, Google Translate cannot completely replace the human understanding of language interpretation because the app is limited to pragmatic and language culture.

The critical attitude shown by respondents when assessing translation results is an important part of learning. Critical thinking skills and better linguistic awareness are demonstrated by users who are able to verify and correct translation results. Therefore, using Google Translate will be more beneficial if it is used analytically rather than passively.

Overall, the study concludes that Google Translate has a great opportunity to be an excellent language learning tool, especially when it comes to improving access, comprehension, and confidence. But there are still issues with accuracy and context, so they must be used carefully and critically for maximum benefits.

CONCLUSION

Google Translate is a technology-based language learning (TELL) tool. This application has been proven to increase students' confidence in using foreign languages and is easily accessible. One of the available features, text translation, is the main choice because it is practical and effective in supporting the learning process.

However, Google Translate has its drawbacks, especially when it comes to translation accuracy, context understanding, and translation of idiomatic terms and figurative meanings. The development of critical thinking and language mastery independently can be hampered if you rely too much on these apps. As a result, Google Translate cannot be used as the sole source of learning.

In addition, the study shows that learners who use Google Translate wisely and critically, verify translation results and understand context, can benefit greater. Therefore, Google Translate should not be used as a substitute for the learning process, but as a support. It is very important for educators to regulate the use of these technologies to fit the main goal of language learning, which is the overall mastery of language skills.

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