The Use of Google Translate and U-Dictionary as Machine Translation for Translating Text: EFL College Student's Preference and Perceptions

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Abstract. Several studies have investigated the effects of using Google Translate and U-Dictionary on translation products for English as a foreign language (EFL) student. However, students' preferences regarding these two machines' translation for translating texts in EFL translation classes in Indonesia still seem relatively few and have not been much explored. This research aimed to determine which machine translation EFL college students prefer for translating their text. This study used a qualitative case study approach. In investigating students' preferences, questionnaires, and in-depth interview were used as data collection tools. Seventeen students were selected by purposive sampling and were administered an online questionnaire. Then, students participated in in-depth interviews and obtained further information from an online questionnaire. We then analyzed the data using two techniques, including frequency counts for quantitative data and qualitative analysis through thematic analysis for qualitative data. The findings reveal that students prefer Google Translate over U-Dictionary for three reasons. First, they consider Google Translate as a complete machine translation with various features that help them translate text. Second, Google Translate increases student's knowledge of new vocabulary. Third, Google Translate makes the translation process more accessible for students. It is so easy to access. However, U-Dictionary also received high marks because students felt more confident in the accuracy of the U-Dictionary translation results. Therefore, it is believed that combining these two machines' translations will make the student's translation process more accessible.

Keywords: machine translation; Google Translate; U-Dictionary; college students; translate text.

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Introduction

In the current age of information technology, Machine Translation (MT) has become the leading technology in EFL (English as a foreign language) translation classes. As the demand for rapid translation increased, MT is now widely used and a fascinating topic for many researchers worldwide. Salman (2000) investigated the effectiveness of machine translation. In addition, Mahardika (2017) examined the use of machine translation tools in EFL learning, and Sujarwo (2020) investigated students' perceptions towards using machine translation tools in EFL classrooms. Their findings show that machine translation is handy and helpful for students in increasing their vocabulary, increasing their grammatical accuracy, saving their time, building their confidence, and giving inspiration or consideration to the users to understand the meaning. Most university students have difficulties in translating meaning from one language to another because of the change in style and grammar between their languages. With the updating of modern technology, students whose English is not good enough to do a translation by themselves will turn to Machine Translation (MT). Many machine translations can be easily used when we want to translate text. This study focuses on machine translation, specifically using Google Translate and U-Dictionary.

For EFL college students, Google Translate is one of the most popular and accessible machine translations. Darsih and Asikin (2020) also revealed that Google Translate was among the most frequently used Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) during the students' English learning process. The usefulness of Google Translate as Mobile Assisted Language Learning (MALL) can be utilized within the process of learning English within the shape of a hand-held mobile device (Aisah Nasution et al., 2023). Google Translate is a free machine translation tool that allows users to translate text across different languages. Regarding translation, a lot of research has been done on Google Translate. A study by Alsalem (2019) and Medvedev (2016) stated that Google Translate helps students improve their translation skills. Habeeb (2019) also expressed a high attitude towards using Google Translate and pointed out some advantages, such as fast translation and easy access. From a different perspective, Josefsson (2011) found that Google Translate outperforms traditional dictionaries as a support aid on students' mobile devices, particularly when it comes to speed and accuracy when translating collocations, phrases, and specialized terms. Thus, Google Translate is user-friendly for machine translation, particularly for students learning foreign languages. With translations accessible in 90 languages, Google Translate enables us to translate a wide range of content. Not only can translate words, but also phrases, text paragraphs, and whole pages.

On the other hand, U-Dictionary was just launched in March 2016, which is ten years after Google Translate's initial release. The uses of the U-Dictionary include the fact that it has become trendy among EFL college students because it is free, unique, and easy to access and download. U-Dictionary allows users to practice any language. Although U-Dictionary has become very popular recently, there is little research on U-Dictionary. Zheng (2015) states that U-Dictionary helps students type and translate words and sentences with a handy feature. The feature allows you can take a photo and upload it, and the system will directly scan

and translate the text for you without typing and instantly display the target meaning. According to Wulandari and Handayani (2020) U-Dictionary has a favorable effect on students' English proficiency, making it a useful teaching tool for EFL college students. Maulidiyah (2018), discovered that U-Dictionary can help students with their pronunciation, which lends more credence to this.

Google Translate and U-Dictionary, as machine translation, have an essential role for students working on translation assignments. These free machine translations always help the translator to create a good result in translating the source language into the target language. There is no need to go through the trouble of translating word for word from a foreign language, especially if we need online machine translation to replace the required foreign language.

Based on the review of previous studies, most studies focused on the effectiveness of Google Translate and U-Dictionary. These two machines' translations are usually discussed separately in the Indonesian EFL context. Most of the time, discussions about Google Translate and U-Dictionary are ignored in the same study. Sipayung et al. (2021) argue that investigating these two modes of translation in translating text can be used as an evaluation to improve machine translation performance. It must be investigated more deeply. In this case, students' perceptions of translating text are essential and helpful in conducting research in this area. Therefore, this present study is devoted to discovering the EFL college students' preference for using Google Translate and U-Dictionary as a tool for translating text. This study will specifically examine which machine translation do students prefer to translate texts and how students' perceptions of Google Translate and U-Dictionary. Ultimately, it is hoped that this study will help EFL students translate texts by knowing which translation machine they need and having good translation quality.

Method

This study used a qualitative case study approach. Baxter and Jack (2015) define qualitative case study as "an approach to research that facilitates exploration of a phenomenon within its context using a variety of data sources which ensures that the issue is not explored through one lens, but rather a variety of lenses which allows for multiple facets of the phenomenon to be revealed and understood." This study was carried out at a North Sumatra State University. Seventeen students majoring in English language education in the seventh semester who have passed the translation course were recruited to participate in this study. In this case, the criterion the selected participants needed to fulfill was their familiarity by using Google Translate and U-Dictionary to translate text. In this study, students' preferences in the use of Google Translate and U-Dictionary in translating text were determined.

Data for this study were collected through various instruments, including questionnaires and in-depth interviews. The questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms with closed questions on a 5-point scale (strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, strongly disagree). Based on the responses to the questionnaire, the researchers developed questions for in-depth interviews. Additionally, an in-depth interview was conducted to elicit additional details about the information provided in the questionnaire. Frequency counts were used in a quantitative analysis of the information gathered from the questionnaire's closed-ended

questions. Thematic analysis was used to qualitatively examine the interview transcripts from the participants. Thematic analysis is thought to be the most appropriate method for any study that aims to find through interpretations, as noted by Alhojailan and Ibrahim (2012). In order to uncover themes, thematic analysis entails going over a set of data (such as transcripts from in-depth interviews) and looking for patterns in the meaning of the data.

Findings and Discussion

The data in this research can be classified into two categories: first, the student's preference in using translation from Google Translate and U-Dictionary; second, the student's perception of Google Translate and U-Dictionary for translated text. The results of data analysis regarding these two categories are presented and discussed sequentially below:

EFL college students′ preference for using Google Translate and U-Dictionary as machine translation

Students' preferences in using Google Translate and U-Dictionary were investigated to see how these two machine translations are used differently. The results are then displayed in Figure 1 below:
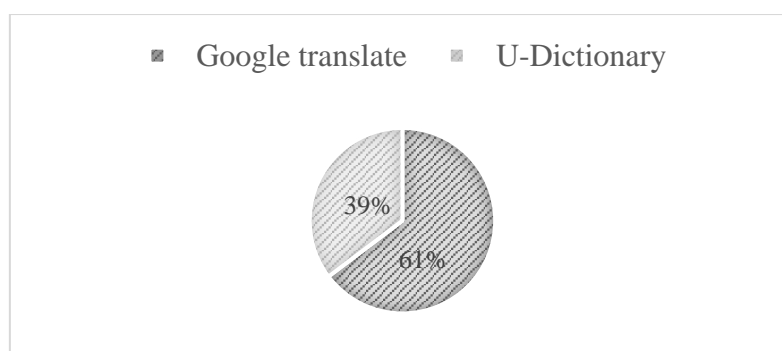

Figure 1. Students' preference for Google Translate and U-Dictionary

In terms of the student's preference in using translation from Google Translate, and U-Dictionary during this study, it can be seen that 61 percent of students chose Google Translate and 32 percent chose U-Dictionary. So, it can be concluded that most students (n=17) prefer to use Google Translate rather than U-Dictionary to translate their text.

Students′ perception of Google Translate and U-Dictionary for translating text

Students' perception of Google Translate and U-Dictionary for translating their text was explored based on the investigation of information found within the questionnaire and interview. After the initial information was found within the questionnaire, the interview questions were planned to find deeper information. Their perceptions were then explained in more detail, which can be seen in table 1 below:

Table 1. Students' Perception of Google Translate and U-Dictionary

Item	MT	n	Frequency					Mean
			SA	A	N	D	SD	
GT/UD is a complete MT for EFL college Students	GT	17	64,7%	35,3%	-	-	-	4,65
	UD	17	11,8%	23,5%	35,3%	29,4%	-	3,18
The voice feature on GT/UD is handy	GT	17	17,6%	64,7%	-	17,6%	-	3,82
	UD	17	23,5%	17,6%	35,3%	23,5%	-	3,41
Camera translation feature on GT/UD is very handy	GT	17	29,4%	11,8%	52,9%	5,9%	-	3,65
	UD	17	23,5%	17,6%	35,3%	17,6%	5,9%	3,35
Translation result on GT/UD is accurate	GT	17	11,8%	29,4%	52,9%	5,9%	-	3,47
	UD	17	35,3%	17,6%	47,1%	-	-	3,88
The readability level of GT/UD is good	GT	17	29,4%	29,4%	41,2%	-	-	3,88
	UD	17	17,6%	58,9%	23,5%	-	-	3,94
Translation result of GT/UD is acceptable	GT	17	11,8%	52,9%	35,3%	-	-	3,76
	UD	17	23,5%	29,4%	47,1%	-	-	3,76
Translation result of GT/UD is in good structure	GT	17	17,6%	23,5%	29,4%	23,5%	5,9%	3,24
	UD	17	11,8%	17,6%	52,9%	17,6%	-	3,24
GT/UD increases my confidence in translation	GT	17	23,5%	41,2%	23,5%	11,8%	-	3,76
	UD	17	35,3%	23,5%	35,3%	5,9%	-	3,88
I like to translate text with GT/UD	GT	17	41,2%	29,4%	29,4%	-	-	4,12
	UD	17	41,2%	5,9%	35,3%	17,6%	-	3,71
Using GT/UD makes my translation process easier	GT	17	29,4%	70,6%	-	-	-	4,29
	UD	17	35,3%	17,6%	47,1%	-	-	3,88

The findings of the statistical analysis of the student's perception of Google Translate and U-Dictionary are shown in Table 1 above. Items 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 8, 9, and 10 produced statistically varying answers from these students. Based on the frequency and average scores in the table, most students agree that Google Translate is a complete machine translation (item 1) with various useful features, such as voice features and camera translation, that can help them translate texts (items 3 & 4). However, for the accuracy and readability of the translation results in Google Translate and U-Dictionary, students prioritize the accuracy and readability of the U-Dictionary translation results. This can be seen from the frequency and average results in the table above (items 4 & 5). From the frequency and average results in items 4 and 5, it is clear that students feel more confident with the translation results in U-Dictionary than in Google Translate (item 8). Even though the use of Google Translate did not have a significant influence on students' confidence in translating text, it is still liked and used by the majority of English study program students (item 9). Students are more likely to use Google Translate as an alternative machine translation to make it easier to translate words or texts in daily use and greatly benefit them to learn effectively (item 10).

As presented in Table 1, students chose Google Translate to translate text because Google Translate has various excellent functions that can make it easier for them to translate text. However, they also became aware of Google Translate's shortcomings. It can be seen from the results of the table above (items 4 & 5) that Google Translate has weaknesses in the level of accuracy and readability of the translation results, so students prefer U-Dictionary to Google Translate. It pointed out that the translation process needs to be carried out correctly. To achieve good translation results, the students relied not only on machine translation, such as

Google Translate but also on their knowledge of the English language. This result was corroborated by research conducted by Sukkhwan (2014), which found that the four most frequent tasks completed by EFL students when translating are reading a sentence or text before utilizing Google Translate, translating a sentence at a time, searching for and substituting a more appropriate word in Google Translate, and editing Google Translate output. In this study, the seventh-semester students translated texts using Google Translate in the same way. They were aware of the errors caused by Google Translate and tried to ensure that the translation results did not contain any errors.

From the questionnaire that has been conducted, it can be concluded that students have different perceptions of these two translation machines. Therefore, the author divides student perceptions into two categories: first, students' perceptions of the use of Google Translate; second, students' perceptions of the use of U-Dictionary. Each student has different reasons, which will be discussed below:

Students' perception of the use of Google Translate

Based on the results of the above questionnaire, the researchers found there are three main reasons why students prefer to use Google Translate instead of U Dictionary to translate texts. This can be explained as follows:

Theme One: A Complete Machine Translation

The first theme that emerged from the data revealed that the first reason why students prefer Google Translate over U-Dictionary in translating text is that Google Translate is a complete machine translation. Students said that Google Translate is a complete machine translation because various features help them in translating text, as evidenced by the following excerpts:

> *"For me, Google Translate is a complete machine translation because superior features make the translation experience more complete. A clear example of this completeness is the voice feature, which allows users to hear the correct pronunciation of the translated text. This voice feature provides an additional dimension to communication capabilities, which may not be obvious with other machine translation"* (FS, Interview)

> *"I strongly agree that Google Translate is a complete machine translation because as long as I use Google Translate, there are several features that I like to use in translating text. An example is when I want to know the translation of an article. Sometimes, several articles cannot be copied for me to translate, and this confused me. But with the feature of camera translation in Google Translate, I can screenshot the article and then immediately use this feature to translate the text that I want. This feature helps me, I don't need to type the sentences in the article one by one"* (TR, Interview)

Two excerpts from the interview results above are supported by the frequency and mean score of students' perceptions of using Google Translate and U-Dictionary, as seen in Table 1 (item 2 & item 3). The results revealed that 13 participants agreed that using the voice feature and camera translation in Google Translate was very useful in helping them translate text. This result is consistent with the findings of Yanti & Meka (2019), who said that the feature in Google

Translate that allows us to translate text from photographs is useful and that the translation process was speedy since we did not have to retype the text. Students also reported that using the voice feature on Google Translate not only helps them understand the meaning of words but also improves pronunciation skills.

Similarly, (Nguyen, 2019) discovered that Google Translate could be one of the facilities for students to develop their pronunciation skills because, on Google Translate, there is a voice feature that can check the meaning of the word we say, if the word we say is not detected, then the pronunciation is wrong. We can also check the correct pronunciation for each word by using the same feature. It is also supported by (Khasanah et al., 2022), who found students had a positive perception that Google Translate is convenient, easy to use, and has the potential to improve students' pronunciation skills. (Wongsiruya, 2020) also showed that the Google Translate application can be used to improve pronunciation ability for difficult words. Thus, it has been shown that EFL college students prefer Google Translate over U-Dictionary because it is more complete as seen from the various features that are very useful in helping them translate text.

Theme Two: Increasing student's knowledge of new vocabulary

The second reason why students choose Google Translate is that it increases students' knowledge of new vocabulary in the target language, as shown in the following excerpts:

> *"I like Google Translate because by using Google Translate, it was like I found a new thing. As we know, Google Translate has function as a dictionary; it can find equivalent vocabulary from the mother tongue with the target language that I never knew before. So Google Translate can facilitate me in increasing my knowledge of vocabulary in the target language"* (HF, Interview)
>
> *"My vocabulary always gets increased by using Google Translate. For example, when I want to express an opinion in a class where I have to use English, I often don't know the vocabulary I want to use in English. To overcome this, I always use Google Translate so that every day my vocabulary increases by using Google Translate, its use is very simple"* (RA, Interview)

Students have previously mentioned that by using Google Translate, students' curiosity can be increased indirectly by constantly engaging them with new vocabulary in the target language. This activity also improved the students' knowledge, and they learned something new every time they used Google Translate. Even though they just read and write the word or sentence they have translated, they are indirectly familiar with the new vocabulary. Those statements were in line with the previous study (Pratama & Utami, 2022), which mentioned vocabulary is an essential aspect of mastering English because having a lot of vocabulary will help students learn English more easily. So, maximizing the use of Google Translate can help students to enrich their vocabulary in class. This was in line with a study conducted by Tumbal et al. (2021), which found that students gave a positive response to Google Translate since it makes studying English easy and beneficial for all students, particularly when acquiring new vocabulary. Furthermore, the study conducted by (Agustin & Siswana, 2022) also has the same result. The result demonstrates that Google Translate helped students in enriching

their vocabulary. Moreover, students mentioned that Google Translate also improved their translation skills.

> *"When I proofread Google Translate translation results, I think my translation skills can improve because I am aware that translation results from Google Translate are less accurate; sometimes the translation results are not appropriate, which confuses me. So there is always an urge to correct the translation using my language; this improves my translation skills"* (FJ, Interview)

From the statements given by the participant, it was concluded that due to the inaccuracy of the translation results from Google Translate, students corrected the translation in their language, which made their translation skills improve. Many inaccuracies were found in the Google Translate translation results. This can be seen from the results in Table 1, item 4. Students prefer the accuracy of the U-Dictionary translation results compared to Google Translate.

Google Translate can be a problem, namely the accuracy of the translation from Google Translate, which is categorized as less accurate. Categories that are less accurately described through the usage of words, technical terms, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, or existing text are accurate to the same meaning in SL and TL (Br Munthe et al., 2023; Maulidiyah, 2018). It is relevant to (Yanti & Meka, 2019), who revealed that the accuracy of Google Translate was quite doubtful for students. 61% of students said Google Translate changes the original meaning. Therefore, the student applied some strategies while using Google Translate in class. There were 95% of the students who double-checked the Google Translate results. Students also discovered grammatical errors while translating using Google Translate and had to double-check their results. Although there are deficiencies in this application, students still have a positive perception of its use. They believe that the translation results remain accurate as long as they can match the context.

Theme Three: Makes student's translation process easier

The last reason mentioned by the majority of students was the use of Google Translate, which greatly facilitated their translation process. It can be seen from the results of the questionnaire (item 10) that students choose Google Translate because it makes it easier to translate text compared to when they use U-Dictionary. It is also supported by the interview results, as follows:

> *"Google Translate helped me in the translation process; everything felt easy using Google Translate. For example, when a lecturer explains something and there are unfamiliar words, I will immediately look for the word's meaning on Google Translate. For me, this helps me save time; everything feels practical and fast. Moreover, I immediately knew how to pronounce words that were foreign to my ears, so that when the lecturer asked about the word, I already understood both the meaning and how to pronounce it"* (AR, Interview)

> *"The reason why I prefer Google Translate compared to U-Dictionary is that using Google Translate is simpler, making it easier for me to translate text. I don't need to download the Google Translate application on my cellphone because I can access Google Translate only through a website on the internet. Apart*

from that, because this is an application, of course, it is more practical and easier than having to carry a dictionary" (FS, Interview)

For students, accessing and using Google Translate is simple. Students can access the application on their mobile phones anywhere, making it more helpful for the user. Also, operating the tool is uncomplicated compared to a traditional dictionary. They no longer have to flip through a dictionary to figure out how to say something accurately. Furthermore, the speedy look capabilities of these apps make it easier for students to comprehend the meaning of the words or expressions they are translating. Because it makes learning easier, the majority of students prefer to utilize Google Translate as a media for translating text (Siahaan et al., 2022). This result corroborated Groves & Mundt (2015) survey, which claimed that Google translate is an easy-to-use, free web-based machine translation tool. Then, as Medvedev (2016) pointed out, Google Translate is applicable both inside and outside of the classroom. Furthermore, Google Translate used as a media in translation classes, saving students' time (Pham et al., 2022). In order to save time when working on translation assignments, students also strongly advise using Google Translate, which doubles as a dictionary and can translate unfamiliar phrases while also offering synonyms and word suggestions—both of which have proven to be quite helpful. So, with Google Translate, students can translate text faster than open a dictionary and completely free. The advantages of using Google Translate are more accessible in their various translation assignments.

Students' perception of the use of U-Dictionary

From the questionnaire results in Table 1, there are several statements where students prefer U-Dictionary over Google Translate. This will be divided into two themes, as explained below:

Theme One: An accurate translation

Translation accuracy refers to the reader's understanding of the source language to the target language. It also involves making sure that the target language is accurate so that readers can easily understand the meaning. According to (Harjanti, 2020), the degree of accuracy or message equivalency that may be attained in translated texts is determined by how well the author's style, the context of the text, and the language used in the translation all fit together. While analyzing the data for this theme, we found that most of the students who participated in this research strongly agree that the translation results in U-Dictionary are accurate compared to the results from Google Translate. This situation was clarified by the students' interview, showing that the translation results from U-Dictionary are accurate with the correct word choices and meanings. Also the grammar is better than Google Translate.

"For me, the accuracy of the translation results in U-Dictionary is perfect compared to the accuracy of the Google translate translation results; the text translation results are not confusing, so it is easy for me to understand and don't need much revision." (TR, Interview)

This finding also aligns with earlier research by Setiawan & Axelina (2022), who discovered that the majority of students choose U-Dictionary to translate because the accuracy of translating words and sentences in U-Dictionary is better than Google Translate. Students often found that the translation results in Google Translate were reputed to be less accurate if the data were most of its content, such as word technical terms, phrases, and clauses. From the inaccuracies in the Google Translate translation results, students prefer to use U-Dictionary rather than Google Translate.

Theme Two: Increasing student's confidence in translation

That U-Dictionary increases students' confidence in translation activities is the second theme that emerged regarding students' perceptions of using U-Dictionary. Most students stated that their self-confidence increased actively in almost all translation activities. Their statements were in line with what they reported in the questionnaire. As can be seen in Table 1 (item 8), all students prefer U-Dictionary to increase their confidence in translation compared to Google Translate.

> *"When I use U-Dictionary to translate my text, my confidence increases. With the accuracy of the translation results in the existing U-Dictionary, it gives me confidence, so sometimes I don't need to revise the translation results from the U-Dictionary"* (AR, Interview)

> *"Since I used U-Dictionary to translate text for my translation assignment, I have become more confident and less overthinking of my translation assignment, both in terms of grammar and content. Before using U-Dictionary, I was often unsure of what I was writing. Now, I also prefer to read the translation that I have made because it looks neat both in terms of language and structure"* (HF, Interview)

This finding is in line with the (Fedora & Hasan, 2023) argument that U-Dictionary has a direct impact on students' self-confidence levels. The questionnaire results clarified why students thought using U-Dictionary would be beneficial as well. The majority of respondents reported using U-Dictionary frequently and increasing their level of self-confidence. As students' self-confidence increases, students feel that u-Dictionary can also overcome their anxiety levels regarding language learning

Conclusion

This study revealed that EFL college students generally have positive perceptions towards Google Translate and U-Dictionary. However, the results of the present study showed that students frequently prefer to use Google Translate more to translate their text than U-Dictionary. There are three main reasons to support their idea: first, they consider Google Translate as a complete machine translation with various features that help them translate text. Second, Google Translate increases student's knowledge of new vocabulary. Third, using Google Translate makes the translation process more accessible for students. Students also looked up vocabulary definitions more rapidly by using Google Translate as a fast dictionary. However, students also reported some drawbacks. The students

emphasized that Google Translate cannot translate all words accurately and occasionally the results yield incorrect interpretations. Hence, students often check their Google Translate results in dictionaries or keep asking their friends for help. Although Google Translate often produces inaccurate translations and errors when translating languages, it is still an alternative option for students who want to translate text. Besides, U-Dictionary received positive points about the accuracy of the translation results, where students preferred the accuracy of the results in U-dictionary compared to Google translate.

Considering the positive perception of these two machine translations, it is believed that the combination of these two machine translations could make it easier for students to translate text. Therefore, teachers must examine students' preferences when translating texts using Google Translate or U-Dictionary because these preferences play an important role in influencing the efficiency of lesson implementation. In the future, it would be interesting to conduct a study comparing the perceived benefits of Google Translate and U-Dictionary and their impact on students' translations.

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