



Perceptions of EFL Students Regarding the Use of Machine Translation Tools in Learning English

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Article Information	Abstract
<i>Received:</i> May 9th, 2026 <i>Revised:</i> July 1st, 2026 <i>Accepted:</i> July 7th, 2026	The present study seeks to explore how English as a foreign language (EFL) learner perceive the use of machine translation (MT) for translating words or texts into English. The research type is qualitative descriptive, and the respondents are 13 students who use this technology. Data were collected from machine-supported translation quality assessment and student questionnaires implemented in translation courses. The findings of the research revealed that EFL learners at the university should reconsider and reorganize translation for better results based on their understanding. Machine translation tools are yet another alternative for meaning-making in a foreign language. This MT can also be utilized as a dictionary. Automatic translation is helpful and makes it very easy, as it gives the general meaning of the words. However, students also acknowledge that although machine translation facilitates and expedites their translation tasks, the output is not always accurate in terms of contextual appropriateness and grammatical precision. Overall, despite certain limitations, machine translation remains a highly beneficial tool in language learning and continues to serve as an effective resource for enhancing vocabulary acquisition and supporting comprehension in second language learning contexts. Keywords: <i>EFL; Machine Translation; Translation Accuracy; Vocabulary learning; student perception</i>

Introduction

Machine translation (MT) has recently become one of the most striking new

developments in the area of translation, especially for language learning. According to Naveen and Trojovský (2024), MT refers to the automatic translation of text or speech

from one language to another, providing an immediate and convenient way to bridge language barriers. The use of MT (machine translation) tools, especially those such as Google Translate, in the wild has caused major shifts to what professional translators and language learners alike do when translating. With the increased need for translation around the world, MT is widely used for translation across languages. The provision of MT platforms online has made translation easier for learners and allowed professionals an alternative to the use of dictionaries and manual translation (Rizky & Rohmana, 2025).

Back in the day, language students practically had to use printed dictionaries to look up expressions and phrases. Unfortunately, such an approach is laborious and not time-efficient. And with MT on and translations of words and sentences you can actually translate something in a more realistic way. But even with this ease, there are still difficulties with poor translation quality in translations produced by this system. Therefore, many students still choose to modify the offered translation for a more context-appropriate (Alkhatnai, 2019). Further innovations have been speeding up the accessibility of tools such as MT and are becoming an integral part of the educational setting.

The growing prevalence of MT in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classes has led to much discussion about the effectiveness of and issues concerning its implementation in learning. Studies have demonstrated that MT can be a valuable aid to the learning process and promote students' comprehension of words or phrases they come across in their studies. Unease over an overuse of these tools is widespread; they might undermine learners' acquisition of powerful language skills. Studies on students' and teachers' perspectives of using MT in EFL classrooms reveal that the use of MT as a resource can be beneficial, but its potential

usefulness is significantly influenced by users when accessing resources and the contexts where it occurs (Carrió-Pastor, 2016).

As students' perceptions about MTs have a strong bearing on the way in which they engage with it, understanding their opinions is crucial to maximize its use in educational contexts. Perception is the mechanism by which people choose, organize, and interpret information that leads to their behavioral responses. And in the MT field, learners' attitudes decide if and how often they use MT tools and on what extent they depend on them when performing translation tasks. The purpose of the present study is to tap into EFL students' attitudes in a university towards the use of MT regarding their translation tasks and learning. Student feedback is expected to reveal both the advantages and drawbacks of MT in translation assignments (Davidoff, 1998).

The relationship between MT and target language skills is one of the main issues. Despite the ease that MT brings, translation can be incorrect or not fit into context, and it may hamper the learning process. Author For instance, many of the mistakes made by MT systems are related to poor translations and context-insensitive translation correcting source word without taking this into account, as it often seems that words or phrases are translated out of context. This raises the question of whether students are able to critically evaluate and improve machine translations (Hassan, 2020). In addition, the ready availability of MT platforms can lead students to become overly dependent on such tools, and this dependence can discourage them from considering other, deeper ways of engaging with translation or new vocabulary.

In spite of these difficulties, studies have indicated that MT can be beneficial in an educational situation when skillfully used. For instance, MT may allow students a rapid understanding of the overall text meaning,

particularly in case of translation of long texts or unfamiliar content (Rossi & Chevrot, 2019). Molding power foreign language learners can also use machine translation as a supplement for learning new words and observing sentence patterns. The potential to exploit MT tools as a dictionary and translation aide makes them an invaluable tool for many learners, particularly when dealing with challenging or LSP (Tsai, 2019).

Nevertheless, although MT tools may develop students' professional translation competence in some settings: they have their limitations. For instance, MT occasionally fails to translate idioms and cultural references which are significant for language learning. This also points out that the students should avoid over reliance on MT than learning language through traditional methods of reading, writing and exposure to native speakers. Moreover, the role played by teachers in directing the use of MT applications by students is essential. Educators can support students to think critically about the affordances and limitations of these tools, and to use them as an additional source rather than as their go-to translation tool (Sabtan, 2020).

Finally, although MT tools can be a helpful support for translation tasks, there is no question that the effectiveness of pre-service translators will depend heavily on how they make use of them. Students' attitudes towards MT can have an effect on how they will use the tools and knowing what their attitude is can be a key issue when integrating MT into the EFL class. It is crucial that educators also consider the application of such technologies in supporting language learning, as well as facilitating skill acquisition in translation. With the increasing use of MT in translation practice, more research is necessary to investigate the long-term effects of MT on L2 acquisition and translation competence (Pym, 2003).

Machine translation (MT) Machine translation is a computer translation process in which software or system translates a source text from one language into another. While MT has been around since the 1950s, it's currently evolving quickly as technology advances. The modern MT systems like Google Translate, DeepL, etc are incorporated of very complex algorithms to analyses and convert the text from source language to target language. MT uses various modes, which will be rule-based and statistical and neural machine translation mode newer and accurate. In addition, MT can facilitate the process of translation but often not to a perfect accomplishment. Though MT can sometimes offer fast, practical tasks, the translations it generates are usually contextually incorrect and lack nuance or accurate linguistic structure. In that regard, while MT may serve as a helpful reference tool, students should learn to evaluate and improve the machine-generated translations.

In the FLL context, MT is a welcome aid for facilitating students' understanding of unknown foreign words and proverbs. A number of studies demonstrate that MT can support the students to enhance their comprehension from vocabulary learning, save time and relieve the stress from trying to translate something by hand (Alkhatnai, 2019). When they encounter new difficult words or passages, students can use MT to translate them and get much faster solutions than using a conventional dictionary.

However, there are some concerns of students' excessive dependence on MT. Some studies find those students who heavily depend on MT often avoid deeper reflection in the process of translation, which may slow the progress of language skills. In that instance, MT could save students the effort to understand and redraft thoroughly (Rossi & Chevrot, 2019).

The way students perceive the use of

MT in learning is crucial to analyze. This can influence how users interact with the tool and whether they feel supported or distracted by it. Some researchers have reported a favorable opinion towards the use of MT, and that it is so easy to translate text and access information (Sabtan, 2020). They see MT as a useful and effective aid to help them with translation work, notably in the presence of hard words or sentences. Yet, while MT is useful in getting past language and communication barriers, learners know its limitations. They also assert that MT translations tend to be unfaithful and lack deep contextual and semantic understanding. Thus, many students have to double-check and modify the translation generated by the MT to be in line with their own comprehension (Marito & Ashari, 2017). Having said that, it demonstrates that while machine translation is an excellent aid, it will never be able to substitute for deep translation knowledge and ability.

The chief advantage of training foreign languages on MT is that MT can assist learners in rapidly and effortlessly understanding foreign text. Machine translation (MT) serves students who need to use translated text at short notice, a common challenge when they encounter time-consuming or complicated texts (Tsai, 2019). Moreover, MT can also help students to extend their vocabulary by offering translations of words they did not previously know. On the other hand, it is not all easy for MT as well. One of them is the overuse of the tool. If students overuse MT, they will miss out on learning good translations skills which can be detrimental to their comprehension and analysis of text. Moreover, MT can lead to imprecise or wrong translations which faculty could mislead students in comprehension the sense of the material (Almutawa & Izwaini, 2015). A further problem is that MT cannot accommodate cultural idioms or expressions effectively in all cases, which is an essential aspect of learning a language.

The study of Odacıoglu & Kokturk (2015) shows that technology in general, and MT particularly, has had a positive influence on translation learning. They argue that the MT can accelerate the translation process, however, results must be edited and aligned manually. Other research also demonstrates that, while MT can help students achieve an overview of the text in question, analytical and interpretation skills are still necessary to produce 'correct' translations which are not out-of-context (Pym, 2003). However, Sabtan (2020) emphasizes the need to combine MT with a holistic model of learning, where such tools serve as complementary rather than supplanting basic translation skills. So, the use of MT can be smart and economical in learning, but it shouldn't affect students' grasp of more complex translation issues. This review of the literature reveals that MT in foreign language is very fruitful for students especially to rapidly and quite accurately translate texts. Nevertheless, MT does have its weaknesses, in particular with respect to accuracy and complex language specifics. Then, it is also necessary for students to wisely utilize MT and continue to improve their translation skills through practice and knowledge.

Methodology

The research adopts a qualitative descriptive design to investigate students' attitudes towards the application of MT tools in EFL class. The qualitative descriptive approach was used because it can shed light on the phenomenon very deeply through prioritizing analysis and interpretation of data derived from the participants. (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In this paper, our goal is to explore how students perceive and employ MT in T learning and what effect's it has on their language competences.

The qualitative view is to focus more on the phenomenon of interest in field and bring out a full picture of what respondents see or experience (Creswell, 2009). This will

provide a richer and wider range of data that could contribute to a more nuanced perspective on students' attitudes towards use of MT tools. The study has the purpose of describing how students use MT in their translation work and if they perceive this to be helpful in a learning perspective.

The research was conducted on university students in Lampung particularly English (EFL) students who were in the 6th semester and the 7th semester. The choice of topic of study is also grounded in the assumption that, at this level, learners would have acquired fundamental translating skills and are increasingly required to perform some more sophisticated translating tasks. The participants in this study are 13 students who have studied translation. This population is believed to be a student body that utilizes and feels comfortable with MT usage in their learning.

The primary methods of data collection in this research are interviews and questionnaires. With these tasks, we aimed to elicit quantitative data that would indicate students' overall perceptions of the use of MT in their learning of translation. In contrast, interview participants can be asked to elaborate on their personal experiences as well as the perception of machine translation tools. The used questionnaire includes a number of close-ended questions which aims to collect information about the experience with MT, frequency of participating in activities and benefits/challenges of MT faced by students. The questionnaire items were constructed to investigate students' attitudes toward the following aspects of the use of MT: ease of use, impact on their translation ability and help or obstacle in learning translation. Interviews are in-depth and personalized data about students' direct experiences with MT, being also made use of these to collect more detailed insight on students' practice with the MT. Those were semi-structured interviews with a guide for questioning available; however, respondents

could still give open-response answers and reflect their experience.

The main instruments used in this study were questionnaires and interview guidelines. The questionnaire consists of questions that cover several important aspects, such as:

- Q1 Experience using MT in translation activities.
- Q2 Frequency of MT use.
- Q3 Perception of the accuracy of MT translations.
- Q4 Benefits and challenges faced when using MT.
- Q5 The influence of MT on students' language skills and translation.

The interview guidelines used focused on further exploration of how students use MT, whether they feel more dependent on the tool, and how they rate the quality of translations produced by MT compared to their manual efforts.

The data obtained through questionnaires and interviews were then analyzed using qualitative data analysis techniques. Data analysis is carried out by following these steps:

1. Data collection: After the data are collected, initially results of interviews and questionnaires have been organized. Each response by putative consumers is coded by the category that fits into the key research theme.
2. Data Reduction: In this stage, the content list generated during data collection is sifted to filter only those values that are pertinent to research queries. This reduction is needed to get rid of unnecessary data and concentrate the analysis on information that is helpful in answering the research question.
3. Coding of Data: Refers to coding or tagging of data sections which are pertinent. By coding, researchers can reduce into coded categories to facilitate analysis. Each one of these categories will be clustered according to particular topics,

i.e., benefits from the use of MT, difficulties and opinion about adequacy of translations.

4. Presentation of Data: After the data has been arranged, the logician now presents it in a story with his findings that result from questionnaire and interview analysis. Such results are anticipated to shed light on students' attitudes toward the use of MT in their classrooms.
5. Verification of Data: At last, the investigator checks both the reliability and truthfulness of the collected data. This is when you compare the data from your research with other theories or other experiments- and look at similarities and differences.

To maintain data credibility and integrity, the researcher employed several methods that include triangulation. The strategy of triangulation is applied by using more than one data collection procedure questionnaire and interview to secure the validity and consistency of research findings. Furthermore, the researcher performed triangulation analysis of data gathered from these sources to avoid bias in interpreting data. This is an essential process to make the findings of a study valid and trustworthy and to increase trustworthiness with regard to research outcomes. Accordingly, the integrity and credibility of the data can be maintained effectively.

This research also concerns ethical issues, particularly concerning data obtained from respondents. Explanation of the study's objectives and results before starting was also given to all participants. Voluntary written consent to participate in the study was obtained from each respondent. Furthermore, the participants' identities are confidential and the result will be used only for this research. Adopting a descriptive qualitative research design, this paper is anticipated to give an overview of EFL students' viewpoints and attitudes towards the use of machine translation applications and their

influence on language learning

Results and Discussion

This study aims to analyze the perception of English (EFL) students regarding the use of machine translation tools (MT) in translation learning activities. Based on the data obtained from the questionnaire and interviews, the main findings of this study are discussed below, followed by an analysis and interpretation that links the findings with related literature.

1. Student Experience in Using Machine Translation

A major result from the survey was that a vast majority of respondents had experienced MT in the course of their learning. Most students also revealed that they relied on MT to translate hard words and unfamiliar sentences. The majority use Google Translate as their preferred tool, primarily because it is widely available and user-friendly. A small proportion of them also use offline MT like digital dictionaries which do not require internet connectivity. According to the findings, MT has functioned as a very practical instrument for aiding students in comprehending the meanings of words or expressions they are not familiar with. That is consistent with Sabtan (2020) who proved that MT-tools are very helpful to speed the translation of students and help them to garner vocabulary. However, while it is considered very useful, few say the machine translation does not require review and refinement for conviction on its legitimacy.

2. Students' Perception of Machine Translation Accuracy

Participants felt, however, assisted by MT, but at the same time most condemned the machine results of the translation. They recognize that although MT is capable of delivering translations quickly, the translated

output is not entirely accurate, especially for complex sentences. Some other students also reported that MT was not able to manage idiomatic or cultural expressions of the original language. The majority of respondents agreed that MT often produces very literal translations which do not match the sense of the sentence. This proves that, even though MT can serve as a support, some skills to evaluate and edit translation outputs into more context-adapted ones should be equipped (Rossi & Chevrot, 2019).

3. Benefits of Using MT in Translation Learning

A top benefit students feel is the availability of quick translations to expand their vocabulary. MT is very useful for students to accelerate their translation, particularly when they are dealing with lengthy and difficult texts (Carrió-Pastor, 2016).

The general atmosphere is that they are now more confident in translating with the support of MT, although some college students even claim that their translation competence may be affected by back-translation to a certain extent. They believe that MT can come in the way of deeper understanding of a language. This brings us to the necessity of depending less and studying more fundamental skills around MT (Hassan, 2020).

4. Challenges Faced by Students in Using MT

According to these students the main difficulties which they experience when making use of MT are in respect of poor translation quality and frequently incorrect grammar issues. Lots of students will tell that too often MT will generate translations sounding weird and out of grammar. For instance, they observed that MT is often oblivious to the exact form of a word in the source language in contrast to the target

language (Al Yousoef et.al., 2025). Furthermore, several young college students report difficulties with MT when they are not connected to the internet or have an unstable connection. They would rather resort to small-scale statistical MT off-line even within translation results. This fact is clear evidence that however promising MT technology may be, it remains contingent on excellent access and connectivity (Alkhatnai, 2019).

5. The Role of MT in Student Translation Skill Development

While MT is quite convenient, many students find that they need to learn how to translate on their own as far as possible without using MT. They also prefer revising the machine translations in their own way so that they are entirely in line with context (Al-Yousef et al., 2025). The present research also indicates that, while MT allows students to get a translation fast, they are of the opinion it is important in order to master the traditional translation basics and to think deeper about context in any case. This bears on Pym (2003), who claims that although the role of MT technology is to accelerate translation, human ability to comprehend and evaluate context cannot yet be replaced.

According to the findings presented in this study, it is possible to infer that the use of machine translation (MT) tools has proved to be effective for learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), providing time gains during translation and also vocabulary enhancement. Nearly all participants in the present study reported employing machine translations tools like Google Translate to assist them with difficult words or phrases. There are several advantages to using MT where easiest access and fast distribution of translations results tend to be the main benefits. Thanks to MT, they can immediately grasp the meaning of words or expressions that they did not know and this can be very beneficial for learning new

vocabulary and understanding the text. MT also provides students with a more efficient approach for dealing with translation tasks, particularly when long or complicated texts are involved. This is quite crucial when it comes to studying a foreign language, since it will have you learning faster and hence easier get an overview over the meaning of text.

Nevertheless, with all the advantages that MT offers, students also take advantage of the shortcomings of this medium. A very low accuracy of translations is often complained about not being able to provide the right context/grammatical use. A lot of students told me that machine translation tends to be more literal and does not necessarily take the context of sentences or abstract meaning into consideration. This totally happens with machine translation algorithm that goes lambda by lambda, sentence by sentence, ignores the relation of the words between themselves and to some bigger scope. Hyperliterally translations often produce linguistic dissonance between the source text and the target text, which may puzzle reader or decoder. Indeed, MT systems still have difficulties in dealing with idiomatic expressions or cultural phrases specific to the source language and not directly translatable into the target one. This demonstrates the fact that although MT serves in providing immediate translations, learners still need to be able to evaluate and modify machine translations into appropriate context.

Furthermore, students learn that despite it may be the case that MT can speed up translations, they nevertheless must check and amend what is produced.' Hence, the use of MT should not alleviate their responsibility to fully understand and analyze text. MT overdependence may hinder the students' manual translation skill development. In the manual translation, these students can pay more attention and consider more deeply in the context, paying special attention to those aspects related to the culture of the text and selecting more appropriate words for the

purpose of communication which is presented. As such it is equally important for students to learn and practice translation on their own, without overly relying upon them.

The great advantage of MT for students is that it can promote their vocabulary enrichment. With MT, students can quickly learn the meanings of new words that they did not previously know, and thus can vertically expand their vocabulary for longer horizontal vocabulary growth. That is a benefit in learning a foreign language, as vocabulary mastery is generally plays such an essential role in language acquisition. Nevertheless, the use of MT as an aid to enriching this vocabulary has also to be supplemented with deeper appreciation for meaning and context of the words used. If the students use the target word from the MT without looking at it in context or how to use it, they may well "learn" its meaning but not really know which is appropriate when.

On the one hand, students highly appreciate that MT is a great asset to accelerate writing translations, while on the other, they acknowledge how difficult it can be. Grammatical mistakes in machine translation are another big issue. MT can generate sentences that are simply not grammatical or in line with the rules of the target language. According to reports from student translators, the machine translation often contains grammatical errors and needs correction in order to achieve a natural output and adhere to proper language rules. The problem with it is that while MT makes language easy, and to a great extent easy to use in a time-saving, reliable mode, it cannot replace an underlying knowledge of the structure of a language and its rules of grammar. Hence, students should practice to improve their ability to grasp and apply appropriate grammar rules more accurately and naturally.

According to these results, it may be inferred that even though MT offers many

benefits in EFL learning, students may wisely use this tool and do not completely rely upon it. MT is potentially quite powerful for making translation faster, increasing one's vocabulary and finding the meaning in difficult texts. Nonetheless, the translations given by MT are not always perfect and may need additional modifications to guarantee accuracy and context relevance. Hence, once we cannot trust in manual translation by students themselves and depends only on MT as the unique solution to language learning. Although MT should be weighted with manual translation exercises, which can reinforce language comprehension, develop critical thinking, and guarantee high-quality TT is not only correct but also appropriate to the requested context.

Therefore, in order to derive the greatest benefit from MT tools, they are also required to be used alongside higher translation skills. Students should be taught that MT is a tool to accelerate the learning process, with an awareness of the quality of the translations obtained from such resources based on the interpretation and structure of language. A sensible theoretical and practical middle ground of working with MT and manual translation skills holds the potential to push students' overall language development further in vocabulary comprehension, wording, grammar, and broader interaction. Therefore, the MT could act as a powerful tool to help EFL learners; however, its application should be such that students will not stop doing their part to learn a language by themselves.

Conclusion

In Conclusion, this study shows that machine translation (MT) is widely used by EFL students as a supportive tool in translation learning. The findings indicate that most students rely on MT to quickly understand unfamiliar vocabulary and complex texts. MT is considered useful because it improves efficiency, supports

vocabulary development, and helps students grasp the general meanings of foreign language texts. However, the study also reveals that MT has limitations, particularly in terms of accuracy, grammar, and contextual meaning. Students recognize that machine translation-generated translations are often too literal and do not fully reflect the intended meaning, especially in idiomatic or culturally specific expressions. The implication of this study suggest that MT should be used as a complementary tool rather than a replacement for human translations skills. Educators encourage to guide students in critically evaluating MT results and integrating them into learning activity effectively.

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