

## THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE BY STUDENTS IN WRITING A NARRATIVE ESSAY

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### ABSTRACT

Learning English means learning the four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Of the four skills, writing is the most difficult skill to acquire. Fortunately, in this 21st century, technological developments are very helpful for us, especially in language. Many translation tools are very easy to use. One of the translation tools that is available to use by people nowadays is Google Translate. This research focused on the use of Google Translate in the writing narrative essay of 3rd semester English education students at Jambi University and used qualitative approach. The results of this research showed that students use Google Translate to help them solve their problems with vocabulary and grammar. Even though Google Translate could not fully help students to improve their writing skills, it is known to have a contribution to making students more independent, they will work alone, not depending on lecturers and friends. Students used Google Translate to ease their work in writing.

**Keywords:** *Writing, Narrative essay, Google Translate.*

### INTRODUCTION

Learning English means learning the four skills, namely listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Of the four skills, writing is the most difficult skill to acquire. This statement supported by Hyland (2003), who states that writing is often considered as one of the most difficult aspects of second language (L2) learning since there are difficulties in writing various types of text, which may arise from the writer's need to grasp the linguistic features of these various types of text. There are also many aspects we have to pay attention to in writing. Irawati (2015) states that in writing we have to follow many steps such as prewriting, drafting, editing, revising, and publishing.

Apart from the many steps that must be taken when we write, writing is also divided into several types according to its purpose such as expository to explain information, persuasive to persuade readers, narrative to tell a story to readers, and descriptive to describe something to readers. According to Oshima and Hogue (2007), narrative is a paragraph which the author tells about something sequentially by using time order. In pursuing undergraduate education, English education students at Jambi University also learn writing in English. As a step to improve their writing skills, students are required to practice it by write various kinds of essays. One of the types of essays they have studied is narrative essays.

As a country where English is a foreign language, in Indonesia, it is taught as a compulsory subject in secondary school. But, as an English education student, English is used

as a second language because it has been used for daily communication in an English-speaking environment. However, students still face difficulties in writing English. Students may have difficulty expressing what is on their minds into sentences using proper grammar and structure. This usually occurs because students are lacking in vocabulary and have difficulties due to first language (L1) interference. This statement also supported by the results of research conducted by Farooq, Uzair-Ul-Hassan, and Wahid (2012, p.191) which state that “There is a strong relationship between vocabulary and difficulties due to first language interface”, and also “Students who faced difficulties in the appropriate use of vocabulary also faced a problem of L1 interference while writing the English language” (Farooq et al, p. 191).

Moreover, the differences in the language structure between Bahasa and English is the reason why they find it very difficult when writing English. Subject, for example, is generally followed by a verb in English, but it can also be followed by a noun or an adjective in Indonesian (Rahayu, 2015). He also states that while some English progressive structures, such as Present Progressive, Past Progressive, and Perfect Progressive, have Indonesian equivalents, meanwhile others, such as Future Present Progressive, Future Past Progressive, Future Present Perfect Progressive, and Future Past Perfect Progressive, do not have Indonesian equivalents (Rahayu, 2015). For example, “*The people were having fun at the concert*” in English sentence, indicates that the situation occurred in the past. Meanwhile, if it is translated into an Indonesian sentence, it becomes “*Orang-orang sedang bersenang-senang di konser tersebut*”. The translation from English to Indonesian causes ambiguity. In the Indonesian sentence, the situation is not known whether it happened in the present or the past. However, without time signals such as *kemarin* (yesterday) or *pagi ini* (this morning), translating an Indonesian sentence into English can be ambiguous and lead to misunderstanding (Rahayu, 2015).

In addition, Farooq et al (2012) also state that grammar is the most difficult subject for L2 writers because they struggle to use proper sentence structure and paragraph development, as well as construct a coherent form. For example, in the Indonesian sentence: “*sayakemarin membeli album K-pop*”, while in English the sentence: “*I bought a K-pop album yesterday*”. The literal translation of the word “*beli*” in Indonesian to English is “*buy*”, but since the use of time signals applies to the verb in English, it becomes “*bought*”. There are still many people who make writing errors in English, especially in grammar. Students generally understand how to construct tenses, but they struggle to do so in written language, and they often have trouble combining two full sentences (Farooq et al, 2012)

Fortunately, in this 21st century, technological developments are very helpful for us, especially in language. Many translation tools are very easy to use, such as Google Translate, Bing Microsoft Translator, Linguee, and so on. The translation tool that is available to use by people nowadays is Google Translate. Google Translate is one of the features from Google that offers translation services. Some of the reasons why people like it because it is easy to access and can be accessed by all platforms such as Microsoft Windows, Mac OS X, Android Phones, and so on by using an internet connection only (Raza & Nor, 2018). Almost all languages are available there, which makes it easier for us to translate any language, especially when we want to communicate with foreigners, or even to complete school assignments in written form such as essays, and so on.

Based on the statements and information above, it can be seen that students may have some difficulties in writing. To produce good writing and grades, students still use Google Translate as a tool to help them in the learning process. However, the results of previous

studies have not explained in detail how Google Translate helps students in writing. In this research, the researcher wants to see how students use Google Translate so that this tool can be considered to help them to write narrative essay. So, the researcher conducted a research about the use of Google Translate by the students in writing a narrative essay

## RESEARCH METHOD

In this research, the researcher used qualitative as the research method. Qualitative research informs the analysis of research problems that discuss the meanings of individuals or groups ascribed to social or human problems, starting with assumptions and the use of interpretive/theoretical frameworks (Creswell, 2018). A suitable approach in this research is a case study. Case studies show that the researcher took a case study in one place. Descriptive case studies are those that concentrate on the historical aspect of a case with questions like what, who, or how (Yin R. , 2009).

To collect data in this study, the researcher used interview, observation, and document as the data collection techniques. The observation was carried out through Zoom meetings with all participants at different times. The researcher asked participants to enable screen sharing, then wrote 200 words or 1 page of narrative essay with the same topic. The researcher then observed how they use Google Translate while writing narrative essay. By observe the participant directly, the researcher could describe what the participants do while writing narrative essay and would find out the stages of the use of Google Translate in writing narrative essay.

Creswell (2012) also states that interviews have the benefit of providing insightful information while you can't observe participants directly, and they allow participants to explain specific personal information. The researcher also used interview as data collection technique with the intention that the researcher could find out more deeply the information that could not be obtained by observing.

Secondary data used by researchers in collecting data is documents. The document comes from the results of writing a narrative essay written by participants during observation. According to Creswell (2012), there are several useful guidelines for collecting documents, such as determine the types of documents that can help the researchers to answer their qualitative research questions. By collecting documents, the researcher hopes that it will strengthen the data obtained.

## FINDING AND DISCUSSION

To analyze the use of Google Translate, the researcher divides the use of Google Translate into 6 writing aspects, those are words, phrases, sentences, paragraph, grammar, and spelling.

**Table 1 The Total Form of Using Google Translate (Grammar and Vocabulary)**

Writing Aspects	S1	S2	S3	S4
Word	SS	SS	N	SD
Phrase	SS	O	SD	O
Sentence	SS	N	N	SD
Paragraph	O	N	SS	N
Grammar	N	N	N	N

Spelling	N	N	N	N
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A = Always                      SD = Seldom  
 O = Often                        SS = Sometimes  
 U = Usually                      N = Never

Based on the table 4.2 above, it can be seen that words were sometimes used by Student 1 who has an academic writing score of E and Student 2 whose academic writing score is C+, also seldom used by Student 4. It is known that students' difficulties in writing are found in vocabulary and grammar. This is in line with the results of the interview by Student 1.

“My difficulty in writing is I still have a little knowledge in grammar, vocab. So, my lack of translating is not knowing the exact structure. And the structure of the Indonesian and English languages is different”

In making a narrative essay which has approximately 300-400 words, the phrase was sometimes used by Student 1, often used by Student 2, seldom used by Student 3, and often used by Student 4. Based on the results of interviews conducted by the researcher, it was found that students translated their phrases in Google Translate because students have difficulty translating several parts in one sentence, so they need the help of Google Translate. This is in accordance with the answer stated by Student 4 during the interview.

“Maybe I need a phrase often. Sometimes in one sentence, we know the particles, but we don't really know how to translate it as a whole. So, sometimes I just translate the part of the phrase. If it's to influence the writing skill, maybe it will add more vocabulary, for writing”

Based on the previous paragraph, it is known that students have a lack of vocabulary and difficulties in forming the structure of English which caused them to have difficulty in writing so that they translate words and phrases using Google Translate. According to the results of these observations, it can also be found that there is the use of sentences which were sometimes used by Student 1 and seldom used by Student 4. By translating sentences using Google Translate in writing narrative essays, students who are known to have difficulties with grammar will be helped by understanding tenses in the form of verbs found in the results of the translation of the sentence. This is in accordance with the answers mentioned by Student 2 during the interview.

“When using Google Translate, I often interpret sentences or clauses. For words, I usually use a manual dictionary and not Google Translate. Because Google Translate tends to have the impression that it is more convenient to use if we want to make a sentence”

As for paragraphs, it is often used by Student 1 and sometimes used by Student 3 who has an academic writing score of A. It is known that because of the easy way of using and accessing Google Translate, students sometimes take advantage of it when they are in a hurry to write. This is also due to the lack of students' vocabulary in English, so it is still difficult for them to make sentences or full paragraphs in English directly. This is in accordance with the answers given by Student 3 during the interview.

“For that level of accuracy, I often translate per sentence, from the beginning to the point. It's the safest. Meanwhile, for the per paragraph, I use it when I'm really stuck or I'm running out of time, for example, so I translate it directly per paragraph. Then, I checked again. Meanwhile, if you translate by sentence, it doesn't need to be checked too much because it's usually accurate”

As mentioned in Chapter 2, the process of writing is divided into prewriting, organizing, writing and polishing: revising and editing. By observed 4 participants, the researcher found that the use of Google Translate in their writing process is very diverse. The result of observing Student 1 showed that in writing process he used Google Translate in the process of writing and polishing: revising and editing. For Student 2, the use of Google Translate in her writing process is found in the third process, that is writing. Furthermore, in his writing process, Student 3 whose academic writing score is A seen using Google Translate in 2 processes. Last, Student 4, in her narrative writing process, the researcher found that her use of Google Translate is similar with Student 2.

It is known that in using this tool, there are students who in the process of writing it directly write into English even though at first they think in Indonesian first. This is only done if they know the English vocabulary of the words to be written. However, it is not uncommon for students who prefer to think and write in Indonesian first. The reason is so that they focus more on writing and don't lose important points to be written, because they don't need to think about the meaning in English first. This is in accordance with the answers given by Student 3.

“Usually if I need something short, I type or write something directly in English. Meanwhile, if it's something long, like yesterday in the creative reading and writing course, I was asked to make an argumentative essay, I typed Indonesian. I do this so that the points can be written clearly. Then I translate sentence by sentence”

By conducting interviews, the researcher asked participants to find out how often they used Google Translate. Through the research findings, it is known that all participants can be said to often use Google Translate even though the use of each of them is different. This is in accordance with the answers of Student 1 and Student 3 during the interview.

**Student 1:**

“Yes, I often use Google Translate in writing”

**Student 3:**

“I think its usage is still in the range of 50-60%”

Thus, in the results of interviews conducted by the researcher, it can be seen that the reasons why students use Google Translate because students find it difficult when writing in English because they still do not understand the structure of the English language. They also still have limited vocabulary and poor grammar skills, making it difficult to make sentences in English. Meanwhile, in writing narrative essays, some of them use Google Translate because they agree that it helps the writer's vocabulary during the writing process, such as develop paragraphs and ideas in writing. Some of them also agree that Google Translate can be relied on as an online dictionary, which helps them in the translation process. However, for grammar, some of them find it helpful, while others don't. It is known that if someone does not write down the language to be translated properly and completely, such as using the right time signals, then Google Translate will also give incorrect translation results.

Then, based on the answers from the interviews of all the participants, it can be concluded that there are several kinds of impacts that students felt in their writing after using Google Translate. The impact is in the vocabulary aspect. They feel they can add more new vocabulary after translating it to Google Translate. Hence, they can be more creative and expressive in writing because they have several variations of vocabulary. Another impact felt by the participants was in the aspect of time efficiency. When compared to using a dictionary, translating with Google Translate can save more time.



## CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

The use of Google Translate is influenced by their writing ability. In writing a narrative essay, students with grade A, C+, and E, they all use Google Translate to help them writing a narrative essay. The academic writing score that influenced the use of Google Translate can be seen in the results which show that a student with the low academic writing ability used Google Translate more often in all aspects except grammar and spelling. Meanwhile, students with grade A used Google Translate only in two vocabulary aspects.

In addition, the findings show that Google Translate has benefits. It is undeniable that their writing needs are met with Google Translate. This means that even though Google Translate is not so optimal and really helped, also technological machines are often found some shortcomings, still there are also some positive sides. This also cannot fully help students to improve their writing skills, and students don't fully trust Google Translate. However, the positive sides of using Google Translate in student writing is known to have a contribution in making students more independent, they will work alone, not depending on lecturers and friends. Another positive side is that they feel helped. Students use Google Translate to ease their work in writing

First, for the lecturers, the researcher hopes this study can be useful for additional knowledge and information that can be applied in teaching strategies, especially in teaching writing. The lecturers are also advised to look for other alternatives to help students enrich their vocabulary in English

Second, for students are advised to upgrade themselves individually, they should not always rely on the machine because there are still shortcomings in the machine. Read more books to increase vocabulary. Use Google Translate only as a media

Last, the other researchers are advised to do research on other aspects or maybe other machine translation so that it can be used as a comparison. If they want to conduct further research with a similar theme, they are advised to deepen the results of the interview by asking more in-depth questions that are expected to complement the results of existing research.

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