

The Use of Google Translate in Indonesian Tertiary Writing

Shalawati
shalawati@edu.uir.ac.id
English Education Study Program
Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Riau, Indonesia

Naginder Kaur*
ninder@uitm.edu.my
Academy of Language Studies
UiTM Perlis Branch, Malaysia

Sitti Hadijah
sittihadijah@edu.uir.ac.id
English Education Study Program
Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Riau, Indonesia

Corresponding author*

Received: 15 November 2024

Accepted: 20 February 2025

Published: 25 May 2025

CITE THIS ARTICLE:

Shalawati, Kaur, N., & Sitti Hadijah. (2025). The use of Google Translate in Indonesian tertiary writing. *Journal of Creative Practices in Language Learning and Teaching*, 13(1), 51-69.
10.24191/cplt.v13i1.3863

ABSTRACT

With extensive use of technology inherent in all spheres of language teaching and learning, in the last 20 years or so, Google Translate has increased in prominence and now plays a significant and parallel role in assisting learners with various academic tasks. With its far-reaching presence, questions have arisen as there are concerns and ambivalence as to whether it is able to provide precise guidance in academic work. Thus, this study explores how Google Translate is used by Indonesian tertiary students in writing their research proposal. The central focus of the analysis also extends to investigate students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of Google Translate in completing their academic tasks. Taking up from where previous studies have left, this paper looks for unique patterns in the use and support of Google Translate in students' writing process.

To achieve these aims, a qualitative research approach was used to explore in-depth perceptions and opinions of four female students based on their instructors' analysis of their research proposals, namely, in chapter one where ideas and conceptual terms were evidently present. Results suggest that all students use Google Translate at varying levels for translation of words, sentences and paragraphs. However, the trends of use are dissimilar along different types of search. Some students experienced a reduced dependence on Google Translate from the beginning to end of the semester, while others remained heavily reliant till completion of proposal writing. The study implies the viable role of Google Translate in the teaching and learning of ESL writing and indubitably supports its complementary role in research, education and scholarship in academia.

Keywords: Google Translate, Indonesian tertiary writing, EFL writing, EFL learners, writing challenges

INTRODUCTION

For almost 20 years since its existence in 2006 (Lam, 2021), Google Translate has broken language barriers and made the world of academia more accessible, prior to which the dictionary and thesaurus were more prevalent writing crutches among students. The advent of Google Translate has brought positive influence to the domain of language teaching for academic purposes too (Groves & Mundt, 2015). Information and sources in different languages are easily available and can be quickly accessed as the service is offered in 90 languages that translate words and phrases, sections of a text, or web pages (Ghasemi & Hashemian, 2016). As technology is widely embraced and inherent in all spheres of language teaching and learning today, Google Translate is seen to play a more significant and parallel role in assisting learners with various academic tasks (Lew & Kaur, 2021). As such, writing academic papers in the target language has become easier and more convenient through Google Translate owing to its free access (Groves & Mundt, 2015), hence, shaping and impacting the process of academic writing and improving its results in several ways. Invariably, in academic writing, Google Translate has positioned its purpose in an indispensable way.

Nevertheless, there are constant discussions and concerns over its potential to overshadow assessments in writing (Ducar & Schocket, 2018). Concerns are also raised about learners' ability to discern correct output and whether they are able to use Google Translate effectively, which remains a challenge to address to date, necessitating the need for the present study. Although Google Translate has built a strong presence, there are questions as to the extent it is able to lend support in the academic life of students. Despite its widespread use, the accuracy of output and overall effectiveness remains ambivalent and debatable (Stapleton & Leung, 2019).

At tertiary level, some instructors discourage and advocate against use of the said but students continue to use Google Translate to improve their writing composition and elevate it to higher quality through selection from a wide range of vocabulary with some revisions to grammar. Tsai (2019), in his preliminary investigation on the use of Google Translate in EFL (English as a Foreign Language) drafts found that students' texts that had been run through Google Translate showed better quality and had lexical features with fewer grammatical mistakes, higher spelling

accuracy and more appropriate word choices. These EFL students also admitted that Google Translate assisted them in finding vocabulary items and completing English language writing tasks (Tsai, 2019). Conversely, in the context of Iraqi students using Google Translate for completing their translation tasks, Habeeb (2020) found that while students occasionally experienced positive aspects such as easy access, low cost, new vocabulary, they remained hesitant to rely on it for significant tasks without double checking their translations to avoid potential contextual errors and grammatical inaccuracies.

As education advances to a higher stage, demand for writing has increased in Indonesia too, as in other parts of the globe, with EFL students no exception to such demands. Although second language (L2) academic writing in particular has garnered much attention in the past two decades (Li & Zhang, 2021), writing classes are nevertheless deemed challenging and stressful (Hyland, 2018; Kaur, 2012; Kaur et al., 2019) as students resort to converting all their thoughts to the target language and in different writing styles or genres (Setyowati & Sukmawan, 2018). Part of the effort invested can be seen in the use of translation tools such as the dictionary (Kaur, 2017), or Google Translate. Additionally, Ducar and Schocket (2018) also iterate the use of Google Translate to have significantly increased since it is developed through Artificial Intelligence and has resulted in fewer translation errors since its inception in 2006.

In the observed university, it is apparent that hardcopy / paper dictionaries are less popular and have less significant presence, while instant help from Google Translate inevitably occurs in most teaching and learning situations. Immediate access and portability are two main attributes for this shift from paper to digital translation tools. It is no longer an option to view Google Translate as a method of deceiving the art of writing, rather it is incorporated into writing classes and perceived as an assistive tool in teaching and learning (Lew et al., 2025). By setting clear guidelines for use of Google Translate, the process of teaching and learning writing is adjusted at the theoretical and practical level. Numerous studies in different countries have demonstrated the effectiveness of Google Translate in various academic contexts, highlighting its role in facilitating language proficiency (Tsai, 2019), assisting with translation tasks (Habeeb, 2020; Lew et al., 2025), and enhancing vocabulary acquisition, grammar, and spelling (Chandra & Yuyun, 2018), thereby establishing itself as an essential tool in learning and education. However, further investigation on students' perceptions and attitudes towards the use of Google Translate in academic writing at higher education in Indonesian is warranted. Such research could provide valuable insights for teachers, teacher-educators, and educational practitioners, helping them to better understand how this technological tool can be effectively integrated by considering the students' perspectives and experiences. Considering its prevalent and pervasive use at this university, it is imperative to seek answers to the following questions:

1. How do Indonesian tertiary students use Google Translate in their academic writing tasks?
2. What are Indonesian tertiary students' perceptions and attitudes towards Google Translate in their academic writing tasks?

In this regard, this research aims to (a) investigate the extent and ways Indonesian tertiary students use Google Translate in writing their research proposals and (b) to find out students' views,

perspectives, experiences and attitudes on the extent Google Translate is able to support their academic writing tasks. The academic task students worked on was writing a research proposal, a mandatory requirement for the final year project carried out in the final year of study, that is the seventh semester at the university.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Process of Translation in Language Learning

It can be said that all writers are translators, as many L2 or foreign language learners do think in their first language and use their cognitive strength to translate ideas to the target language. The tasks of writing and translation have similarities, especially in the challenges they pose and the processes they include (Risku et al., 2016). What makes the two different is the degree of imitation of writing characters within the inter-lingual conventions; the more inclined it is, the closer it is to translation (Basols & Francisco, 2012). Though both the processes are aimed at text production, each experiences a different phase along its way. In translation, the model of development by Angelone (2010) that is, comprehension, transfer and production, for example, suggests that translation is the process of converting an idea or thought into a verbal or non-verbal form of language. In general, Heltai and Lanstyák (2018) refer to translation as changes of message forms based on pre-existing texts.

The advancement of technology has shifted the translation mechanism and production as Google Translate has gained substantial popularity among students due to its access and practical support to academic life (Habeeb, 2020). When writing academic assignments in different languages such as English, Google Translate is one of the inevitable and invariable tools students refer to (Santosa et al., 2024). Students may translate the whole text from the native language, paragraph by paragraph sentence by sentence, or word by word. This process can yield results quickly, as the platform accommodates a maximum of 500 words at a time (Santosa et al., 2024). Therefore, the combination of translation and writing very likely takes place in tandem in students' writing tasks.

Google Translate in Writing

The improvement in translation machines like Google Translate now sees its potential for students to rely upon it in completing academic assignments (Lew et al., 2025; Santosa et al., 2024). This development has shaped our education practices and demands for education practitioners' attention to adapt their current policies (Bellos, 2012). With regard to this development, Chandra and Yuyun (2018) have found the three aspects of Google Translate in order of importance to be (a) vocabulary, (b) grammar, and (c) spelling. Raza and Nor (2018) also found students to be inclined to use Google Translate in language learning due to its practicality and ease of use. The students utilised it to find new vocabulary while the teachers reasoned that Google Translate enabled them to focus on content and communication within the language. In addition, the use of Google Translate helps to enrich the writing of academic papers in sentence construction and vocabulary choice (Kol et al., 2018), increase student satisfaction, observed in their quick completion of work upon using Google Translate (Tsai, 2019), which extends to paragraph translation (Groves &

Mundt, 2015). In a similar vein, Google Translate offers rapid translations that can streamline the writing process for students (Habeeb, 2020; Lew et al., 2025), leading to enhancements in both content and vocabulary in writing (Pham, 2024).

However, in achieving these benefits, Google Translate also poses a challenge for instructors in assessing students in producing original written work. Earlier research by Groves and Mundt (2015) revealed the quality of translation to be somewhat lower than expected results, with errors detected in messages that are sent out. The researchers further urged for Google Translate improvement in its grammar output due to the extensive increase of Google database. Given the increase in the number EFL students using Google Translate, this situation seems to have caused internal as well as professional conflict within the minds and practice of instructors, that is, to be or not to be making allowances and whether to welcome machine learning in the classroom, especially so for writing instructors, as its pervasive use could significantly undermine foreign language teaching and learning process (Groves & Mundt, 2015). Meanwhile, Spreeman (2017) presented a more neutral perspective on its use in which he observed the impact towards establishing a globalised culture of language than the learning itself. The practical use may benefit travellers and those in need of quick language barrier support, not so much about acquiring another language, *per se*.

Challenges in Academic Writing in the Indonesian EFL Setting

Teaching writing skills in the Indonesian context is challenging and taxing for EFL teachers at secondary schools and tertiary levels. It is also a neglected skill, resulting in low writing proficiency among university students (Abas & Abd Aziz, 2018). One of the attributing factors is inadequate time allocation to practise writing at secondary school because instructors tend to see writing as one of the skills to cut back or relegate to the last session of teaching or for homework (Widiati & Cahyono, 2006). Hence, when students are at the university or other tertiary institutions, they continue to lag and struggle to accomplish good writing skills (Bram & Angelina, 2022). Megaiab (2014) also found that students' problem in writing is also affected by first language (L1) interference, namely, their native language, Indonesian. Students tend to opt for direct translation from Indonesian to English, causing patchy errors in grammar and spelling, consequently resulting in unnatural writing products due to native language influences and interference (Ariyanti, 2016). Hence, students are often inclined to adopt stylistic conventions of Indonesian writing even though they are writing in English.

With the development of technology, the availability of tools to cope with students' English language barriers has impacted language learning experiences (Rintaningrum, 2023). Among Indonesian EFL students, Google Translate has been found to bring both positive and negative effects on writing proficiency. Chandra and Yuyun (2018) found it to be helpful in improving students' writing because it helps improve writing quality, such as ability to produce more words, reduce errors in word choice, spelling and grammar. In thesis writing, Indonesian EFL students perceive the use of Google Translate positively, attributed by its practicality and engaging features, such as thesaurus, images, documents, websites, and audio translation features (Santosa et al., 2024). On the other hand, Ismail and Hartono (2016) found Google Translate to have limited ability to transfer meaning of words contextually, thereby causing unnatural writing products from

Indonesian to English language. Hence, a balanced use of Google Translate in writing needs to be applied because technology does not act to create a better result instantly, instead, requires human intervention for better quality output. In brief, there is a clear challenge for academic practitioners to wisely incorporate Google Translate into their classroom as there are disadvantages that outweigh the benefits and allow acquisition of English language skills to occur.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

This study is grounded on the theory of Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) (see Figure 1), developed by Davis (1989). This model is arguably the most widely utilised model of acceptance and usage of innovated technology among users (Aljarrah et al., 2016). TAM has become a robust model appropriate for predicting the acceptance of several technologies (Al-Emran et al., 2018). Thus, the model enabled the researches to understand how and why Indonesian EFL students accept and use Google Translate in their academic writing tasks.

TAM explains user acceptance of technology based on two criteria: perceived usefulness (PU) and perceived ease of use (PEOU), in which the two factors influence an individual's attitude, behavior, and actual use. Perceived simplicity of use and utility have a substantial influence on satisfaction and willingness to utilise new technology (Baki & Birgören, 2020). As previously discussed, Google Translate is able to support students' learning of vocabulary, grammar, and structure in the writing process (Chandra & Yuyun, 2018). Additionally, it is able to assist students in drafting, revising, and translating ideas (Zhang, 2022), boost writing fluency and confidence (Habeeb, 2020). These in turn, bring forth a positive attitude among learners who consistently rely on it as an important tool to support their academic writing (Xu, 2021).

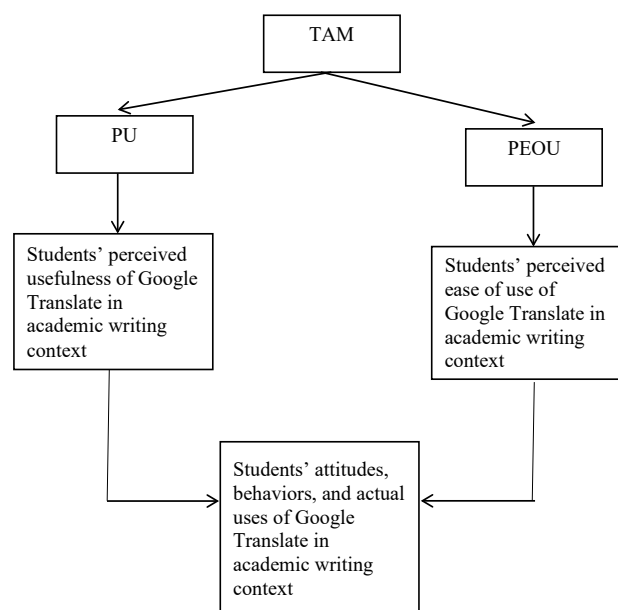


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study

METHODOLOGY

The present research is a case study investigating the use of Google Translate among Indonesian tertiary students in writing their research proposals to find out how Google Translate supports students' writing. This experience report is a descriptive qualitative case study, with the purpose to name things, or phenomena, or to classify characteristics of things (Touch & Berg, 2016). Although qualitative approaches may not represent the entire population (acknowledged as limitation of study), the qualitative case study is able to add depth and meaning to facilitate understanding of the phenomena being probed (Holtrop et al., 2018).

The data was collected through in-depth interviews and paper review of four female undergraduate students in their final semester of study. They were of similar age and were of average English language proficiency. The participants were purposefully selected as each represented a distinct characteristic and approach of using Google Translate in completing their academic writing task of a research proposal. Since the sample comprised only four participants for the case study, the scope and findings of study are deemed limited, disallowing generalisability of the entire population. In analysis of their responses, the information was extracted and classified to see the main patterns of use. In the results, all the information was linked to see the main flow of information, together with some of the less occurring trends which constitute their unique patterns.

Initially, the students were interviewed through a set of questions related to their way or approach of using Google Translate - why, how, sentence or paragraph writing (Alam, 2020), and conditions as to when they considered it essential to rely upon Google Translate including dependence on Google Translate, detailed translation (Zafitri & Harida, 2017). The questions addressed in the interview were: a) Do you use Google Translate?, b) Why do you use it?, c) How do you use it?, d) Do you translate words/sentences/paragraphs?, e) Is there any change in the way you have used it from the beginning of your university study?, f) Do you think Google Translate is helpful? If so, in what way? Subsequently, texts of students' proposals were analysed within the scope of the Introduction section, which was within two to three pages. While checking students' texts, two other questions were also asked: a) Did you use Google Translate in this entire paragraph? b) Can you show its detailed use? The Introduction section was selected for analysis as the primary ideas written in this section need to be presented in suitable academic genre, with coherence, and in acceptable academic tone. Many of the sentences in this section were generally non-contrived from other sources, hence, it was pertinent to find out how the participants relied upon Google Translate for assistance. As a cursory note, prior to writing the research proposal, the students had received sufficient guidance in a seminar following which, they began writing their proposals with supervisory guidance. As part of document review, each paragraph was carefully scrutinised and sifted to know the students' writing process and the extent of Google Translate dependence in sentence production.

The information and insights obtained during the interview were documented in the form of audio recordings and written files. Initially the audio files were transcribed by using an online transcription tool, followed by meticulous verification to ensure the accuracy of the transcripts. Relevant information extracted from the interview transcripts was translated to English. Braun and Clarke's (2021) principles for reflexive thematic analysis were applied. These involved six key

stages: (1) familiarisation, that is, reading and re-reading interview transcripts and students' proposals to gain understanding of the shared information and its reflection in students' writing, (2) generating initial codes, that is applying manual coding through deductive approach based on the conceptual framework to examine students' perceptions, ease of use, and attitudes, (3) constructing themes by developing possible themes from the emerged codes, (4) defining themes, articulating the central idea of each theme that aligns with the research questions, (5) refining, defining, and labelling themes and (6) report writing by building cohesive narrative that highlights the findings of the study.

Furthermore, in order to establish reliability and validity of the collected data, both interview data and students' proposals were integrated for the purpose of triangulation of data. As explained by Carter et al. (2014), triangulation is a qualitative research strategy to test validity by corroborating information from different sources. Additionally, themes generated in this study were checked by research team members to ensure the themes answered the research questions accurately. To ensure data dependability and credibility, strategies such as debriefing, member checking, triangulation, or reflexive journals were also considered by researchers (Carter et al., 2014).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The data obtained from the four case study participants is compared and weaved together in tables. The data in the following tables draw upon the models on the use of Google Translate tapped from the insights provided by the participants.

How Indonesian Tertiary Students Use Google Translate in Academic Writing

The information below is on the actual sentence and paragraph construction of each participant's paper. The information captures the detailed process of writing itself at sentence construction level. Hence, it can be seen that individually, the students approach Google Translate differently.

Table 1. Document review 1

	P 1	P2	P3	P 4	P 5
	Taken and summarised from a journal	Two sentences written in Indonesian, then translated to English	Synonyms of two words translated to Indonesian and the words learnt from GT	A conjunction and a word found in an article, translated and adopted into writing	Paraphrased a text, changed some words with synonyms
	P6	P7	P8	P9	
S1	Taken from a text,	Translated a sentence	Changed two words with	Translated a sentence	

checked the meaning from GT	synonyms, wrote a sentence in Indonesian and translated it to English
-----------------------------	---

Student One (S1) used Google Translate not only for writing but also to understand text in English (Table 1). She stated, “Google translate assist me to comprehend English text because I just copy-pasted some confusion parts of the text into the Google translate and then find out the meaning” (S1). Although the quality of comprehension is not the primary focus of this research, the avenue of using Google Translate is seen while at the same time, it is used for assistance in writing. S1 also predominantly used Google Translate for vocabulary alternatives, translating sentences and for checking sentence correctness. She further stressed, “as writing skill is a challenging skill for me, Google Translate helps me to have a better writing.”

The findings here are in sync and similar to Bahri (2016), as well as Alhaisoni and Alhaysony (2017). For S1, Google Translate is an effective crutch to support her language learning, particularly in vocabulary choices and sentence construction. The application, thus, serves as an effective supplementary tool in the learning process (Bahri, 2016) in order to find meaning of unknown words, select appropriate contextual words, support task completion process, as well as to enhance English language skills (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017).

Table 2. Document review 2

	P 1	P2	P3	P 4	P 5
	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT
S2	P6	P7	P8	P9	
	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then written in Indonesian before translating with GT	

Student Two (S2) wrote completely in Indonesian, then translated all sentences to English with Google Translate (Table 2). She said, “I obtained ideas for writing from references and then rewrote these Indonesian language” (S2). Due to lack of confidence, based on her self-assessment and self-admission during the in-depth interviews, she avoided writing directly in English, instead wrote in Indonesian first, subsequently, carried out translation of full content to English through Google Translate. She shared her thoughts, “I use Google translate for assistance and guidance; to minimise vocabulary and grammatical errors in my writing and guide me to have excellent penmanship.

The finding shows the student’s writing competence is impacted by her low self-confidence. As a result, she relied on Google Translate completely in completing her writing task, for both vocabulary and grammar.

Table 3. Document review 3

	P 1	P2	P3	P 4	P 5
	Wrote in Indonesian and then translated to English herself, without GT	Wrote directly in English herself	Wrote in Indonesian and then translated to English herself, without GT	Did word checking only	Paraphrased from journal readings, then wrote in Indonesian before translating with GT
S3	P6	P7	P8	P9	
	Paraphrased from journal readings, then wrote in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then wrote in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then wrote in Indonesian before translating with GT	Paraphrased from journal readings, then wrote in Indonesian before translating with GT	

Student Three (S3) is completely different from Student Two (S2). She wrote in relatively fewer paragraphs than the other two students. However, her work was a lot more independent of Google Translate, with only minor consulting of the app (Table 3). Her work shows that she mainly wrote based on her translation skills, instead of help from Google Translate. She opted for Google Translate assistance only for vocabulary choices, “I used to use Google Translate to find some unknown vocabularies in some sentences that I want to write ... I open Google translate to recheck my writing before I collect it to my supervisor.”

It ought to be pointed out here that in relation to this finding, Google Translate must be used with caution and care, as it can be a double-edged sword which requires effective codes to optimise its positive values instead of using it uncritically (Mundt & Groves, 2016).

Table 4. Document review 4

	P 1	P2	P3	P 4	P 5
	Only changed some words to higher frequency words with GT	Taken from a book, summarised and rewrote; GT helped with improvement of some vocabulary items	Wrote in Indonesian and then translated to English with GT	Changed some words with higher frequency ones and synonyms	None used GT
	P6	P7	P8	P9	
S4	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	

The last participant, Student Four (S4), seems to have far less dependence on Google Translate (Table 4). It can be seen that out of her five paragraphs, she only used Google Translate for changing and improving vocabulary items, from simple to higher frequency words (Chandra & Yuyun, 2018). S4 further said, “I used Google Translate frequently in my early semesters ... I found Google Translate was really helpful to improve my writing, particularly at early years of my study at the university.” However, she kept learning and practising, which resulted in improvement of writing skills. She also said, “Google Translate has helped me in my previous writing processes, and so, I decided to reduce reliance on Google Translate in writing my ongoing research proposal.” Further, the participant also revealed that this was a deliberate decision that would help her improve her ability as an independent learner. As postulated by Bahri (2016), Google Translate encourages students to become independent learners in completing tasks and solving their language learning problems.

From the data obtained from the four students, it can be summarised that students use Google Translate for various academic writing tasks, ranging from translating the whole paragraph in order to improve their research proposals. All the participants used Google Translate to improve their vocabulary, be it to replace simple words or to find higher frequency or more accurate words (Bahri, 2016; Chandra & Yuyun, 2018; Tsai, 2019). They also wrote sentences in Indonesian and then paste them on Google Translate for English language equivalent output. These are the most frequently used translation approaches among students. Similarly, Chandra and Yuyun (2018) also identified the use of Google Translate among EFL students in essay writing in three categories, namely, vocabulary, grammar and spelling. In other words, Google Translate provides positive influence on students’ writing, which is usually found to be a challenging language skill (Kaur et al., 2019), as iterated by S1 and S2 in this study.

At the beginning of college study, students' dependence on Google Translate was relatively high, especially in writing. However, some have been able to reduce their dependence although Google Translate is intermittently referred to in one way or another in the writing process. An interesting finding is that the participants revealed less dependence as time progressed. On the other end of the continuum, S4, said that she almost rarely uses Google Translate in her writing, "I only open Google Translate when I get stuck on some vocabularies" (S4). This is a result of continuous diligence in the early semesters of study, which has yielded improvements in her writing, hence increased independence in writing.

The data suggests that all four students use Google Translate in writing their research proposal with almost the same purpose to support their writing. The findings also suggest different levels of dependence as the students progressively go through the various semesters of their college study. There were two students with a distinctive gap in their use of Google Translate; one with strong dependence (S2), and another with loose attachment (S4) to Google Translate. One student said, "I completely translated all paragraphs to English with the help of Google Translate" (S2). Meanwhile, another student said, "I only translated one sentence, which was only to check the correctness of my writing" (S4). This pattern of translating the entire paragraph(s) appears to be a less occurring practice among students.

Indonesian Tertiary Students' Perceptions and Attitudes towards Google Translate in Academic Writing

The data in Table 5 is a summary and synthesis obtained from the in-depth interview with the participants on their overall perceptions and attitudes on the use of Google Translate in completing their academic tasks.

Table 5. Interview extract

Student	Use of GT	Purpose	Changing Dependence to GT	Cross-Check towards the Result of Translation	How GT Helps	Post Revision
S1	Yes, it is popular among students	For looking up synonyms, frequently used to produce sentences, less frequently used in writing paragraphs,	Yes, in the earlier semesters, all words were translated using GT	Yes	It helps in improving vocabulary and writing	Yes

		only when writer's block occurs				
S2	Yes	For looking up synonyms, unknown words, sentences and paragraph writing	Still dependent on GT as she is not confident with her writing and checks grammar with GT	Yes	As she writes sentences herself, she feels overwhelmed and GT elevates her confidence.	Yes
S3	Yes	For synonyms, sentences and paragraphs (for checking only)	She has much less dependence on GT as her writing sees improvements over the semesters		For improving sentences and writing quality	Yes
S4	Yes	For unknown words, synonyms, sentences, paragraphs (cross- check only) to ensure the paragraph is correct and with self- revision. GT also used for reading.	Yes, reduced dependence over the semesters. She admits that she rarely uses GT.	Yes	In improving sentence correctness, and understanding academic texts	Yes

This research found interesting facts on the rationale, perceptions and attitude behind students' decision to rely upon Google Translate in the writing process. The primary reason is in this university, writing support centre is unavailable. As such, Google Translate is perceived to be one of their most reliable and go-to tools to double-check and be involved in the process (Groves &

Mundt, 2015). All the four participants attested to the ability of Google Translate to build on students' confidence in writing (Valijärvi & Tarsoly, 2019). For example, S2 affirmed, "my confidence in writing improves when I am able to translate from Indonesian language to English with the help of Google Translate or checked my writing with Google Translate assistance." She said that she feels composed and is able to retype her work with the help of Google Translate in checking and improving her vocabulary choice, indicating strong preference for and positive attitude towards the benefits and efficacy of Google Translate. In other words, Google Translate is able to shape students to have positive attitudes in completing their writing as it is a useful assistive tool in the revision of writing drafts, such as when reviewing grammatical errors, vocabulary, and spelling (Tsai, 2022).

Additionally, for the four participants, Google Translate is also a frequent source of reference before meeting research supervisors (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017). Self-revision is done through Google Translate and occasionally with peer-checking. All the participants admit that Google Translate helps to improve their writing quality and understanding of academic texts or references (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017). Once they consider their writing to be in need of improvement, they would revise word choice and review sentences. For example, when overwhelmed about writing sentences in English, and experiencing writer's block, S2 would look to Google Translate for assistance and guidance. It is acknowledged that this study is limited in scope and did not probe the causes of writer's block among students – whether the root cause is lack of knowledge, perfectionism, or perception. In the case of S2, it is concluded that students with limited writing skills tend to have psychological withdrawal from writing and dependence on Google Translate is heightened and therefore, necessary.

The students also revealed that they are familiar with translation tools, especially applications in their smartphones, as they are portable and convenient compared to the traditional paper-based dictionary. Even though using a paper-based dictionary is one of the strategies to look for vocabulary in writing, it is still challenging to find contextual words (Kaur, 2017; Levy & Steel, 2015). Hence, Google Translate is the most preferred tool and widely used among classmates in this study, proving students' positive perceptions and attitude towards its use.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overall, all the participants in the study agree that Google Translate helped them improve their research proposal by improving vocabulary and sentence and/or for paragraph checking. The data in this study has been compared and connected through TAM explaining the degree of dependence, scope, rationale, perceptions and attitude towards Google Translate. Undeniably, Google Translate is relevant for use by all learners for various reasons and varying degrees. Although some learners may reduce dependence over the course of their study in the quest for independent learning, its use and reliance does not diminish altogether. Learners' inherent personality profile (for example lack of confidence or self-esteem) can also pose a major setback or influence in their efficient use of Google Translate. It is concluded that Google Translate plays a complementary role in students' efforts to improve their academic writing tasks and does not undermine students' efforts and the overall impact of assessments, as seen in the effort displayed by the four participants - of

completing their research proposal. It serves as a boon, not a bane in enhancing the quality of output in students' learning outcomes. As a case study of four students, this study is limited in its generalisability, yet it invariably implies the viability of Google Translate for use in ESL writing and indubitably supports its assistive role in aspects of research, education and scholarship in academia, albeit its varying degrees of use and dependence among different learners.

In relation to the use of Google Translate in supporting students' writing, instructors can promote the use of translation applications, such as Google Translate as a supplementary tool to find words and produce accurate spelling and grammar (Bin Dahmash, 2020). To add, instructors need to provide adequate guidance in the use of Google Translate in writing, so it can be an effective pedagogical tool (Cancino & Panes, 2021) for both instructors and students alike.

For future studies, more insights can be obtained with a larger pool of participants of varying language ability who may provide varied responses and approaches in the use of Google Translate. Studies investigating the different types of reference to Google Translate by different types of learner profiles may also be carried out to enrich the literature on this fast evolving and developing topic in second and/or foreign language teaching today.

REFERENCES

- Abas, I. H., & Abd Aziz, N. H. (2018). Model of the writing process and strategies of EFL proficient student writers: A case study of Indonesian learners. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 26(3), 1815-1842.
- Alam, A. (2020). Google Translate sebagai alternatif media penerjemahan teks bahasa asing ke dalam Bahasa Indonesia. *Instruksional*, 1(2), 159. <https://doi.org/10.24853/instruksional.1.2.159-163>
- Al-Emran, M., Mezhyuev, V., & Kamaludin, A. (2018). Technology acceptance model in m-learning context: A systematic review. *Computers and Education*, 125, 389-412. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.compedu.2018.06.008>
- Alhaisoni, E., & Alhaysony, M. (2017). An investigation of Saudi EFL university students' attitudes towards the use of Google translate. *International Journal of English Language Education*, 5(1), 72. <https://doi.org/10.5296/ijelev.v5i1.10696>
- Aljarrah, E., Elrehail, H., & Aababneh, B. (2016). E-voting in Jordan: Assessing readiness and developing a system. *Computers in Human Behavior*, 63, 860-867. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chb.2016.05.076>
- Angelone, E. (2010). Uncertainty, uncertainty management and metacognitive problem solving in the translation task. In G. M. Shreve & E. Angelone (Eds.), *Translation and cognition* (pp. 17-40). John Benjamins Publishing Company.
- Ariyanti, A. (2016). The teaching of EFL writing in Indonesia. *Dinamika Ilmu*, 16(2), 263. <https://doi.org/10.21093/di.v16i2.274>
- Bahri, H. (2016). Google translate as a supplementary tool for learning Malay: A case study at Universiti Sains Malaysia. *Advances in Language and Literary Studies*, 7(3). <https://doi.org/10.7575/aiac.alls.v.7n.3p.161>

- Baki, R., & Birgören, B. (2020). Analysis of the studies on e-learning acceptance of learners in the Middle East and the proposal of an extended technology acceptance model. *Kastamonu Eğitim Dergisi*, 28(5), 1977–1986. <https://doi.org/10.24106/kefdergi.4169>
- Basols, M., & Francisco, J. (2012). *The sound of humor: Translation, culture and phonological jokes*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10803/80041>
- Bellos, D. (2012). *Is that a fish in your ear? The amazing adventure of translation*. Penguin Books.
- Bin Dahmash, N. (2020). I can't live without Google translate: A close look at the use of Google translate app by second language learners in Saudi Arabia. *Arab World English Journal*, 11(3), 226-240. <https://doi.org/10.24093/awej/vol11no3.14>
- Bram, B., & Angelina, P. (2022). Indonesian tertiary education students' academic writing setbacks and solutions. *International Journal of Language Education*, 6(3), 267–280. <https://doi.org/10.26858/ijole.v6i3.22043>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2021). One size fits all? What counts as quality practice in (reflexive) thematic analysis? *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 18(3), 328–352. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14780887.2020.1769238>
- Cancino, M., & Panes, J. (2021). The impact of Google Translate on L2 writing quality measures: Evidence from Chilean EFL high school learners. *System*, 98, Article 102464.
- Carter, N., Bryant-Lukosius, D., Dicenso, A., Blythe, J., & Neville, A. J. (2014). The use of triangulation in qualitative research. *Oncology Nursing Forum*, 41(5), 545-547. <https://doi.org/10.1188/14.ONF.545-547>
- Chandra, S. O., & Yuyun, I. (2018). The use of Google translate in EFL essay writing. *LLT Journal: A Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 21(2), 228-238. <https://doi.org/10.24071/llt.2018.210212>
- Davis, F. D. (1989). Perceived usefulness, perceived ease of use, and user acceptance of information technology. *MIS Quarterly*, 319-340. <https://doi.org/10.2307/249008>
- Ducar, C., & Schocket, D. H. (2018). Machine translation and the L2 classroom: Pedagogical solutions for making peace with Google Translate. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51(4), 779-795. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12366>
- Ghasemi, H., & Hashemian, M. (2016). A comparative study of Google Translate translations: An error analysis of English-to-Persian and Persian-to-English translations. *English Language Teaching*, 9(3), 13. <https://doi.org/10.5539/elt.v9n3p13>
- Groves, M., & Mundt, K. (2015). Friend or foe? Google translate in language for academic purposes. *English for Specific Purposes*, 37, 112-121. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2014.09.001>
- Habeeb, L. S. (2020). Investigating the effectiveness of Google Translate among Iraqi students. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 12(12), 325-337.
- Heltai, P., & Lanstyák, I. (2018). *Translation and bilingual language use: Two subtypes of bilingual communication*. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/324573287_Translation_and_Bilingual_Language_Use_Two_Subtypes_of_Bilingual_Communication
- Holtrop, J. S., Rabin, B. A., & Glasgow, R. E. (2018). Qualitative approaches to use of the RE-AIM framework: Rationale and methods. *BMC Health Services Research*, 18(1), 1-10. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12913-018-2938-8>

- Hyland, K. (2018). Genre and second language writing. In D. Belcher & J. Liu (Eds.), *The TESOL encyclopedia of English language teaching*. The University of Michigan Press. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0535>
- Ismail, A., & Hartono, R. (2016). Errors made in Google Translate in the Indonesian to English translations of news item texts. *ELT Forum*, 5(2), Article 326936. <https://doi.org/10.15294/elt.v5i2.11228>
- Kaur, N. (2017). The role of peers and cultural tools in supporting autonomous learning behaviour among Malay tertiary learners. *Pertanika Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities*, 25(1), 61-80. http://www.myjournal.my/filebank/published_article/56450/5.pdf
- Kaur, N. (2012). *Learner autonomy in second language lexical development amongst pre Malaysian University English Test learners at Universiti Teknologi MARA* [Unpublished doctoral dissertation]. Universiti Sains Malaysia.
- Kaur, N., Haron, N. I., & Mohd Radzi, N. A. (2019). Malaysian University English Test: A comic approach to a serious subject matter. *Proceedings of the 2nd International Conference on the Future of ASEAN (ICoFA) 2017 – Volume 1* (pp. 273-286). Springer.
- Kol, S., Scholnik, M., & Spector-Cohen, E. (2018). Google translate in academic writing courses? *The EuroCALL Review*, 26(2), 50-57. <https://doi.org/10.4995/eurocall.2018.10140>
- Lam, K. W. (2021). The use of Google Translate in English language learning: How students view it. *International Journal of Advanced Research in Education and Society*, 3(1), 47-53. <https://myjms.mohe.gov.my/index.php/ijares/article/view/12459>
- Levy, M., & Steel, C. (2015). Language learner perspectives on the functionality and use of electronic language dictionaries. *ReCALL*, 27(2), 177-196.
- Lew, Y. L., Kaur, N., Hoe, F. T., & A Hamid, H. (2025). Language instructors' beliefs and coping mechanisms on the use of machine translation: Cautions and concerns. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 15(2), 352-362. <https://doi.org/10.17507/tpls.1502.05>
- Lew, Y. L., & Kaur, N. (2021, May 27-28). *Google Translate in Mandarin writing: A boon or a bane?* [Conference presentation]. International Conference on Language Education (iCOLE 2021), Universiti Teknologi MARA Perlis Branch, Malaysia.
- Li, M., & Zhang, M. (2021). Collaborative writing in L2 classrooms: A research agenda. *Language Teaching*, 56(1), 94-112. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0261444821000318>
- Megaibab, M. M. A. (2014). The English writing competence of the students of Indonesian senior high school. *The 2014 WEI International Academic Conference Proceedings*, 187-192.
- Mundt, K., & Groves, M. (2016). A double-edged sword: The merits and the policy implications of Google Translate in higher education. *European Journal of Higher Education*, 6(4), 387-401. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2016.1172248>
- Pham, A. T. (2024). Google Translate: The impact of its usefulness on English-majored students' acceptance in essay writing in the Vietnamese context. *English Teaching and Learning*, 1-25. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s42321-024-00192-x>
- Raza, M. A., & Nor, F. M. (2018). Google Translate in an EFL classroom. *International Journal of Translation*, 30(1), 7-21. <http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.11640240>
- Rintaningrum, R. (2023). Technology integration in English language teaching and learning: Benefits and challenges. *Cogent Education*, 10(1), Article 2164690. <https://doi.org/10.1080/2331186X.2022.2164690>

- Risku, H., Milosevic, J., & Pein-Weber, C. (2016). Writing vs. translating: Dimensions of text production in comparison. *Reembedding translation process research*. John Benjamins Publishing Company. <https://doi.org/10.1075/btl.128.03ris>
- Santosa, M. H., Yanti, G. M. T., & Adnyani, L. D. S. (2024). The integration of Google Translate as a machine translation aid in EFL students' thesis composition. *Journal on Language and Language Teaching*, 27(1), 214-229.
- Setyowati, L., & Sukmawan, S. (2018). EFL Indonesian students' attitude toward writing in English. *SSRN Electronic Journal*, 4, 365-378. <https://doi.org/10.2139/ssrn.2898636>
- Spreeman, V. (2017). Lost (and found) in translation: A look at the impact of Google Translate and other translation technologies. *Communication Studies: Student Scholarship & Creative Works*. Augustana Digital Commons. <https://digitalcommons.augustana.edu/commstudent/1>
- Stapleton, P., & Leung, K. K. B. (2019). Assessing the accuracy and teachers' impressions of Google Translate: A study of primary L2 writers in Hong Kong. *English for Specific Purposes*, 56, 18-34. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.esp.2019.07.001>
- Touch, J., & Berg, J. P. (2016). Parent perspectives on appointment nonattendance: A descriptive study. *Pediatric Nursing*, 42(4), 181-188.
- Tsai, S. C. (2022). Chinese students' perceptions of using Google Translate as a translingual CALL tool in EFL writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 35(5-6), 1250-1272.
- Tsai, S. C. (2019). Using Google translate in EFL drafts: A preliminary investigation. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 32(5-6), 510-526. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1527361>
- Valijärvi, R.-L., & Tarsoly, E. (2019). Translating Google Translate to the language classroom: Pitfalls and possibilities. *Practitioner Research in Higher Education*, 12(1), 61-74.
- Widiati, U., & Cahyono, B. Y. (2006). The teaching of EFL writing in the Indonesian context: The state of the art. *Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan*, 13(3), 139-150.
- Xu, J. (2021). Google Translate for writing in a Japanese class: What students do and think. *Journal of the National Council of Less Commonly Taught Languages*, 30, 136-182.
- Zhang, H. (2022). Training in machine translation post-editing for foreign language students. *Language Learning and Technology*, 26(1), 1-17. <https://www.lltjournal.org/item/1012/>
- Zafitri, L., & Harida, E. S. (2017). The effectiveness of using Google translate on students' translation at Mathematic. *Proceedings of the Fifth International Seminar on English Language and Teaching*, 5, 80-85.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest in preparing this manuscript.

Acknowledgement

The authors are grateful to Universitas Islam Riau Pekanbaru, Indonesia and Universiti Teknologi MARA Perlis Branch for the support lent in working on this case study.

Authors' Contributions

All authors contributed equally in preparing this manuscript.

About the Authors

Shalawati has been an English language educator for more than 20 years. She has previously worked for an international funding agency, World Bank, the UN, and AJWS. She now teaches at the English Education Department, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia. Her research interests are language teaching and learning.

Naginder Kaur (PhD) is an Associate Professor at the Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Perlis Branch, Malaysia. Her research interests lie in the area of MUET, autonomous learning, vocabulary instruction, and ESL writing.

Sitti Hadijah is an academic at the English Education Department, Universitas Islam Riau, Pekanbaru, Indonesia. Her strong focus is on teacher development in English language teaching. She is also interested in the area of technology-enhanced learning and translation studies.