



Students' Perceptions of Using Google Translate Platform As a Translation Medium in English Learning

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Abstract

While Google Translate has become a ubiquitous tool in language classrooms, its pedagogical impact and how students critically engage with its limitations remain underexplored. This study aims to investigate students' perceptions towards the use of Google Translate platform as a translation medium in English learning. In this study, the researchers applied a mixed-methods approach presented descriptively. The research instruments were questionnaires and interview guide, designed to collect data. It employed structured interview, and then analyzing students' perception through questionnaire by applying Likert scale. The sample comprised 15 third-semester students of English Department at Muhammadiyah University of North Maluku, Indonesia, consisting of five males and ten females. The results showed that there is positive and negative effect on students' perception. The positive impacts are the students consider the use of it is important and very helpful in translating English texts. The result of translation is good and it is very effective, faster, easy, and more practical, besides it also facilitates pronunciation practice. Despite these limitations, such as network factors and potential grammatical errors, it can be said that Google Translate is generally perceived as effective for the use as a translation medium in English learning. This study contributes to the field by expanding the empirical data on technological integration in outer-island Indonesian pedagogical contexts, mapping a definitive threshold where operational utility intersects with academic dependency.

Keywords: Perception; Use; Google Translate Platform; Translation Medium; English Learning.



1. Introduction

In the development of the world today, virtually all professional domains cannot be separated from technology. It needs for people in conducting daily activities especially for a job in the office, school and university where people usually employ internet media for speeding up the job. Ashari, Yassin and Purwaningsih (2025: 1594) argued that nowadays, technology plays a significant role in many types of education, including translation. Thus, it can be said that Google takes a main role in creating tools for facilitating people in doing job, learning process, and provides other media to fulfill people's need.

Current empirical evidence suggests that Google Translate continues to support language learning despite the emergence of generative AI. Margareth et al., (2025) demonstrated that Google Translate contributes positively to students' translation learning outcomes, while Kitbamrung and Chinokul (2026) found that integrating Google Translate with Grammarly significantly improved students' English writing performance. Google Translate remains one of the most widely used neural machine translation tools in language learning because it provides fast and accessible multilingual translation. However, recent developments in generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), particularly large language models such as ChatGPT and GPT-4, have transformed students' translation practices by providing context-sensitive, interactive, and adaptive translation support beyond literal translation (Zhang et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2026; Gwasmeh et al., 2026).

New studies indicate that students continue to rely on Google Translate because of its accessibility, speed, and ease of use. Nevertheless, current developments in artificial intelligence have shifted students' translation behavior from merely obtaining literal translations toward using AI-assisted tools as interactive learning partners. Consequently, students increasingly expect translation technologies to provide contextual understanding, grammatical suggestions, and adaptive language support rather than word-for-word translation (Zhang et al., 2025; Yang et al., 2026; Abdelhalim et al., 2025).

Google Translate is one of the most accessible translation tools and enables users to translate texts across various languages quickly and conveniently. Despite several limitations, such as difficulties in translating proper names or culturally specific expressions, (Ambarwati, 2021). However, although Google Translate has significantly improved through neural machine translation, it still produces grammatical inaccuracies, contextual ambiguities, and inappropriate lexical choices, particularly when translating complex academic texts (Wang et al., 2026; Gwasmeh et al., 2026). Consequently, students are encouraged to verify machine-generated translations using their own linguistic knowledge. As Nugraeni and Ahmad (2024) emphasize, translation competence remains essential in academic contexts, while students' perceptions of educational technologies may influence their learning outcomes (Lee, 2020, as cited in Istiqamah & Ari, 2022). Furthermore, Kitbamrung and Chinokul (2026) argue that machine translation outputs become considerably more accurate through post-editing

activities, highlighting the importance of developing students' critical language awareness rather than relying uncritically on AI-generated translations. Therefore, investigating students' perceptions of Google Translate is essential for understanding how this technology supports or potentially hinders autonomous English language learning. Several previous studies have investigated students' perceptions of Google Translate in English language learning. Margiana and Syafryadin (2023) reported that university students generally perceived Google Translate positively because it supported translation tasks, vocabulary development, pronunciation, and other language-learning activities. These findings suggest that Google Translate has become an important learning aid for EFL students.

Although previous studies have investigated the usefulness of Google Translate in English learning, most have focused on translation quality, writing improvement, or comparisons among translation technologies (Margareth et al., 2025; Kitbamrung & Chinokul, 2026). Limited attention has been paid to how university students perceive Google Translate as a learning medium in relation to their dependency, critical awareness, and autonomous learning behaviour, particularly in Indonesian EFL contexts outside major educational contexts in Indonesia. Therefore, the present study addresses this gap by investigating students' perceptions through a mixed-method approach that integrates quantitative trends with qualitative experiences. Unlike previous studies, this research positions Google Translate within the contemporary landscape of AI-assisted translation to explore how students critically evaluate its benefits, limitations, and influence on autonomous learning. Accordingly, this study aims to answer the following research question: "What are students' perceptions of using Google Translate as a translation medium in English learning?" Based on this question, the objective of the study is to investigate students' perceptions of using Google Translate as a translation medium in English learning through quantitative and qualitative evidence.

2. Methods

In this study, the researchers applied a mixed-methods descriptive design. It analyzed students' perceptions toward the use of Google Translate in translating English material. Quantitative data were gathered using a Likert-scale questionnaire to map general perceptual trends, while qualitative data from structured interviews were employed to gain a deeper, contextual understanding of students' individual experiences. The subjects in this study were the third semester students of English Department with a total number fifteen students consisting of five males and ten females. This sample size was chosen as it represented the entire active cohort of the specific translation class, ensuring comprehensive internal validity for this localized pedagogical context.

Technique of analyzing data based on Milles & Huberman (1994: 19) which involve four steps:

1. Data Reduction: The researchers selected, focused, simplified, and transformed the raw text from the interview transcripts, filtering out irrelevant responses to isolate core meanings.
2. Coding: The result of interviews can represent the theme in every respondent's interview.
3. Data Display: The reduced qualitative data and transcription excerpts were organized and compressed into thematic matrices and structured text to allow systematic comparison.
4. Drawing Conclusion /Verification: The researchers made the transcript for member checking purpose. Member checking had been employed in response to get validity of the gathered data.

Here are the steps to analyze questionnaire data:

- a. Clustered answer scores grouped by students' category (Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree and Strongly Disagree) by Likert Scale.
- b. Tabulating the number of each student's answer, so the participants get a frequency consistent with the alternative answer.
- c. The researchers used formula:

$$T \times p_n$$

Notes:

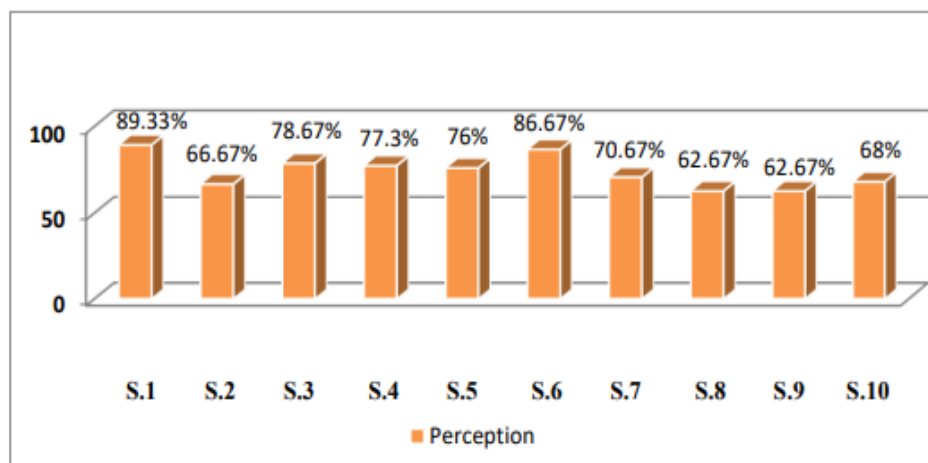
T = total number of respondents who chose.

Pn =Likert score questionnaire choice

3. Results and Discussions

3.1.The Result of Questionnaires

The quantitative data from the 10-item questionnaire were evaluated to map the overarching patterns of students' perceptions. Rather than viewing the percentages as isolated figures, the statistical results point to a critical intersection between perceived utility and behavioral dependency among the participants.



Graph 3.1. Students' Questionnaires Result

Based on the ten items within the questionnaire, the findings are structured according to their rank, descending from the highest to the lowest value.

Statement number 1 received the highest score about 89.33%. The third semester of students English Department at Muhammadiyah University of North Maluku agreed that the using of Google Translate Platform is very helpful in translating English texts. This exceptionally high consensus underscores that machine translation is no longer just an optional tool, but an essential infrastructure in the students' academic workflow.

Statement number 6 got the second highest score 86.67%. It was proved that most students are lazy to open dictionaries and tend to prefer using Google Translate Platform which is faster and more practical. This high percentage suggests a strong perceived correlation between platform reliance and a decline in autonomous vocabulary study, highlighting a significant pedagogical tradeoff where speed replaces active language engagement.

Statement number 3 shows that 78.67% of students agreed that Google Translate tool has produced good translation. The score of statement number 4 is 77.3%, where students feel that Google Translate Platform is a better tool for translating texts. Statement number 5 got score 76%, most of them agreed if Google Translate were very precise with what was in the dictionary. And, statement number 7 got score 70.67%, which means that most students have problems in using Google Translate due to network factors or internet access that are not supported, so it can take a long time to produce translation results.

While, statement number 10 got score 68%, meaning that some of them agree if English text can be translated effectively by Google Translate. Then statement number 2 got an average score 66.67% was obtained, which means that Google Translate is most important. Statement number 8 got score 62.67%, it is the lowest score of the others where all of them disagree that Google Translate makes the sentence structure messy. Statement number 9 also got the same score that is 62.67%, which means some students cannot translate English texts without using Google Translate.

Synthesizing these data points reveals a clear dual-nature perception: students highly value Google Translate for its immediacy and perceived accuracy (Statements 1, 3, and 4), yet they concurrently acknowledge its role in fostering academic laziness and dependence (Statements 6 and 9). This quantitative baseline directly aligns with the qualitative themes explored in the following section, proving that student reliance is driven by utility despite known technical limitations.

The aforementioned questionnaire results are summarized briefly below:

1. The use of Google Translate Platform is very helpful in translating English texts.

2. Most students are lazy to open dictionaries and tend to prefer using Google Translate Platform which is faster and more practical. This causes students lack of new vocabulary.
3. Students agreed if Google Translate tool has produced good translation.
4. Students feel that Google Translate Platform is a better tool for translating texts.
5. Most of them agreed if Google Translate were very precise with what was in the dictionary.
6. most students have problems in using Google Translate due to network factors or internet access that are not supported, so that Google Translate can take a long time to produce translation results.
7. English text can be translated effectively by Google Translate.
8. Google Translate is most important
9. All of them disagree that Google Translate makes the sentence structure messy.
10. Some students cannot translate English texts without using Google Translate.

Actually, Google Translate Platform is very helpful for students in translating the text, and they generally have a positive perception of Google Translate, viewing it as a helpful and time-saving tool for tasks like translating words, sentences and speeding up assignments. However, there is also a limitation, particularly their laziness to open dictionary and make them depend on Google Translate. Consequently, many students use it as a starting point in finishing their task.

3.2. The Result of Interview

Instead of evaluating the interview items in isolation, the qualitative findings were synthesized into overarching thematic dimensions to provide deeper interpretive depth.

Theme 1: Pervasive Normalization and Perceived Efficiency

The qualitative data revealed that the Google Translate platform is deeply embedded in the students' academic routines. In response to Question 1, all 15 participants reported being highly familiar with the tool, stating: *"Very familiar with Google Translate."* The unanimous familiarity reported by all 15 participants is significant for several reasons. First, it indicates that the platform has achieved near-total penetration into students' academic lives, functioning not as an optional tool but as a normalized, taken-for-granted resource. Furthermore, data from Question 2 showed a long-term behavioral pattern; ten respondents (R1, R2, R5, R6, R8, R9, R10, R11, R13, R14) noted they had utilized it since high school, while the remaining five began during their first semester of university. The primary driver for this normalization is extreme efficiency. Across Questions 3, 4, 7, and 9, students continuously characterized the platform as a tool that *"simplifies and speeds up the translation process"* and is *"very effective because it makes it easier to translate words, sentences, and texts quickly."*

Theme 2: Cognitive Friction: Grammatical Skepticism vs. Convenience

Despite high reliance, the qualitative insights unveil a layer of critical awareness among learners rather than blind acceptance. When discussing the disadvantages (Questions 4, 5, and 8), a clear divergence in perspective emerged. While the majority focused on speed, a significant minority of students (R2, R4, R5, R7, R9) explicitly

categorized the tool as ineffective regarding language structure, noting an *"incorrect grammar problem"* and stating that it was *"not effective because the grammar is sometimes not appropriate."* This demonstrates that students actively navigate and notice translation errors. However, a major paradox was revealed in Question 6: despite knowing that machine translation compromises text structure, all 15 respondents ultimately preferred it over traditional dictionaries because the latter *"takes up a lot of time"* and requires tedious manual searching. Thus, the immediate convenience and modernity of the platform consistently override students' grammatical skepticism.

Theme 3: Technical Dependencies and Secondary Pedagogical Benefits

The interview also highlighted critical external constraints and unexpected learning benefits. In Question 5, a large majority of respondents (R1, R3, R4, R6, R7, R9, R10, R11, R12, R13) identified internet infrastructure as their primary operational obstacle, stating that *"the difficulty is only on network interference."* This indicates that students' academic output is highly vulnerable to digital connectivity gaps. Interestingly, an unexpected pedagogical benefit emerged in Questions 3, 6, and 9; multiple students explicitly highlighted that Google Translate serves a dual purpose by allowing them to practice pronunciation. They reported that the platform *"is faster and can practice pronunciation,"* whereas paper dictionaries only offer phonetic symbols that are difficult for them to interpret. Finally, Question 10 confirmed an absolute consensus: all 15 students strongly agreed that the platform is vital because it seamlessly supports their real-time classroom survival and learning processes.

The results derived from the ten interview questions can be summarized as follows:

1. For students, Google Translate Platform is well known or very familiar in learning English in the classroom. It is not a new thing for them, and it was more modern if it compares with dictionary.
2. The advantages of utilization Google Translate Platform is very effective, faster, easy, more practical and very helpful in translating text, besides it also helps in doing practicing about the correct pronunciation. Most of the respondents strongly agree that Google Translate Platform is very useful in English learning because it makes easier for students in learning process in the classroom.
3. While, the disadvantages of it make students even lazier to open dictionary or learn new vocabularies because dictionary takes up a lot of time. Even, some respondents think that the use of Google Translate Platform was ineffective because the translation process sometimes did not match with the text and grammar point of view.
4. The accessing the Google Translate platform sometimes had the problems with the network or internet connection which is not supports it.

4. Discussions

When synthesizing the quantitative survey results and qualitative interview insights, the findings directly answer the core research question regarding students'

complex, dual-faceted perceptions of Google Translate. The data demonstrates that while students recognize the platform as an indispensable, high-efficiency medium that facilitates immediate classroom survival, they are equally aware of its detrimental impact on their independent learning habits.

This finding is supported by Nugraeni and Ahmad (2024), who viewed that perception may be divided into positive and negative aspects. Positive impression boosts self-confidence and empowers individuals to succeed in the world, to persevere in the face of a crisis, and to focus on something other than oneself. Furthermore, their research also showed that EFL students have a positive perception of the use of Google Translate in translation classes, finding it easy to use and helpful. In alignment with our findings, Nugraeni and Ahmad (2024) also highlighted that learners' persistent reliance on Google Translate to complete tasks quickly poses a serious challenge to developing independent translation skills. This study extends that argument by showing that students deliberately trade off structural accuracy for operational speed; they are fully aware of the "incorrect grammar problems" identified in Theme 2, yet the immediate convenience of machine translation consistently outweighs their grammatical skepticism.

The present findings are consistent with Zhang et al. (2025), who reported that university students perceive AI-assisted translation tools as highly effective for improving translation efficiency and reducing cognitive workload. However, those researchers also emphasized that excessive reliance on AI may reduce students' critical evaluation skills and independent problem-solving abilities. Similar patterns emerged in this study, where participants acknowledged that Google Translate facilitated rapid task completion while simultaneously reducing their motivation to consult dictionaries and expand vocabulary independently.

Likewise, Yang et al. (2026) argued that translation students increasingly view AI not merely as a translation engine but as an educational partner that enhances confidence and supports autonomous learning. Nevertheless, they emphasized that AI should complement rather than replace students' translation competence. This recommendation strongly supports the present findings that Google Translate should function as an assistive learning technology under teacher supervision instead of becoming students' sole translation strategy.

These findings are also parallel with Gwasmeh et al. (2026), who found that although students frequently use AI-powered translation technologies in classroom activities, instructors continue to emphasize ethical awareness, verification strategies, and human revision. This implies that successful integration of translation technology requires balancing technological efficiency with students' linguistic competence and critical thinking.

From a pedagogical perspective, these findings suggest that lecturers should integrate Google Translate into translation instruction through guided learning activities rather than prohibiting its use. Students need to be trained to critically evaluate machine-generated translations, identify grammatical inaccuracies, and revise translation outputs based on contextual meaning. Such an approach enables Google Translate to function as

a learning scaffold instead of creating long-term learner dependency.

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that students generally have positive perceptions of Google Translate as a translation medium in English learning. They consider it as an effective, practical, and accessible tool that facilitates translation tasks, improves learning efficiency, and supports language learning activities. However, the findings also reveal several concerns, including students' dependency on Google Translate, reduced motivation to expand vocabulary independently, and the possibility of grammatical and contextual inaccuracies in machine-generated translations. These findings suggest that while Google Translate offers substantial benefits for English learning, it should be used critically rather than relied upon unconditionally. Therefore, Google Translate should be integrated into translation pedagogy as an assistive learning technology supported by teacher guidance, critical evaluation, and ethical use to promote students' linguistic competence and autonomous learning

Recommendation:

Based on the findings of this study, English students are encouraged to use Google Translate as a supplementary learning and translation support tool rather than as the primary resource for producing academic work. Although Google Translate offers significant advantages in terms of speed, accessibility, and convenience, its outputs should be critically evaluated because inaccuracies may occur, particularly in complex grammatical structures and contextual meanings. Future research is recommended to compare Google Translate with other AI-assisted translation tools, such as ChatGPT, DeepL, Gemini, and GPT-4o, to examine differences in translation quality, contextual accuracy, and students' learning experiences. Furthermore, studies involving larger and more diverse samples from different universities are needed to improve the generalizability of the findings and provide broader evidence regarding the integration of AI technologies into English language learning.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest. The funders had no involvement in the study design, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, manuscript preparation, or publication decision.

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