# Student Perception of "Google Translate" Application as a Media for Translating English Material at the Second Grade Students of SMAN 10 Mataram

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**Abstract:** As technology plays an increasingly significant role in education, tools like Google Translate have become widely accessible for language learning and translation. This study investigates the perceptions of second-grade students at SMAN 10 Mataram regarding the use of the Google Translate application as a tool for translating English materials. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method. This study used structured interviews based on a set of guidelines to evaluate students' perceptions of Google Translate as a tool for translating English content. A qualitative and descriptive approach was applied for data collection, with the data presented and analyzed in stages, starting with interview analysis. The interviews, incorporating questions based on the 5W + 1H framework, aimed to gather information about students' perceptions before and after using Google Translate, as well as the challenges they faced and their strategies for overcoming them. Mobile phones and note-taking were used to record and capture additional information during the interviews. The findings show that most students view Google Translate as a helpful, time-efficient, and user-friendly tool for understanding English texts. However, limitations such as inaccuracies in grammar and context were noted. Despite these issues, most students have a positive attitude towards using Google Translate as a supplementary aid in their English learning. The study concludes that while Google Translate is a valuable resource, it should be used alongside teacher guidance and other learning strategies to enhance language proficiency.

**Keywords** : Student Perception, Google Translate Application, Media Translating English Material.

## Introduction

Brown (2007) states, language learning involves the development of four basic skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. These skills are interrelated and should be integrated into the curriculum in a way that reflects real-world use of the language. Saiful (2014) categorizes listening and reading as receptive skills, while speaking and writing are considered productive skills.

As the demand for English proficiency increases, there has been a growing focus on translation activities, especially with the rise of globalization. Newmark (2017) emphasizes that translation is not merely a language conversion task, but involves conveying the content and intent of the author accurately. Ninsiana (2016), defines translation as a way of expressing a language in another language, focusing on semantic meaning and equivalence. On the other hand, Wuryanto (2016), describes translation as the process of transferring written text from the source language into the target language.

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Traditionally, translation has relied on dictionaries and human expertise, but advances in technology have introduced tools such as Google Translate. This widely-used, free translation service is especially popular among students due to its ease of use. However, there is a notable gap between the expectations and actual performance of such tools (Hutchins & Somers, 1992). Although Google Translate uses sophisticated statistical methods and vast databases of parallel texts, Arifatun (2012) notes that it often falls short in delivering precise translations, particularly for complex academic content.

At SMAN 10 Mataram, it has been observed that second-year students frequently use Google Translate to comprehend English materials, despite its limitations. Although earlier studies by Maulida (2017) and Pujiati (2017) have explored Google Translate's general usage, there is limited research on how students perceive and adapt its use for translating academic content. Moreover, Wibowo (2019) have explored general usage patterns of Google Translate, but there is limited research on students' perceptions of its effectiveness in translating academic materials.

This study aims to address this gap by exploring students' experiences both before and after using Google Translate, identifying the challenges they face and the strategies they employ. The innovative aspect of this research is its focus on the practical use of Google Translate within an academic context, potentially guiding more effective integration of translation tools in language learning. As Clark and Mayer (2023) states, learning media refers to any resource that facilitates the transmission of messages from the source, contributing to an efficient and effective learning environment. Recognizing these elements is essential for developing strategies that maximize the benefits of translation technology while mitigating its limitations in educational contexts.

**Method**

This qualitative research explored students' views on Google Translate as a translation tool at SMAN 10 Mataram. The study involved 28 second-year students from Class IPS 1, who actively use Google Translate for translating English materials. The selection criteria were based on students' consistent use of Google Translate in their academic tasks.

Data collection was conducted through structured interviews using the 5W+1H framework. The interview questions focused on students' perceptions before and after using Google Translate, challenges they faced during its use, and the strategies they employed to address these issues. The interviews were recorded with mobile phones, and additional notes were taken to capture contextual information and non-verbal cues. The interview protocol ensured a consistent approach to data gathering across all participants.

The analysis followed a three-phase process: data reduction, data display, and verification. In the data reduction phase, interview recordings were analyzed to identify recurring themes and patterns. Data display involved transcribing the interviews and organizing the findings into clear categories. The verification phase included member checking, where participants reviewed their transcripts to confirm the accuracy and validity of the interpretations. This systematic method provided a thorough understanding of students' experiences while maintaining the integrity of the research.

**Result and Discussion**

The findings of this research are based on interviews conducted with 28 second-grade students at SMAN 10 Mataram. These interviews aimed to explore students' perceptions of Google Translate as a media for translating English material. The findings are organized into four main categories: perceptions before using Google Translate, perceptions after using Google Translate, difficulties encountered, and solutions developed.

Students' difficulties in learning English include several main aspects, such as listening, speaking, reading, and writing. In listening, students often have difficulty understanding the meaning of the conversation because of the speed, accent, or dialect of the native speaker. In speaking, students feel less confident, have difficulty constructing sentences with correct grammar, and have limited vocabulary. In reading, they experience challenges in understanding long texts, recognizing new words, and finding the main idea. In writing, errors in grammar, sentence structure, and spelling are the main obstacles.

These difficulties are often exacerbated by a lack of motivation, interest, and understanding of vocabulary and grammar. The following is a grouping of the types of difficulties that students often experience in learning English, particularly in listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Table 1 below categorizes these difficulties:

Table 1. Difficulties faced by Students in Learning English

| Difficulty Based on English Skills | Number of students | Difficulties Experienced by Students |
|---|---|---|
| Listening | 15 | Students find it difficult to understand the purpose and main idea of the recording/audio due to the native speaker's speed of speech, accent or dialect. |
| Speaking | 28 (Almost all students) | Students feel a lack of confidence in speaking English, have difficulty constructing sentences with correct grammar, and lack vocabulary to express ideas. |
| Reading | 20 | Students often have difficulty understanding long texts or academic reading; Do not recognize new words in the context of the reading; Difficulty finding the main idea or specific information in the text. |
| Writing | 18 | Students have difficulty constructing sentences with correct grammar; Inability to structure ideas (paragraphs or essays); Errors in spelling and punctuation. |

Table 1 illustrates the different challenges faced by students in the four key English language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. This data is supplemented with the number of students who experience difficulties in each skill and an explanation of the types of difficulties they face. For example, in listening skills, student have difficulty understanding the meaning of audio recordings due to the speed of speech, accent, or dialect of native speakers. While in speaking skills, most students feel less confident, have difficulty constructing sentences with correct grammar, and lack vocabulary. Table 2 provides a comprehensive overview of the challenges faced by students in learning English.

| Common Difficulties in Learning English | Difficulties Experienced by Student |
|---|---|
| Vocabulary | Difficulty understanding and remembering the meaning of new words, context, synonyms, antonyms and homonyms. |
| Grammar | Difficulty understanding and using sentence structures and grammar correctly when speaking or writing. |
| Pronunciation | Difficulty pronouncing words correctly especially for sounds not in the native language, and understanding sentence intonation or stress. |
| Motivation and Interest | Difficulty constructing |

Table 2. Common Difficulties in Learning English

Table 2 outlines the common challenges students encounter while learning English, categorized into four main aspects: vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and motivation and interest. Each aspect is accompanied by details of the types of difficulties experienced by students. For example, in the vocabulary aspect, students find it difficult to understand and remember the meaning of new words, context, synonyms, antonyms, and homonyms. In the grammar aspect, students experience challenges in understanding and using sentence structure and grammar correctly when speaking or writing. In addition, students also experience difficulties in pronunciation, especially for sounds that are not found in their mother tongue, as well as understanding intonation or sentence stress. The motivation and

interest aspects are also obstacles that affect their learning process.

To address challenges in learning English, students can focus on improving vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Strategies include using flashcards, practicing with questions, listening to authentic materials, and speaking with peers or teachers. Building self-confidence and participating in supportive learning environments, such as an English club, can also help students progress. By combining individual efforts, resources, and a positive learning environment, students can overcome various obstacles in mastering English.

Students perceive Google translate as a user-friendly and accessible tool that helps them translate English materials quickly and efficiently. It especially appreciated for saving time and supporting pronunciation through its audio feature, which aids in improving speaking skills. Bassalamah (2007) asserts that comprehending the source of a text stems from reading and interpretation. However, students acknowledge its limitations, particularly in translating complex sentences or idiomatic expressions accurately, as it often struggles with grammar and contextual understanding.

While the tool boosts motivation and confidence, especially for those who struggles with English, it also creates a risk of dependency that may hinder the development of independent language skills. Overall, students find Google Translate helpful but recognize the need to use it as a supplementary resource rather than a primary learning tool.

**Students' Perceptions Before Using Google Translate.**

Prior to encountering Google Translate, students faced numerous challenges in their English language learning journey. These difficulties shaped their initial perceptions of the language and the learning process.

One of the primary obstacles students encountered was the complexity of English pronunciation. Many students reported struggling with the disparity between written and spoken English. As one participant eloquently stated, "There are lots of writing errors and difficulties in speaking English." This challenge was particularly evident in words with non-phonetic spellings and in the case of homophones (words that sound the same but have different meanings and spellings, such as "two," "too," and "to"). The intricacies of English pronunciation often led to frustration and a lack of confidence among learners.

Another significant hurdle was the overall comprehension of English subjects. Students frequently found themselves grappling with understanding the content of their English lessons, which in turn affected

their motivation and interest in the subject. This sentiment was clearly expressed by one student who remarked, "Lack of interest in learning English because it is difficult to understand the subject." This difficulty in comprehension created a barrier to effective learning and engagement with the language. This result is in line with Megawati (2016), she found that differences in English language proficiency levels among students cause various difficulties in learning English. Factors such as ineffective teaching methods and lack of student motivation contribute to low understanding and interest in learning English.

Translation posed yet another challenge for students. Many found it arduous to translate English vocabulary into Indonesian and vice versa. This difficulty was succinctly captured by a student who said, "Difficulty understanding English subject, difficulty translating English vocabulary into Indonesian and vice versa." The inability to easily switch between languages hindered students' progress in developing their language skills and limited their ability to engage with English-language materials. research from Kembaren et al. (2024) found that students' difficulties in translating descriptive texts were caused by internal factors such as lack of motivation and cognitive abilities, as well as external factors such as the school environment and differences in language structure between Indonesian and English. This difficulty makes students confused in organizing the meaning of the two languages.

Furthermore, These challenges collectively contributed to a perception of English as a formidable subject, often leading to decreased motivation and engagement among students. The lack of effective tools to bridge the language gap exacerbated these difficulties, making the learning process seem daunting and sometimes insurmountable.

**Students' Perceptions After Using Google Translate**

Bimo Walgito, as cited in Adiwijaya, Purnami, and Arsana (2019), defines perception as the process of organizing and interpreting stimuli received by an individual, transforming them into something meaningful, and involving an integrated activity within the person. On the other hand, Jalaludin Rachmat (2007) describes perception as the act of observing objects, events, or relationships and drawing conclusions from the information gathered, as well as interpreting the messages received. The introduction of Google Translate into students' language learning toolkit marked a significant shift in their perceptions and experiences. This shift was characterized by several key aspects that emerged from the interviews.

Accessibility and convenience emerged as primary benefits of Google Translate. Students found

the tool to be readily available, particularly through their smartphones. This ease of access was highlighted by a student who noted, "Google Translate is a free service that allows translations without any cost; by simply downloading the language, we can translate at no charge." The ability to have a powerful translation tool at their fingertips, without the need for bulky dictionaries or costly resources, was a game-changer for many students.

The versatility of Google Translate in handling various forms of content was another aspect that students greatly appreciated. As one student observed, "Google Translate is an online translation tool that assists in translating words or sentences." This versatility allowed students to tackle a wide range of translation tasks, from individual words to complex sentences and even entire paragraphs, enhancing their ability to engage with English-language materials.

Google Translate's role as a learning aid extended beyond mere translation. Students found it valuable for vocabulary acquisition and pronunciation practice. For instance, when students encounter English texts they don't fully understand, they can comprehend the material by translating the words into Indonesian. (J. C. Catford, 1956). One participant expressed, "Google Translate makes it easy to find the meaning of words or sentences and helps with pronunciation, which is useful for student assignments, particularly when working on presentations." This multifaceted utility transformed Google Translate from a simple translation tool into a comprehensive language learning resource.

The potential of Google Translate to facilitate multicultural communication was not lost on the students. Many recognized its value in bridging language barriers, with one student stating, "Google Translate makes it easy for anyone to understand English and other languages." This perception opened up new possibilities for global communication and cultural exchange in the minds of the students.

Students were especially impressed by the advanced features provided by Google Translate. The camera function, which allows users to translate text from images, and the voice recorder feature for translating spoken language, were particularly appreciated. Lukaningsih (2010) explains that visual perception occurs when an individual receives a sensory stimulus through the eyes, serving as a means of vision. Widyana (2009) adds that visual perception is the ability to process stimuli received through sight into knowledge about an object. One student excitedly shared, "Google Translate has several useful features, especially the camera function, which can scan or capture sentences written in English and other

languages." Another participant mentioned, "The voice recorder feature also makes it easier for anyone who wants to speak English or other languages directly with foreigners." These features broadened the tool's usefulness beyond simple text translation, offering new opportunities for language learning and practical application.

**Difficulties Encountered in Using Google Translate**

Despite its many benefits, students encountered several challenges when using Google Translate as a translation media. These difficulties highlight the complexities of machine translation and the need for critical thinking in language learning.

Inaccurate translations, particularly for complex phrases or sentences, were a common complaint among students. One participant noted, "Inaccuracies in translated sentences, for example, when translating long text." This observation underscores the limitations of machine translation in capturing nuanced meanings and complex grammatical structures, especially in longer passages of text.

Context-related issues posed another significant challenge. Students found that Google Translate sometimes struggled with context-dependent translations, leading to misinterpretations or awkward phrasing. This was particularly evident in cases involving proper nouns or idiomatic expressions. As one student pointed out, "When translating someone's name in a sentence is a difficulty that is often experienced." This highlights the importance of cultural and contextual knowledge in accurate translation, an aspect that machine translation systems can sometimes overlook.

The translation of words with multiple meanings (polysemy) and words that sound the same but have different spellings and meanings (homonyms) presented another layer of difficulty. Students reported confusion when encountering such words, as expressed by one participant: "Difficulty translating words that have a variety of meanings and words that sound the same but have different spelling and meanings." This challenge underscores the complexity of language and the limitations of one-to-one word translations.

These difficulties collectively point to the need for a nuanced understanding of language and translation processes, even when using advanced tools like Google Translate. They highlight the ongoing importance of human judgment and linguistic expertise in the translation process.

**Solutions Developed by Students**

In response to the challenges they encountered, students demonstrated resourcefulness and critical thinking by developing several strategies to optimize

their use of Google Translate. Self-correction and cross-referencing emerged as a primary strategy. Students learned to critically evaluate the translations provided by Google Translate, especially for complex or ambiguous phrases. They developed the habit of cross-referencing suspicious words or phrases with other sources, such as traditional dictionaries or language learning websites. This approach not only improved the accuracy of their translations but also deepened their engagement with the language learning process.

Seeking human assistance was another important strategy employed by students. When faced with translations that seemed incorrect or unnatural, many students would turn to their teachers or peers for clarification and correction. This practice not only helped improve the accuracy of their translations but also fostered a collaborative learning environment and encouraged discussions about language nuances.

Students also reported utilizing additional tools to complement Google Translate. Some mentioned using applications like Grammarly for grammar checking, Hi Dictionary for more detailed word definitions, or DeepL Translate as an alternative translation service. By diversifying their resources, students were able to cross-verify translations and gain a more comprehensive understanding of the language.

These solutions demonstrate students' active engagement in the learning process and their ability to adapt to and overcome challenges. By developing these strategies, students not only improved their translation skills but also enhanced their overall approach to language learning, fostering critical thinking and resourcefulness.

The findings of this study reveal a significant transformation in students' perceptions and experiences with language learning following the introduction of Google Translate. This shift can be analyzed through various theoretical lenses and in the context of existing research on language learning and technology integration.

**The Role of Perception in Language Learning**

The students' experiences with Google Translate highlight the crucial role of perception in the language learning process. Drawing on Chaplin's (2005) definition of perception as the process of identifying objects and events through the senses and past experiences, we can see how students' initial views of English as a difficult subject were influenced by their challenges with pronunciation, comprehension, and translation.

The introduction of Google Translate served as a catalyst for altering these perceptions. This aligns with Fieldman's (1999) view of perception as a constructive process where individuals attempt to construct

meaningful situations from the stimuli presented to them. Students, armed with this new tool, began to construct new understandings of language learning. The ease of access to translations and pronunciation guides reduced the perceived difficulty of English, leading to increased confidence and engagement with the material.

This shift in perception is particularly significant in the context of language learning. As Riebel (1994) notes, visual perception plays a crucial role in language acquisition, influencing how individuals imagine forms in their minds based on previous knowledge and experience. Google Translate, by providing both textual and auditory support, enhances this visual perception process, allowing students to form stronger mental connections between words, their meanings, and their pronunciations.

Google Translate as a Multifaceted Learning Tool

The research findings support the conceptualization of Google Translate as more than just a translation tool, but as a multifaceted learning resource. This is consistent with Maulida's (2017) characterization of Google Translate as a free multilingual machine translation tool that can translate different types of content. The students' experiences confirm this versatility, with many noting its usefulness for translating words, sentences, and even entire paragraphs.

Moreover, the findings corroborate Bayu's (2020) assertion that Google Translate can accelerate vocabulary acquisition. Students The various features of Google Translate, such as the camera function for translating text from images and the voice recorder for spoken translations, further enhance its utility as a learning tool. These features align with modern pedagogical approaches that emphasize multimodal learning and the integration of technology in education.

**The Limitations of Machine Translation and Critical Thinking**

Despite its advantages, the study also emphasized the limitations of Google Translate, especially regarding accuracy and context sensitivity. These results align with Arifatun's (2012) observation that although Google Translate can assist readers in grasping the overall meaning of foreign language texts, it doesn't always deliver precise translations.

The difficulties students encountered with complex sentences, context-dependent translations, and words with multiple meanings underscore the continued importance of human judgment in the translation process. This realization led students to develop strategies for verifying and improving

machine translations, demonstrating their critical thinking skills and active engagement in the learning process.

This aspect of the findings aligns with current trends in education that emphasize the development of critical thinking skills alongside content knowledge. The students' strategies for overcoming Google Translate's limitations – such as cross-referencing, seeking human assistance, and using multiple tools – demonstrate the development of these crucial skills.

Impact on Language Learning Strategies

The introduction of Google Translate has significantly impacted students' language learning strategies. Prior to using the tool, many students relied heavily on traditional methods such as textbooks and in-class instruction. However, Google Translate has enabled a more independent and exploratory approach to language learning. Students now engage in a process of discovery, using Google Translate as a starting point for understanding new vocabulary and sentence structures. They have developed a more critical approach to translation, cross-referencing Google Translate's output with other sources and seeking human verification when necessary. This shift aligns with modern pedagogical approaches that emphasize learner autonomy and critical thinking skills.

The development of these strategies also reflects Morgan's (1987) definition of perception as whatever is experienced by a person. Students' experiences with Google Translate have shaped their perception of language learning, leading them to adopt more active and engaged learning strategies.

**Implications for Language Education**

The findings of this study have several important implications for language education:

1. Integration of Technology: Educators should consider integrating tools like Google Translate into their teaching methods. This integration should be thoughtful and strategic, teaching students how to use these tools effectively while also understanding their limitations.
2. Focus on Context and Nuance: Given the limitations of machine translation in handling context-dependent translations and nuanced meanings, there should be an increased emphasis on teaching students about context, cultural nuances, and the sociolinguistic aspects of language.
3. Developing Critical Translation Skills: Students should be taught how to evaluate and improve machine translations. This includes skills such as cross-referencing, contextual analysis, and understanding the principles of good translation.
4. Balancing Technology and Traditional Methods: While tools like Google Translate offer significant benefits, they should complement rather than replace traditional language learning methods. A balanced approach that combines technological tools with human instruction and practice is likely to be most effective.
5. Fostering Learner Autonomy: The accessibility of tools like Google Translate provides opportunities for independent learning. Educators should guide students in developing self-directed learning strategies that make effective use of these tools.
6. Addressing Ethical Considerations: As students become more reliant on translation tools, it's important to address ethical considerations such as plagiarism and the appropriate use of machine translation in academic and professional contexts.

In conclusion, this study reveals that Google Translate has had a profound impact on students' perceptions of language learning and their approach to translation. While it has addressed many of the challenges students initially faced, it has also introduced new complexities that require critical thinking and strategic use. As technology continues to evolve, it will be crucial for educators and students alike to adapt their approaches to language learning, leveraging tools like Google Translate while also developing the skills necessary to use them effectively and critically. The future of language education lies in striking a balance between technological assistance and human expertise, fostering a generation of language learners who are both tech-savvy and linguistically astute.

**Conclusion**

Based on the interview results, all students are aware that Google Translate is a service for translating between languages. They use Google Translate not only for translation but also to learn pronunciation and expand their vocabulary or find synonyms, indicating that students are familiar with its other functions. In their learning process, English education students encounter a lot of English material. They admit to using Google Translate to convert it into Indonesian and vice versa. Almost all translation tasks are handled by Google Translate, from translating individual vocabulary to translating entire texts, meaning that

dictionaries are seldom used by students. They rely on Google Translate to comprehend English content.

Students know how to properly use the Google Translate application by entering the vocabulary they wish to translate and then adjusting the translation manually, taking grammar, word choice, and other factors into account. When translating sentences, they enter words individually rather than whole sentences. If they need to translate a paragraph, they translate by looking up the meaning of unfamiliar words and then combine them, paying attention to grammar and other details.

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