Digital Translation Literacy of Undergraduate EFL Students

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Received: 23 March 2023
Revised: 31 December 2023
Accepted: 31 December 2023
Published: 31 December 2023

Abstract

Literacy is the representation of language competency, individual skill in reading, writing, speaking, and managing. In digital era, literacy can be represented through the use of Google translation tool as one of the most popular tools among EFL students, either for their translation assignment or improve foreign language skills. This study aimed to explore undergraduate EFL student’s digital literacy by using Google translate as a tool to do translation. Qualitative descriptive method is used to present the data comprehensively. The data collection begins from problem identification, field observation, interview, and study the document related to their assignment. This research used purposive sampling which involved 31 EFL undergraduate students of a private University in Tangerang. This research shows that EFL undergraduate students are able to operate and use Google translate effectively in assisting assignment. Google translate tool can eliminate the learning’s gap among different level of student’s English competency especially in vocabulary mastery and time management, the research also shows student’s digital literacy through Google translate not only for written translation, but also orally and can be used in diversity functions, such as translating the language in sentence form and learning how to pronounce English words.

Keywords: Literacy, translation, Google translate, EFL students, digital literacy

Introduction

For the past decade, literacy known well by scholars as the implication of individual approach to find and practice their knowledge. Literacy as the competence of understanding, comperehanding, and the ability that has already increase rapidly through many domains of literacy. One of the domains is digital literacy. With the rapid changing of literacy, (Rowsell & Walsh, 2017) argued that literacy as the shift of thinking about the way how people are able to make language meaning. In digital era student are required to be able to find many information freely and doing practice as many as they can. In addition, teacher should be able to pay attention to
any kinds of diversity in their language learning, and able to commit with the student’s pedagogical practices (Tan & McWilliam, 2009).

Almost all of Indonesian citizen can assess internet freely as the representative of digital generation era, (Supratman & Wahyudin, 2017). For some reasons digital era could be hard for some students especially for EFL students because of the lack of digital literacy (Supratman & Wahyudin, 2017). Meanwhile, the understanding on how to use or apply digital devices is required by both teachers and students. Digital literacy as the ability to access, manage, understand, communicate, evaluate, integrate, and create the information can be implemented for citizen’s literacy (UNESCO, 2018). In this era students are required to be able to get information competitively to expand their knowledge and understanding. Undergraduate student majoring in English departments is also required to do various tasks and assignments in English. Students who did the task in English language need some improvement on their knowledge. For almost one semester, researcher observed the 5th semester students related to their ways in doing assignment. The students mostly used online tool, but some others used offline tool to do the assignment effectively. This act as one of the students’ efforts to find their own strategy in learning (Ismail et al., 2013). Digital era is identified by looking at the existence of various accessed information, internet hardware capability, and various tools to support teaching and learning process.

Translation is the process of converting the language from source language to the target language. Furthermore the translation practices are very essential to do by EFL learners because almost all subjects in their department are in English language. Through translation, students can make the learning process meaningful since the students can practice their English meaningfully (Mart, 2013). In addition, without knowing the translation tool, it will quite difficult to do the work effectively. That is why, the digital literacy is needed for EFL learners to assist their assignment because literacy orientation can rise student’s critical interpretation, then practice it into their daily life (Menke et al., 2018).

One of the popular tools to assist EFL undergraduate students in translating is Google translate tool. Google translate is not only easy to access, but also has good features for language practices and improvement. Google translate also develops their language sources for more than 100 languages. In addition, Google translate can be an alternative tool for students in completing their assignment (Feweda, 2023). This phenomenon is very popular in this era since the presence of Google translate embrace EFL undergraduate students to find such an easy way to solve their language problems and to do their English assignment at university. Academic requirement can be very difficult to do without any good language assistance (Shi, 2015). Meanwhile, the fulfillment of academic tasks by college students is very important since they are the university asset who are able to bring the changing for their university in this digital era (Shen & Tian, 2012).

This research focuses on some issues regarding digital literacy in assisting the specific assistance given by Google translate to EFL undergraduate students for completing their Translation task, as well as how effective the Google translate is (in assisting the 5th semester students at English major). As university students, using Google translate is very suggested because to be able to enhance their
understanding on machine translation and treat their skill on using technology in
digital era. As part of digital literacy, google machine translation also plays role in
improving students language skills, because through the internet assess learning
become easier (Hamat et al., 2014). This kinds of research also supported by
(M.Lewis, 2014) that doing research based on the phenomena or analysis related to the
things to find the effectiveness of something is allowed.

Digital literacy brings lots of revolution among academicians regarding
learners’ learning style, teacher’s method, the strategy to interact, the way of
communication and many others. Digital literacy has increased rapidly because
people are encourage to improve their skills dealing with current fast information,
technical skills, and operational skills (Helsper, 2016). Furthermore, the rapid
changes of communication and act represents the gap among the use of digital
devices (digital literacy). Those gap can be positive and negative (Supratman &

Multimedia is a good combination between online and offline learning model,
and the Google translate as one of multimedia which acts as an alternative tool to
assist the students. Furthermore, multimedia is very effective to be used by EFL
students to fulfill their academic requirements (Aslani & Tabrizi, 2015). In
academics area digital literacy is mostly able to give positive regulation since
through the digital devices the learners can improve themselves for both receptive
skills and digital practice. Meanwhile, digital literacy is assumed as the essential set
of professional situated which is supported by the diverse technology ((Shangho,
2018). As language learners, translating English to Indonesian language is common
for them. However, unpredictably, they have some difficulties to solve the problems
regarding the language translation in particular context. Therefore, they strive to
translate it effectively through the most familiar tool, that is Google translate.

Nowadays, the requirement of good translation is needed by EFL
undergraduate student to fulfill their assignment in English. Thus, the existence of
Google translation is needed as an alternative assistant tool to obtain good
translation. Google translate is a service provided by Google company which has
some technical terms in translating the language source into language target. The
use of Google translate can be very effective for students it enables the students to
access multiple kinds of language preference and words recommendation for
correcting the language. In spite of that, Google translate also has simpler features
and easier menu to access rather than another translator. The most interesting thing
is Google translate can provide some editing tools that allowed the user to improve
or revise their target language result (Giannetti, 2016). Moreover, Google translate
can be downloaded in smart phone so that the user can operate the apps easily
anytime and anywhere. In detail function, Google translate can be used in some
purposes, such as: 1) translating the language from the language source to the
language target just by typing the sentence or using the copy-paste, 2) writing a
document through camera or writing directly on the tools, and 3) translating the
language by pressing the microphone icon, then the translate machine will
recognize the sound to translate it (Feweda, 2023).

Regarding the study of digital literacy and translation at the present age, the
study related to this idea surely have been done by several researchers (Arta, 2021;
Soifah et al., 2021; Eryansyah et al., 2020; Akayoğlu et al., 2020; Liza & Andriyanti, 2020; Kurniawati, Maolida, & Anjaniputra, 2018; Durriyah, & Zuhdi, 2018; Supratman, & Wahyudin, 2017; Azmi, 2017; Amin, 2016; Ciroma, 2014; Lachica, 2015; Yayuza & Akyuza, 2015; Ciroma, 2014; Christophersen, 2013). However, most of them did the analysis on digital literacy and translation in separated way. Thus, there is still a gap that should be filled in (be elaborated) as the answer of the present problem (translation). For instance, Arta (2021) did an analysis on translation in EFL classroom which aimed to search the controversy about the implementation first language (L1) by the students, as well as to recommend the activities of translation a beneficial tool for the students at South East European University (Tetovo, North Macedonia). Meanwhile, Soifah et al. (2021) tried to unlocking digital literacy practices of EFL teachers in their study. What they would like to accomplish are: Determining the perceptions of the teachers regarding digital literacy practices in the classroom, (2) pointing out the digital literacy in practical implementation by EFL teachers, and (3) investigating the challenges and obstacles faced by the EFL teachers in implementing digital literacy in the practical classroom. The result shows that digital literacy was significantly encouraged by the facility provided by all schools, but with various internet access level. Some tools had been used by the teachers in the classroom level. However, they believed that the teachers faced some challenges, such as defective equipment and Internet access and intrinsic factors such as teachers’ knowledge in technology, their attitudes toward digital technology, and students’ commitment to apply digital literacy.

Another researcher (Eryansyah et al., 2020) did an analysis on digital literacy which focus on pre-service EFL teachers’ digital literacy and its factors on the development of digital literacy. The study aims to explore pre-service EFL teachers’ digital literacy skills and factors affecting them in developing their digital literacy skills. Its findings shows that pre-service EFL teachers’ digital literacy was identified above acceptable level. Meanwhile, the factors that affect the development of digital literacy are: limited number of computers, limited internet access, there is no ICT training, less practices, and lack of integration of technology in language learning.

In addition, Meanwhile, Eryansyah et al. (2019) in their previous study in 2019, their focus almost the same which is analyzing the digital learning in EFL classrooms. However, their main subject is on the EFL students, not the teacher or pre-service teachers. Its study aimed to look at the skills and the current knowledge of EFL students on the use of ICT. Its finding revealed that the current knowledge of EFL students related to digital literacy is low. The result almost the same as what Eryansyah et al. (2020) had done in their research that there were some factors affecting their low knowledge on digital literacy, such as limited access to campus’ computer, limited internet access, and the integration of technology in daily learning. Furthermore, other researchers (Yayuza & Akyuza, 2015) strived to investigate digital learning in EFL classrooms in which their study focus is on analyzing some theoretical information about digital learning in the same field (teaching and learning in EFL classrooms). The result of review shows that the learning and teaching in the future will move to digital which give the impacts on
learning procedures, learners, and the teachers. Its finding reaches some conclusions, those are: technological implementation affected by the demand from the development of technology and the perception of teachers as well as learners. Another finding shows that technology integration needs advance devices to support the quality of learning along with its training.

Based on the studies that had been done by all of these researchers, the existing analysis mostly focus on analyzing the problem of how the students or the teachers face the challenges in implementing the digital literacy such as the limited devices, limited internet access, lack of training of ICT, lack of technological integration in learning. Another focus is regarding the factors and perceptions of teachers and students on the current implementation of digital literacy. Meanwhile, the idea of literacy on the translation’s tools, students’ preferences, and how the tools can help EFL students as the implementation of digital literacy still in progressive search. Hence, all of these gaps are necessary to explore. Regarding this matter, the present study aimed to explore student’s digital literacy using Google translate in assisting EFL undergraduate students to do translation. This gaps surely bring some questions to answer, those are: 1) what digital tool is familiar for EFL undergraduate students to assist their translation, 2) why students prefer to use Google translate? Does Google translate really helped EFL undergraduate students for completing their Translation task? 3) Does Google translate effective to help 5th semester students majoring in English department?

Method
This research uses qualitative descriptive method by analyzing and observing the sample. The sample is taken purposively from 3rd semester EFL undergraduate students with the total sample is 50 students from a private University of 2017/2018 academic year. The process of the research begin from the identification of the problem based on the information and observation, the analysis on documents based on the submitted assignment, and interview.

The interview consists of 8 questions which required students to answer both close-ended and open-ended question. The interview is conducted directly after doing the observation and require the participants to answer the interview form. Open-ended questions are required student’s perspective related to their experience in using Google translate tool, while for close-ended question the students are given the answer’s choice through yes or no. Interview process emphasize the exploration on student’s experiences of Google translate tool which might minimize their problem in their assignment and their lack of understanding in vocabulary mastery. As supported by previous study (Giannetti, 2016) that google translation could be student’s resource to engage student’s writing skill as a part of language skill.

Findings and Discussions
Digital literacy is one of the digital era requirements since without digital literacy, people cannot compete with others to run their business (Gee et al. 2015; Law et al. 2018). The representation of ability to use and eperate Google translate tool easily as one of the proofs that students are having digital literacy. Through Google translate students are able to submit their assignment properly, because they
understood the task’s instruction and initiative to find the aid to assist them (Tan & McWilliam, 2009). The process of understanding those instructions using *Google translate* is very helpful for them. Some arguments stated by other research that translation machine can be an important comparative study between the original translation and machine translation. In this case, students’ translation-knowledge can be improved through *Google translate* (Chesterman, 2016; España-bonet & Costa-jussà, 2016; Giannetti, 2016). Google translation as a beneficial tool for doing translation tasks especially for EFL undergraduate students. Contrary, *Google translate* could be an alternative tool to reduce language bias among student’s understanding related to language use (Vidhayasai et al., 2015).

EFL undergraduate students in this study have understood about literacy which represented by 83.9% respondents. 12.9% were doubt about their understanding about literacy, and the rest did not understand yet. *Google translate* is the most familiar among the respondents because the menu of the tool is easy to operate and easy to understand. This assumption shows that student’s digital translation literacy using *Google translate* can assist their assignment in translation work (Law et al., 2018). Different with other research (Supratman & Wahyudin, 2017) which shows that media literacy for learning EFL may be used through any platforms which with understanding the process and evaluation will encourage not online for learning result, but also for social literacy for digital learners. In this matter, Supratman & Wahyudin (2017) argue that the platform of translation is not only used for learning, but also for social activity which support their digital literacy.

![Figure 1](https://example.com/figure1.png)

**Figure 1.** Students’ understanding as representation of digital literacy

![Figure 2](https://example.com/figure2.png)

**Figure 2.** Students’ understanding as representation of digital literacy

In interview, EFL undergraduate students have various point of views regarding their reasons on using *Google translate*. Most of them have positive view on the existence of *Google translate*, such as; beside easy to use, *Google translate* is also able to have variative mode. In other sense, students can use *google
translation tool for words, sentence, and paragraph. Even, the students can use the voice-record menu, then their assignment can be done in a short time even though they need to recheck their work. Google translate makes the user easier to access without depending on the condition and situation. Meanwhile, Shangho (2018) believes that the existence of offline machine can be the comparison source to assist the online problem. Following are the students’ point of views regarding their reasons on using Google translate. In line with this result, the ability of utilizing google's translation machine as the representation of student’s digital literacy. It similar with the previous result by (Horarik et al., 2018) that, digital literacy can support teaching and learning process to accomplish the outcomes of teaching and learning properly through utilizing translation platform learning such as google translate. In another research (Supratman & Wahyudin, 2017), the findings shows that media literacy for learning EFL focus on translation platform which with the process understanding and evaluation that encourages not only online for the learning result, but also for social literacy for learners.

**Figure 3.** are the result of interview on the students related to their reasons in using Google translate.

**Figure 4.** are the result of interview on the students related to their reasons in using Google translate.

**Figure 5.** are the result of interview on the students related to their reasons in using Google translate.
Figure 6. are the result of interview on the students related to their reasons in using Google translate.

Meanwhile, based on the questionnaire, 72% of respondents agree that google translation is effective to help EFL undergraduate students in completing their assignment. Meanwhile, 25% is doubt that google translation is effective since they are not sure that Google translate tool can work in translationg their assignment. There is a wide recognition of value in digital tools such as Google translate. In other words, the students work and does the machine. In this case, those comprehensive understanding in adaptable use can bear the term “digital literacy” (Tang & Chaw, 2016). The ability in understanding digital value by the students indicates that its range of digital literacy is wide. This digital literacy can be seen from different model of how the student’s treat themselves to master pronounciation skill. Meanwhile, 68.8% Google translate is used for drilling students’s pronounciation, and only 25% who is not really sure to use Google translate in drilling their pronounciation skill. The explanation can be seen as following chart:
description indicates that the most common alternative machine to assist EFL undergraduate students is Google translate. As in the interview, some students have point of views that Google translate is effective to use because it eases them to find some difficult world quickly. Some of them also believe that it is effective because they can use it anywhere and anytime via their phone. Following students’ point of views regarding the effectiveness of Google translate on their translation task and knowledge.

**Student A:** “Because Google translate help me to find the difficult words quickly.”

“It makes me easier to understand and do my translation task.”

**Student B:** “It helps me to add more new vocabulary and sentence pattern.”

**Student C:** “Because it is so simple, I can use it on my cell phone.”

![Figure 9](image.png)

**Figure 9.** Students’ period in using Google translation machine to assist their tasks.

Moreover, although Google translate is used by the students to translate their assignment. Most of them said that they need to recheck and to revise the result through group discussion. Therefore, Google translate is able to assist the students to complete their task as long as they can used it properly. This act similar to the previous research by Yu and Liu (2021) as follows.

![Figure 10](image.png)

**Figure 10.** Students’ processing on utilizing Google translation machine

Furthermore, the process of doing the translation by EFL students is drawn relate to the google translation tool, such as; the process of translating the assignment, doing revision, rechecking the work from google tranlate tool, ensuring the completeness, and doing submission. Although Google translate is not the only tools to assist EFL undergraduate students, most of them prefer to use Google translate for completing their daily assignment or task. Meanwhile, the other tools that commonly used by the students is Kamusku, Cambridge tools and others.
However, they also argued that *kamusku* can not be used to translate the longer sentence. In conclusion, google translation tool still become favorite one for EFL undergraduate students to assist their translation work since the tool can be used to make translation more efficient. Besides giving a lot of information and knowledge, this tool also can be used as a notable favor in learning process (Arjulayana, 2019).

Moreover, this study proves that Google Translate machine can be an option for EFL students in helping their coursework to be more effective in understanding the meaning of every assignment given by the lecturer. In other words, through the use of Google Translation Machine has proven that digital era learning has provided many alternative solutions in facilitating the learning process as an effort to improve the quality of individuals learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia (Munday, 2016; Tamura, 2008; Zamrodah, 2016). In other words, the Google translation machine can reduce the gap between students in the learning process, because this tool is not only used in written translation, but also in an effort to improve oral translation skills through understanding pronunciation (España-bonet & Costa-jussà, 2016; Winiharti et al., 2021).

In conclusion, digital translation literacy is a new demand along with the development of era, which is called the digital era (Miller, 2015). As EFL learners who have been finding it difficult to understand academic tasks, it can be helped by the existence of google translation machine, and this is also proof that EFL learners have digital literacy as one of the 21st century learning demand (Kustini et al., 2020; Maloy, Robert., Ellen, Ruth., Edwards, Sharon., 2017).

**Conclusion**

In the present study, EFL undergraduate students have good digital literacy in term of their understanding on google translation tool. For EFL undegraduate students, they feel exited on the simple use of google translation in which not only in written form, but also through the voice record. The variation of languages in this translation tool has given many alternatives for students. Even, google translation tool can be more potential to be used by maximizing the variative function on it. Google translation tool as the representation of student’s digital literacy gave new literacy expansion on human communication and perspective which is very useful for cross-information exchange (Bermann, Sarah, & Porter, 2014). *Google translate* as an automatic translation tool can be used anytime and anywhere since the user can use smartphone freely. As alternative tools, *Google translate* really assist EFL undergraduate students under the reason that they do not need longer time to finish their translation assignment.

Google translate is one of the most popular translation machine among EFL undergraduate students at Muhammadiyah Tangerang University. The result of analysis shows that they can complete their assignment in a short time. Besides, *Google translate* also help them to drill their pronunciation skill through the voice translation (Gibbons, 2002). A wonderful service provided by *Google translate* tools enables the millennial generations to have significant improvement on their English language mastery. Another analysis shows that Google translate enables the students to be an autonomous learner since it can attract the students to get the meaning and pronunciation at once. Digital literacy is not only about understanding...
the digital/technology, but also being able to implement the technology wisely. The ability of using *Google translate* to support student’s learning process is one of the proofs that the student has digital translation literacy. *Google translate* tool can be promoted as one of the media to teach English to EFL undergraduate students. As the millennial generation, they should find the advantages of digital literacy in learning. As long as the students do several rechecks on the translation-error in google machine, this machine can be promoted as a great tool in testing students’ pronunciation and their writing.

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Digital Translation Literacy of Undergraduate EFL Students

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