

STUDENT PERCEPTIONS OF THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE ON ARABIC THESES; EASY BUT PRONE TO ERRORS

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ABSTRACT

Google Translate is a breath of fresh air and a savior for academics in the field of foreign languages. However, behind all the convenience offered, the use of Google Translate itself raises new problems in translation, especially in non-English translations, especially Arabic. This study aims to capture the perceptions of students who use Google Translate for Arabic thesis translation. The researcher collected data through questionnaires and interviews. The data were analyzed in four steps: data collection, reduction, display, and conclusion. The results of this study state that almost all PBA students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang use Google Translate in translating and writing theses, with various portions of use. This happens because students feel helped by the existence of Google Translate, even though they also realize that Google Translate is very prone to errors. The existing errors are dominated by aspects of nahwu and sharaf rules; this is because the Google Translate translation machine does not recognize gender, nakirah, ma'rifah, singular and plural words, and is inconsistent in the use of terms. Students realize that errors in the results of Google Translate must be corrected because the repair process is time-consuming. They feel that the use of Google Translate is actually difficult because it is prone to errors.

Keywords: *Arabic, error, google translate, thesis, translation*

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A. INTRODUCTION

The presence of information technology provides a breath of fresh air that is expected to overcome the problems of learning Arabic (Haniah, 2014). In addition, a recent development in digital technology, namely the ability of machine translation (MT) to translate with grammatical and lexical accuracy, has now improved and is also increasingly accessible to students majoring in languages for academic purposes. As with other developments in digital technology for teaching and learning, it is likely that machine translation will become a tool that students will rely on to complete their assignments in a second language. This will have implications for the language teaching community of practice in academia (Groves & Mundt, 2015). The same impact also happens to students of foreign language study programs, especially Arabic Language

Education Study Programs, who are required to write theses or other scientific works in Arabic.

Based on research from Arifatun (2012) in the Arabic Language Education Study Program, Department of Foreign Languages and Literature, Faculty of Languages and Arts, State University of Semarang, it is found that the Arabic Thesis is considered very difficult and a heavy task for students. Therefore, students often take the route of translating their Indonesian thesis into Arabic through Google Translate. This is also corroborated by research from Nurman (2019), which states that PBA students who write Arabic theses have difficulty completing their thesis, so the completion process takes a long time, with the average student completing their studies in the fastest 10 semesters. According to Bahri & Mahadi (2016; Ghasemi & Hashemian (2016), the lack of time and the need to translate texts for various reasons led to an increase in studying machine translation. Over the past decade, Google Translate, as a statistical machine translation (SMT), has come into the limelight as it supports 90 languages.

In line with the description above, the same problem is also felt by PBA students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang. Based on initial observations made by researchers, which are also related to previous research on Need Assessment of Improving Maharat Kitabah in Writing Arabic Thesis, in the aspect of translation, there is a gap between Target Situation Analysis (TSA) and Present Situation Analysis (PSA). Students who should be able to translate texts into the target language (BT), namely Arabic, are in fact very difficult to translate, so much so that more than 80% of Arabic Language Education Study Program students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang use Google Translate to translate their theses. The proportion of the use of Google Translate itself varies; between 50% and 90% of the translation process is done using only Google Translate. For more details, see the following figure:

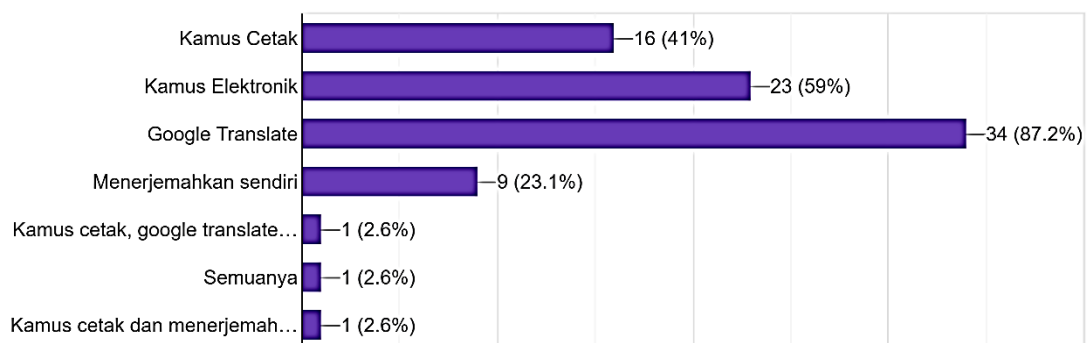


Figure 1. Data on the tools used by Arabic Language Education students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang in translating Arabic theses

However, behind the convenience offered, the use of Google Translate itself raises new problems in translation, especially in non-English translations. As stated by Bahri &

Mahadi (2016), Groves & Mundt (2015), Maulidiyah (2018), and Van Rensburg et al. (2012), machine translation is far from being able to produce error-free text. Research (Jackson et al., 2019) assesses that Google Translate for translating non-English studies requires caution in its use. Other research shows that Google Translate shows a strong tendency towards male defaults, particularly for fields typically associated with an unbalanced or stereotypical gender distribution, such as occupations. Google Translate produces male defaults much more frequently than would be expected from demographic data (Prates et al., 2020). In translating using Google Translate from Indonesian to Arabic, there are several errors, which are classified by Arifatun (2012) in 7 categories, including: Nakirah ma'rifat errors; mudzakkar muannats errors; harf meaningful usage; dhomir usage errors; mufrad, mutsanna and jama' errors; i'rob errors; and fi'il usage errors.

There are many relevant studies that discuss the translation of Indonesian into Arabic, both using digital, electronic, and Android-based dictionaries as well as Google Translate. From the various searches that researchers have done, researchers can find some relevant results from previous studies, namely: first, research from Arifatun (2012) suggests that Arabic language scholars should be able to minimize the use of Google Translate and pay attention to the results of translation, especially in terms of grammatical structure. Second, research from Arifin & Mulyani (2021; Baharum & Samah, 2015) examines perception in translation. This study recommends special dictionary training at the beginning of lectures at the higher education level.

Furthermore, research on translation errors (Anhar et al., 2020; Anisya, 2021; Arifatun, 2012; Fahmi, 2016; Harahap, 2014; Maulana & Sanusi, 2020; Mushodiq et al., 2021; Ranselengo et al., 2020; Sa'diyah, 2014) describes Indonesian-Arabic translation errors or vice versa. Other studies also focus on the thesis as the object of study, including research from Adriana (2012), Najah & Agustina (2020), and Sujefri et al. (2022). The results of each study describe the errors that exist in Arabic theses.

From the relevant studies described earlier, it can be said that the position and novelty of this research are that previous studies have various objectives, namely describing errors, classifying types of errors, and expressing perceptions about the use of digital dictionaries. While this study aims to portray the perceptions of students who use Google Translate in thesis translation, which is focused on translating Arabic theses, and what percentage of its use they make, it also examines whether they can read and understand the translated text to identify errors in the translation results, what forms of errors they experience, whether they correct existing errors, and their general perception of Google Translate in translating Arabic theses. With different methods and objectives from previous studies, the results of this study will make a new contribution to the field of translation, especially Arabic translation.

B. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research type to describe students' perspectives on the use of Google Translate in translating theses into Arabic. This type of qualitative descriptive research is generally used to study social phenomena (Hidayati, 2017; Mahardika et al., 2020). One of the studies related to language use, both spoken and written, related to scientific writing, more specifically about Arabic scientific articles and quotations from these articles. Data collection (Hamzah, 2021) uses a questionnaire technique; to validate the data, method triangulation is also used (Bachri, 2010; Rahardjo, 2010), by adding the interview method to ensure the validity of the data. The population in this study were students who wrote theses in the field of Arabic, while the sample researchers used purposive sampling, which was adjusted to the purpose of this study, namely 39 selected respondents who were considered to have knowledge related to Arabic thesis translation.

Data analysis uses an interactive analysis model consisting of four activity streams, namely collection, reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Jogiyanto Hartono, 2018; Majid, 2017; Sarosa, 2021; Wijaya, 2019, 2020). Data analysis in qualitative research is carried out before entering the field, while in the field, and after completion in the field. The main strength of qualitative research lies in the flexibility of the researcher's style to describe the research flow with a very open research problem.

C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

In accordance with the explanation in the method section, the analysis of this research consists of four steps: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. After the data is collected and reduced, the researcher presents the data, which consists of four parts. First, data related to the respondent's background and relationship with the thesis translation using Google Translate Second, data on respondents' perceptions, namely those of students who translate Arabic theses with Google Translate, related to whether Google Translate helps in translation third, data on the quality of Arabic thesis translation results with Google Translate according to respondents, and finally data on Arabic thesis errors with Google Translate from the respondents' point of view.

RESPONDENTS' BACKGROUND AND RELATIONSHIP WITH THESIS TRANSLATION USING GOOGLE TRANSLATE

In this section, the researcher will present data related to the respondents' background and relationship with Google Translate in translating Arabic theses. Respondents totaling 39 students all came from the Arabic Language Education study program who had just undergone a thesis trial in July-August 2022. The length of the respondent's study period also varied; most of the respondents had a study period of 8 semesters, namely 64.1%, 10 semesters by 33.3%, and the remaining 2.6% of the study period was 12 semesters. This indicates that there are still many students who are hampered and late to complete their studies in the ideal time of eight semesters. For more details, see the following figure:

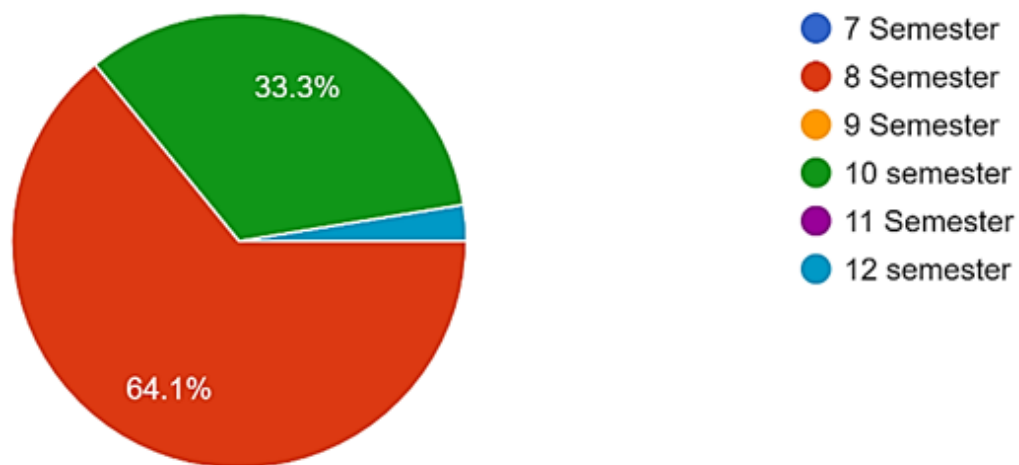


Figure 2. Data on the study period of Arabic Language Education students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang

The next piece of data relates to the use of Google Translate in translating Arabic theses. Of the 39 respondents, 38 respondents, or 97.4%, stated that they used Google Translate to translate Arabic theses, and only one respondent did not use it. From this data, it can be said that almost all PBA students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang use Google Translate as a way to translate in order to write an Arabic thesis. For more details, see the following figure:

Apakah anda menggunakan google translate dalam menerjemah skripsi berbahasa Arab?

39 responses

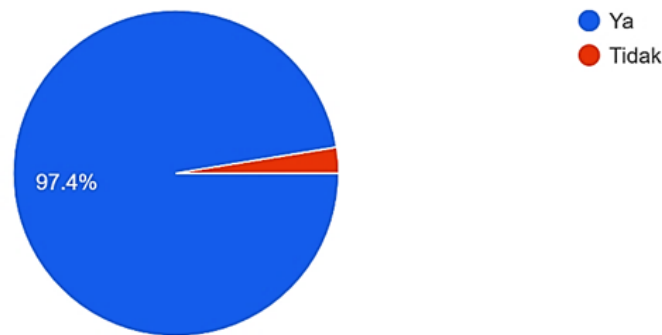


Figure 3. Data about the use of google translate

Although almost all Arabic Language Education students use Google Translate to translate their thesis, the percentage of its use varies. Of the 39 respondents, 33.3% only used less than 50%, then 17.5% used 50% and 60%, 20.5% used as much as 70%, and the remaining 5.1% used as much as 80%. Those who only used 20% and 90% were both 2.6%. From the distribution of these data, it appears that PBA students as a whole do not only use Google Translate to write or translate Arabic theses because the portion they use is also not 100%. This means that there is still a translation process that uses other tools such as dictionaries and quotes from Arabic sources. The distribution of these data can be seen in the following figure:

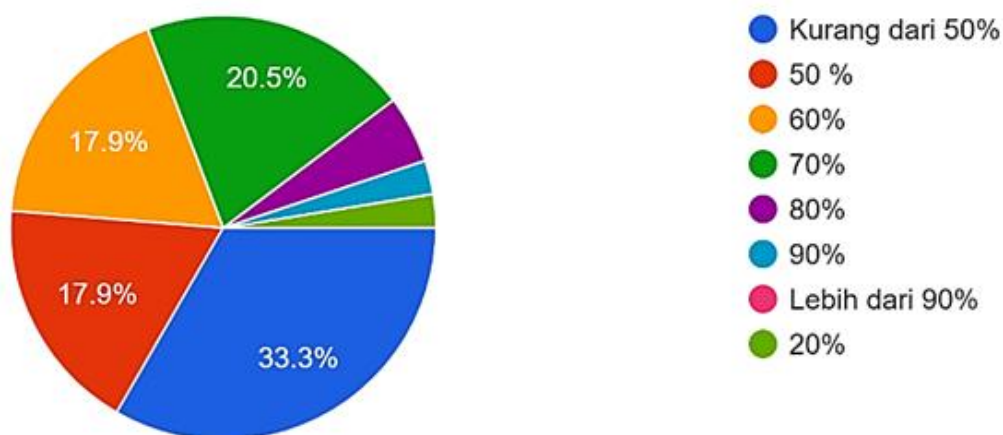


Figure 4. Data on the portion of Google Translate usage

STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THE EASE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE IN TRANSLATING ARABIC THESES

In this section, researchers will present data related to respondents' views on the ease of using Google Translate. Of the 39 respondents who gave responses, 15.4% stated that Google Translate was very helpful in translating Arabic theses, and 15.4% also stated that Google Translate was less helpful in translating into Arabic, while 69.2% stated that it was quite helpful. From these data, it appears that the majority of PBA students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang are helped by the existence of Google Translate in translating and writing Arabic theses, although a small portion stated that it was less helpful.

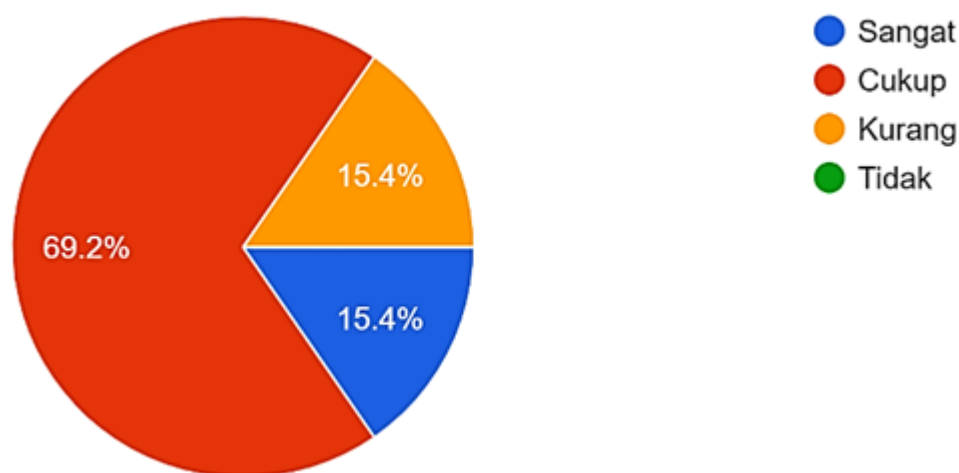


Figure 5. Data on students' views on Google Translate assistance

QUALITY OF ARABIC THESIS TRANSLATION RESULTS WITH GOOGLE TRANSLATE

In this section, researchers will present data related to the quality produced by Google Translate from the student's point of view. The first set of data is related to students' responses to whether the Google Translate translation results have good quality or not. Of the 39 respondents, 53.8% stated that the results were quite good, but 43.6% stated that the results were not good, and even 2.6% stated that the results were bad. From these data, it can be said that almost all students do not agree that the results of Google Translate translation are very good, meaning that there is still user dissatisfaction with the existing translation results because it indicates that there are some translation errors. This is also reinforced by the fact that 43.6% of respondents feel the results are not good. For more details, see the following figure:

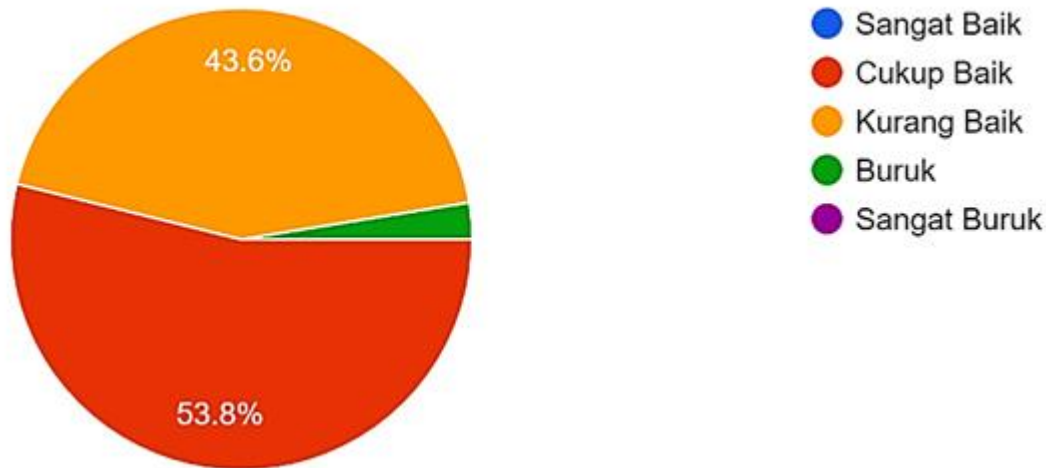


Figure 6. Data on google translate translation quality

To strengthen the above data, we asked a follow-up question about whether the translation results could be read and understood. The results were quite astonishing: as many as 38.5% responded that they could read and understand the translation, and as many as 38.5% also could only read but did not understand the Google Translate translation results. This means that the statement that the translation results are quite good was refuted by itself. To be more convincing, the researcher asked another question about the suitability of the Google Translate translation results with the rules of nahwu and sharaf. The result again refutes the statement that the Google Translate translation is good enough because, of the 39 respondents, as many as 66.7% answered that the translation was less appropriate, and even 15.4% answered that it was not appropriate. For more details, see the following figure:

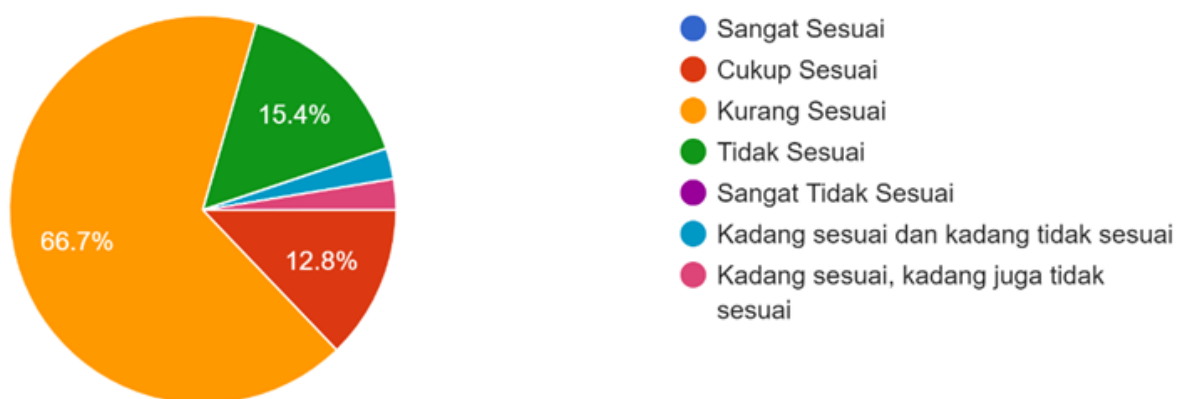


Figure 7. Data on the suitability of Google Translate translation with nahwu and sharaf rules

ARABIC THESIS TRANSLATION ERRORS WITH GOOGLE TRANSLATE

To support the previous data, we asked follow-up questions with open-ended questions regarding the types of errors that students encountered from the Google Translate translation results and their conclusions regarding the use of Google Translate. The first data related to the forms of errors came from 39 respondents who answered. We summarized the forms of errors as follows: a) nahwu shorf rules (such as after fi'il there is no fa'il, etc.). b) Inappropriate use of jar letters c) repetition of words that should not be (inconsistent). d) dhomir (pronoun) errors in fi'il and fa'il not according to gender (muannats and mudzakar). e) Idafah, na'at man'ut, Nakirah, ma'rifah, plural, and mufrad. f) the translation uses unpopular or new terms. g) Mufradat does not fit the context.

Then, at the end of the questionnaire, the researcher asked the question, "Does Google Translate make it easy or even make it difficult because of the many corrections?" The answers from most respondents 65% stated that the use of Google Translate made it easy, with a record of many errors that had to be corrected; 15% of all respondents stated that it made it easy; and 20% of respondents stated that it made it difficult.

D. CONCLUSION

From the exposure and discussion of the data above, the researcher draws the conclusion that almost all PBA students at UIN Imam Bonjol Padang use Google Translate in translating and writing Arabic theses, with varying portions of use. This happens because students feel helped by the existence of Google Translate, although they also realize that Google Translate is very prone to errors. The existing errors are dominated by aspects of nahwu and sharaf rules; this is because the Google Translate translation machine does not recognize gender, nakirah, ma'rifah, singular and plural words, and is inconsistent in the use of terms. Students also realize that errors in the results of Google Translate translation must be corrected, and because the repair process also takes a long time, students feel that the use of Google Translate is actually difficult because it is prone to errors, especially in translation to Arabic.

E. ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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