Google Translate In Pronouncing And Providing Phonetic Transcription

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Abstract. *The research aims to find out the effectiveness of Google Translate in pronouncing English words and providing the Phonetic Transcription from university students' perspective. This is qualitative research that uses questionnaires directed to the students and observation by the researchers to collect the result. It turns out that Google Translate provides accurate pronunciation after being compared to other translation tools, but it's not provide the Phonetic Transcription which students' know so.*

Keywords: google translate, translation app, Dictionary.com, U-Dictionary, IPA

Abstrak. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengetahui keefektifan Google Translate dalam mengucapkan kata-kata bahasa Inggris dan menyediakan Transkripsi Fonetik dari sudut pandang mahasiswa. Ini adalah penelitian kualitatif yang menggunakan kuesioner yang ditujukan kepada siswa dan observasi oleh peneliti untuk mengumpulkan hasilnya. Ternyata Google Translate memberikan pelafalan yang akurat setelah dibandingkan dengan alat terjemahan lain, tetapi tidak menyediakan Transkripsi Fonetik yang diketahui siswa.

Kata kunci: google translate, aplikasi terjemahan, Dictionary.com, U-Dictionary, IPA

INTRODUCTION

A journal wrote that more than 500 billion people use Google Translate and it translates more than 100 billion words per day. The facts have shown a big impact on how technology, including websites, advance. People experience the repercussions of this change, both good and bad. Undoubtedly, a wide range of apps are developed to improve our lives in several ways. Today's problems with pronunciation, learning foreign languages, and language differences among students and the society are only a few examples. As a result, many industries compete to develop the best solutions that will help the society to resolve this problem.

In university, students normally use Google Translate to translate words to another language or to find out the pronunciation of words. For English Education Department students, there's no doubt that they rely on Artificial Intelligence to make up their assignment. Students alike believe this one to give words or sentence language transfer and how to pronounce them. They even get the way to say something as well. Of course, this is what spurs Google to work on Google Translate, which is commonly used by foreigners, students, and many others to facilitate language learning and speaking. That's what Google Translate is for.

According to Maulida (2017), Google Translate is a multilingual text translation engine created by Google. Google Translate is categorized as a medium or tool in translating from one language to another. Most students and educators use this medium as a translation tool into various languages, online dictionary, spell checking, and also medium for pronunciation. Therefore, Khademi (2021) wrote a journal entitled *Learning Pronunciation with Google Translate : Focus on English Past - Ed* which generates data that Google Translate and its speech abilities assist learners in increasing their phonological awareness and perception regarding the pronunciation of past allomorphs.

In a previous discovery, the current system problem of Google Translate is to translate words without taking into account their structure, resulting in a translated sentence that has a confused meaning that is far different from its original understanding (Pujiati, 2017). In order to determine whether Google Translate is effective and accurate, the researchers conducted this research. It is crucial to find out the effectiveness of Google Translate in pronouncing and giving Phonetic Transcription, not

in its way translating words, compared to admitted English dictionary apps, such as Dictionary.com and U-Dictionary, which have almost the same popularity as Google Translate itself. Hence, this paper will show the effectiveness of Google Translate from students'.

RESEARCH METHOD

In order to find the best result, this research used a qualitative approach. The data was collected from eleven students randomly as the sample of English Education students in the fourth semester. The researchers gave questionnaires and held an observation as additional information. They received the questions via Google Form and answered it privately. Meanwhile, the observation was done by the researchers themselves, who are also students in the same field, by using Dictionary.com, Google Translate, and U-Dictionary to observe and compare the Phonetic Transcription and pronunciation. Dictionary.com explains itself by this, which is collected from its official website:

> *"Dictionary.com is the world's leading digital dictionary. We provide millions of English definitions, spellings, audio pronunciations, example sentences, and word origins. Dictionary.com's main, proprietary source is the Random House Unabridged Dictionary, which is continually updated by our team of experienced lexicographers and supplemented with trusted, established sources including American Heritage and Harper Collins to support a range of language needs. Dictionary.com also offers a Word of the Day, a Synonym of the Day, word games and solvers, and a wealth of editorial content that benefit the advanced word lover and the English language student alike.*

> *Language is constantly evolving, and the editorial offerings from Dictionary.com shine a light on how language is being used. From pop culture to idioms and grammar advice, there's always something new to learn from Dictionary.com."*

Meanwhile, U-Dictionary has an almost precise role like Dictionary.App. It provides a learning language basis and translation as well. It debuted in 2016 and has reached approximately 100 million users in 150 countries. For the features, it has an Oxford Dictionary in 12 languages with the sentence examples, automatic translation on

other apps, offline translation in 58 languages, camera translation, audio translation, object translation, new words vocabulary on lockscreen, and grammar checker.

Finally, the result is using descriptive analysis to present the findings of, in which the research results are discussed by diagrams, tables and description.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Research Finding

After doing the research, it turns out that all participants use Google Translate. Then, six of them prefer to choose a translation app to Google Translate. In pronouncing words, six students get Google Translate helpful, four of the students get it really helpful, and the remaining one is not getting it. In providing Phonetic Transcription, seven of them admit that Google Translate is helpful, three of them feel highly helped, and the last one get it not helpful at all. For more clear data will be presented by the diagrams below.

Google Translate Users

Diagram 1
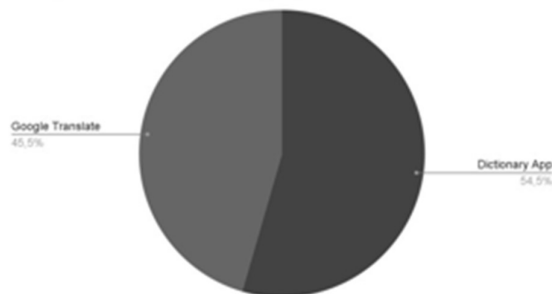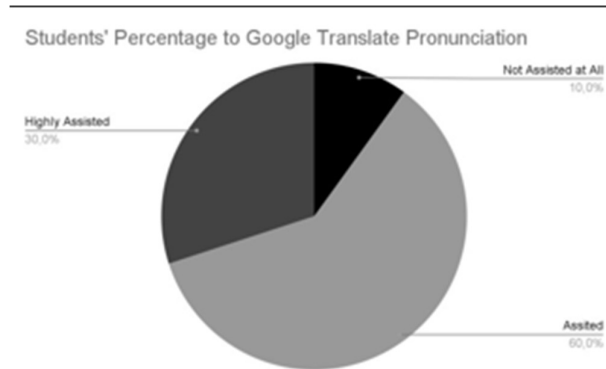
Google Translate vs. Dictionary App

Google Translate
45,5%

Dictionary App
54,5%

Diagram 2

Students' Percentage to Google Translate Pronunciation

Not Assisted at All
10,0%

Highly Assisted
30,0%

Assited
60,0%

Diagram 3

Students' Percentage to Google Translate Phonetic Transcription

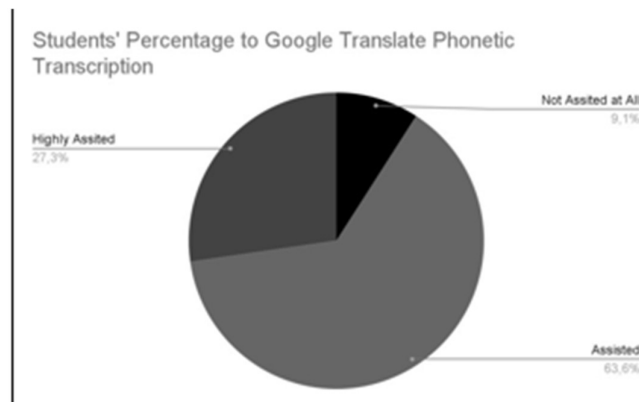Not Assited at All
9,1%

Highly Assited
27,3%

Assisted
63,6%

Diagram 4

To collect more accurate results, the researchers hold an observation by comparing Google Translate to two other translation apps, they are Dictionary.com and U-Dictionary. In a wide scope, Dictionary.com is more referring to language interests, and U-Dictionary goes to its magic translation that connects to other apps. Overall, both are providing Phonetic Transcription in American and U-Dictionary has the British as well. According to Yulianti and Holman's research (2022) on the use of English learning to U-Dictionary, which was evaluated at Walisongo Vocational School on 20 students, 55% of respondents strongly feel that mastering grammar is vital, while 25% somewhat agree. 70% of pupils firmly believe that the application can hone reading abilities.

This is consistent with their observations, which revealed that 4 students (20%) and 14 students (70%) both highly agreed that the dictionary application could be utilized at anytime and anyplace.

Furthermore, the researchers discover that both of the digital translation apps show almost the same Phonetic Transcription. Then, they are compared to Google Translate. All of the transcriptions follow American rules.

Comparison Table of Words Phonetic Transcription

Table 1. Words Phonetic Transcription

Words Observed	Dictionary App	Google Translate	U-Dictionary
University	/ ˌyu nəˈvɜr sɪ ti /	ˌyoonəˈvərsədē	/ˌjuːniˈveʒːsəti/
Jornal	/ ˈdʒɜr nl /	ˈjərnl	/dʒɜːnrl/
Undergraduate	/ ˌʌn dərˈgrædʒ u ɪt, -ˌeɪt /	ˌəndərˈgrajooət	/ʌndeˈgroedjʊət/
Linguistics	/ lɪŋˈgwɪs tɪks /	liNGˈgwistiks	/lɪngˈwɪstɪks/
Psycholinguistics	/ ˌsaɪ koʊ lɪŋˈgwɪs tɪks /	ˌsīkōliNGˈgwistiks	/ˌsaɪkəʊlɪŋˈgwɪstɪks/
Publish	/ ˈpʌb lɪʃ /	ˈpəbliSH	/pʌbliʃ/
Artificial Intelligence	/ ˌar təˈfɪʃ əl ɪnˈtɛl ɪ dʒəns /	ˌärdəˈfiSHəl inˈteləjəns	/ɑːtɪˈfɪʃ(ə)l ɪntelɪdʒ(ə)ns/

Discussion

Questionnaire Findings Discussion

The questionnaire shows that all the participants use Google Translate–*see the Diagram 1*–, but they don't have the same perceptions on it. Clearly, diagram II displays students bravely taking their favorite app translations to know a word's pronunciation or check the Phonetic Transcription. The students give a variety of reasons as well. For those who choose Google Translate, they assume that this one is easy to access. This reason is admissible; for its simple and quick appearance on Google. Students don't need to wait for long to use it. They just need a good connection to open it. Furthermore, Google Translate has been their habitual tool in learning language, *in this case English*, where they are extremely good at it. For some circumstances, Google Translate is able to show valid pronunciation and Phonetic Transcription as well. That makes students rely on this machine so much.

Meanwhile, for the remaining students, Google Translate is not interested anymore. They just use it in an unconditional situation; in a hurry or having a bad connection. On their occasion to choose, they use a translation app rather than Google Translate. The students prefer an interesting and updated app which provides more than a translation, pronunciation, and Phonetic Transcription. For instance, Dictionary.com provides more than translation and pronunciation, it makes the users find thesaurus even games which is indeed knockout Google Translate. The modifying apps are certainly accurate due to its popular use in society. Additionally, students also avoid Google Translate for its inability in translating slang or phrases, so students assume this one is not worthy to choose. In the very last, diagrams III and IV make the researchers find out that at least most of the participants are assisted by Google Translate in pronuncing English words and providing Phonetic Transcription beside the known weakness.

Observation Findings Discussion

Table 1 examines the straight differences among the three translation machines. Google Translate shows the most contrast result. In observing how those tools pronounce and give Phonetic Transcription, it is quite shocking that Google Translate doesn't put a literal symbol of Phonetic. It looks more like Phonetic Respelling. Another strange thing is Google Translate mixes both of them. For instance, in the word of publish, it writes

'pəbliSH, where it combines Phonetic symbol *ə* with alphabets. The transcription is disabled to be mentioned as Phonetic Respelling; for it engages a Phonetic symbol. It means, Google Translate only gives users the way to pronounce a word, not how it should be written properly in Phonetic rules.

In writing the respelling, Carnegie Mellon University states there are two policies that need to be concerned; syllables are separated by dashes, and stressed syllables are capitalized. For instance, the word *'university'* will have *'/yoo-nuh-vur-si-tee/'* in the Phonetic Respelling. Meanwhile, according to Ohala, Phonetic Transcription has the following guidelines.

1. It begins and ends with square brackets ([ ]). Meanwhile, Phonemic Transcription started and ended by slanted brackets (/ /).
2. Phonetic Transcription also avoids capital letters and punctuation.
3. Further, it does not allow to put c, x, or q letters in order those are parts of the Phonetic symbol.
4. There is no double consonant in transcription.

According to Luke (2015), where he said his opinion on the differences in phonemic and phonetic transcription, which he uploaded on the linguistics tax change comments page, he is aware of three fundamental distinctions between phonemic transcription and phonetic transcription:

a. Phonetics Transcription relates to phones or sounds that happen to every language. However, Phonemic Transcription relates to Phonemes which have the probability to change the meaning of words.
b. Phonetics Transcription gives information about how sounds actually uttered, but Phonemic Transcription demonstrates how people perceive the sounds.
c. Square brackets are used for phones and sounds, then slashes for phonemes.

By the explanation, the three translation tools do not provide Phonetic Transcription as what they should be. Dictionary.com is the almost consistent and perfect tool in providing the transcription. However, it belongs to Phonemic Transcription, because it begins and ends by square brackets–*see Table 1*. Indeed, it also serves the

respelling, but it has a separate feature. Then, U-Dictionary follows by providing the transcription with slash as well which indicates it belongs to the Phonemic Transcription. It also serves almost similar symbols which means they are more different than Google Translate.

Google Translate does not give any brackets to show whether it is Phonemic or Phonetic Transcription. It also does not belong to the respelling because of the previous reason. Further, considering the second rule by Ohala, Google Translate is in contrast having the Phonetic Transcription for it puts capital letters in the spelling. On the other

THE INTERNATIONAL PHONETIC ALPHABET (revised to 2015)

© 2015 IPA

Indeed, Phonetic transcription is an effective method to make students or foreigners correctly pronounce English words (Riza & Kawakib, 2020). According to research, the International Phonetic Alphabet (IPA), which was developed in the linguistic age of this century, can be used to represent speech sounds in written form. This is particularly helpful because the way that words are pronounced differs greatly from how they are often spelled. The Phonetic alphabet is a topic that is covered in the majority of textbooks. The vocabulary list includes the symbol as well. Based on the survey results, 96% of students felt that the symbols were very helpful. (Setiyono, 2019). The International Phonetic Alphabet is used in both British and American English. Certainly, there will be distinct accents in interpreting and making the symbols and sounds in reality, but IPA cannot be abandoned (Hamka, 2016).

In this case, Wells (2018) states that differences in Phonetic Transcription is not a big problem. The inconsistency occurred due to the purposes which are admissible in a language world, such as descriptive phonetics, lexicography, computerized speech recognition, and so on. Furthermore, dictionaries do not consistently provide similar Phonetic symbols. They, the native people, prefer to put the orthography. English orthography is showing how a word is clearly pronounced following the typing, so is also mentioned as respelling.

The symbols diversity in the three translation tools do not impact the way of them pronouncing words. In this case, there are differences in pronunciation of most words. As a result, researchers found while listening to the tools in pronouncing English words are not far different, and not essential to consider. Overall, considering Wells' study, it is not a massive thing that everyone must concern. It can be mentioned as the language process in era development.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

For students, Google Translate is well-known for its capability in translating, pronunciating, and providing Phonetic Transcription. Unfortunately, the effectivness of the features are left behind the updates translation apps that more helpful for students' need. It turns out that Google Translate never gives Phonetic Transcription, but only the way of words pronounce in which it is not belong to Phonetic, Phonemic, or respelling trancription. Considering this fact, although students still count on Google

Translate in pronouncing English words, they should not rely on this tool too much because it will kill their intention or ability to use Phonetic symbols. This science may not be forgotten only by an easy access tool, especially for English Education students.

To practice their ability in comprehending Phonetic symbols, students are able to rely on dictionary or translation apps, such as Dictionary.com and U-Dictionary, which provide more features than only pronunciation. Students do not need to worry if they find differences of the symbols written in Phonetic Transcription because it will not affect how the pronunciation would be.

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