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The Use of DeepL as a Translation Tool in English Language Learning: Insights from Indonesian EFL University Students

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ABSTRACT

The rapid advancement of digital technologies has transformed language learning practices, for instance, the use of DeepL translation tools for machine translation. It plays a growing role in facilitating comprehension, vocabulary development, and academic literacy among EFL learners. This study provides empirical evidence of how DeepL shapes students' learning efficiency and translation strategies. This mixed-methods study explores the perceptions and challenges of 27 fourth-year English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students at Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta regarding DeepL as a translation tool in their language learning. Employing questionnaires and semi-structured interviews for data collection, the research gathered both quantitative and qualitative data. The questionnaire explored students' overall perceptions, while interviews delved into the specific challenges encountered by six selected students, using a purposive sampling technique across varying proficiency levels: two students with high proficiency, two students with medium proficiency, and two students with low proficiency, as indicated by the analyzed questionnaire scores. Furthermore, the researchers analyzed the questionnaire results through data checking, coding categories, and compared them across the highest, middle, and lowest categories, analyzing the results descriptively. Meanwhile, for the semi-structured interview, the results were analyzed using an interactive model, comprising data collection, data reduction, data display, and drawing conclusions. Findings indicate positive student perceptions. Quantitative analysis of questionnaire data revealed overwhelmingly positive perceptions, with 81.5% and 66.7% of students showing high agreement on key positive statements about DeepL's utility. However, the qualitative data reveal that all interviewed students face challenges, particularly the time-consuming process of double-checking translations due to the uncertainty of meaning. This study highlights DeepL's significant role in facilitating language learning while also underscoring the need for students to develop critical evaluation skills.

KEYWORDS:
Challenges;
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Introduction

In today's more advanced era, numerous tools have been developed to simplify and enhance translation, making it more effective and easily accessible. Translation tools such as Google Translate, Machine Translation (MT), and DeepL are widely used and increasingly popular in both the translation industry and today's digital landscape. According to Deng and Yu (2022), there is a growing interest in the ways that MT tools can be used to facilitate student learning. Along with this rapid technological development, the application of MT at various levels of education has also transformed, resulting in diverse types. MT has contributed to various fields of education, including nursing, science, and language. Machine Translation is the process of translating text from one source language to another using computer software (Khotimah et al., 2021). Meanwhile, Arnold et al. (2001) confirm that machine translation can be used to represent the kind of information required for translation that can be processed automatically.

This technological development also has a significant impact on the world of education, particularly in language learning. Machine Translation (MT) has been implemented in classroom practices at various levels, ranging from primary education to higher education (Novita & Mudjiran, 2021). MT as a pedagogical tool is essential in second language writing (Doherty, 2016), and MT evaluation metrics are considered adequate for assessing language learners' translation and interpretation (Han & Lu, 2021). DeepL is one of the leading tools in machine translation, recognized for its strong accuracy and ability to handle a wide range of languages. Along with globalization, which facilitates data exchange across languages, the need for translation tools is increasing (Kamaluddin et al., 2024).

DeepL Translator gained widespread recognition after its launch in 2017, attracting interest from general users, scholars, and industry experts (Kamaluddin et al., 2024). Artificial intelligence, specifically DeepL, has created a breakthrough as an accurate translation tool and is gaining popularity among both learners and translators. DeepL's ability to understand context is superior to that of conventional translation technologies, which typically produce translations that are rigid and literal.

Studies into the DeepL translator as a translation machine in the field of education have been conducted by several experts. For instance, Birdsell (2022) conducted a study on the influence of using a Neural Machine Translation (NMT) system, such as DeepL, on essay writing by students and how teachers evaluate essays. The findings revealed that teachers awarded higher scores to NMT-assisted essays and could accurately identify whether an essay had been produced with NMT. This research also discusses the implications of using NMT in learning foreign language writing.

Another study was conducted by Polakova and Klimova (2023), who examined the use of DeepL Translator in learning English as an applied foreign language to improve students' English writing ability. The results showed that using DeepL Translator significantly improved students' language skills, and students found this tool very useful in learning English as a foreign language. Laksana et al. (2024) conducted a study to investigate the perceptions of Indonesian EFL students regarding the utilization, advantages, and disadvantages of the DeepL machine translation tool. This mixed-methods research design contributes to the discourse on the integration of AI in language education, which emphasizes the importance of understanding user perceptions and developing balanced implementation strategies.

Other relevant studies, namely Asmara and Kembaren (2024), examined students' perceptions of using the DeepL translator for writing a thesis or journal in English Education.

This qualitative research revealed that many students utilized the DeepL translator in writing theses or journals. By using the translation method per paragraph, students completed their thesis or journal using the DeepL translator to convert Indonesian into English. Khairyah et al. (2024) conducted a phenomenological study on the perceptions of English education students regarding the use of DeepL Pro for text translation (English-Indonesian). This qualitative study revealed that respondents were highly satisfied with DeepL's accuracy, speed, and contextual understanding.

Despite the plethora of studies into the DeepL translator as a learning tool, the study that is focused on the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students' perceptions of the use of DeepL in learning translation and to figure out their challenges in the tertiary context is still limited to the best of researchers' knowledge. Earlier research has primarily focused on DeepL's role in evaluating essay writing, assisting with academic writing, and exploring the advantages and disadvantages of translation tools. This study makes a significant contribution to English language education, particularly in the areas of translation and the use of digital technology.

ELESP students' perceptions and challenges with the DeepL translator tool need to be examined because the rapid development of technology, including artificial intelligence-based translation tools such as DeepL, has made them a popular choice for quickly and efficiently translating text. This study will provide a more in-depth picture of how ELESP students utilize DeepL as a translation tool in their academic activities, such as translating assignments, journal articles, and learning references. Understanding how students perceive DeepL in terms of accuracy, speed, and ease of use compared to other translation tools, such as Google Translate, will help educators and educational institutions determine the effectiveness of incorporating this technology into the learning development process.

The results of this study can serve as a reference for translation technology developers to develop features that better meet the needs of academic users by identifying the difficulties and limitations faced by students when using the DeepL translation tool. Therefore, it enhances the quality of students' English learning and encourages innovation in translation technology, ultimately helping students learn the language more effectively. This research can also serve as a basis for future researchers to explore the impact of using digital translation tools on students' ability to understand and produce translated texts independently in greater depth.

The present study examines how ELESP students perceive the use of DeepL translation tools in learning Translation and the challenges they encounter when using this tool. To fill the gap, the present study addresses the issues of using DeepL as a translation tool in English language learning activities used by ELESP students, and further explores the challenges encountered when using it. Thus, the researchers address the following research questions: 1) What are the ELESP students' perceptions of using the DeepL translator tools in learning Translation activities? 2) What challenges do the ELESP students encounter in utilizing the DeepL translator tool in learning Translation activities, and how do they solve these problems?

Method

A mixed-methods approach was employed in the present study to collect both quantitative and qualitative data on students' perceptions and challenges in using DeepL as a translation tool. Using a quantitative approach, the researchers presented numerical data on students'

perceptions, and the qualitative data on their experimental difficulties when using DeepL as a translation tool. Twenty-seven (nine male and eighteen female) students from semester eight at the English Language Education Study Program were involved in the present study. The students have previously used the DeepL translation tool for doing their assignments, academic papers, and in their translation course. Therefore, they are familiar with the DeepL translation tool and use it very often. Moreover, the English Language Education Study Program (ELESP) students are pre-service English teachers enrolled in a university-level teacher education program. They are trained in English linguistics, pedagogy, translation, academic writing, and professional teaching skills. As fourth-year or eighth-semester students, the participants in this study have advanced English proficiency and substantial academic experience, particularly in working with English texts for assignments, research articles, and translation courses.

The students have been using the DeepL translation for about two years since they joined the Translation and Interpreting course. Additionally, they are experienced users of DeepL, having actively utilized it in their daily activities and tasks, which enables them to provide meaningful comments on both its advantages and challenges. Furthermore, there are several reasons why ELESP students are relevant to this present study, namely, first, they are frequent users of translation tools. ELESP students regularly engage in tasks that require comprehension of academic texts, translation of references, and the production of written English. Second, they possess higher metalinguistic awareness: Compared to general university students, ELESP students have a deeper understanding of grammar, syntax, and semantics, enabling them to evaluate MT output critically. They are future English teachers: Their perceptions influence how future generations of students will be introduced to MT tools in classrooms. Fourth, they are experienced users of DeepL: The participants have actively used DeepL prior to the study, enabling them to comment meaningfully on both the advantages and challenges. Finally, they are key stakeholders in language education; their experiences reflect the real conditions of AI integration in English Foreign Language (EFL) contexts at the tertiary level, making them directly relevant to research on technology-enhanced language learning.

To gather data on the students' perceptions and the challenges they face, the researchers administered a questionnaire. A questionnaire consisting of ten items was distributed to twenty-seven students from the ELESP at Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta to gauge their perceptions of using DeepL as a translation tool. Furthermore, the quantitative data were analyzed quantitatively using a four-point Likert Scale. Each statement contains a four-point Likert Scale: "Strongly Agree" (SA), "Agree" (A), "Disagree" (D), and "Strongly Disagree" (SD). Table 1 presents the scale categories.

Table 1. *Likert scale scoring rubric*

Scale	Score
Strongly Agree	4
Agree	3
Disagree	2
Strongly Disagree	1

The researchers then categorized all responses based on the ten questions presented to answer the research question one and interpreted them with descriptive written explanations.

$$P = F/n \times 100$$

Adopted from Sugiyono (2018)

Meanwhile, semi-structured interviews were conducted to further explore the challenges encountered when using DeepL as a translation tool. The semi-structured interview consisted of ten questions. It took twenty minutes to answer the questionnaire items and forty-five minutes for the interview session. The questions asked in this semi-structured interview stage are adapted from Malone (1981) with two indicators: Effort and Uncertainty of Outcome. Upon completing the questionnaire, the researchers then interviewed six students to explore further the challenges they encountered when using DeepL as a translation tool, based on the questionnaire's categorization scores (high, medium, and low). The qualitative data obtained from semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the interactive model, as referred to by Miles and Huberman (2014), which includes data reduction, data display, and the concluding part of the process.

Results

Students' Perceptions of the Use of DeepL as a Translation Tool in English Language Learning

To understand how students perceive using DeepL as a translation tool, the researchers administered a questionnaire consisting of ten items to the students, hoping that the responses would represent their individual experiences and viewpoints on using DeepL. The percentage results of each statement in the survey questionnaire can be seen in Table 2 as follows:

Table 2. *The percentage of each statement*

No	Statement	SA		A		D		SD	
		F	%	F	%	F	%	F	%
Absorbing									
1	Statement 1 Using DeepL enables me to easily absorb the translated information.	6	22,2%	19	70,4%	2	7,4%	0	0%
2	Statement 2 Using DeepL as a translation tool makes my understanding of the context of English texts clearer.	6	22,2%	20	74,1%	1	3,7%	0	0%
3	Statement 3 Using DeepL as a translation tool helps me grasp the meaning of difficult foreign words more easily.	4	14,8%	22	81,5%	1	3,7%	0	0%
4	Statement 4 How I absorb DeepL's translation results is influenced by my learning experience.	5	18,5%	21	77,8%	1	3,7%	0	0%

5	Statement 5 DeepL's translation results often align with what I expect based on my initial understanding	6	22,2%	18	66,7%	3	11,1%	0	0%
Understanding									
6	Statement 6 After using DeepL to translate a text, I better understand its overall meaning.	7	25,9%	18	66,7%	2	7,4%	0	0%
7	Statement 7 DeepL helps me organize translated information for learning purposes.	7	25,9%	17	63%	3	11,1%	0	0%
8	Statement 8 I feel that my understanding of the original text improves after using DeepL	8	29,6%	16	59,3%	3	11,1%	0	0%
9	Statement 9 I can easily categorize the information translated by DeepL according to my learning goals.	5	18,5%	21	77,8%	1	3,7%	0	0%
10	Statement 10 I feel that the quality of DeepL's translations greatly affects my understanding and analysis of the text.	8	29,6%	17	63%	2	7,4%	0	0%

Table 2 presents the percentage of individual respondents' answers to the ten questionnaire items. As shown, the majority of students expressed positive perceptions of using DeepL as a translation tool, which is reflected in the high percentages of respondents selecting "Strongly Agree" (SA) and "Agree" (A). Meanwhile, the total scores for each questionnaire item are summarized in Table 3.

Table 3 presents the total scores for each questionnaire item. The results indicate that respondents' scores predominantly fall within the Strongly Agree (SA) and Agree (A) categories. The highest score recorded is 100, the median score is 75, and the lowest score is 52.5. The study's findings revealed that the vast majority of students reported that DeepL significantly aids their understanding and learning processes. Several key findings are as follows: first, Information Absorption: A combined 92.6% of students (22.2% strongly agree, 70.4% agree) found that DeepL made it easier to absorb translated information. Only a small percentage (7.4%) disagreed. The second key finding is the Clarity of English Context: DeepL was widely seen as clarifying the context of English texts, with 96.3% of students (22.2% strongly agree, 74.1% agree) concurring.

Table 3. *The results of the respondents' score questionnaire*

No	Respondent	Score of Statement										Total	Total
		S1	S2	S3	S4	S5	S6	S7	S8	S9	S10		Score
1.	FAA	3	3	3	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	28	70
2.	AA	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	34	85
3.	JP	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
4.	VNW	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	32	80
5.	AQ	2	3	3	3	2	2	3	3	3	3	27	67,5
6.	SA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
7.	SHF	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	4	31	77,5
8.	LNF	2	2	2	3	2	2	2	2	2	2	21	52,5
9.	IGS	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
10.	SHM	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
11.	FAR	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
12.	NMA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	76
13.	RARGP	3	4	4	3	4	3	3	3	3	3	33	82,5
14	AP	3	3	3	2	3	3	2	2	3	2	26	65
15.	DK	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	40	100
16.	ANI	4	3	3	3	3	4	3	4	3	4	34	85
17.	MJ	4	4	3	4	3	4	4	4	3	4	37	92,5
18.	R	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	3	4	38	95
19.	MAP	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
20.	PLN	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
21.	MA	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
22.	RNH	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
23.	DPR	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
24.	NA	3	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	38	95
25.	RFW	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	30	75
26.	GAN	4	3	3	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	37	92,5
27.	SF	4	4	4	3	4	4	4	4	4	3	38	95
High Score													100
Median Score													75
Low Score													52,5

The third is Understanding Difficult Vocabulary: An overwhelming 96.3% of students (14.8% strongly agree, 81.5% agree) agreed that DeepL facilitates understanding the meaning of challenging foreign words. The fourth is Influence of Learning Experience: Students broadly acknowledged that their learning experience influences how they absorb DeepL translations, with 96.3% (18.5% strongly agree, 77.8% agree) agreeing with this statement. The fifth is Alignment with Expectations: Most students (88.9% combined) found that DeepL's

translations often matched their initial understanding, with 22.2% strongly agreeing and 66.7% agreeing.

The seventh key finding is Enhanced Overall Meaning: After using DeepL, 92.6% of students (25.9% strongly agree, 66.7% agree) reported a better understanding of the overall meaning of texts. The ninth is Organization for Study: A significant 88.9% of students (25.9% strongly agree, 63% agree) felt that DeepL helped them organize translations for study purposes. The tenth is Improved Original Text Comprehension: DeepL was perceived to improve the understanding of the original text by 88.9% of students (29.6% strongly agreed, 59.3% agreed). The eleventh is Categorization for Learning Objectives: The ability to easily categorize DeepL-translated information for learning objectives was affirmed by 96.3% of students (18.5% strongly agree, 77.8% agree). The twelve is Impact on Understanding and Analysis: A substantial 92.6% of students (29.6% strongly agree, 63% agree) believed that the quality of DeepL's translations significantly affects their understanding and analysis of texts. Table 4 shows the level of perceptions based on students' score categories.

Table 4. *Perception levels based on students' score categories*

Score Group	Score Range	Number of Students	Characteristics
High Perception Group	85-100	6 Students	Very strong confidence in DeepL, rarely revise, see DeepL as accurate and time efficient.
Medium Perception Group	70-80	16 Students	Positive, but balanced; occasionally revise to check context, with minor uncertainty.
Low Perception Group	52.5-67.5	5 Students	More cautious, frequently revise, check with other tools, and make a free effort; increase for complex tasks.

Table 4 presents a comparison of students' scores among those in the high, medium, and low perception groups. The research indicates that fourth-year ELESP students at Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta hold a very positive view of DeepL. They perceive it as a highly effective tool that significantly enhances their ability to comprehend, organize, and analyze translated information, ultimately contributing to their learning process. The findings suggest that DeepL plays a valuable role in their academic endeavors related to English language texts.

The Challenges Encountered by ELESP Students in Using the DeepL Translation Tool, and the Way They Solve the Problems

To gather data on students' difficulties with using the DeepL translation tool and the strategies they employed to overcome them, the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with six respondents selected through purposive sampling. The respondents were selected based on the questionnaire score results in the survey. There were two students with the highest scores, two students with middle scores, and two students with the lowest scores. Questions asked in this semi-structured interview stage are adapted from Malone (1981), with two indicators: Effort and Uncertainty of Outcome. Therefore, the results of the interview are

categorized into the aforementioned two indicators, which are comprehensively described as follows:

Effort

In the effort indicator, five questions are given to six students. In the first question, “How much effort do you put into translating English texts using DeepL? The researchers identified one key component in this question, which is "Effortless"; six respondents, namely DK, R, JP, IGS, LNF, and AP, provided the same answer regarding the effort required to translate text using DeepL. One of them, R, expressed his opinion on how much effort was made when translating English texts using DeepL, as presented in excerpt 1, "Not too much effort, I think DeepL is more accurate and easier than Google Translate. DeepL has a feature to search for synonyms of the translated word so that the translation results can be as we want” (R). According to R's answer, he believes that translating an English text using DeepL requires minimal effort. A similar opinion was also expressed by "IGS," who revealed that DeepL is very easy to access and the translation results are accurate, as seen in excerpt 2, “I do not make much effort to use DeepL, I just open Google and type in the website DeepL, enter the text, and the accurate translation results can be understood immediately" (IGS).

Similar responses were also expressed by four respondents, namely DK, JP, and LNF, who stated that translating English texts with DeepL did not require much effort and was easy. This concern is addressed in excerpt 3, "Almost all texts that need to be translated, I always use DeepL, the role of DeepL is very helpful and easy, and does not need much effort in using it" (DK). "The use of DeepL does not require much effort when compared to Google Translate because DeepL translates the text we provide with appropriate results, so it does not require much effort" (JP). “I do not use DeepL very often, but a few times using DeepL does not require much effort” (LNF).

In response to question number two, “Do you feel the need to make revisions or changes to the translation of DeepL to suit your understanding? Based on the answers from all respondents, the researchers can categorize two key components. The first respondent, namely DK, responded to this question as seen in excerpt 4, “I need to, sometimes if there is a word that seems awkward, I look for a word that is more understandable. So, I change it to a word that I understand” (DK).

From the answer given by DK, it can be seen that there is a need for revision after translating the text using DeepL. R also expressed the same opinion regarding the need to revise the translation results of DeepL. R responded to this question as presented in excerpt 5, “It is necessary, sometimes I need to revise if the translation result is not very good, I look for synonyms of the word using the DeepL feature” (R).

The statements above are in line with DK, who added the use of the DeepL feature to revise the translation results, ensuring the final result aligns with his wishes. Furthermore, AP, responding to the question of whether it is necessary to modify the translation of DeepL, stated his answer as seen in excerpt 6, “Yes, after translating at DeepL, revisions need to be made because we have to adjust to the context of the language we want. We can adjust to a more appropriate structure” (AP).

Furthermore, responding to question number three, “How much time did you spend to complete the translation task using DeepL? All respondents share a common view that DeepL is more efficient than other translation tools. The findings revealed that there is one key component, namely time efficiency. This issue is addressed by the respondents IGS, DK, and

AP in excerpt 7, where IGS states, "It has a big effect because it doesn't take a long time, you only need to enter the word or sentence you want at DeepL, and the translation results will come out immediately" (IGS). "Compared to other translation tools, DeepL is time-effective because it can be used easily" (DK). "Very influential and very helpful in the translation process of using DeepL, compared to using Google Translate, I need to translate from other systems first. So DeepL is quite helpful for translating" (AP).

Moreover, in response to question number four, "Do you think using DeepL as a translation tool increases or decreases the amount of effort required to understand English texts? Based on the answers from all respondents, the researchers can conclude that there are two key components: reducing effort and increasing effort. Respondents DK, R, JP, and IGS fall into the component of reducing effort, with the following statements, as seen in excerpt 8, "I think the use of DeepL itself greatly reduces effort, because indeed the translation results provided by DeepL are appropriate" (DK). "Actually, there is an increase and a decrease, but based on my experience, it is more to reduce the effort because, as I said before, one paste of the text can be used immediately because it is appropriate and accurate (R). "It's less, because it's easy to understand" (JP). "It reduces because the translation provided by Deepl is appropriate and easy to understand" (IGS).

From the statements of respondents DK, R, JP, and IGS above, the researchers can conclude that the use of DeepL reduces their effort in translating English texts. While the other two respondents, namely LNF and AP, stated the opposite, namely the use of DeepL as a translation tool increased their efforts because they needed to check the correctness of the results with the original context and needed to compare with the translation results of other translation tools, their statements can be seen in excerpt 9, "It improves, because after translating using DeepL, I have to make more effort by changing what I want and comparing with Google Translate" (LNF). "I think it improves because I need to understand again to make sure whether the translation provided by DeepL matches the context of the original text or not" (AP).

In addition, in response to question number five, "Do you think additional effort is needed to ensure that the translation of DeepL matches the context or meaning? Two key components were identified in all respondents' answers: the need for additional effort and the lack thereof. Respondents R, JP, and AP stated that they required additional efforts to ensure the contextually correct translation by DeepL. The statements of the four respondents are presented in excerpt 10, "Yes, I have to, I have to check again by reading the translation result, then make sure whether this word is correct with the context, if it is not correct, I can use the DeepL feature to change the word with a synonym that suits my wishes" (R). "...for some cases, it is necessary to reconfirm whether the translation results provided by DeepL are by the original text" (JP). "Yes, it is necessary, because as I stated before, it takes additional effort to check the translation results to match the context of the sentence or compare with the results of Google Translate or other translator applications" (AP).

Based on the answers from all respondents above, the researchers can conclude that R, JP, LNF, and AP stated that additional efforts were needed to verify whether the translation results provided by DeepL accurately reflected the original text. Meanwhile, the other two respondents, namely DK and IGS, stated the opposite. The statements of the two respondents are presented in excerpt 11, "...no, because in my experience the translation results provided by DeepL are based on the original text or context" (DK). "There is no need because I think the translation results are correct" (IGS).

Uncertainty of outcome

Furthermore, in "Uncertainty of Outcome," there are also five follow-up questions, responding to question number six: “On a scale of 1-100%, what percentage of the time do you feel unsure about the translation of DeepL? The researchers concluded there are two key components in the form of numbers, from a scale of 1-50%, which means that it can be categorized as still confident in the translation of DeepL, and a scale of 50-100% which means that it can be categorized as not confident in the translation of DeepL.

A total of five respondents, namely DK, JP, IGS, and AP, gave a score below 50%, indicating they are not confident in the results of DeepL. The following excerpt 12 reflects their perceptions. “I am not convinced by the translation of DeepL by 10%” (DK). "46%, because based on my experience in learning languages and doing assignments using DeepL, most of the results given are appropriate and I am sure of the truth" (JP), “20%, so I am 80% confident in the translation from DeepL” (IGS), and “40% are not convinced by the translation of DeepL” (AP).

Furthermore, in response to question number seven, “Does it ever happen that the translation results from DeepL do not meet your expectations? If that's true, how did you control it? The researchers identified two key strategies used by respondents to manage inaccurate DeepL translation outputs: (1) adjusting the results using DeepL’s built-in editing features, and (2) cross-checking the translation with other translation tools. Three respondents—DK, R, and JP—reported using DeepL’s adjustment features to refine the output. Their statements are presented in Excerpt 13, "Yes, I have, for example, there are foreign words that are difficult to understand, and the solution is to find words that can be understood using the synonym word feature on DeepL" (DK). "Yes, I have, but I can say that rarely, the solution is to paraphrase or use the DeepL feature to change the words" (R), and “Yes, usually check again using AI on the DeepL feature or look at the dictionary” (JP).

From the statements of the three respondents above, it can be inferred that they sometimes received translation outputs from DeepL that were unsuitable. Their solution was to utilize DeepL’s built-in features, specifically the alternative word choices that enable users to tailor the translation to their preferences. In contrast, the other three respondents addressed unsuitable translation results by cross-checking and revising them through other translation tools. Their statements are presented in Excerpt 14, "It happened once during a translation lesson. The way I control it is by checking and comparing with Google Translate results" (IGS), “It happens, my solution is to change it to what I want or use Google Translate” (LNF), "It happens, usually if it doesn't match, I compare it with other apps or other sources to see each word and then adjust it to the context" (AP).

Furthermore, in response to question number eight, “How would you evaluate DeepL's ability to produce truly accurate translation results, especially for more complex texts? The respondents had similar responses when evaluating the ability of DeepL with AI to determine the correctness of the translation results on complex texts. This concern is addressed by the respondents R and AP, in excerpt 15, “To evaluate, I compare the translation results of DeepL with Google Translate, and usually the results of DeepL are more understandable so I think it is more accurate” (R), "DeepL is pretty good at translating, but for more complex translations, I need to be more careful, because I don't think it's very good yet. The way I evaluate it is by re-adjusting it to the context, then I look for it from other sources, and I compare it with other applications" (AP).

Furthermore, responding to question number nine, "In what cases are you unsure whether DeepL provides the right translation for English texts? There are two key components: not being confident in DeepL's results when translating complex and unfamiliar texts, and being unsure of DeepL's results, starting with respondents who are not confident in DeepL's ability to translate complex texts. The respondents' statements can be seen in excerpt 16, "...in the case of English texts or sentences with difficult language, sometimes I am not sure about the translation of DeepL" (LNF), "...in terms of translating more complex sentences, law terms, or specialized terms that are not so general that I don't know. Then in one sentence that has multiple meanings, I'm usually less confident with the translation on DeepL" (AP).

Responding to the last question, "How much does the uncertainty of DeepL translations affect your understanding and ability to do English assignments? The results of the interview revealed two key components: namely, no effect and an effect. Starting from the statement that it had no effect, DK, JP, and IGS made this assertion. The statements of the four respondents can be seen in excerpt 17, "...for me, it doesn't matter, because if I compare the certainty of the translation results of DeepL with the translation results of other translation tools, I am more confident in the results of DeepL" (DK), "...if I answer with a percentage, I would say 40 percent, so it doesn't matter because so far the results of DeepL from my experience are quite accurate." (JP), "Most of what I translate to DeepL is always appropriate, but there are a few times I have to change it to make it appropriate" (IGS). It can be concluded that they feel uncertain about the translation results of DeepL when translating complex texts or sentences, as well as texts that discuss topics outside the respondents' areas of expertise.

Discussion

The findings, derived from both a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews, paint a largely positive picture of DeepL's utility in English language learning. The present study aligns with Yudianto et al. (2025), who confirm that students have a favorable perception of using the DeepL translator in their English language acquisition. That is why Kembaren et al. (2024) suggest that teachers integrate MT into teaching. The qualitative findings of Ngoc et al. (2025), Munawwarah and Martriwati (2024), Nusantara and Izzah (2024), and Fatkhurozi and Hidayat (2024) confirm that MT provides several benefits, including increased translation efficiency, post-editing support, improved vocabulary, and enhanced grammar. However, users need to be aware of the potential for misinterpreting the original meaning and adjust their teaching methods accordingly (Mahmud & Saud, 2024).

The questionnaire results overwhelmingly indicate that students hold a highly favorable view of DeepL. A significant majority of students (over 88% across all relevant statements) reported that DeepL significantly aids their information absorption, clarifies the context of English texts, and facilitates understanding of difficult vocabulary. For instance, an impressive 96.3% of students agreed that DeepL helps them grasp the meaning of challenging foreign words, highlighting its value as a lexical aid. Similarly, 92.6% of students felt that DeepL enhanced their overall understanding of texts after translation, and 88.9% found it helpful in organizing translated information for study purposes. These high percentages suggest that DeepL is perceived as an effective tool for improving comprehension and streamlining the learning process. The alignment of DeepL's translations with students' initial expectations (88.9%) further underscores its perceived accuracy and reliability. The findings of Asmara and Kembaren (2024) support the present study, which suggests that the DeepL program provides accurate translation results, enabling them to translate their journals and theses into English without needing to double-check the grammar application.

The interview data on the "Effort" indicator largely corroborates these positive perceptions, with most students describing the use of DeepL as effortless. Respondents, such as R and IGS, emphasized the ease of access and accuracy of DeepL's translations, which significantly reduced the effort required to understand English texts. In terms of post-editing, DeepL translations require less work compared to Google Translate (Rivera-Trigueros, 2022). Many students also highlighted DeepL's time-effectiveness compared to other translation tools, with respondents such as DK, R, and AP explicitly stating that DeepL expedites the translation process. Students must select a suitable translation tool based on their specific needs for its accuracy, contextuality, and ease of use (Sihombing et al., 2025).

This suggests that DeepL not only enhances comprehension but also improves efficiency in completing English language learning tasks. DeepL offers a higher level of precision than other engines, such as Google Translate and Microsoft Translate (Cotelli Kureth et al., 2023). Deng and Yu (2022) demonstrate that DeepL translates more naturally and readably than human translation, while also producing more syntactically accurate translations.

Despite the overwhelmingly positive feedback, the research also uncovered some challenges and strategies students employ when using DeepL. While the majority of students found DeepL to reduce effort, a notable observation from the "Effort" indicator in the interviews was the necessity of revision. Respondents, such as DK, R, and AP, indicated that they often needed to revise DeepL's output to ensure it aligned with their understanding or the desired context. These challenges were pointed out by Rizky and Rohmana (2025), who noted that students encountered issues, including inaccuracies and mistranslations. This suggests that while DeepL provides a strong initial translation, students still engage in critical evaluation and refinement to ensure accuracy and contextual appropriateness. This revision process often involves utilizing DeepL's built-in synonym feature or, as some respondents, such as LNF and AP, mentioned, comparing the translation with other tools, like Google Translate. About this issue, Jamal et al. (2025) stated that incorporating the MT in learning and teaching may create problems, including a lack of digital competency, the addictive nature of technology, and a shortage of experts. Furthermore, Kim (2024) addressed the students' challenges in clarity, word order, and complex sentences in English writing.

Under the "Uncertainty of Outcome" indicator, most students expressed a relatively low level of uncertainty (below 50%) regarding DeepL's translations, indicating a general confidence in the tool's accuracy. For example, JP stated a 46% uncertainty, primarily due to their positive experiences. However, when DeepL's translations did not meet expectations, students employed various strategies to improve them. Some, like DK, R, and JP, leveraged DeepL's features (e.g., synonym suggestions, AI checks) to refine the output. Others, including IGS, LNF, and AP, resorted to cross-referencing with other translation tools or external sources to verify and adjust the translations, particularly for complex or unfamiliar texts. This adaptive behavior highlights students' awareness of potential limitations and their proactive approach to ensure translation quality. Wulansari et al. (2024) confirmed that MT can be used in the modern era, but users must double-check the results with other translation tools.

It is also worth noting that while most students felt that DeepL reduced their effort in understanding texts, a few, such as LNF and AP, perceived an increase in effort due to the need for additional verification and comparison with other tools, especially for nuanced or specialized vocabulary. This suggests that while DeepL is generally effective, its application in more complex linguistic scenarios may require more active engagement and critical

thinking from the user. To address this issue, Kirana et al. (2024) recommended that students use the tool as a supplement, not a replacement, in the learning process.

Conclusion

The findings of this study demonstrate that fourth-year ELESP students at Universitas Teknologi Yogyakarta overwhelmingly perceive DeepL as a highly beneficial and effective translation tool for English language learning. Its key strengths include improving information absorption, strengthening contextual understanding, and simplifying complex vocabulary, thereby supporting a more effective learning process. The majority of students experience reduced effort and increased confidence when utilizing DeepL for their translation needs.

However, the research also reveals that students are cognizant of DeepL's limitations and actively employ strategies to mitigate potential inaccuracies. The necessity of revising translations to align with personal understanding and contextual requirements, often by utilizing DeepL's internal features or cross-referencing with other tools, highlights a nuanced approach to using AI-powered translation. This suggests that while DeepL is a powerful aid, it serves as a valuable assistant rather than a complete substitute for critical engagement with the target language. Ultimately, DeepL plays a valuable and positive role in supporting students' academic endeavors related to English language texts, fostering both comprehension and efficiency. What further insights might be gained by exploring specific types of English texts (e.g., academic, technical, literary) and their impact on students' perceptions of DeepL's effectiveness?

Recommendation

In light of the findings related to students' perceptions and the difficulties they encounter when using DeepL, this study offers several recommendations for stakeholders, such as students, educators, and future researchers. Students should embrace DeepL as a learning aid, not a replacement. Moreover, it is crucial to always review and revise, even with DeepL's accuracy, as the translated output requires critical review. Students need to develop critical thinking skills for machine translations. They should not unquestioningly trust every translation; instead, they should take the extra step to cross-verify DeepL's translation with other sources to gain a broader perspective.

English Foreign Language (EFL) Teachers need to integrate DeepL into the curriculum strategically: Instead of discouraging its use, acknowledge DeepL as a prevalent tool. Develop specific lesson plans or modules that teach students how to effectively and ethically use DeepL as part of their language learning process. Furthermore, teachers should consistently remind students that machine translation, while advanced, is not infallible. Stress the importance of human critical thinking, contextual understanding, and cultural nuance when evaluating DeepL's output, especially for complex academic or professional writing.

While the current study identified challenges with complex texts and contextual accuracy, future research could delve deeper into specific linguistic errors (e.g., idiomatic expressions, cultural nuances, technical jargon) that DeepL struggles with in the Indonesian English language pair. This could involve qualitative content analysis of revised translations. Furthermore, future researchers may conduct longitudinal studies to observe how consistent use of DeepL impacts students' overall language proficiency, critical thinking, and translation skills over an extended period. This could provide stronger evidence for its long-term

educational benefits or drawbacks. While this study focused on comprehension, future research could also explore how DeepL impacts students' English writing production, including their grammar, vocabulary usage, and overall writing quality.

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