



CASE STUDY ARTICLE

Section: *Translation Studies*

Published by Scientific-Board
LLC in the Research Journal in
Translation, Literature, Linguistics,
and Education (RJTLLE). Volume
2, Issue 3, 2026.

ISSN: 3067-6290 (Online)
3068-8450 (Print)

Article Details

Received: 15 May 2026

Revised: 30 May 2026

Accepted: 17 June 2026

Published: 20 July 2026



Conflict of Interest: The author/s
declared no conflict of interest.



How to Cite:

Yanti, A. D., Putri, K. M., Herman,
H., Silaban, D. C., & Saragih, M.
C. I. (2026). Students' dependence
on machine translation and their
manual translation competence
in translating descriptive texts.
*Research Journal in Translation,
Literature, Linguistics, and Education*,
2(3), pp. 117-130. [https://doi.
org/10.64120/ta2h7t73](https://doi.org/10.64120/ta2h7t73)

Students' dependence on machine translation and their manual translation competence in translating descriptive texts

Alya Dwi Yanti^{1*}, Khairina Melani Putri¹, Herman Herman¹, Desy
Crismas Silaban² & Mery Chris Isabella Saragih²

¹Department of English Education, Universitas HKBP Nommensen
Pematangsiantar, Indonesia

²Department of Elementary School Teacher Education, Universitas Efarina,
Indonesia

<https://orcid.org/0000-0001-6818-5142>

*Correspondence: alyadwiyanti311@gmail.com

Abstract

This study is based on the increasing use of Machine Translation, particularly Google Translate and DeepL, in translation activities among EFL students. The ease and speed offered by these tools encourage students to use them frequently, which may affect their manual translation competence development. This study aimed to investigate students' dependence on Machine Translation, their manual translation competence in translating a descriptive text, and the relationship between these two aspects. The participants of this study were 15 third-semester students from the English Education Study Program at Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar. Data were collected through a questionnaire on students' dependence on Machine Translation and a manual translation test. In the translation test, students were asked to translate a descriptive text entitled "*Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar.*" Manual translations were assessed based on accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity. The data were descriptively analyzed using tables, percentages, and graphs. The findings show that students have a relatively high level of dependence on MT. Meanwhile, students' manual translation competence was at a moderate level, with an average score of 59.1%, in which clarity was the strongest aspect and accuracy the weakest. In comparison, translations produced using Machine Translation achieved higher results, with an average score of 81.7%. However, the Machine Translation results were used only as supporting data for comparison. These findings indicate that Machine Translation can assist the translation process, but excessive dependence may hinder the development of students' manual translation competence.

Keywords: machine translation, Google Translate, DeepL,
translation competence, EFL students



© 2026. This article is licensed and distributed under a Creative
Common [Attribution \(CC BY\) International License](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/).

1. Introduction

Language is the primary tool of human communication used to express ideas, thoughts, feelings, and information, through which people can communicate, build social descriptions, and share knowledge in various fields, including education. In the era of globalization, language has become increasingly important because it enables communication among people from different cultural and national backgrounds. English plays a dominant role in global communications. Herawati and Istinganah (2024) state that English functions as a global language because of its wide use in international fields such as education, science, technology, and cross-cultural communication. Therefore, English is taught as a foreign language (EFL) in many countries, including Indonesia, to help students participate in global communication and access international information.

Translation is necessary because of the linguistic differences between countries. Translation serves as a bridge to convey messages from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) without changing the original meaning of the message. Newmark (1988) defined translation as the process of transferring the meaning of a text from one language to another in accordance with the original author's intent. Meanwhile, Andayani et al (2023) explain that translation aims to produce the closest and most natural equivalent of the source language message in terms of meaning and style. In the context of EFL learning, translation serves not only as a tool for understanding texts, but also as an academic activity, such as sentence structure analysis, vocabulary selection, and cultural context understanding. Therefore, translation plays an important role in helping students understand English texts and improve their language skills.

Translation competence refers to a person's ability to understand source language texts and accurately convey their meaning in the target language. This competence includes language proficiency, contextual understanding, translation strategies, and the ability to make appropriate decisions during the translation process. In EFL learning, manual translation exercises are considered important because they help students understand the language structure more deeply. Through manual translation, students learn to recognize translation units, apply translation shifts, and increase their awareness of the structural and linguistic differences between the source and target language. Therefore, manual translation still plays an important role in developing students' language competence.

Technological developments have significantly changed translation practices. Students now use Machine Translation (MT) tools such as Google Translate and DeepL frequently because they are easy to use and quick. Google Translate can instantly translate various languages whereas DeepL is known for producing more natural and contextual translations. Research shows that MT is often used to help people learn English as a second language. O'Neill (2019) states that MT can support language learning when used wisely, such as to understand the meaning of a text or new vocabulary. However, excessive use of MT can also reduce students' active involvement in the language learning process.

Although MT has benefits for learning, excessive use can lead to dependence. When students have to translate something, they often use MT immediately instead of trying to do it manually first. This habit can reduce students' opportunities to practice their language analysis skills and improve their manual translation competence. Several studies have shown that language learners often tend to trust Machine Translation outputs without adequate revision, which may result in inaccurate or unnatural translations (e.g., Niño, 2009; O'Neill, 2019). This increasing reliance on Machine Translation may also negatively affect the development of students' manual translation competence.

Previous studies on Machine Translation in the context of EFL have generally focused on student perceptions related to translation accuracy, and comparisons between MT and human translation. Sujarwo (2020) investigated students' perceptions of MT use and found that students viewed MT as a tool that helped them understand texts. Hasan Rizky and Martriwati (2025) explored the use of Google Translate in writing skills and found that it had an impact on students' independent writing abilities. Another study by Reftyawati (2024) analyzed the relationship between the use of translation technology

and translation skills, but did not specifically highlight the aspect of dependence. In addition, most studies have not specifically discussed the relationship between students' level of dependence on MT and manual translation competence, particularly in translating descriptive texts and among third-semester students. Therefore, this study fills this gap by examining the relationship between students' dependence on Google Translate and DeepL and their manual translation competence in translating descriptive text. Based on the background and research gaps mentioned above, this study sought to investigate the connection between students' dependence on machine translation, specifically Google Translate and DeepL, and their manual translation competence in translating descriptive texts. This study seeks to determine the level of student dependence on Machine Translation, identify the level of students' manual translation competence in terms of accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity, and analyze the description between dependence on Machine Translation and students' manual translation performance. This study focused on third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at HKBP Nommensen University Pematangsiantar who were actively involved in translation activities in the context of EFL.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Translation

Translation is a language-based activity that is very important for making communication between languages easier and more effective. Translation helps people learn new languages and understand messages, facts, and ideas from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) without changing the meaning intended by the original author. Thus, translation is not simply understood as a mere transfer of words, but as a process of transferring meaning.

Herman (2017) defines translation as the act of conveying the meaning of a text into a different language in accordance with the original author's intent (Ngongo et al., 2024). This definition makes it clear that the main goal of translation is to convey meaning, not just the form of language. Saputra et al (2022) assert that translation seeks to create the most accurate and natural equivalent of the source language message, encompassing both meaning and style (Herman et al., 2024). Both definitions emphasize that translation must be correct in meaning and acceptable in the target language (TL). Translation connects the source and target languages, making it possible for people from different cultures and languages to communicate (Herman & Rajagukguk, 2019; Batubara et al., 2023). Every language has its own grammar, vocabulary, and cultural context; therefore, translation is necessary to ensure that the message is understood correctly by readers of the target language. Without translation, people who speak different languages would have difficulty communicating with each other.

Translation is an important tool for understanding texts when learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL). EFL students can learn more about language structures, expand their vocabulary, and become more aware of the differences between the source and target languages through translation activities.

2.2. Translation Competence

Translation competence refers to the ability to carry out the translation process accurately by considering language, meaning, and context. This competence involves not only mastery of the source and target languages, but also the ability to analyze texts, choose appropriate translation strategies, and understand the cultural context contained in the source text. Salamah (2021) states that translation competence involves a combination of linguistic and strategic competences, which allow translators to make proper decisions throughout the translation process (Sinambela et al., 2024).

In the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning, manual translation competence is important because it shows students' ability to translate texts independently without using automatic translation tools. Students with good manual translation competence can understand the source text, transfer meaning accurately, and produce translations that are natural and acceptable in the target

language. Salamah (2021) also explained that translation competence develops through continuous practice and reflection on translation results. Therefore, regular manual translation practice is important to improve students' understanding of language structure and vocabulary selection.

2.3. Manual Translation in EFL Learning

Manual translation in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning plays an important role in developing students' language competence and analytical skills. It requires learners to process the source text by analyzing the sentence structures and selecting appropriate lexical equivalents in the target language. Beyond language practice, manual translation also encourages learners to engage more actively with linguistic forms and meaning-making without relying on automatic translation tools. This process supports the development of translation competence via continuous practice. Sari and Putri (2020) state that regular manual translation practice contributes significantly to EFL students' translation competence. Therefore, manual translation remains an important component of EFL learning, even in the presence of translation technologies.

2.4. Machine Translation

Machine Translation (MT) refers to the automatic translation of text from a source language into a target language using computational methods based on artificial intelligence and natural language processing systems (Garcia & Pena, 2011; Pym, 2013). The development of Artificial Intelligence (AI) and machine learning has significantly improved the quality of MT output in recent years. Tools such as Google Translate and DeepL are widely used in educational contexts because they allow users to obtain quick translations that support the initial comprehension of foreign language texts. According to Alharbi (2023), AI-based Machine Translation can serve as a supportive tool in language learning by assisting students in understanding the general meaning of texts and unfamiliar vocabulary, particularly in EFL contexts.

Google Translate supports a wide range of languages and provides instant translation services that are easily accessible across devices, whereas DeepL is often reported to produce more contextually natural translations in certain language pairs because of its neural network-based system. However, several studies have indicated that although Machine Translation offers convenience and efficiency, its outputs are not always fully accurate or contextually appropriate. Kurniawati and Clarisa (2025) found that excessive reliance on Machine Translation may reduce students' active engagement in language learning processes if it is not used critically. Therefore, Machine Translation should be positioned as a supportive learning aid rather than a substitute for independent translation practice and language skill development.

2.5. Students' Dependence on Machine Translation

Dependence on Machine Translation refers to the frequent and excessive use of automatic translation tools in completing academic tasks, particularly when students rely on Machine Translation outputs rather than their own translation ability. O'Neill (2019) notes that frequent use of Machine Translation may encourage passive learning habits, where students accept translation results without critical evaluation. This condition can limit opportunities for active language practice and hinder the development of manual-translation competence. Although Machine Translation can support comprehension and improve learning efficiency, excessive reliance may negatively affect students' language development. Therefore, it is important to examine students' level of dependence on Machine Translation in translation learning.

2.6. Description Between Machine Translation Dependence and Translation Competence

The relationship between machine translation dependence and translation competence can be understood from a learning behavior perspective. Students who frequently rely on machine translation tend to engage

less in manual translation practice, which may limit the development of their translation competence. Previous studies indicate that while machine translation can support language learning, excessive reliance may reduce students' active engagement in the translation process. For example, Reftyawati (2024) found a relationship between translation technology use and translation skills, although technology alone was insufficient to build strong competence. Similarly, Sujarwo (2020) reported that students still need to revise machine-generated translations to align them with their understanding of the material. Overall, the relationship between machine translation dependence and translation competence is complex and requires further empirical investigation in EFL contexts.

2.7 Translation Quality Assessment

Translation quality assessment is a systematic approach to evaluating the quality of translation based on linguistic and functional criteria. According to House (2015), translation quality assessment focuses on the equivalence of meaning between the source and target texts, as well as the appropriateness of lexical, grammatical, and textual features in the target language (van Thao et al., 2020).

House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) model evaluates translation through two main dimensions: overt errors (linguistic mistakes such as grammar and vocabulary) and covert errors (inappropriate cultural or contextual meaning transfer).

In addition, other translation scholars, such as Newmark (1988), have emphasized accuracy, while Nida and Taber (1982) have highlighted naturalness and equivalence in translation. Based on these frameworks, this study evaluates students' translation competence in terms of accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity, which represent meaning transfer, lexical choice, and readability respectively.

3. Research Methodology

3.1. Research Design

This study employed a descriptive quantitative research design. This study aimed to describe students' dependence on Machine Translation and their manual translation competence based on numerical data obtained from a questionnaire and translation test. According to Creswell (2014), descriptive quantitative research is used to describe phenomena using statistical data, such as percentages, means, and distribution of responses (Sugiyono, 2019).

Therefore, this study analyzed students' responses from a Likert-scale questionnaire and scores from a translation test to describe the level of Machine Translation dependence and manual translation competence. This study does not analyze the correlation statistically, but focuses on the descriptive comparison between variables.

3.2. Research Subjects

The subjects of this study were 15 third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar. The students were selected purposively because they had learned basic translation concepts and were involved in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context.

Third-semester students were considered suitable for this study because they actively use both manual translation and Machine Translation tools to complete academic tasks. In addition, at this stage, they are in the process of developing their translation competence, which makes them relevant for examining the difference between Machine Translation dependence and manual translation competence.

3.3. Research Objects

The research objects of this study are students' dependence on Machine Translation and their manual translation competence. Students' dependence on Machine Translation refers to the use of automatic translation tools, specifically Google Translate and DeepL, to complete translation tasks. This dependence

was analyzed through several aspects, namely, frequency of use, level of task-related dependence, perceptions of machine translation effectiveness, and students' attitudes and psychological dependence on MT. These aspects were chosen because the use of Machine Translation is increasingly common among EFL students and is believed to influence their study habits and the way they rely on and evaluate machine-translated outputs in completing translation tasks.

Meanwhile, students' manual translation competence refers to their ability to independently translate descriptive texts from English into Indonesian without using Machine Translation. This competence is measured through three aspects of assessment: accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity. These three aspects were chosen because they represent the main elements of translation quality: accurate meaning transfer, appropriate word choice, and clarity of translation for readers.

The selection of these two research objects is based on the assumption that a high level of dependence on Machine Translation may affect students' opportunities to practice their manual translation skills. By examining these aspects, this study aims to investigate the relationship between students' dependence on Machine Translation and their manual translation competence in the contexts of learning English as a Foreign Language (EFL).

3.4. Research Instruments

The instruments used in this study consist of two types, namely a questionnaire and a translation test. The questionnaire items were adapted from previous studies on students' use of Machine Translation in EFL learning conducted by Niño (2009), O'Neill (2019), and Sujarwo (2020). The items were modified to fit the objectives and context of the present study. The questionnaire items were adapted and modified from Niño (2009), O'Neill (2019), and Sujarwo (2020) to align with the research context and objectives of this study. The questionnaire items were reviewed for content validity by two experts in English language education (EL). The reliability of the questionnaire was tested using Cronbach's alpha, and the results indicated acceptable reliability for research use.

3.4.1. Machine Translation Dependence Questionnaire

The questionnaire was used to measure students' level of dependence on Machine Translation, specifically Google Translate and DeepL. The questionnaire was designed using a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, which is commonly used to measure attitudes, perceptions, and tendencies (Likert, 1932).

The scale is described as follows:

- a) 1 = Strongly Disagree
- b) 2 = Disagree
- c) 3 = Neutral
- d) 4 = Agree
- e) 5 = Strongly Agree

The questionnaire items cover several aspects, such as:

- 1) frequency of using Machine Translation;
- 2) level of dependence when completing translation tasks;
- 3) students' perceptions of the accuracy and convenience of Machine Translation.
- 4) students' attitudes and psychological dependence on machine translation

3.4.2. Translation Test

The translation test was used to measure students' manual translation competence. In this test, students were asked to manually translate a descriptive text from the Source Language (English) into the Target Language (Indonesian), without using any translation tools. A descriptive text was selected because it represents one of the most common text types used in early EFL learning, characterized by the simple

present tense, familiar vocabulary, and straightforward sentence structures. This makes it suitable for assessing students' basic manual translation competence without excessive interference from complex discourse.

The descriptive text used in this study is entitled "*Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar*." This text was developed by the researchers because this topic is familiar to the students, uses common vocabulary, and has sentence structures that match the language proficiency level of third-semester students. Therefore, the text is considered appropriate and representative for measuring students' manual translation competence in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Students' manual translation results were used as the main data to assess their manual translation competence. The assessment is based on three aspects: accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity, which represent the quality of meaning transfer, word choice, and readability of the translation.

In addition, students were asked to translate the same text using Machine Translation tools, specifically Google Translate or DeepL. However, the Machine Translation results were used only as supporting data for comparison purposes and to illustrate students' tendency to depend on MT. These results were not used as the basis for assessing students' manual translation competence.

Descriptive Text

Title : Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar
Source : Developed by the researchers

Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar is a well-known university in the city. The campus is surrounded by green trees, creating a fresh and comfortable atmosphere for students to study. The main building stands tall with cream-colored walls and wide windows that allow sunlight to enter the classrooms.

Inside the campus area, there is a large field where students often gather for events, sports, or to relax between classes. The campus is always lively and buzzing with activity. Students can be seen walking around, chatting with friends, or buying snacks near the cafeteria. The friendly atmosphere and active student activities make the campus feel like a second home for many students.

3.5. Data Collection Technique

The data in this study were collected using two techniques: questionnaire distribution and translation tasks. These techniques were used to obtain information related to students' dependence on Machine Translation and their manual translation competence in translating descriptive text.

The questionnaire was distributed directly to the respondents and completed under the researchers' supervision. The respondents were asked to complete the questionnaire based on their actual habits and experiences using Machine Translation (Google Translate or DeepL).

Hence, the manual translation test was conducted directly in the classroom under the researchers' supervision to ensure that students completed the translation independently without using Machine Translation tools or other translation aids.

3.6. Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was conducted descriptively. The questionnaire data were analyzed by calculating the frequency and percentage of students' responses for each item. The results were then interpreted to describe students' dependence on Machine Translation in translation activities.

Meanwhile, the students' manual translation results were analyzed based on translation assessment aspects, namely accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity. The translation results were assessed descriptively to identify the characteristics and quality of students' manual translation competence.

In addition, the translations produced using Machine Translation tools were analyzed as

supporting data to compare the differences between manual translation and Machine Translation outputs. The findings were presented in the form of tables, percentages, and descriptive explanations to provide a clear overview of the research findings.

4. Research Findings

4.1. Results of Students' Translation Test

This section presented the results of the translation test analysis. The goal of the analysis was to identify students' manual translation competence and to compare manual translation results with translations produced using Machine Translation tools, namely Google Translate and DeepL.

The translation test results of 15 third-semester students of the English Education Study Program at Universitas HKBP Nommensen Pematangsiantar were analyzed to assess their manual translation competence. The analysis focused on three aspects: accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity, while the Machine Translation outputs were used as supporting data for comparison.

The translation results were assessed based on three main aspects: accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity. The results of the manual translation test were analyzed based on the three assessment aspects presented in Table 1.

A. Results of Students' Manual Translation Test

Table 1 presents the scores of students' manual translation test based on three assessment aspects.

Table 1. Scores of Students' Manual Translation Test

Respondent	Manual			
	Accuracy	Vocabulary	Clarity	Total Score
R1	3	3	3	9
R2	2	3	3	8
R3	4	5	5	14
R4	2	2	2	6
R5	2	2	3	7
R6	2	4	3	9
R7	2	2	4	8
R8	4	4	4	12
R9	1	2	2	5
R10	4	4	4	12
R11	4	5	5	14
R12	3	3	3	9
R13	1	2	3	6
R14	2	1	3	6
R15	2	3	3	8
Mean	2.53	3.00	3.33	8.87
Percentage	50.6%	60.0%	66.6%	59.1%

Figure 1. Percentage of Students' Manual Translation Scores Based on Assessment Aspects

Based on Table 1, the results of the manual translation test show that the students' average total score was 8.87 out of a maximum score of 15, which is equivalent to 59.1%. This indicated that the students' manual translation competence was moderate. In other words, the students were generally able to translate descriptive texts, but the quality of their translations still needs improvement.

Based on Figure 1, the results show differences in students' performance across the three

assessment criteria. The clarity aspect obtained the highest mean score (3.33 or 66.6%), indicating a moderate-to-good level of readability in the students' translations, although some issues in sentence structure and fluency were still observed. The vocabulary aspect recorded a mean score of 3.00 (60%), which indicates an adequate level of lexical choice; however, students tended to use simple and sometimes less context-appropriate words. Meanwhile, the accuracy aspect received the lowest mean score (2.53 or 50.6%), indicating a relatively low level of accuracy, with several instances of meaning shifts and incorrect message transfers from the source text. Overall, the results suggest that students perform better in terms of clarity than accuracy and vocabulary when translating descriptive texts.

Figure 1 illustrates that clarity obtained the highest score, followed by vocabulary, while accuracy received the lowest score, indicating that accuracy is the weakest aspect of the students' manual translation.

B. Comparison of Manual Translation and Machine Translation Results

In addition to translating the text manually, the students were also asked to translate the same text using Machine Translation tools, namely Google Translate and DeepL. These data were used as supporting data to compare the tendency of students' manual translation results with the results produced by Machine Translation.

Table 2. Comparison of Average Scores of Manual Translation and Machine Translation

Type of Translation	Accuracy	Vocabulary	Clarity	Total Score
Manual Translation	2.53	3.00	3.33	8.87
Percentage	50.6%	60.0%	66.6%	59.1%
Machine Translation	3.80	4.20	4.26	12.26
(Google Translate/DeepL)				
Percentage	76%	84%	85.2%	81.7%

Based on Table 2, the comparison of the average scores between students' manual translation and Machine Translation (Google Translate and DeepL) can be seen from three assessment aspects, namely accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity.

In terms of accuracy, the average score for manual translation was 2.53 or 50.6%. Meanwhile, Machine Translation achieved a higher average score of 3.80 or 76%. This contrast shows that Machine Translation can produce translations that are more accurate in terms of meaning than students' manual translations.

For the vocabulary aspect, manual translation obtained an average score of 3.00 or 60%, while Machine Translation reached 4.20 or 84%. This result shows that Machine Translation provides more appropriate and varied word choices, whereas students' manual translation still tends to use simple vocabulary.

Regarding clarity, manual translation achieved an average score of 3.33 or 66.6%, whereas Machine Translation obtained a higher score of 4.26 or 85.2%. This finding indicates that translations produced by Machine output was generally clearer and easier to understand for readers.

In terms of the total score, students' manual translation reached an average of 8.87 or 59.1%, while Machine Translation achieved a higher total score of 12.26 or 81.7%. Overall, this result shows that Machine Translation produces better translation results than manual translation.

However, it should be emphasized that the results of Machine Translation do not represent students' manual translation competence, as the translations are generated by an automatic system. These findings indicate that students are still highly assisted by and tend to rely on Machine Translation to produce translations that are more accurate, clear, and better in overall quality.

Based on the results of the translation test, it can be concluded that the students' manual translation competence was at a moderate level. Students are generally able to translate descriptive texts, especially in terms of clarity, but they still experience difficulties in achieving accuracy. The comparison results show that Machine Translation obtains higher scores in all assessment aspects than students' manual translation. This finding indicates that students tend to depend on Machine Translation to produce better translation results.

Therefore, the results of this section reveal a gap between students' manual translation competence and the translation quality produced by MT. These findings provide a basis for further discussion on the relationship between students' dependence on Machine Translation and their manual translation competence.

5. Discussion

5.1. Students' Dependence on Machine Translation

The results of the study show that students are quite dependent on the use of Machine Translation in translation activities. Most students frequently use Machine Translation, and the questionnaire results indicate that they perceive it as easy to use, time-saving, and helpful in understanding English texts. This indicates that Machine Translation has become a common tool for completing translation tasks.

Students tend to use Machine Translation when they face difficulties, especially with vocabulary and sentence structure. This habit shows that Machine Translation is often used as the main solution without attempting to translate on their own. From the perception aspect, students view Machine Translation as an effective and time-saving tool, although their level of trust in its translation accuracy varies. This finding is in line with Niño (2009), who stated that language learners perceive Machine Translation as a fast and helpful tool for understanding foreign language texts, although its results still require critical evaluation and revision.

Machine Translation not only helps students with technical issues, but also increases their confidence when translating texts. However, not all students fully trusted the automatic translation results and still felt the need to check or revise them. Overall, these findings indicate that students' dependence on Machine Translation is influenced by ease of use, time efficiency, and learning habits. Therefore, Machine Translation should be used as a learning aid rather than a replacement for manual translation competence.

5.2. Students' Manual Translation Competence

The results of the manual translation test showed that the students' translation competence was at a moderate level. The average total score of the students' manual translation was 8.87 out of 15, which is equal to 59.1%. This result indicates that the students can translate descriptive texts, but the quality of their translations still requires improvement.

The accuracy aspect was the weakest, with an average score of 2.53 or 50.6%. This finding shows that many students still have difficulty accurately conveying the meaning of the source language into the target language. The errors mostly relate to inaccurate meanings and shifts in information, which may be caused by limited vocabulary and grammatical knowledge in English.

In contrast, the clarity aspect obtained the highest average score of 3.33 or 66.6%. This result indicates that the students' translations are generally easy to understand, even if they are not always accurate. Students tend to focus more on making translations readable in Indonesian.

On the other hand, the vocabulary aspect had an average score of 3.00 or 60%, showing that students had an adequate level of vocabulary mastery. However, the vocabulary used is often simple and not always appropriate to the context.

Overall, these findings indicate that the main weakness of students' manual translation lies in accuracy, while clarity is their strongest aspect.

5.3. Comparison between Manual Translation and Machine Translation

The results show that MT translations produced using Machine Translation have higher scores than students' manual translations in all assessment aspects. Overall, the average score of students' manual translation was 59.1%, while the score of Machine Translation reached 81.7%. This indicates that, in terms of the final results, Machine Translation can produce better translations.

In terms of accuracy, Machine Translation achieved a score of 76%, which is much higher than the students' manual translation score of 50.6%. This shows that Machine Translation is more effective in accurately conveying the meaning of the source text. In the vocabulary aspect, Machine Translation also performed better with a score of 84%, while students' manual translation only reached 60%, indicating students' limited vocabulary use. Furthermore, in terms of clarity, Machine Translation obtained 85.2%, which is higher than the students' manual translation score of 66.6%.

Although Machine Translation produces higher translation scores, this does not mean that students have better translation competence. The translations generated by Machine Translation are produced by an automatic system, not by students' ability. Therefore, high scores in Machine Translation reflect the quality of the tool rather than students' manual translation skills.

Thus, Machine Translation should be viewed as a learning support tool, not as a replacement for manual translation competence. Using Machine Translation without sufficient practice in manual translation may lead students to become overly dependent on technology and limit the development of their translation skills.

6. Conclusion

This study was based on the increasing use of Machine Translation, especially Google Translate and DeepL, in EFL students' translation activities. The ease and speed offered by these tools encourage students to use them intensively, which may influence their manual translation competence development. This study investigated students' dependence on Machine Translation, their manual translation competence in translating a descriptive text, and the relationship between these two aspects. The findings were obtained through a questionnaire and a translation test was assessed based on accuracy, vocabulary, and clarity.

The results show that students have a relatively high level of dependence on MT. Meanwhile, students' manual translation competence was at a moderate level, with clarity as the highest aspect and accuracy as the lowest. In addition, translations produced by Machine Translation achieved higher scores than students' manual translations in all assessment aspects.

Based on these findings, it can be concluded that the findings indicate that students frequently depend on Machine Translation in translation activities, while their manual translation competence remains moderate, especially in terms of translation accuracy.. High dependence on Machine Translation tends to reduce students' opportunities to practice translating independently, which affects the accuracy of their translations. However, Machine Translation can still be beneficial when used as a learning tool rather than as a replacement for manual translation competence. Therefore, the use of Machine Translation should be balanced with continuous manual translation practice so that students' translation competence can develop optimally.

Acknowledgment

“The authors used AI-assisted tools only for limited grammar checking and language improvement purposes. All research design, data analysis, interpretation, and manuscript content were independently developed and reviewed by the authors.”

References

- Alharbi, W. (2023). The use and abuse of artificial intelligence-enabled machine translation in the EFL classroom: An exploratory study. *Journal of Education and E-Learning Research*, 10(4), 689-701. <https://doi.org/10.20448/jeelr.v10i4.5091>
- Andayani, A., Herman, H., Syathroh, I. L., Fatmawati, E., Syahrul, N., Al-Awawdeh, N., Batubara, J. & Saputra, N. (2023). Inquiry into the challenges of translating idioms extracted from musical lyrics. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 4(3). <https://doi.org/10.58256/rjah.v4i3.1274>
- Batubara, J., Syarifudin, A., Syathroh, I. L., Herman, H., Yasaviyevna, D. S., & Al-Awawdeh, N. (2023). Challenges of Translating Slang Expressions in American Song Lyrics of the 21st Century into the Arabic Language. *International Journal of Membrane Science and Technology*, 10(2), 131-139. <https://doi.org/10.15379/ijmst.v10i2.1162>
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research Design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed Methods approaches* (4th ed.). SAGE Publications.
- García, I., & Pena, M. I. (2011). Machine translation-assisted language learning: Writing for beginners. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 24(5), 471-487. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2011.582687>
- Hasan Rizky, F., & Martriwati. (2025). The Use of Google Translate in Enhancing EFL Students' Writing Skill. *ELLTER Journal*, 6(2), 390-402. <https://doi.org/10.22236/ellter.v6i2.20009>
- Herawati, I., & Istinganah, E. L. (2024). Students' Perception of English as Global Language. *Aplinesia: Journal of Applied Linguistics Indonesia*, 6(1), 253-258. <https://doi.org/10.30595/aplinesia.v6i1.13595>
- Herman. (2017). Shift in Translation from English into Indonesia on Narrative Text. *International Journal of European Studies*, 1(3), 72-77. doi: 10.11648/j.ijes.20170103.12.
- Herman & Rajagukguk, J. (2019). An English Oblique Translation Analysis of "Twitter" Social Networking Website into Indonesian: An Applied Linguistics Study. *International and Public Affairs*, 3(1), 6-12. doi: 10.11648/j.ipa.20190301.12.
- Herman, H., Sipayung, R. W., Ngongo, M., Sari, I., Fatmawati, E., Rahmawati, R., Sari, H. N., and Silalahi, R. Y. (2024). Improving the comprehension of English-Indonesian translation through translation procedures on twitter web pages: A case on translation. *REVISTA IBEROAMERICANA DE PSICOLOGÍA DEL EJERCICIO Y EL DEPORTE*, 19(4), 386-389.
- House, J. (2015). *Translation Quality Assessment: Past and Present*. Routledge.
- Kurniawati, L. A., & Clarisa, W. (2025). Non-English Department Students' Perceptions of the Use of Machine Translation in Learning English. *JELLT (Journal of English Language and Language Teaching)*, 9(1), 14-28. <https://doi.org/10.36597/jellt.v9i1.18871>
- Likert, R. (1932). *A technique for the measurement of attitudes*. Archives of Psychology.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A Textbook of Translation*. Prentice Hall.
- Ngongo, M., Sipayung, R. W., Afrianti, D., Fatmawati, E., Syathroh, I. L., Herman, H., Sari, H. N., and Saputra, N. (2024). Strategies in Undertaking Difficulties in Translating Idioms from English into Indonesia: A Case on Translation. *Pakistan Journal of Life and Social Science*, 22(1), 6528-6538. <https://doi.org/10.57239/PJLSS-2024-22.1.00478>
- Niño, A. (2009). Machine translation in foreign language learning: Language learners' and tutors' perceptions of its advantages and disadvantages. *ReCALL*, 21(2), 241-258. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344009000172>
- Nida, E. A., & Taber, C. R. (1982). *The Theory and Practice of Translation*. Brill.
- O'Neill, E. M. (2019). Online Translator, Dictionary, and Search Engine Use among L2 Students. *Computer-Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal*, 20(1), 154-177. <https://callej.org/index.php/journal/article/view/265>

- Pym, A. (2013). Translation Skill-Sets in a Machine-Translation Age. *Meta*, 58(3), 487-503. <https://doi.org/10.7202/1025047ar>
- Reftyawati, D. (2024). Connectional Study on the Use of Translation Technology and Translation Skills Among EFL Students. *Lexeme: Journal of Linguistics and Applied Linguistics*, 6(2), 233-238. <https://doi.org/10.32493/ljal.v6i2.42883>
- Salamah, D. (2021). Translation Competence and Translator Training: A Review. *International Journal of Linguistics, Literature and Translation*, 4(3), 276-291. <https://doi.org/10.32996/ijllt.2021.4.3.29>
- Saputra, N., Sulistyani, S., Fatmawati, E., & Herman, H. (2022). Translation techniques of subtitle from English into Indonesian in a movie: A case on literature. *ScienceRise*, (2), 30-36. <https://doi.org/10.21303/2313-8416.2022.002422>
- Sari, D. F., & Putri, S. E. (2020). Translation techniques and translation competence in translating informative text for Indonesian EFL learners. *Scope: Journal of English Language Teaching*, 5(1), 1-10. <http://dx.doi.org/10.30998/scope.v1i01.862>
- Sinambela, E., Sipayung, R. W., Herman, H., Purba, R., Fatmawati, E., Ngongo, M., & Manurung, L. W. (2024). Investigating translation strategies used by students in translating metaphors from English into Indonesian: A case study on translation. *Research Journal in Advanced Humanities*, 5(4). <https://doi.org/10.58256/m8qeqf93>
- Sugiyono. (2019). *Metode penelitian dan pengembangan (research and development)*. Alfabeta.
- Sujarwo, S. (2020). Students' Perceptions of Using Machine Translation Tools in the EFL Classroom. *Al-Lisan: Jurnal Bahasa (e-Journal)*, 5(2), 230-241. <https://doi.org/10.30603/al.v6i2.1333>
- Van Thao, N., Binh, H. C., and Herman. (2020). Application of Halliday's Register Model to Construction of Translation Quality Assessment Criteria in Translation Teaching Context. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics and Translation*, 6(2), 47-51. doi=10.11648/j.ijalt.20200602.12