EFL LEARNERS IN DIGITAL AGE: THE TENDENCY AND IMPACT OF USING TRANSLATION TOOL APPLICATION IN WRITING ENGLISH TEXT

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Abstract

In the fulfillment of the EFL learners duties, writing using good and proper English is a must as a student of English study program. The growth of technology influences the existence of the translation tool application which is considered effective and greatly helps students to be effortless and to reduce time-consuming in writing English text. The objectives of this study are to examine the tendency of how often the translation tool application was used by EFL learners, the motive behind it was used, and what are the impacts of using translation tool application in their academic life. This study used qualitative research in which the methods of data collections were observation, interview, and questionnaire. Participants in this study were students majoring English department (Education and Literature). The results show that 46.7% of the participants are constantly the translation tool application user. However, it triggers some consequences not only positive but also negative impacts on the EFL learners.

Keywords: EFL learner, translation tool, writing English text

Introduction

Students majoring foreign language department have full responsibility for mastering the language of interest in their chosen courses. In this case, English department students (education and literature) are referred to EFL learners. Since Indonesian EFL learners are non-native English, they must find some challenges to their academic tasks. According to Kim (2011), EFL learners who have low English proficiency cause several limits in conducting the L2 classroom.

Writing becomes one of the basic skills that must be mastery of EFL learners besides listening, speaking and writing. Rahmatunisa (2014) argued that writing is a result of ideas thinking process where people put in the form of text. As EFL learners, it is crucial to organize a good English text to be acceptable and understandable for others (Ariyanti, 2016). Through writing in a proper L2 arrangement, they will have a good engagement to deliver ideas in the target language.

The EFL learners’ skill of translation is very considered to attain intercultural communication. The rapid development of technology that became more uncontrollable nowadays helps the creation of some tools to ease students’ job, one of them is translation tool application for accomplishing the academic writing assignment. Its importance also affects the advancement of education field. Vrasidas and McIasac (2001) stated that technology has influenced our life and environment, for instance, in forming policy at the workplace, and curriculum at school. Somehow the existence of technology is able to support EFL learners to study.
Theoretical Framework

The weakness appears when the beginner of Indonesia EFL learners transfers their ideas from Bahasa to English naturally because the context and the word choices sometimes are not appropriate. Lack of vocabulary is also one of the reasons. This case is also supported because of English only used inside the classroom, while there is little intention of using English outside the class so that the habit is hardly formed (Chen, Warden, and Chang, 2005).

Writing an English text is considered as preoccupying yet challenging for EFL learners. Kroll (1990) stated that writing has alike process whether for L1 or L2 writers because of its complexity and creativity. However, Ariyanti (2016) In this case, has a different opinion that to change a text from Bahasa to English is quite challenging therefore both languages differ in some characteristics such as structural and grammatical terms and styles.

Translation takes an important role in transferring ideas from L1 to L2. For education need, it enables the pedagogic system to become more effective and facilitates EFL learners to be more aware and use the target language as well (Kim, 2011). As the high progress of technology, translation tool application brings new learning method for EFL learners in the digital era. Translation tool application is one of communication technology machine that helps the readers to understand foreign language text (Pym, 2011).

Methods

The participants were students of English Department (Education and Literature). This study was conducted at Universitas Sebelas Maret Surakarta. The researcher used qualitative descriptive as a method and used structured interview, questionnaire, and observation as data collection techniques.

Findings and Discussion

There are three objectives that are achieved from conducting this study, they are to examine the tendency of how often the translation tool application been used by EFL learners, the motive behind it was used, and what are the impacts of using translation tool application in their academic life.

The tendency of using translation tool application for EFL learners is measured by how often the tool is used, what kind of translation tool application used, how the students translate the text and the reason what makes them utilize that tool.

1. You have difficulty in translating Bahasa to English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>66.7%</td>
<td>13.3%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. You use translation tool application if you have difficulty in translating Bahasa to English

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>Sometimes</th>
<th>No</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>46.7%</td>
<td>53.3%</td>
<td>0%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Translation tool that you most frequently used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Offline dictionary</th>
<th>Online dictionary</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>40%</td>
<td>53.4%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4. You use translation tool to

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Translate per word</th>
<th>More than per word</th>
<th>Both</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>73.3%</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>6.7%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 1. Result of questionnaire of the tendency of translation tool application use for EFL learners
The result of the existence of difficulty shows that 66.7% participants sometimes have it, 20% participants absolutely have difficulty, while 13.3% do not have any difficulty in translation. The difficulty that belongs to the EFL learners becomes a trigger of utilizing translation tool application as a considerable device. Later, to solve the problem in changing Bahasa to English text, translation tool application is chosen by the participants as much as 46.7%, while 53.3% said that they only sometimes to use it. This tool is believed as an effective way based on the higher number of participants. As the participants experience both in previous and nowadays era, there are two kinds of tool that are compared, 53.4% participants admit that they exploit an online dictionary rather than the offline dictionary that belongs to 40%, while 6.7% stated that they use both of them. 73.3% participants prefer to translate per word, 20% of them directly translate per sentence or even per paragraph and 6.7% stated that it is conditional depending on his difficulty.

The application refers to the integration of technology (Linthicum, 2003). The huge number of participant percentage in applying translation tool application (‘yes’ and ‘sometimes’ answers) proves that EFL learners nowadays tend to use technology, in this case, translation tool application in their academic life. Both offline and online dictionary is formed by technology enhancement, the difference is only on the availability of internet network.

The motive behind the use of translation tool application by the EFL learners reveals some reasons which are generally faced during translating Bahasa to English text, for instance, lack of English vocabulary, it is fast, real-time and practical. The participants also describe that through translation tool application, they find ease, the provided answer is reliable and considerable, also there are some word choices appropriate with context.

The consequences of using translation tool application bring both positive and negative impact for EFL learners. The participants stated that the tool contributes some positive impacts such as fast used, enrich the vocabulary and word choice based on the context, easy, practical, flexible, and considerable. However, negative impacts also come along its contributive effects, for instance, sometimes the words do not match with the context, trigger laziness, and addictive behavior.

References