

**Auto Translate Feature on Social Media to Learn English: A Case Study of  
an English Department Student**

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**Abstract**

Auto translate feature in social media is one of the growing technologies nowadays. Auto Translate Feature is a computer program designed to translate text from one language to other languages appeared on social media such as Facebook and Instagram. This study aimed to find out the way auto-translate could help the students to learn English and the challenges faced in using auto-translate feature. There were two questions formulated in this study which was “How auto translate feature help to learn English” and “What are the the challenges which the participant face when using auto-translate feature”. Besides, the reasearcher used qualitativve research design in this study. This research was conducted at an English department in a private university in Yogyakarta. The data of this study were collected from the participant’s diary and interview. The participant was one student who has been using auto translate feature for learning English. The researcher chose open-ended interview in order to make the participant feel relaxed. In addition, the findings showed that there were two ways of auto translate could help the students in learning English such as spelling and translation while the challenges were found in the context and homonym.

*Keywords:* Auto translate feature, social media, learning English.

## **Introduction**

Language is beneficial for majority of people in social life context. With language, they can make a conversation. The statement mentioned is in line with Smith (2017) who stated that language skills are the ultimate 21st century social skill linked to creativity, problem solving, and the ability to effectively communicate. In other words, language has gives many advantages not only to communicate in oral and written but also to write well. Encyclopedia (2016) wrote that there are more than 1.000 languages in this world. That way, English has the biggest language learnt by most of the people as second language. It is supported by Kelly (2015) there are 1.5 billions people who learn English as second language. From this phenomena, it can be concluded that the people need to learn English as their second language. By learning English, it may help them to learn to communicate with worldwide people, improve their communicate skill and gain new experiences.

However, learning can be learned from anywhere. Not only from teaching – learning process in the formal school. In this modern era, one of the effects in learning language is the advancement of technology. Thus, technology can affect people including in learning languages. Regarding the statement mentioned, it is in line with Bull and Ma (2001) siad that the technology provides unlimited resources for language learners. In other words, the technology can facilitate the students to learn any languages in this world.

In addition, one of the technology facts which grow so fast is social media. Kominfo (The Ministry of Communication and Information of the Republic of

Indonesia) reported that there are 3.6 billion of people in this world who are active social media users in. From the statement mentioned, it is supported by Szurawitzki (2012) some of social media users when they create a post, they feel comfortable to use their own language. Besides, social media is one of the users' ways to communicate without meeting face-to-face with other people in one place. Additionally, the social media comes not only as communication tool, but also it can facilitate the users to share knowledge. It is supported by Pavlik, McIntosh, John, and Shawn (2015) who stated that social media is useful for communication, and it facilitates the users for sharing the knowledge. Likewise, the social media can facilitate the users especially the students to learn English which can improve their skill. Khan, Ayaz, and Faheem (2016) supported that the role of social media is like the brightness of the day because social media facilitates the students to learn new words and improves their vocabulary mastery.

In regards to the social media use, it is not every person who sees it will understand it. They might not understand the language when somebody else posts the information in different languages. From the statement mentioned, not understanding the language through the social use rises as the problem caused by language barriers among the users. Besides, the communication between the social media users gets blocked owing to the fact that they cannot understand other social media users. However, a need to create a tool which eases the people to understand out of other worldwide languages is the technology use. One of the technologies is called Machine Translation. Machine Translation (MT) is a modern translating tool through computer assisted. Two big companies which

have popularized machine translation in the world are Google and BING. This statement is supported by Lin and Chien (2009) in the middle of social media evolution, a very large porportion of people can find translating tool as a feature in social media supported by popular MT like Google Translate or BING. The example of social media which has translating feature is Facebook and Instagram. When the users use these social media, they can find translating feature in making a post. Instagram or Facebook named this feature as “see translation”. By choosing or double tap on the translation button, the programs will automatically translate the post into the users’ language based on the language used towards the social media.

Based on the researcher’s preliminary study at English Language Education Department (ELED) of an Islamic Private University, the researcher has found out a student who has used MT in social media. The participant utilizes this feature when her friends post or comment a status in her first language. That way, it is expected that the participant as English students can master English Language without translating it with translation feature in their social media to know the point of the post. Therefore, the researcher is interested in conducting a research to investigate auto translate feature on social media used by the English department student to learn English regarding the phenomena mentioned above.

## **Methodology**

The researcher adopted the case study as qualitative research design. Cresswell (2012) stated that qualitative research was used to explore the problem in order to find out the phenomena of the study and explore the participant's thoughts more. By using qualitative research, the researcher was able to achieve detailed information and attain answers from the participant.

The researcher used case study as the research design owing to the fact that the researcher conducted the research based on the phenomena. According to Yin (1994), a case study aims to investigate contemporary phenomena within its real-life context. This statement mentioned was supported by Merriam (1998) who said that "the case study as study is an intensive and holistic description and analysis of a single instance, phenomenon, or social unit" (p. 21).

In this research, the researcher had a limited number of participants and needed an explanation about how the participant used translate feature in social media in depth. Moreover, the researcher asked the participant based on her experience when she used translate feature in social media to help her in learning English.

The participant of this study was a student of a private university in Yogyakarta batch 2017 who had been using the translate feature in social media to learn English. Besides, the participant had the experience in using translate feature in social media to translate post, comment, and messages. Starman (2013) stated that case study is used when the researcher analyze or describe a person individually or a problem, phenomenon, and others. In other words, case study could be used

to investigate to only one participant and dig more deep information about the phenomenon appeared. The statement mentioned was in line with Creswell (2012) bounded that the system in case study is a specific aspect because with case study, the researcher could dig thick description about the issue. Following this, Emilia (2009) supported that case study is used in conducting the research since it allows the researcher to do research in small amount of participant.

Additionally, the researcher only needed one participant to gather the information. As a result, the researcher wanted to dig deep more information about auto translate feature in social media and felt interested with the phenomena. The characteristics to select the participant to this study. Firstly, the participant was an active social media user. Secondly, the participant had known that the social media had the feature use called auto translate feature and she had used it. Thirdly, the participant used the translate feature to read a post, caption, or messages. Following this, the participant shared her experience after the researcher gave her a news post in social media using auto translate feature in social media to read it. Lastly, the participant should be easily contacted and willing to be interviewed and documented. The reason why the researcher choose the participant is because the participant fulfill the researcher requirement for participant. Also the researcher feel interested cause the participant use technology in her learning process in learning English Language.

The researcher use interview and document to take the data. Interview is an activity where two people have conversation about an issue regarding the research data (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2011). As another reason the

researcher took interview, researcher could press not only for complete answers but also for responses about complex and deep issues using interview. From the four types of interview, the researcher chose open-ended interview as the type of interview. The researcher applied open ended interview due to avoid misunderstanding. Besides, open-ended interview is flexible to be used. As stated by Cohen, Manion, and Morison (2011), open ended question has some advantages such as allowing the interviewer to probe, so the interviewer can take more depth data if she chooses and clears up some misunderstandings, and it is flexible. Sugiyono (2015) asserted that document is the record of past event, and it can be defined as note, image, or people's creation like statue. That way, documentation method is a technique of collecting data indirectly given to the research subject. The document of this study was in a form of a note or diary written by the participant to express her experiences in using translate feature on social media .This diary was taken once in a week for five months to improve the originality of the research.

## **Findings and Discussion**

There are two findings based on the purposes of this research namely auto translate feature in social media to learn English. ways of auto-translate feature to learn English and the challenges faced by the students in using auto-translate feature in social media.

## **The Ways of Auto-Translate Feature Help Students Learn English**

In this section, the findings and discussions were related to the way of auto-translate feature in social media could help the participant in learning English. Based on the result of the interview, the participant started to use this feature to help her in improving their reading skill. The researcher also revealed how auto-translate influence the participant in English Language in this part. There were two findings found by the researcher in this study. Hence, the findings were discussed based on the theme of the way which auto-translate feature could help the students to learn English.

**Giving the English version to Help Learn Spelling.** The research revealed that auto-translate feature in social media helped the participant in practicing spelling the words. The participant explained in the interview saying that after auto-transalate feature translated the post into English. Besides, she could find new vocabularies and learn how to spell the words. Auto-translate feature in social media facilitated the participant to help her in learning English. By translating the caption into English, the participant found new vocabulary or words which she once heard, but she did not know how to write them yet. Therefore, the auto-translate feature could help her by writing the words in the correct way. Besides, she had known that there was a double 'p' in word *apprehensive* with a single 's'.

In the study conducted by O'neill (2012), online translation (OT) gives a good effect in terms of spelling as OT could minimize the error related to orthography. Besides, auto-translated feature has a positive impact by spelling



because it can minimize error. Hence, Chandra and Yuyun (2018) stated that to provide the students with access to the vocabulary, auto translate-software also provides the students with the proper spelling of words.

**Improving Vocabulary.** The use of vocabulary had been found that using auto-translate feature in social media facilitated the participant in learning English by improving vocabulary. The participant felt that by using auto translate feature in social media could help her to improve vocabulary mastery. Hence, the participant found new vocabulary indirectly by reading the post which had already been translated from Tagalog into English.

The participant in interview stated “Actually, auto translate feature really helps me improve my vocabulary indirectly. By reading random post on my timeline, it made this feature as a useful tool which could help me to improve my vocabulary skill. Sometimes, I found more than one new vocabulay after uisng auto-translate feature to translate its word into English but sometimes I also find none. But most of all, I always find a new one. Sometimes, by using auto-translate feature, I could find new vocabulary which was actually a common vocabulary, but I just knew it because I accidentally used auto-translate translate a post”. From the statement mentioned, the participant always found new vocabulary in every post which she read. Accordingly, most of those new vocabularies were common words for her which she just knew them.

The participant also added that in her diary on September 7, 2019, she found new vocabulary, and by reading the post which she knew what is *bodkin*,

*recess*, and *azimuth*. Additionally, the participant wrote that by using this feature, she could know how to spell those words well. The participant's vocabulary skill had also improved on 20 September 2019 by reading her Thailand friends' post. That way, the participant found some new vocabularies such as affection, and feeling so blue.

Based on the findings mentioned, the researcher found that using translate feature in social media could improve her vocabulary mastery. The statement mentioned was in line with Kasuma (2017) who stated that social media has the positive impacts in influencing vocabulary and grammatical structure and increasing the skills of English Language. In addition, the social media can be an effective learning facility for the students to improve the vocabulary mastery. Consequently, auto-translate feature not only could improve the participant's skill in spelling but also it could improve their vocabulary mastery.

### **The challenges using the Auto-Translate Feature in social media.**

The researcher found two challenges mentioned by the participant of the research in this research. Hence, in this part, the findings of challenges in using auto-translate were discussed based on the themes of the challenges which the students faced when using auto-translate feature in social media.

**Accuracy.** The participant mentioned that she faced the challenges in accuracy when she used auto-translate feature in social media. Regarding the statements the participant had found low accuracy meaning in some posts translated into English which she had read in social media. Therefore, the participant felt confused when she read the translated posts owing to the fact that

sometimes, it turned into an ambiguous meaning for her. For the reason, auto-translate feature translated the sentences word-by-word, and the participant needed to read it slowly to understand the meaning. Moreover, the participant also stated “Almost all of the posts who has long caption always have less accuracy since the meaning becomes so ambiguous”.

In addition, Aikan and Balan (2011) showed that the translation machine can be low of accuracy system because the translation machine translates the sentences word-by-word, and sometimes, it can be one word which has two meanings and vice versa. Besides, the translation machine does not have the intelligence like human, and it cannot adjust the point of the paragraph as the translation machine only translates the sentence word-by-word. Following this, it can also make the sentences to be the grammatical errors. The statement mentioned was also in line with Hatim and Munday (2004) who said that the key problem in translated feature is the frequent lack of one-to-one matching across languages. Not only does the signifier change across languages but each language depicts reality differently. In other words, the translation machine translates the sentence just passing through the words when it does not have the data about the words.

**Find Homonym which made ambiguous meaning.** The participant mentioned that she faced the challenges in accuracy when she used auto-translate feature in social media. The participant indicated that when using auto-translate feature, it could meet homonym which had two meanings. Sometimes, auto-translate feature translates the sentences into the incorrect meaning which had

same word. In addition, the participant also wrote on her diary on September 13, 2019, and she felt confused with the meaning of the caption because there was a homonym.

Based on the findings above, the researcher found that the participant felt confused when she met homonym words on the ground that the participant realized that auto-translate feature translated the sentences word-by-word and ignored the context. In regards to the statement mentioned, it was supported by Jamilah (2015) who defined that from a hundred of homonymous words in Indonesian language, Google Translate does not succeed translating eighty eight homonyms into English correctly. As the reason, Google Translate only recognizes the dictionary meaning or literal meaning. Additionally, it ignores the functional meaning of the word in the context of the sentences.

## **Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **Conclusion**

This research was conducted in order to find out auto-translate feature on social media to learn English Language especially on how the translation feature could facilitate the participant in learning English. There were some reasons why the researcher chose the topic. Firstly, it became the subject in this department of ELED. Secondly, the researcher felt interested to reveal about the way auto-translate feature could help the students in learning English. Thirdly, the researcher wanted to prove that social media could be a tool especially for the students in this generation to learn English. Therefore, this research aimed to find

out the challenges faced by the students in using auto-translate feature in social media.

The results of this study showed that there were two ways of the auto-translate feature which could help the students in learning English. The researcher found that the participant got some impact through document and interviewing the participant in using auto-translate feature in social media to facilitate her in improving the skill in learning English. Besides, there were also two challenges faced by the students when they used auto-translate feature such as in the accuracy and when the participant met the homonym. Thus, the participant still used auto-translate feature in social media.

### **Recomendation**

Based on the findings of this research, the researcher proposes some recommendations for some parties related to this research. The recommendations are intended for students, lecturers, and other researchers..

**For the students.** Nowadays, most of students are social media active users. Based on the results of the study, the researcher recommends the students to try to use social media feature called auto-translate feature as a tool to learn English since the way to use translate feature is simple. Therefore, the students are suggested to use social media as a bridge for them to learn English.

**For the lecturers.** The lecturers who applied technology in their classroom to facilitate teaching learning progress are suggested to use auto-translate feature in social media. Besides, the auto-translate feature in social media can be an example for grammatical errors and how translation machine works.

**The Other Researcher.** Conducting this research, other researchers can know auto-translate feature on social media to learn English used by the students in learning process. Besides, the other researchers can use the findings of this research as the theoretical overview of further research on the same topic and might become recommendation of further research. Therefore, by conducting this research, it can also encourage the researchers to conduct the researches towards the strengths and weaknesses of using auto translate feature on social media in learning English related to the same area of this research. Hence, the researcher also hopes that other researchers can dig more advantages from machine translation in social media. Therefore, the researcher also recommends other researchers to start working on other topics dealing with the use auto-translate feature in social media as a way of learning English in order to know how the various factors in the use of auto-translate as learning media.

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