

## **The Use of Google Translate by Iraqi EFL University Students at Imam Al-Kadhum College**

**Naba'a Haithem Mohammed Ali,**

**Mohammed Ridha A. Yousif,**

**Assistant Professor Amjed Abbas Ahmed**

### **Abstract**

This study examines the use of Google Translate and its effect on the achievement of EFL students at Imam AL-Kadhum College. A questionnaire was developed and distributed to 163 student teachers in the English Department of the college to collect data on their use of Google Translate, academic performance, and attitudes towards using the tool for academic purposes. The results of the questionnaire reveal that a significant proportion of students in Imam Al-Kadhum College rely on Google Translate to some extent for their EFL studies. However, the use of Google Translate has a negative correlation with academic achievement, indicating that students who rely heavily on the tool may not be achieving their full potential in terms of language learning. The findings also suggest that using Google Translate for whole text translation can be particularly detrimental to student learning outcomes. However, students who use the tool to translate individual words or phrases and as a training material without depending on it entirely have shown more confidence and academic progression. Therefore, it is recommended that educators discourage students from relying too heavily on Google Translate and instead encourage them to use it as a supplementary tool to aid their language learning process. This study highlights the importance of fostering independent language learning skills and promoting the development of critical thinking among students. It also emphasizes the need for educators to provide appropriate guidance and training on the effective use of technology in the language learning process.

**Keywords: Effects, Google Translate, Students Achievement, Imam Al-Kadhum College.**

### **Introduction:**

Google Translate (GT) as one of the products provided by Google has become a popular translation tool for language students. As English is still considered a foreign language in Iraq, many Iraqi students, even college students appear to use GT to help them in learning English. This tool tends to help the students to get the translation quickly and easily (Al-Badi, 2015; Al Darwish & Sadeqi, 2016; Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017; Huwari, I & Al-Khasawneh, 2013; Younes & Albalawi, 2015). The integration of technology in education has become an essential aspect in the 21st century.

The use of technology in language learning has been widely acknowledged as an effective way to enhance students' learning experience and improve their language proficiency. Google Translate is one of the most widely used

translation tools among students and teachers. The tool can be used in various ways, from simple word translation to complete sentence and even passage translation. However, the question of how the use of Google Translate affects students' achievement in language learning has not been fully explored. The popularity of Google Translate among students and teachers is due to its ease of use, availability and the ability to translate text in various languages. Google Translate has been used in various educational settings, such as language classes, to help students with vocabulary, grammar and comprehension.

The tool can also be used as a self-study aid for students who want to improve their language skills outside of the classroom. However, there are concerns among educators about the use of Google Translate in language learning. Some argue that the tool can have a negative impact on students' language development. On the other hand, some argue that the use of Google Translate can be beneficial for students' language development. Despite the ongoing debate, the effects of Google Translate on students' achievement in language learning in an Iraqi context are not fully understood. Therefore, this study aims to investigate the effects of Google Translate on students' achievement in English as a foreign language (EFL) in an Iraqi context. The study will provide valuable insights into the effects of Google Translate on students' achievement in language learning in an Iraqi context and will also contribute to the ongoing debate about the use of technology in language learning.

The main research question of this study is 'how does the use of Google Translate affect the achievement of EFL students at Imam AL-Kadhum College? The study will use a case study approach, in which the study population will be Iraqi EFL students in IKC. The study sample will be the fourth-year students of the Department of English, both morning and evening studies, in IKC. The study will provide valuable insights into the effects of Google Translate on students' achievement in language learning in an Iraqi context and will also contribute to the ongoing debate about the use of technology in language learning.

### **1.Literature Review**

The question of how the use of Google Translate affects students' achievement in language learning has not been fully explored. The use of Google Translate in language learning has been the subject of several studies. Some studies have found that the use of Google Translate can have a negative impact on students' language development. For example, a study by Lee and Zou (2018) found that the use of Google Translate can discourage students from actively engaging in the language and discourage them from developing their own language skills. The study also found that the use of Google Translate can discourage students from developing critical thinking skills, as they may rely too heavily on the tool for translation rather than using their own understanding of the language.

Other studies have found that the use of Google Translate can be beneficial for students' language development. A study by Park and Cho (2015) found that the use of Google Translate can help students to improve their vocabulary and grammar, as well as comprehension of the language. Additionally, the study found that it can be a useful tool for students who are struggling with the language and need extra support. Moreover, a study by Al-Ani (2019) examined the attitudes of Iraqi EFL students towards the use of Google Translate in language learning. The study found that the majority of the students had a positive attitude towards the use of Google Translate, as they believed that it helped them to improve their language skills. However, some students had a negative attitude towards the use of Google Translate, as they believed that it could discourage them from actively engaging in the language and discourage them from developing their own language skills. In addition to the above studies, several researchers have investigated the use of technology in language learning in an Iraqi context. For example, a study by Al-Ani (2018) found that the majority of Iraqi EFL students use technology in their language learning, and that the use of technology has a positive impact on their language skills (Ahmed , 2017). A study by Al-Ani and Al-Gharawi (2019) found that the use of technology in language learning can improve students' motivation and engagement in the language.

## **2. Methodology**

### **2.1 The questionnaire**

The questionnaire was designed to gather information about the frequency and purpose of Google Translate use among EFL students in an Iraqi context. The questionnaire consists of ten questions, as follows:

1. Have you ever used translation software during the Covid-19 online study?
2. Have you used Google Translate in your study?
3. Do you use translation software to translate words or chunks?
4. Do you use translation software to translate whole sentences?
5. Do you use translation software to translate whole pages (web pages or documents)?
6. Do you set your browser to auto-translate content?
7. How do you typically use translation software?
8. When you write a composition or an assignment, which of the following methods do you use?
9. When you watch videos (such as YouTube videos), what do you typically do?
10. How do you typically use translation software?

The questions were designed to be clear and concise, and multiple-choice answers were provided to allow for easy analysis of the data. The questionnaire was distributed to college students in the department of English (student

teachers) at Imam Al-Kadhumi College, and a total of 163 students completed the survey.

Student stage:

162 responses

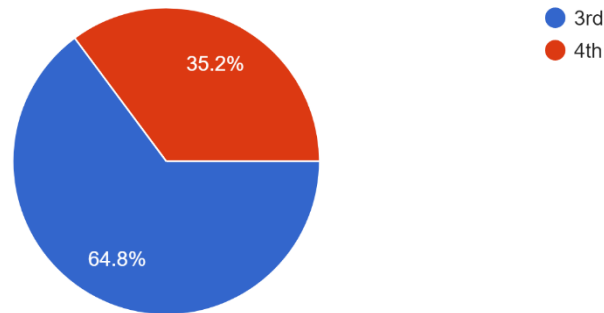


Figure 1: Students according to their stage

Study

162 responses

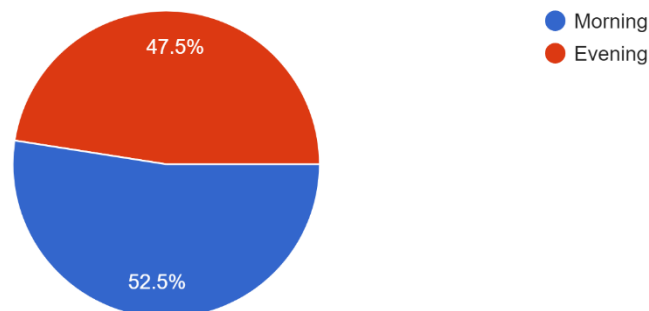


Figure 2: students according to study (Morning)

### 3. Results and Discussion

#### 3.1. Results

Here are some analyses of the results:

1. Use of Translation Software: A majority of the respondents (53.4%) reported that they sometimes used translation software during Covid-19 online study, while 38% reported using it always.

Have you ever used Translation Software during the Covid-19 online study?

163 responses

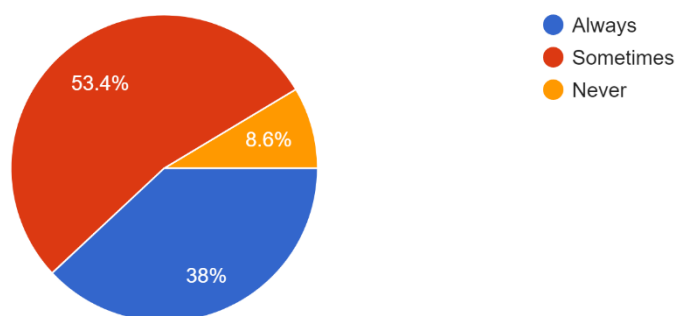


Figure 3: Question One

2. Use of Google Translate: More than half of the respondents (52.8%) reported that they sometimes used Google Translate in their study, while 42.3% reported using it always.

Have you Used Google translate in your study

163 responses

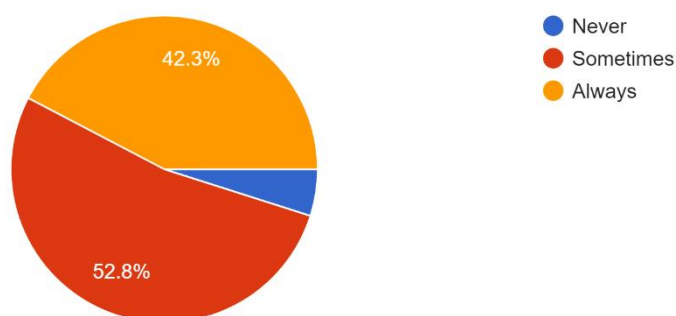


Figure 4: Question Two

3. Use of Translation Software for Translation of Words and Chunks: The majority of the respondents (55.8%) reported that they sometimes used translation software to translate words or chunks, while 37.4% reported using it always.

You use translation software to translate words or chunks.

163 responses

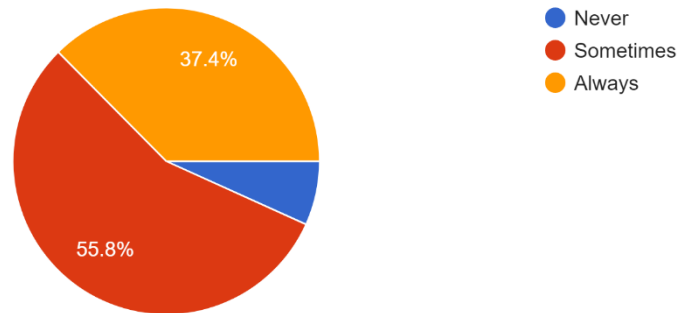


Figure 5: Question Three

4. Use of Translation Software for Translation of Whole Sentences: A majority of the respondents (58.3%) reported that they sometimes used translation software to translate whole sentences.

You use translation software to translate whole sentences.

163 responses

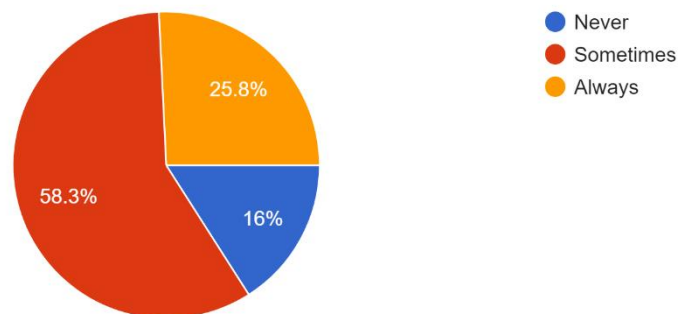


Figure 6: Question Four

5. Use of Translation Software for Translation of Whole Pages: More than half of the respondents (50.9%) reported that they sometimes used translation software to translate whole pages (web pages or documents).

You use translation software to translate whole pages (web pages or documents).

163 responses

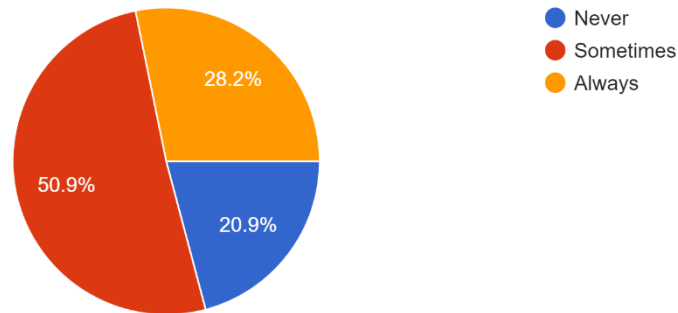


Figure 7: Question Five

6. Browser Auto Translation: Nearly half of the respondents (47.9%) reported that they sometimes set their browser to auto-translate content.

You set your browser to auto translate content.

163 responses

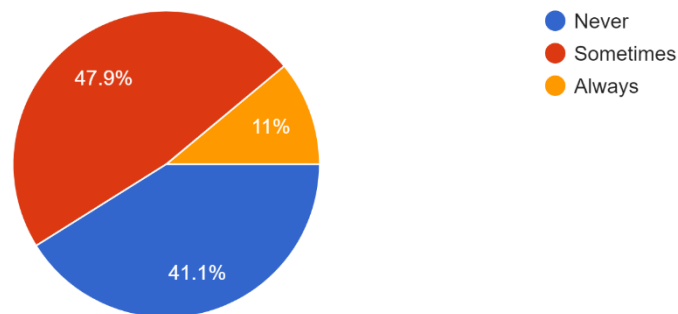


Figure 8: Question Six

7. Type of Translation: The majority of the respondents (54.6%) reported that they translated words or chunks that seem hard to be understood, while only 21.5% translated the whole page.

When you read a file you prefer to

163 responses

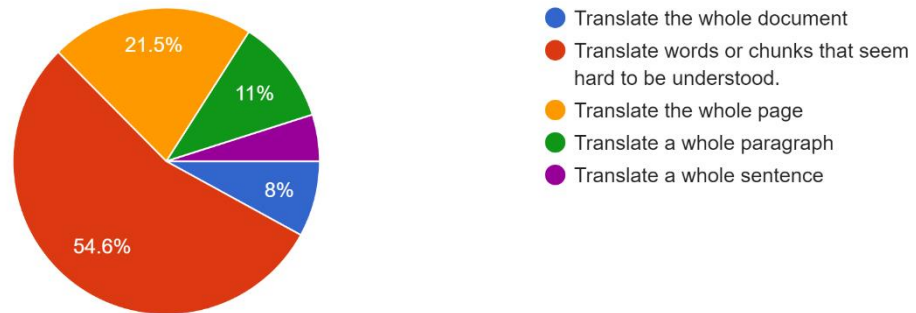


Figure 9: Question Seven

8. Writing Composition or Assignment: A majority of the respondents (39.3%) reported that they write their composition or assignment in Arabic and then translate the whole document into English.

When you write a composition or an assignment, you:

163 responses



Figure 10: Question Eight

9. Use of Captions for English Videos: The most common response was to activate the caption on English videos (34.4%), while 29.4% did not activate any captions, and 27% activated auto-translation into Arabic.



When you watch videos (such as YouTube videos) you:

163 responses

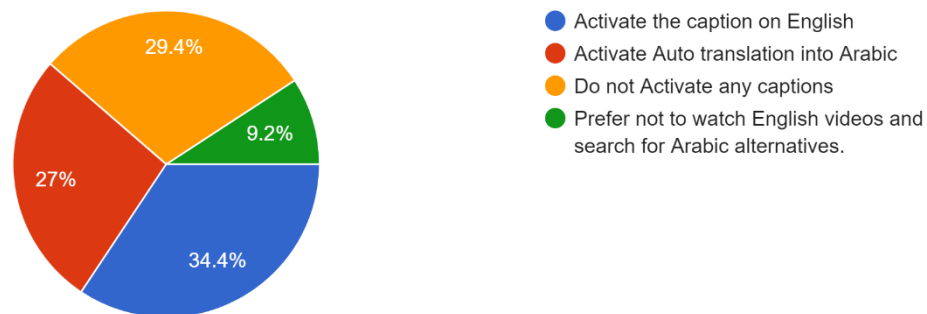


Figure11: Question Nine

10. Use of Translation Software for Various Purposes: The most common use of translation software was to check for the meaning of a word (44.8%), while 22.1% used it to check for the meaning of a whole text, and 14.7% used it to check for the pronunciation of a word or a chunk.

You use translation software to: (You can choose more than one)

163 responses

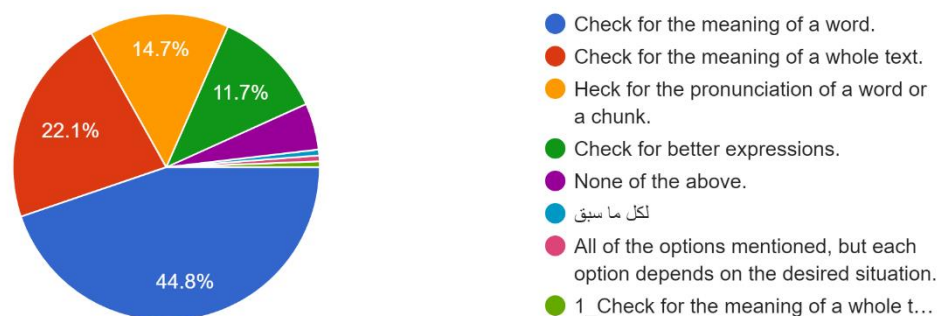


Figure 12: Question Ten

### 3.2. Discussion

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it seems that a significant portion of English student teachers use translation software, with 53.4% using it sometimes and 38% using it always for Covid-19 online study. The use of Google Translate is also high, with 52.8% using it sometimes and 42.3% always. Additionally, a majority of students use translation software to translate words or chunks (55.8% sometimes, 37.4% always), sentences (58.3% sometimes, 25.8% always), and whole pages (50.9% sometimes, 28.2% always).

When it comes to writing compositions or assignments, the most popular response was to write it in Arabic and then translate the whole document into

English (39.3%), followed by writing it in English and translating the difficult sentences when stuck (24.5%), and writing it in English and translating the rest using translation software (20.2%). This suggests that some students may rely heavily on translation software for their written work.

In terms of watching videos, the majority of students do not activate any captions (29.4%), while 34.4% activate captions in English and 27% activate auto-translation into Arabic. This indicates that a significant number of students may not be engaging with English-language content in a meaningful way, potentially hindering their language learning progress.

When it comes to the reasons for using translation software, checking the meaning of a word is the most common (44.8%), followed by checking the meaning of a whole text (22.1%), checking for the pronunciation of a word or a chunk (14.7%), and checking for better expressions (11.7%). This suggests that some students may be relying on translation software as a crutch for language learning rather than actively engaging with the language and developing their own understanding.

Overall, the results of the questionnaire indicate that while translation software can be a useful tool for language learning, it should be used with caution and not relied on too heavily. Students should engage with the language in more meaningful ways, such as through watching videos with English captions, reading English texts, and actively practicing speaking and writing in English.

In summary, the results indicate that a significant number of the surveyed students used translation software and Google Translate, particularly for translating words, chunks, and whole sentences. Additionally, many students relied on translation software to help them with their writing assignments, which often involved writing in Arabic and then translating the whole document into English. Lastly, many students also used captions or auto-translation when watching English videos, although a significant number preferred not to watch English videos and instead searched for Arabic alternatives.

## **4. Conclusion and Recommendations**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

Based on the results of the questionnaire, it is difficult to draw a direct conclusion on how the use of Google Translate affects students' achievement in English as a foreign language (EFL) in an Iraqi context. However, the study provides some insights on the use of translation software by EFL students, which can inform the discussion on the potential impact of Google Translate on EFL learning.

The high percentage of students using translation software, particularly Google Translate, suggests that it is a popular tool for language learning among EFL students in Iraq. While checking the meaning of a word is the most common reason for using translation software, a significant portion of students also use it

to translate sentences and whole pages, which raises questions about the extent to which they are engaging with the language in a meaningful way.

The finding that the most popular response for writing compositions or assignments is to write them in Arabic and then translate the whole document into English is also notable. This suggests that some students may be relying too heavily on translation software, which may hinder their ability to improve their English writing skills.

Overall, the study suggests that while translation software can be a useful tool for language learning, it should not be relied on too heavily, as it may limit students' opportunities to engage with the language in more meaningful ways. Language teachers in Iraq should provide guidance to students on the appropriate use of translation software and encourage them to engage with the language in other ways, such as through watching videos with English captions, reading English texts, and actively practicing speaking and writing in English. More research is needed to investigate the impact of Google Translate on EFL learning at Imam AL-Kadhum College.

#### **4.2. Recommendations**

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations can be made:

1. Provide guidance on the appropriate use of translation software: Language teachers should provide guidance to students on how to use translation software effectively and efficiently. Students should be made aware of the limitations of translation software and encouraged to use it only as a tool to check for meanings or translations, rather than relying on it completely.
2. Encourage engagement with the language: Language teachers should encourage students to engage with the language in more meaningful ways, such as through watching videos with English captions, reading English texts, and actively practicing speaking and writing in English. This will help students to develop their language skills and improve their ability to use the language effectively.
3. Incorporate technology in language teaching: Teachers can incorporate technology in language teaching by using tools such as online dictionaries, grammar checkers, and language learning apps. This will provide students with a more varied and engaging learning experience, and help them to develop their language skills in a more interactive and meaningful way.
4. Provide opportunities for practice: Teachers should provide opportunities for students to practice their language skills in a supportive and constructive environment. This can be done through in-class activities, group work, and homework assignments that encourage students to use the language actively and productively.
5. Conduct further research: Further research is needed to investigate the impact of translation software on EFL learning in an Iraqi context. This will

help to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of translation software in language learning, and inform the development of effective language teaching strategies and approaches.

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