

Chapter One

Introduction

This chapter describes all contents of the introduction of the research namely the background of the research, statement of the problem, research question, purpose of the research, significance of the research, and outline of the research.

Background of the Research

Writing is an important skill that people need to acquire. Cook and Singleton (2014) stated that the main means of communication for people today is written language because it is used for all language purposes, whether serious or not and all that communication takes place on social media. Based on a study by Chakraverty and Gautum (2000), writing is defined as a form of reflective activity to describe a particular topic also to analyze and classify the basis or starting point of knowledge which takes a long time to do. As one of the parts of four language skills, the difficult skill that students needed to be acquired was writing (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017). In foreign language learning, language transfer from the first language to the second language (Belkhir & Benyelles, 2017) also limited vocabulary and limited idiom (Salem, 2007) have become the reasons for writing activity to be perceived as difficult by students. Moreover, Arifanita, Nurkamto, and Suparno (2019) found that writing became a difficult activity because students sometimes faced problems in mastering vocabulary, using the proper grammar, spelling, and using proper punctuation.

In the writing process, students sometimes need to find words' meaning from one language into other languages. They will need meaning references to find the words by using a dictionary in their writing process. Din (2019) stated that there are several kinds of dictionaries which are “bilingual, monolingual, specialized, etymological, rhyming, pocket dictionary, dictionary of literary terms, thesaurus and glossary” (p. 148). Therefore, in general, dictionaries can be divided into two types which are printed dictionaries and electronic dictionaries.

Furthermore, a kind of dictionary that becomes popular nowadays is machine translation. Machine translation (MT) is a computational linguistics (CL) or natural language processing (NLP) sub-field that investigates the use of software for translating text or speech from one natural language into the other (Qun & Xiaojun, 2015). The core of MT itself is the automation of the entire method of translation, which varies from similar concepts such as machine-aided human translation (MAHT), human-aided machine translation (HAMT), and computer-aided translation (CAT) (Qun & Xiaojun, 2015). Machine translation could be used online and offline depending on the availability. Several Machine Translations available in this era are Google Translate (GT), Bing Translator, and Yahoo Babelfish.

Based on the mentioned MT, there is the most familiar MT used by the students. A study implied GT as the most familiar MT (Sukkwan, 2014). According to Komeili, Hendavalan, and Rahimi (2011), GT has become the most popular machine translation that provides over two hundred billion words. Moreover, GT also provides over one hundred languages from the countries all

over the world. The languages examples provided by GT are Afrikaans, Albanian, Arabic, Bosnian, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Sundanese, and Zulu (Google Translate, n.d).

In writing activity, GT has several utilities for the students. Lee (2020) stated that GT has helped English students at a university in Korea in improving their English writing in terms of vocabulary, grammar, and expressions; moreover, GT also offered a positive impact on students' writing strategies during revision. Stapleton and Kin (2019) noticed that by using GT from the Chinese texts, the grades of teachers on English translated texts of primary students did not vary significantly from their self-written English texts; in fact, the GT versions in some cases had more advanced language and complex meaning than the self-written versions of the students. They concluded that this type of technology should be explored by teachers of foreign languages as one strategy that could provide a major effect on the teaching and learning of L2 writing.

As the most popular machine translation, research on the issue of GT in language learning has gained much attention in recent years. One of the researches that discussed GT was the research from Bahri and Mahadi (2016) regarding the use of GT as an additional tool in learning Malay. Another research that discussed GT was by van Rensburg, Snyman, and Lotz (2012) which focused on the influence of GT on the quality of African-English and English-African writing of various levels of education. Furthermore, the use of GT is also very popular among students. Murtisari, Widiningrum, Branata, and Susanto (2019) stated that the students frequently used GT to translate short text or specific words for

general use and on their assignments (reading and writing). The reason as to why the students used it, especially in their writing activity, was because GT is easy to use and is cost-friendly. This is in line with the finding by Valijärvi and Tarsoly (2012) that implied GT as easy to use, quick, simple, and favorable for the students in finding information on the target language.

Despite the positive impact offered by GT to help students in their writing activity, GT also has several negative impacts for the students. Based on a study by Alhaisoni and Alhaysony (2017), GT sometimes could influence the students to become reluctant to correct their final writing. This will result in a bad quality of their final writing. Murtisari et al. (2019) also stated that the negative impacts of GT included improper result of students' writing and possibility to cheat. Moreover, teachers also have certain beliefs related to the use of GT in the teaching and learning process which might affect teaching methods, especially in writing. From the teachers' perception, GT is perceived as ineffective for beginner and intermediate students (Niño, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

GT is one of the most popular tools used by students in the English Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta. The students used GT as a device to help them in their learning process and to deal with language learning. In fact, one of the language lessons that needs a lot of help from GT is writing class. Based on the informal interviews conducted with two students, the reason they chose GT to help them in the learning process was because GT is an easy tool to use. GT can be used as a tool to help them find the meaning of words

when they have to write in English. Furthermore, to find more detailed information about GT in this English Education Department, the researcher conducted an informal interview with two lecturers. Based on the informal interview, the lecturers implied that there was a massive usage of GT in the teaching and learning process. The students usually used GT in the writing activity during the learning process.

In addition, the lecturers' perceptions on the use of GT in writing activity were also found. As the most popular machine translation used by students, GT should be an effective and efficient translation tool to assist students in writing activities. However, in reality, the informal interview with the lecturers revealed low quality on the written product from the students who presumably used GT in their writing activity. The lecturers indicated the students to be using GT because they found some indicators in students' writing, such as using complex vocabulary, using complicated grammar, using inappropriate vocabulary, and leaving several words in the source language untranslated. Moreover, the indicators that become the standard for the low quality of students' writing were incorrect grammar, inappropriate word selection, and inappropriate structure of the sentences. Hence, the researcher was intrigued in conducting this study because despite the massive use of GT, students' writing products were still claimed as poor.

Research Questions

The survey study was aimed to investigate the gap of prior study. The research questions are formulated as follows:

1. What is the teachers' perception on the use of GT in students' writing?
2. What are the advantages of GT in students' writing based on the teachers' perception?
3. What are the effective strategies of using GT?

Purposes of the Research

Based on the research question, the purposes of the research are:

1. To investigate whether GT is effective to improve students' writing based on the teachers' perception.
2. To investigate the advantages of GT in students' writing based on the teachers' perception.
3. To investigate teachers' perception on the effective strategies of using GT.

Significance of the Research

This research is expected to serve information about GT as a tool to help students' writing process. The significances of this research include theoretical significance and practical significance.

Theoretical Significance

This research provides some information about teachers' perception on the use of GT in students' writing. Moreover, this study also explores the strategies of effective use of GT in writing. Hopefully, this research can be served as one of the references for further research.

Practical Significance

For the Students. This study could become a consideration for students to use GT effectively. By analyzing this study, students could gain some information related to the use of machine translation, especially GT.

For the Teachers. Teachers could guide their students who consider using GT in their learning process. The teachers could also take several considerations related to the use of GT in conducting the learning process.

Outline of the Research

This research contained five chapters which are chapter one, chapter two, chapter three, chapter four, and chapter five. Chapter one discussed the background of the research, statement of the problem, delimitation of the problem, research questions, purposes of the research, significance of the research, and the outline of the research. Chapter two discussed the theories related to this research. Chapter two focused on describing the steps in the writing process; the problems in the writing process and translation tools for writing; Machine Translation (MT) that included the definition of MT, the history of MT, the types of MT technology; also, several information about Google Translate (GT) that included GT in language learning, the effectiveness of GT, and effective strategies of using GT. This chapter also presented previous studies and conceptual framework.

Chapter three discussed the methodology used in this research. This chapter presented the research design, research setting, data collection method, the instrument of data collection, the procedure of data collection, and data analysis.

Moreover, chapter four described the finding and discussion of this research. The findings were divided into three main points which were teachers' perception on the use of GT, the advantages of GT, and the effective strategies of using GT. Last but not least, chapter five presented the conclusion and recommendations taken from this research. The conclusion concluded the important information of this research while the recommendations were aimed to the teachers, students, and other researchers.