


Undergraduate English Students' Use of Google Translate in Afghanistan: A Case Study

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ABSTRACT

Google translate (GT) is widely used by students around the world. The current study examined English students' use of GT in Afghanistan. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data from 132 randomly selected students from a public university in Afghanistan. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data. The findings showed that the participants had positive attitudes towards GT, and they were aware of GT drawbacks. The participants utilized GT for numerous reasons including not feeling confident in their own translation. They used GT for a number of purposes to varying extent. They frequently used GT to look up general and technical words as well as idioms and collocations. They also used it for translation purposes. There were differences between female and male students' attitudes towards GT. The study recommends instructors to adopt GT, particularly those teaching in Afghanistan, in their classes and encourage students' critical use of GT.

KEYWORDS

Google translate technology and language, language learning, Machine translation, online translation tools, Web-based learning

1. INTRODUCTION

Computer assisted language learning (CALL) is a wide variety of technological tools including CD-ROMs and web-based resources and applications used for teaching and learning languages (Chapelle, 2010; Garrett, 2009). Machine translation is one type of CALL whose purposes and uses have changed and expanded over the time. It has been utilized by a wide range of users in a wide number of settings including language teaching and learning (Farzi, 2016). Machine translation, particularly online translation tools, have transformed the way languages are taught and learned (Clifford et al., 2013). Google Translate (GT) is one of the most widely used translation tools developed by Google, which provides free translation in over 130 languages (as of December 2022) (Bin Dahmash, 2020).

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GT has widely been used by students for various reasons such as GT's rapid translation and lack of confidence in students' translation and for various functions including checking unknown words and translation and (O'Neill, 2019).

The use of the Internet and technological tools gradually became very widespread in Afghanistan after 2001 before which the Taliban barbarically suppressed the Internet and banned non-governmental Internet use and punished those who violated the edict (USDS, 2003). The Internet use substantially grew in the last two decades (2002-2021) in Afghanistan. For instance, 18% of the population of Afghanistan had access to the Internet in 2020 while the number of Internet users was less than 1% in 2001 (WB, 2022). Mobile phone companies such as MTN Afghanistan and Afghan Wireless have been the major providers of Internet connection in Afghanistan (Madory, 2022). A number of factors including high price of Internet data, little access to electricity and forceful shutdown of mobile network operators by the Taliban decelerated people's access to the Internet especially in remote areas (Mohammadi, 2018; Noori et al., 2022). Unfortunately, people's access to the Internet have declined since the Taliban returned to power in August 2021 because hundreds of thousands of people lost their jobs and millions were driven into poverty.

People have used the Internet for various purposes in Afghanistan. Akseer et al. (2019) and Altai Consulting (2017) reported that people used the Internet for communication, getting information, news, and social networking. Orfan (2021) found that people used the Internet to engage in political activities online, particularly on social networking sites (e.g., Facebook). Akramy (2022), Noori (2021) and Hashemi (2021) reported that Internet was used for learning activities, in particular by higher education institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. Based on the author's observations and experiences, the Internet has been used for online translation. University lecturers have used GT to translate their articles, especially abstracts, from local languages to English language, which is required by almost all academic journals including national ones. Translation services providers have used GT to translate their customers' reports and documents. Employees of NGOs (nongovernmental organizations), particularly those of the international ones, have used GT to translate their reports from local languages to English. Students especially EFL (English as a foreign language) learners have used the Internet to get access to online translation machines, in particular GT. However, there is no information and knowledge about their attitudes and use of online machine translations especially GT. The current study investigates EFL students' views of GT.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Machine Translation has been developed and used for various purposes for decades. There are many online machine translations such as GT, Bing Translator, Yahoo Translation, which are easily accessible. They are widely used, and their use is anticipated to increase significantly in the future (Hampshire & Salvia, 2010; Kumar, 2012). Google Translate (GT) is the most popular online translation tool, which is used by millions of people around the world (Precup-Stiegelbauer, 2013; Tarsoly & Valijärvi, 2019). GT allows users to translate words, phrases, paragraphs, files, websites, webpages, and emails, and it translates video captions, voice, and photo recognition for most widely used languages (e.g., English) (Ducar & Schocket, 2018; Johnson, 2012; Sheppard, 2011). These useful and appealing features can account for the widespread use of GT by students of different disciplines (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017), particularly language learners, in spite of the fact that they cannot provide exact and precise translation (Jolley & Maimone, 2015) unless the outputs are post-edited (Chompurach, 2021).

Studies reported that EFL students had positive attitudes towards GT, and they reported its positive impacts on language learning. Chompurach (2021) investigated Thai students' perspectives about GT in English writing, and he reported that students viewed GT as a helpful and reliable tool that enhanced their quality of writing. Chandra and Yuyun (2018) studied Indonesian students' use of GT in essay writing in EFL classes and its role in learning a language. They found that students considered GT

as a dictionary and used it to improve their vocabulary. Jolly and Jason (2015) investigated Spanish students' and instructors' attitudes of free online translation machines. They collected data from 128 students and 39 instructors. Most of the student participants were English native speakers who were taking Spanish courses in five American universities. Most of the instructor participants were English native speakers who were teaching Spanish in six Spanish programs based in six U.S. universities. They concluded that the participants regarded GT as a useful learning tool and rated the quality of GT translation high. Clifford et al. (2013) explored views of language learners (French, Italian, Spanish, and Portuguese) about the role of machine translation in language learning, and they found that GT was the most frequently used translation machine. Most of the participants believed that GT was helpful in learning a language, and it helped them improve their vocabulary. Winiharti et al. (2021) concluded that lecturers considered the results of GT rather acceptable while student participants regarded them quite acceptable. Moreover, Valijärvi and Tarsoly (2019) assert that incorporating GT as a learning tool in foreign language classrooms encourages students to become autonomous learners.

EFL students use GT for various reasons. It is easily accessible to everyone with an Internet connection, and it is free of charge. It provides students with rapid translation services in a wide range of languages, and students can get the translation results in just a quick click (Chandra & Yuyun, 2018; Ducar & Schocket, 2018; Medvedev, 2016). Students now have the opportunity to use GT without an Internet connection. They can download their preferred languages on GT application and use GT offline as a bilingual dictionary or for translation purposes. Furthermore, GT allows students, particularly English learners, to listen to audio of paragraphs and long passages, which help them to improve their pronunciation. Pham et al (2022) found that students used GT because it was user-friendly, and it provided quick translation. Yeung and Lu (2018) reported that students used GT to translate learning materials from English to their first language for comprehension.

However, GT comes with some drawbacks. It does not provide accurate translation for longer sentences or texts, particularly for languages whose databases are not developed enough. It cannot determine the context, which plays a key role in accurate translation of culture-specific materials (Brahmana et al., 2020; Habeeb, 2019; Medvedev, 2016; Setiyadi et al., 2020). Van Rensburg et al. (2012) examined the translation of six different types of texts (Power Point slides, official letters, examinations, class notes, minutes, and newspaper articles) from Afrikaans to English using GT. They found out that GT yielded better translation for Power Point slides, which can be justified by the fact that Power Point slides are usually bulleted fragments without structure and coherence. Bozorgian and Azadmanesh (2015) found that GT failed to observe subject-verb agreement. They argued that the tool lacked the ability to determine subject-verb agreement, particularly in complex sentences. Some studies revealed that translation between certain languages on GT is of high quality. For instance, Aiken (2019) revealed that translation between European languages were much better than translation between Asian languages. Alsalem (2019), Hoi (2020), Karjo and Metta (2019) and Williams (2006) warned of overreliance of language learners on GT. Hoi (2020) argued that language learners, who rely on translation machines, would learn simple things, and would not improve their language ability.

EFL students use GT for various functions to varying extent. Murtisari et al. (2019) and Panah et al. (2022) found that English students frequently used GT to translate sentences, paragraphs and long texts from English to their first language and vice versa. Yenki and Meka (2019) found that English students used GT to translate English materials to their first language in the class. Maulidiyah (2018) reported that EFL students used GT for reading comprehension. Chompurach (2021) concluded that students always used GT to complete their writing assignments at both sentence and paragraph levels. Jolly and Jason (2015) revealed that students sometimes used GT to complete their translation assignments and prepare their presentation. Clifford et al.'s (2013) participants often used GT to check vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, linking words, verb tenses and word order.

GT is widely used by students of different disciplines, particularly EFL students in Afghanistan. However, there is no information and knowledge about their attitudes and use of GT. The study provides insights about students' use of GT for EFL instructors and English programs, and the findings

will help them make informed decisions about the use of and incorporation of GT in their classes. Moreover, it adds to the growing body of literature on the GT use in education in the context of Afghanistan. The current study investigates undergraduate EFL students' use of GT, and it addresses the following research questions.

1. What are EFL learners' attitudes towards GT?
2. What are their reasons for using GT?
3. How often and for what purposes have they used GT?
4. Are there statistically significant differences between female and male students' responses?

3. METHODS

3.1. Design

The study is quantitative in nature. A survey questionnaire was used to collect data for the research. The participants were required to express their views about GT, its drawbacks, reasons for using GT, and functions. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to analyze the data.

3.2. Participants

Simple random sampling technique was utilized to choose 140 participants for the study. The population of the study was 218 students, 79 of whom were female. The authors wrote the names of all the female and male students and put them in two containers. After shuffling and reshuffling, they picked up 60 female and 80 male students. Five participants withdrew from the study and three participants did not complete the questionnaire appropriately. A total of 132 participants took part in the study. The participants were majoring in English language and literature in the Department of English at Takhar University based in Taloqan, a northeastern city. As Table 1 shows, the majority of the participants (57%) were male and 43% were female students. Most of the participants were Farsi native speakers (47%) followed by Uzbek native speakers (37%) and native speakers of Pashto (13%). A small number of them were speakers of other languages (e.g., Shughni). The majority of the participants were 21-23 years old (60%). English is taught from grades 4 to 12 in public schools and from grades 1 to 12 in private schools (Arab & Orfan, 2023; Orfan, 2020). Therefore, the participants studied English for 8-12 years at schools. Their level of English was pre-intermediate to high intermediate at the time of the study.

Table 1. Participants' demographics

Category		Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Female	57	43
	Male	75	57
Native language	Farsi	62	47
	Uzbek	49	37
	Pashto	17	13
	Other	4	3
Age	18-20	33	25
	21-23	79	60
	23-25	17	13
	26+	3	2

3.3. Instrument

The author reviewed the literature to develop items for the questionnaire. He adapted the questionnaire items from other studies (Bahri & Madadi, 2016; Khotimah et al., 2021; Mulyani, & Afina, 2021; Murtisari et al., 2019; Yanti & Meka, 2019). The questionnaire consisted of three parts. The first part sought information about the participants' gender, age, first language, access to the Internet and use of GT. The second part with 20 items inquired the participants' responses about their attitudes towards GT, GT drawbacks and reasons of using GT. The participants were required to respond to the items on a 4-Point Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = strongly agree). The last part with 10 items sought the participants' response about their purposes of GT use on a 4-Point Likert Scale (1=Never; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently). The questionnaire was sent to three English lecturers for expert judgement and improvement. The problematic items were identified and corrected based on the experts' comments and feedback, but there were not changes on the number of the questionnaire items.

A pilot test was administered with 15 randomly selected students from English Department to measure the reliability of the questionnaire items. *SPSS version 26.0* was used to carry out the reliability analysis of the questionnaire items. The results of the analysis showed that the reliability value of each category of the questionnaire was over 0.6 coefficients (Table 2), which indicates good reliability of the items.

3.4. Procedure

The participants were invited to take part in the study. They showed up at the prearranged time and place. They author explained the research and its purposes to the participants. They were given a copy of the questionnaire along with a consent form to sign before proceeding to complete the questionnaire. The purpose of the consent form was to inform the participants that the study was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any moment. It also informed them that their responses would be kept confidential and that nobody would know about their participation in the study since the questionnaire did not collect personal information that would identify them. They were requested to read the instructions for each section and complete it. They were also informed that they could inquire about any items that were vague or ambiguous. It took the participants 15-20 minutes to complete the questionnaire. The data were collected between March 1 to 25, 2022.

3.5. Analysis

Following the data collection, the author examined questionnaire to make sure that the participants completed them appropriately. Three questionnaires were removed from the analysis because they were not completed appropriately. Totally 132 questionnaires were analyzed. The data were numerically coded in an Excel sheet and imported to SPSS version 26.0 for statistical analyses. Descriptive analyses were used to determine frequency, mean, percentage and standard deviation of the data; they were used to answer research questions 1, 2 and 3. Independent Samples *T*-test was used to determine the differences between female and male participants' responses; it was used to answer research question four.

Table 2. Reliability value of questionnaire items

Category	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha
Attitudes	10	0.647
Drawbacks of GT use	5	0.623
Reasons of GT use	5	0.657
Purposes of GT use	10	0.761

4. RESULTS

4.1. Internet Access and Use of GT

Almost all the participants had access to the Internet to varying extent. As Table 3 shows, around 74% of them frequently had access to the Internet while 25% sometimes had access to the Internet. Only 1.5% of them did not have access to the Internet. Moreover, around 33% of the participants frequently used GT, and around 57% sometimes used it. However, around 11% never used GT.

4.2. Attitudes Towards the Use of GT

Descriptive statistics were used to answer the first research question “What are EFL learners’ attitudes towards GT?” As Table 4 shows, the overall mean score is around 3, which indicates that the participants had positive attitudes towards GT. Participants believed that GT was free and easy to access (88.5%), GT could translate texts quickly (93.6%) and that the speed of GT was better than human translation (88.5%). In addition, the respondents stated that GT helped them do their writing assignments (87.2%), improve their vocabulary (73.1%), gain translation skills (61.5%) and understand passages (61.5%). However, around 40% believed that they learned grammar from using GT. Around 64% of the participants stated that they felt confident when using GT for translation, and 59% believed that the quality of Google translation was better than that of their own.

Table 3. Students’ access to the internet and use of GT

Category		Frequency	Percent
How often do you have access to the Internet?	Never	2	1.5
	Sometimes	33	25
	Frequently	97	73.5
How often do you use GT?	Never	14	10.6
	Sometimes	75	56.8
	Frequently	43	32.6

Table 4. Students’ attitudes towards the use of GT

No	Items	Mean	% of A & SA
1	Google Translate is free and easy to access.	3.19	88.5
2	Google Translate can translate texts quickly.	3.29	93.6
3	The speed of GT is better than human translation.	3.37	88.5
4	Google translate helps me do my writing assignments.	3.13	87.2
5	Google Translate helps me improve my vocabulary.	3.08	73.1
6	I gain translation skills from using GT.	2.86	61.5
7	I understand an English passage better with the help of GT.	2.67	61.5
8	I learn English grammar from using GT.	2.35	39.7
9	I feel more confident when I use GT for translation.	2.92	63.9
10	The quality of GT translation is better than that of my own.	2.87	59
Overall mean score		2.97	

A = Agree SA = Strongly agree

Furthermore, descriptive statistics were used to explore the participants' views of drawbacks of GT. Over 65% of the participants agreed and strongly agreed that GT caused laziness ($m = 2.91$) and led to dependence ($m = 2.83$) (Table 5). Moreover, 69% and around 62% stated that GT demotivated students to use a dictionary ($m = 2.95$) and to learn English words ($m = 2.74$), respectively. Around 81% believed that GT translation was not as accurate as that of human translation.

4.3. Students' Reasons for GT Use

Descriptive analyses were used to answer the second question "What are EFL learners' reasons for using GT?" As Table 6 shows, over 60% stated that they used GT because they did not feel confident with their translation ($m = 2.49$), and they wanted to save time ($m = 2.86$). Moreover, around 77% utilized GT because it provided them with convenience ($m = 2.94$), and it was free and provided quick translation ($m = 3.06$). Around 57% used GT since it was easier for them to understand learning materials in their first language.

4.4. Purposes of GT Use

Descriptive statistics were used to answer the third research question, "How often and for what purposes have EFL learners used GT?" As Table 7 shows, the mean score for general words, technical words, collocations, and idioms is over 2.20. That is, the participants frequently used GT to look up these items. Synonyms received a mean score of less than 2, which means that students sometimes used GT to check synonyms. Moreover, translating phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and an essay received a mean score of over 2.20, in other words, they frequently used GT to translate phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and an essay. They sometimes used GT to translate proper nouns ($m = 1.69$).

Table 5. Students' perceived disadvantages of GT

No	Items	Mean	% of A* & SA
1	Google Translate causes laziness.	2.91	67.9
2	Google Translate leads to dependence.	2.83	65.4
3	Google Translate demotivates EFL students to use a dictionary.	2.95	69.2
4	Google Translate demotivates EFL students to learn English words.	2.74	61.5
5	The accuracy of GT is not the same as human translation.	3.05	80.8

Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = strongly agree)

*A = Agree SA = Strongly agree

Table 6. Students' reasons of use of GT

No	Items	Mean	% of A & SA
1	I use GT because I am not confident with my translation.	2.49	60.7
2	I use GT because I want to save time.	2.86	64.1
3	I use GT because it gives me convenience.	2.94	76.9
4	I use GT because it is free and provides rapid translation.	3.06	76.9
5	I use GT because it is easier for me to understand learning materials in my first language.	2.63	56.6

Likert Scale (1= strongly disagree; 2 = Disagree; 3 = Agree; 4 = strongly agree)

*A = Agree SA = Strongly agree

Table 7. Students' frequency use of GT

No	Items	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	I use GT to check the meaning of general words.	2.28	0.771
2	I use GT to check the meaning of technical words.	2.5	0.785
3	I use GT to check the meaning of collocations.	2.32	0.933
4	I use GT to check the meaning of idioms.	2.21	0.917
5	I use GT to check synonyms.	1.97	0.882
6	I use GT to translate phrases.	2.32	0.96
7	I use GT to translate sentences.	2.67	0.949
8	I use GT to translate paragraphs.	2.47	0.766
9	I use GT to translate an essay.	2.23	0.882
10	I use GT to translate proper nouns.	1.69	0.811

Likert Scale: (1=Never; 2 = Sometimes; 3 = frequently; 4 = very frequently)

4.5. Gender and GT Use

Independent Samples *T*-test was used to answer the last research question “Are there statistically significant differences between female and male students’ responses?” As Table 8 shows, the *p*-value for attitudes is 0.04, which is less than the alpha level (0.05). It indicates statistically significant differences. That is, female students had stronger positive attitudes towards GT use than male students. However, the *p*-value for drawbacks (0.513), reasons for GT use (0.178) and purposes of GT use (0.726) was greater than the alpha level, which indicates no significant difference. There were not significant differences between female and male students’ responses in terms of GT drawbacks, reasons of using GT, and purposes of GT use.

5. DISCUSSION

The current study examined EFL students’ perceptions of GT in an EFL program in Afghanistan. The results revealed that almost all the participants had access to the Internet and most of the participants used GT in learning English to varying extent. It can be accounted for by the fact that huge investments had been made on the Internet in Afghanistan, and it had substantially grown in the last two decades

Table 8. Differences between participants' responses by gender

Category	Gender	Number	Mean	Std. Deviation	P-value
Attitudes	Female	57	3.03	0.30027	0.044
	Male	75	2.89	0.29222	
Drawbacks	Female	57	2.97	0.46687	0.513
	Male	75	2.90	0.41577	
Reasons of GT use	Female	57	2.85	0.48564	0.178
	Male	75	2.71	0.42179	
Purposes of GT use	Female	57	2.25	0.45886	0.726
	Male	75	2.29	0.55843	

(2001-2021) (Madory, 2021). The study revealed that the participants had positive attitudes towards GT, which can be accounted for by the growing useful features it offers to its users, particularly to language learners (De Vries, 2018; Van Lieshout & Cardoso, 2022). For instance, the vast majority of the participants believed that access to GT was free and easy, it provided quick translation and the quality of its translation was better than that of their own. The findings are in line with those of the studies by Jin and Deifell (2013) and Korosec (2012) who reported that their participants found GT helpful. Furthermore, the participants stated that GT helped them do their assignments, improve their vocabulary and translation skills, understand passages, and made them feel more confident when they used it for translation. These findings resonate with studies of Alhaisoni and Alhaysony (2017) and Chompurach (2021) who arrived at similar conclusions. Less than half of the participants believed that GT helped them learn English grammar, which corroborates the study by Chandra and Yuyun (2018) who found out that a small number of EFL students used Google Translation for learning grammar.

The study also revealed that the participants were aware of the drawbacks of use of GT. Most of the participants believed that GT made them lazy and dependent, and demotivated them to use a dictionary and learn vocabulary. These findings are consistent with those of the studies by Murtisari et al. (2019) and Xu (2021) whose participants raised their concerns about the downsides of GT including laziness and overdependence. Furthermore, the participants of the current study believed that the accuracy of Google translation was not better than that of human translation. This can be explained by the fact that the databases of GT for languages of Afghanistan may not be well-developed. Therefore, the accuracy of Google translation between languages of Afghanistan and other languages especially English might not be very high, as numerous studies found that the quality of Google translation depended on the input language. For example, Groves and Mundt (2015) concluded that GT produced high quality translation when the input language was Malay compared to Chinese. They argued that the database for Malay was larger than the Chinese database. Balk et al. (2013) found that the accuracy of translation of European languages (e.g., French and German) was better than that of translation of Asian languages (e.g., Japanese).

The participants used GT for various reasons. The majority of them used GT because of low confidence in their own translation, saving time, convenience, free and quick translation. The author believes that translation is a complicated and laborious task especially for EFL students who take a translation course for the first time in which they are required to translate short and long passages as graded assignments. Therefore, they use GT because it produces better translation than that of their own and it is quick, which gives them time to do other assignments. These findings corroborate Pham et al.'s study (2022) whose participants used GT due to its user-friendliness and free rapid translation services. Most of the participants used GT to translate learning materials from English to their first language. Most of the participants used GT to translate learning materials from English to their first language. It is similar to the findings of the study by Orfan (2023) who reported that EFL lecturers used students' first language to explain complicated ideas and concepts to EFL students. This can be accounted for by the fact that students' English, particularly those in first and second year, is not proficient enough to understand learning materials in English since most lecturers use learning materials and textbooks developed for English native speakers. Therefore, students translate learning materials into their first language using online translation tools, e.g., GT. This finding is on par with studies by Wang and Shao (2018) and Yeung and Lu (2018) whose participants used online translation tools to translate learning materials from English to their first language.

The findings showed that EFL students used GT for a number of purposes to varying extent. They frequently used GT to look up general and technical words, collocations, and idioms, and they sometimes used it to check synonyms. Furthermore, they frequently utilized GT to translate phrases, sentences, paragraphs, and essays, and they sometimes used it to translate proper nouns (e.g., names of places and organizations). It can be accounted for by the fact that GT now allows users to download their preferred languages and use them for a wide variety of purposes including translation without

connection to the Internet. Compared to both online and offline bilingual dictionaries especially English to languages of Afghanistan and vice versa, GT allows users to translate names of countries, places, organizations, and famous people, and it provides pronunciation of words, phrases, sentences, and long passages in English. These results mirror those of the studies by Murtisari et al. (2019) and Rangsarittikun (2022) whose participants used GT for a wide range of purposes including checking unknown words and translation.

The study also revealed that there were differences between female and male students' attitudes towards GT; female students held more positive attitudes towards GT. University female students in Afghanistan have to do a wide range of chores (e.g., cooking, doing dishes and laundry) in addition to attending university if they live with their families, and the vast majority of female students live with their families (Noori & Orfan, 2021). Doing the chores limits female students' time to study and complete their assignments in due time. Therefore, they may use GT more frequently to do their assignments, particularly writing and translation to save time for other activities. This may account for female students' more positive attitudes towards GT. However, female and male participants had similar views about drawbacks of GT, reasons of using GT, and purposes of GT use. It is consistent with the findings of the study by Abdalhussein (2021) who found out that there were not significant differences between female and male students' views about drawback and purposes of GT use.

6. CONCLUSION

The study revealed that EFL students had positive attitudes towards GT, and they were aware of its drawbacks. They used GT for various reasons including lack of confidence in their own translation. They frequently used GT to look up words and translate certain language units ranging from sentences to paragraphs and to essays. Considering EFL learners' positive attitudes towards GT, its positive impacts on language learning reported by other studies (e.g., Bahri & Madadi, 2016; Groves & Mundt, 2015; Rangsarittikun, 2022; Tsai, 2019) and the fact that almost all students are already using GT, the author advocates for strategic incorporation of GT in language learning. EFL lecturers, particularly those teaching in Afghanistan should educate themselves on features, strengths, and weaknesses of machine translation tools, especially GT, so that they can better instruct their students on how to take advantage of GT for learning English. They should also determine the type of use of GT in a given course or assignments and encourage their students to critically examine the quality of output when they use GT for translation purposes.

The author collected data from an EFL program in a higher education institution based in Takhar, a northeastern province of Afghanistan where Internet services are not of high quality, especially after the collapse of Afghanistan to the Taliban in August 2021. Therefore, it may not be generalizable to all EFL programs, particularly those based in private higher education institutions and English language centers. More studies on a larger sample from various EFL programs both in public and private institutions are required to obtain deeper insights about GT use in Afghanistan. Future studies can focus on students' and instructors' views of accuracy and ethicality of GT use and its impact on students' learning.

7. STATEMENTS AND DECLARATIONS

Funding: The author has received no funding for this study.

Conflicts of interest: There is no conflict of interest for the study.

Data Availability: The datasets generated during and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

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