USING GOOGLE TRANSLATE IN AN AUTHENTIC TRANSLATION TASK: THE PROCESS, REFINEMENT EFFORTS, AND STUDENTS' PERCPETIONS

Cheryl Wei-yu Chen
National Taipei University of Business

Abstract:

The current study positioned Google Translate as a facilitative tool used to help its users to accomplish a translation task. Guided by reflexive pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015), a pedagogical unit was implemented to help a group of Taiwanese English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) learners to experience, conceptualize, and analyze the nuances of translating between English and Chinese before they worked as volunteer translators to translate a NGO's community development stories. Data for this study were collected from students' translation portfolios and end-of-semester questionnaires. It was found that GT was used mostly for paragraph and whole-text translation. Students also used a variety of tools to help them refine the translation

drafts. Data also indicated that most participants perceived the GT-assisted translation process quite positively. This study calls for more efforts on investigating the use of MT tools in pedagogical settings as well as the integration of meaningful and contextualized activities to help students develop their linguistic and translation expertise.

Key words: Google Translate, translation process, translation refinement, students' perceptions

1.　INTRODUCTION

Translation is considered an important language skill (Witte et al., 2009). A person who masters a second language is able to interpret messages in this language and translate them into his/her native language and vice versa. He/She is also capable of considering the subtleties that are involved in the second language and adapt them accordingly to convey the intended messages (Castro Moreno, 2015; Ducar & Schocket, 2018). As a pedagogical tool, translation has been shown to be beneficial for heightening students' awareness of the nuances of language and metalinguistic knowledge of the target language (Ducar & Schocket, 2018; Enkin & Mejías-Bikandi, 2016). The mastery of

translation is even deemed as a "marketable skill" (Ducar & Schocket, 2018, p. 793) in the workplace. Authoritative news media have repeatedly reported that the skills which are emphasized in university-level foreign language courses are much sought after in today's highly competitive and globally mobile job market (Strauss, 2017).

With recent advancements in machine translation (MT), the teaching of translation is further assisted by the availability of free online tools such as Google Translate (GT). The new algorithm based on artificial intelligence (AI) has greatly improved GT's translation quality since this algorithm was launched in late 2016. Although MT cannot—at least at present— fully replace human language production, the machine-generated drafts are seen as providing translators, amateur and professional alike, with early, quick drafts from which they can build their work on (Garcia & Pena, 2011; Niño, 2009). As relevant technologies continue to mature, MT is becoming omnipresent and here to stay.

While the field of second language education has debated over the legitimacy of MT in language pedagogy (e.g., Case, 2015; Correa, 2014; Jiménez-Crespo, 2017; Niño, 2009), the current consensus seems to be best summarized by Ducar and Schocket

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

(2018): the issue is "not whether instructors can prevent learners from consulting such technologies, but rather how to help learners understand that positive progress toward greater proficiency and ethical use of technologies are critical 21st-century skills" (p. 793). Ducar and Schocket (2018) urge language teachers to fully understand MT's capabilities and include it among the set of tools commonly used in language classrooms (see also Jiménez-Crespo, 2017).

Ducar and Schocket (2018) further encourage language teachers to begin MT-assisted language teaching as early as possible. The current study echoes to this call by incorporating GT into a freshman English-as-a-Foreign-Language (EFL) writing course. Besides learning the basics of English writing, an important course component was that students worked as volunteer translators for a non-profit organization to translate community development stories from English to Chinese. Guided by reflexive pedagogy (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) to teach translation, GT is positioned as an affordance (Musk, 2014), a facilitative tool used conscientiously to help accomplish authentic and meaningful tasks (ACTFL, 2017). The guiding research questions are:

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

(1) How was Google Translate (GT) used by students during the translation process?

(2) How did students try to refine their translation?

(3) How did students perceive the overall GT-assisted translation process?

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Theoretical framework: Reflective pedagogy

This study is informed by reflexive pedagogy proposed by Cope and Kalantzis (2015). Reflexive pedagogy seeks to connect students with their prior life experiences while immersing them in new experiences and hands-on activities (*experiencing*). Students are also guided to develop disciplinary schema (*conceptualizing*), analyze new materials (*analyzing*), and transfer their new knowledge to new contexts (*applying*). Because reflective pedagogy emphasizes relevance to education and trueness to real life (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015), it is particularly suitable to guide the current study which engaged students to apply their newly learned knowledge about translation and MT to authentic and meaningful real-life translation task after they have developed relevant schema and learned the basics about

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

MT.

In line with Cope and Kalantzis's (2015) reflexive pedagogy, a reflexive approach to teaching translation has also been proposed by Kadiu (2017). A reflective approach to translation emphasizes the unpredictable nature of translation—translators will often face situations for which they are not prepared. This approach also highlights self-reflexivity (a translator should reflect upon the translation process and product constantly), a sense of responsibility (the way a text is translated largely depends on the translator's interpretation), and the need to take risks at times (a translator must make the best decision and take the responsibility for the decision he/she makes). Although the participants of this study did not major in translation and might not aspire to become professional translators in the future, the translation experience offered them an opportunity to learn to be responsible translators and ethical users of online tools.

2.2 Stakeholders' attitudes towards MT

The advent of MT technologies, especially free online tools such as GT, is both exciting and challenging for researchers and educators across disciplines. The ambivalent and uncertain

attitude towards MT can be seen in a wide array of analogies such as "a game changer" (Case, 1015), "a double-edged sword" (Mundt & Groves, 2016), and "friend or foe" (Groves & Mundt, 2015). In fact, a review of the literature reveals that one strand in research on MT is stakeholders' attitudes towards the use of MT technologies (Mundt & Groves, 2016). These stakeholders include students, faculty, academic staff and administrators, and possibly employers. One study which addressed the viewpoints of faculty members was conducted by Case (2015) in a Swedish university. It was found that although the respondents generally agreed that students' use of MT could be considered cheating, they acknowledged that (1) students are bound to use it regardless of teachers' attitude; and (2) teachers should help students develop the skills they need to use MT properly and design their teaching and evaluation around these skills. Another European study which surveyed students as well as university language tutors' attitudes towards MT for foreign language learning and teaching was conducted by Niño (2009). Overall, the use of MT was viewed by both groups as a positive and innovative learning experience. Three-fourths of the students felt that MT provided them with a quick starting draft to work on, while one-fourth of students viewed MT as helping them to comprehend a text. On the part of the tutors, only a minority of them had used MT in

their teaching, but a majority of tutors expressed interest in incorporating this technology into their teaching as it matures.

The current study also looked into stakeholders' perceptions of MT. Specifically, it focused on how students utilized Google Translate to help them complete an authentic translation task and how they felt about the experience. Unlike the aforementioned studies which simply gauged stakeholders' general perceptions, this study was situated in a concrete translation experience, and the results should also offer more insights into students' use and perceptions of a specific MT tool (namely, GT).

2.3 MT-assisted language learning

Although MT technologies have become powerful enough to comprehend oral input (Ducar & Schocket, 2018), the current study is situated in a writing class and will not review the additional features beyond translating typed words instantaneously (for other MT's developments, see Tekwa, 2018). Most empirical MT studies in writing classrooms involve some kind of MT-assisted output of students' writing either in L1 or L2. For example, In Lee's (2019) study, Papago (a MT tool developed in Korea) was used to translate students' L1 (Korean) writing into

English. The MT-generated English text is then compared to students' L2 (English) writing (produced without the help of MT), and students produced a final version by comparing the two earlier L2 versions. Students were found to view the use of MT quite positively. Lee (2019) urges teachers to fully understand MT's strengths and limitations to be able to provide guidance to students. Another study was conducted by Tsai (2019) in Taiwan. In this study, students' self-written English texts (SW texts) were compared to those translated by Google Translate from Chinese to English (GT texts). The GT texts were found to exhibit better writing quality, and students were satisfied with GT helping them to find vocabulary items to complete their writing. Other studies involving MT-assisted language learning can be found in Enkin and Mejías-Bikandi (2016), Garcia and Pena (2011), and Groves and Mundt (2015), to name just a few. *Pre-editing*, involving modifying the source text to get a satisfactory MT output, and *post-editing*, involving correcting raw MT output to obtain an acceptable text, also formed the research focus for some earlier MT studies (e.g., French, 1991; Niño, 2007; Yamada, 2015). All in all, MT-assisted language learning has become a robust field of research in the past three decades.

With its wide applications in language classrooms, we should be

reminded that MT systems were not designed for language learning in the first place (Niño, 2009). They were designed for users to get a gist of a foreign text. MT performs the best under close language pairs and restricted or controlled domain, such as legal documents (Niño et al., 2014), and it can process large quantity of repetitive standardized language efficiently. Hutchins' (2001) classification of three main uses of translation and their expected levels of quality contributes to the discussion of the versatile application of translation and MT in today's multilingual world. The three distinctive uses of translation are: *translation for dissemination or publication purposes* (where the best translation quality is required); *translation for assimilation* (where short-lived documents are translated to gather information, and "rough" or less-than-perfect translation is acceptable), and *on-the-spot translation for interpersonal communication* (where short-lived messages are translated to get the gist to assist communication). In this study, the type of translation students did is closest to the first type, *translation for dissemination or publication purposes*, because the translated products will be archived by the non-profit organization and included in the organization's internal and external publications. Therefore, students participated in *professional translation*, as opposed to *pedagogical translation* whose goal is to learn the target language. What is unique about

the translation task is that students were assigned to translate English community development stories into Chinese. Such a translation task calls for a thorough comprehension of the original text in English. To complete the task successfully, students also need to exercise their knowledge of the differences between the two languages' grammar systems as well as their Chinese writing and editing abilities.

To summarize, the field of MT will continue to blossom as its tools continue to improve and humans continue to have the need to communicate across languages. With regard to the use of MT in pedagogical settings, the consensus seems to be that teachers need to guide their students towards ethical use of MT technology to fully harness the benefits these tools bring. The current study focused on one of the most mature MT tools, GT, to understand how it was used by students to assist their English-to-Chinese translation. As students were likely to use more than GT in the translation process, this study also looked into how other technological tools helped students to refine their translation. Last but not least, students' perceptions of their technology-assisted translation process were also gauged to provide insights into how students felt about their uses of technological tools to help them complete the translation task.

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 The participants & research site

The current study involved 16 freshman (10 females and 6 males) who majored in English in a university in northern Taiwan. Their average age was 17 years old. They shared a rather homogenous linguistic background, as native speakers of Mandarin Chinese and learners of English as a foreign language. All participants signed a consent form to participate in the study. Pseudonyms will be used to protect the confidentiality of participants.

The study took place in these students' Freshman English Writing course in an eighteen-week academic semester. The course was designed to introduce students to writing the major genres in English compositions. An important course objective was to encourage students to express their ideas clearly and critically. Another major component of this course was to serve in the community through translating community development stories for World Vision Taiwan (WVT), a non-profit organization in Taiwan (https://www.worldvision.org.tw/). Basic translation principles were introduced and practiced throughout the course.

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

3.2 The pedagogical unit

Informed by Cope and Kalantzis's (2015) reflective pedagogy which consists of *experiencing*, *conceptualizing*, *analyzing*, and *applying* and Kadiu's (2017) reflective approach to teaching translation which emphasizes reflection, the translation unit followed these steps:

(1) Week 1 (*experiencing*, *conceptualizing*, *analyzing*)— Introduction to the course, World Vision Taiwan, and pop songs & GT: The first class meeting was dedicated to providing an overview to the course and World Vision Taiwan. Also, following Ducar and Schocket's (2018) advice of using translation activities of pop songs to familiarize students with the potentials and limitations of MT tools, students were divided into small groups of 3-4 students and translate an English pop song (*Hope* by Chainsmokers) to Chinese. This song was chosen because the language is easy to understand, and it is also rich in figurative usage which would test students' overall comprehension of the lyrics and translation abilities. Students' Chinese translations were compared

to that produced by GT and the official translation provided by the music record company. The teacher then led the class to discuss this initial exploration of GT.

(2) Week 2 (*experiencing*, *conceptualizing*, *analyzing*)— Post-editing GT translation: Part of the community development story from WVT was read together in class so that students could have a basic understanding of the content. Students were also reminded of the fact that many of the English texts from WVT were written in non-standard English by volunteers in WVT's branches all over the world. Students were then given the Chinese translation generated by GT to edit any error and awkward language (i.e., post-editing; see Niño, 2004; Yamada, 2015). To conclude the session, a text translated by an expert translator of the same passage was provided to students. The class then discussed their observation of the two translation outputs.

(3) Weeks 3 & 8, 10 & 11 (*conceptualizing*)—Speeches by professional translators: In each week, an expert translator was invited to class to share his/her translation experience and expertise with the students. Several brief translation exercises were also practiced during these sessions.

(4) Week 5 (*conceptualizing*)—Debriefing on the requirement of the translation portfolio: Students were debriefed about the contents of their individual translation portfolio (see Appendix A for the instructional material). The instructor/researcher also shared her experience of translating for WVT to help students conceptualize their translation task as well as how to apply what they had learned in the course to help them translate better.

(5) Week 10 to Week 16 (*applying*): Students translated community development stories as they were dispatched by WVT. It should be noted that the lengths of the dispatched texts might vary a great deal. Students handed in their translation portfolios in Week 16.

(6) Week 17 (*reflection*): Students completed a questionnaire to reflect upon their translation experiences (Appendix B). The researcher later sent text messages to some participants to ask them to clarify some comments they made either on the translation portfolios or questionnaires.

3.3 Data collection & analysis

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

The data pool for this study consisted of students' translation portfolios as well as their returned questionnaires (Appendix B). The participants were given the freedom to write in Chinese if they felt doing so helped them to convey their ideas better; the researcher then translated these responses into English. As mentioned earlier, if there was any unclear message in the data pool, text messages were sent to ask for clarification. Data analysis followed Thomas's (2006) steps for inductive coding of qualitative data—preparing raw data, reading the data closely, finding dominant themes or categories from multiple readings of the raw data, and continuing revising and refining the categorization. In the results section, data pertaining to each research question will be presented.

4. RESULTS

4.1 Research question #1: Students' use of GT during the translation process

Data revealed that students chose to enter either words (N=2), sentences (N=3), paragraphs (N=5) or entire source texts (N=6) into GT. The two students who entered words into GT were Andy and Eric. Both students were among the few students who

received rather short source texts. As Andy reflected in his translation portfolio, "I do not trust GT's ability to translate long sentences or paragraphs. I used it mainly to check if a word has additional meanings that I am not aware of." In other words, GT was used much like a dictionary. Eric also doubted GT's ability to translate sentences containing words with multiple meanings. He decided that he would use GT just to check word meanings. As shown by the data, both students were not interested in further exploring whether their personal beliefs about GT's performance.

Three students—Annie, Scott, and Nancy—entered sentences into GT during the translation process. When Annie and Scott encountered sentences whose meanings they were not sure about, they entered the sentences into GT. Although Nancy also entered sentences into GT, her method was distinctively different from that of Annie and Scott. She first translated the source text by herself, without the assistance of GT or any dictionary. Then she entered every sentence into GT to check its outcome against her original translation. She explained her translation method in her portfolio, "I mainly rely on Google Translate. Even if I can comprehend a sentence, I still enter it into GT. Then I will read the preceding text again to come up with the optimal translation."

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

Eleven out of 16 students entered either paragraphs or whole texts into GT. Five of them—Wendy, John, Emily, Ken, and Julia—entered paragraphs into GT to get an initial rough translation before they further refined the output. Julia described GT as a time-saving device for her in the questionnaire while Wendy discovered that GT helped her to parse long English paragraphs into logical Chinese sentences (Wendy's questionnaire).

The remaining six students entered the whole texts into GT. Among them, five students (Ian, Candice, Ruby, Amy and Celine) entered the source texts to GT to get a rough idea of the contents before they began reading the texts and translation output carefully. Celine expressed in her questionnaire that using GT to translate the whole text helped her to ease some of her anxiety of the translation task as it made her feel that the task was "manageable" (Celine's questionnaire). Like Celine, Linda also entered the whole text into GT. However, Linda reversed Celine's method by first trying to translate the source text and then used the GT-generated output to check her translation. In other words, Linda's use of GT was similar to that of Nancy, except that the latter entered shorter linguistic units (i.e., sentences) into GT.

To summarize, the participants were found to use GT in various

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

ways in their translation process. A total of 10 students (excluding Linda) either entered paragraphs or the entire documents into GT to gain an initial translation of their source texts before they began to refine the translation outputs.

4.2 Research question #2: Students' efforts of refining the GT translation output

The second research question looked into how students tried to refine their translation. In terms of other online tools students resorted to, English-to-Chinese bilingual dictionaries, including Cambridge Dictionary (N=9), Yahoo Dictionary (N=4), and Oxford Dictionary (N=1), were used most often. In their translation portfolios, Amy also shared that she used Longman Dictionary, and Julia mentioned she used Merriam Webster Dictionary. Amy further explained that although Longman is an English-only dictionary, it provides readers with a detailed explanation of the usage of a word, which made her "fully understand how to use this word in context" (Amy's translation portfolio).

Besides bilingual and monolingual dictionaries, five students also used Google Search to enhance their understanding of unfamiliar

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

terms, such as "European Asylum Support Office" in Annie's case and "fiscal year" in Nancy's case. Nancy also used Google Map to search for an unfamiliar place in Thailand (the Thoet Thai Sub-district) to complete her translation. Two students, Andy and Ken, mentioned the use of other translation websites (I Love Translation https://zhcnt.ilovetranslation.com/ and Baidu Translation https://fanyi.baidu.com/) while Linda checked the bilingual glossary published by Taiwan's National Academy for Educational Research (NAER, http://terms.naer.edu.tw/).

Among all the participants, Linda produced the most detailed translation portfolio which carefully documented her use of a total of five tools in the translation process (Yahoo Dictionary, Google Search, NAER's glossary, Cambridge Dictionary, and Google Translate). Besides Linda, quite a few students also delineated their efforts of refining the translation. For example, both Wendy and Amy described the recursive process of going back and forth the text to produce a smooth translation. In Nancy's case, the phrase "according to" and the word "appropriate" appeared frequently in the source text. Nancy felt that she should alternate the Chinese translation of these terms so that the readers would not feel the translation was too repetitive. In the case of Julia and John, they both noticed the non-standard English features of the

source documents. For them, trying to comprehend these features was an extra challenge during the translation process.

In summary, a few online tools were used jointly with Google Translate to help students refine their translation outputs. As a translation tool, it seemed that students were generally quite satisfied with the early drafts GT produced. Students also showed care for producing the optimal translation by going over the translation carefully and choosing the most appropriate Chinese words.

4.3 Research question #3: Students' perceptions of the overall GT-assisted translation process

Most participants perceived the GT-assisted translation process quite positively. Words and phrases like "enjoyable," "interesting," "a time-saving device," and "high accuracy" can be found in students' questionnaires and portfolios. In their returned questionnaires, seven students mentioned that before this assignment, they used to use GT for word translation. To complete the translation task for WVT, they discovered that GT could be used beyond word translation. Ruby described this discovering process in her portfolio:

At first, I put unfamiliar words into GT. However, I found GT could not give me the best meaning, so I decided to use Cambridge Dictionary to translate unknown vocabulary. Then I found it took me a while to translate sentences. I tried to enter a sentence into GT. To my surprise, the process was highly efficient, and the product displayed great accuracy. Finally, I put my whole essay in GT. Then I copied and pasted the output to a Word document, and I refined the translation line by line.

She summarized her discovery in these words in her questionnaire, "Try not to enter stand-alone vocabulary into GT when you translate. Enter full sentences or even a whole paragraph or essay to get better accuracy."

GT's rather high accuracy was a pleasant surprise to some students who had previously used it for lengthier source documents. However, the efficiency of GT may present a threat to students' motivation to improve one's English and translation abilities. Annie described the possibility of over-relying on tools like GT, "I feel it is very easy to overly rely on GT. Although it helped me finish my assignment, it may slow down my progress

of improving my translation ability" (Annie's questionnaire). How to balance the tradeoff between efficiency and over-reliance is definitely a topic worthy of more investigation in the future.

As the source texts often contained proper nouns of unknown places, ethnic groups, and organizations, Ken and Ian struggled to find the optimal translation of these nouns in the translation process. Ken remarked that he did not enjoy the GT-assisted translation process because GT "gave him very weird translation" of proper nouns. In fact, Ken's frustration was rather surprising as his finished translation displayed a high level of accuracy and readability. His efforts to refine the translation with Google Search, Baidu, and his language ability seemed to pay off.

Unlike Ken, Julia perceived encountering proper nouns in a more positive light. She wrote on the questionnaire, "GT gave me a base draft to edit. It could not translate those concepts or nouns related to the culture dimension. I think this is the major difference between machine translation and a human translator!" Likewise, Annie also acknowledged GT's inability to translate proper nouns and felt that such a shortcoming is quite understanding, "as there are just too many of them out there!" (Annie's questionnaire).

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

5. DISCUSSION

The current study looked into students' use of GT in an authentic translation task for a Taiwan-based NGO. It was found that except for two students who doubted GT's ability to translate, the other students (N=14) entered either sentences, paragraphs or whole documents into GT. Among these 14 students, twelve of them used GT to get a quick, first drafts of their input. The two remaining students, Nancy and Celine, used GT-generated translation to post-edit their self-produced products. Although there is no optimal way of using GT during the translation process, Nancy and Celine's efforts of translating independently should be applauded. Ruby's experience of experimenting GT from words and progressing to longer units is also enlightening. Although tools like GT may help students get through a daunting class assignment more efficiently, such experience, if involving merely a quick copy and paste, probably contributes little to students' linguistic growth. In their academic and professional lives, there will be many opportunities which require students to write and translate without the assistance of tools like GT. Therefore, students should continue to work on their independent translation abilities and learn to use MT tools judiciously.

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

A second research focus of the current study is students' refinement efforts. Data collected for this study suggested the painstaking and recursive process of checking multiple sources and going back and forth between the source texts and translation drafts. Online bilingual dictionaries were used most often in students' GT-assisted translation process. Google Map and Google Search were also used by a few students to help them generate accurate translation of unfamiliar terms. Two translation applications were used by two students who either had little faith in GT (Andy) or was frustrated with GT's inability to provide him with appropriate translation for proper terms (Ken). With students like Andy, a follow-up study can be conducted to investigate the accuracy of translation outputs from different MT tools. For students like Ken, more scaffolding on tips of translating proper terms can take place in the experiencing and conceptualizing stages (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015) before their mounting frustration develops. In these stages, more collaborative translation tasks may be designed to encourage students to pool together their knowledge and resources.

This study also looked into students' perceptions of the overall GT-assisted translation task. As mentioned in the literature view,

stakeholders' attitudes towards MT has been investigated over the years (Case, 2015; Niño, 2009). Understanding stakeholders' preexisting attitudes is important because they may affect the ways they make use of these tools. As mentioned earlier, Andy and Eric believed that GT was reliable only for checking word meanings; they did not venture to explore the possibilities of GT providing them with workable first drafts of their source texts.

Unlike previous studies which were designed as general surveys to probe into stakeholders' attitudes towards MT, the current study was situated in a contextualized, authentic translation task. Rather than offering decontextualized responses, the participants of this study were guided to reflect on their experience of translating for WVT (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015; Kadiu, 2017). Most students acknowledged the usefulness of GT and enjoyed the translation process. Based on their experience with GT, they also provided concrete feedback on a specific technological tool. This is an important contribution made by the current study on the topic of user attitudes, as the participants did not reflect on their perceptions in void or without much prior experience with any MT tool.

In the future, more authentic, meaning-based assignments should

be implemented to encourage students to express themselves with their current linguistic repertoire (Ducar & Schochet, 2018). Sentence- and paragraph-based, two-way (from the source language to target language and from the target language to the source language) translation assignments should also be designed to guide students develop more judicious and efficient use of MT tools. All in all, to enhance students' professionalism as translators, more pedagogical translation activities can be designed and implemented.

The current study is limited by its participant size and time duration. Also, the lengths and content density of the source texts varied a great deal. As a result, some students had more practices with translation and GT than others. This less-than-perfect arrangement illustrates the unpredictable nature of translation— translators will often find themselves in situations which they are not prepared for (Kaidu, 2017). Nonetheless, this study offers a glimpse into students' translation process, refinement efforts, and perceptions on helping a NGO to translate its documents. To expand the data sources, researchers can consider installing screen recorders (e.g., Camtasia) to record students' translation process. The recorded data can serve as the basis for follow-up retrospective interviews. Students can also be guided to translate

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

different genres (e.g., classic literature and financial reports) to further examine the functionalities of MT tools. As mentioned earlier, the outputs of different MT tools can also be investigated jointly to see what tools work best under certain circumstances.

6. CONCLUSION

The current study examined how a group of Taiwanese EFL learners used GT to translate community development stories for a NGO. The participants were fully aware that the best translation quality was required for their first translation experience and tried their best to produce the best products. With the rapid development of technologies, the functions of MT tools will likely become more powerful and diverse. Rather than holding negative attitudes towards the use of MT in academic settings, both teachers and students should learn to use these supplementary tools more creatively and efficiently. In the end, tools are just tools, and it is humans who can decide what we want to achieve with these tools. This study also found that translating for a meaningful cause was a motivating experience for students. Writing and translation teachers should continue to look for these opportunities to engage their students to experience, conceptualize, and analyze the nuances of translation and apply

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

their newly gained knowledge (Cope & Kalantzis, 2015).

REFERENCES

ACTFL. (2017). ACTFL *position statement on the role of technology in language learning* [Electronic version]. https://www.actfl.org/news/position-statements/statement-the-role-technology-language-learning

Case, M. (2015). Machine translation and the disruption of foreign language learning activities. *eLearning Papers*, *45*, 4-16. https://dialnet.unirioja.es/servlet/articulo?codigo =6364219

Castro Moreno, C. (2016). The role of translation in foreign language learning and teaching. Unpublished Master's thesis. Jaén, Spain: Universidad de Jaén.

Cope, B., & Kalantzis, M. (2015). An introduction to the pedagogy of multiliteracies. In B. Cope & M. Kalantzis (Eds.), *A pedagogy of multiliteracies: Learning by design* (pp. 1-36). Palgrave Macmillan.

Correa, M. (2014). Leaving the "peer" out of peer-editing: Online translators as a pedagogical tool in the Spanish as a second

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

    language classroom. *Latin American Journal of Content and Language Integrated Learning*, *7*(2), 1-20. https://laclil.unisabana.edu.co/index.php/LACLIL/article/view/3568

Ducar, C., & Schocket, D. H. (2018). Machine translation and the L2 classroom: Pedagogical solutions for making peace with Google translate. *Foreign Language Annals*, *51*, 779-795. https://doi.org/ 10.1111/flan.12366

Enkin, E., & Mejías-Bikandi, E. (2016). Using online translators in the second language classroom: Ideas for advanced-level Spanish. *LACLIL*, *9*(1), 138-158. https://doi.org/ 10.5294/laclil.2016.9.1.6

French, R. J. (1991). Machine translation. In W. Brierley & I. R. Kemble (Eds.), *Computers as a tool in language learning* (pp. 55-69). Ellis Horwood Limited.

Garcia, I., & Pena, M. I. (2011). Machine translation-assisted language learning: Writing for beginners. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, *24*, 471-487. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/09588221.2011.582687

Groves, M., & Mundt, K. (2015). Friend or foe? Google Translate in language for academic purposes. *English for Specific Purposes*, *37*, 112-121. https://doi.org/ 10.1016/j.esp.2014.09.001

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

Hutchins, J. (2001). Machine translation and human translation: In competition or in complementation? *International Journal of Translation*, *13*, 5-20
http://www.hutchinsweb.me.uk/IJT-2001.pdf

Jiménez-Crespo, M. (2017). The role of translation technologies in Spanish language teaching. *Journal of Spanish Language Teaching*, *4*, 181-193. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/23247797. 2017.1408949

Kadiu, S. (2017). Teaching theory through practice: A reflexive approach to translation pedagogy. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning*, *4*, 48-77. http://www.cttl.org/uploads/5/2/4/3/5243866/cttl_e_2017_2_ _1_.pdf

Lee, S.-M. (2019). The impact of using machine translation on EFL students' writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 33*, 157-175. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/09588221. 2018.1553186

McCarthy, B. (2004). Does online machine translation spell the end of take-home translation assignments? *CALL-EJ Online*, *6*(1). http://callej.org/journal/6-1/Mccarthy2004.pdf

Mundt, K., & Groves, M. (2016). A double-edged sword: The merits and the policy implications of Google Translate in higher education. *European Journal of Higher Education*, *6*,

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

387-401. https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2016.1172248

Musk, N. (2014). Avoiding the target language with the help of Google: Managing language choices in gathering information for EFL project work. *TESOL Quarterly*, *48*, 110-135. https://doi.org/10.1002/tesq.102

Niño, A. (2007). MT Post-editing: A text repair experience for the foreign language class. *Cadernos de Traduçao*, *1*, 115 – 131. https://periodicos.ufsc.br/index.php/traducao/article/view/6995

Niño, A. (2009). Machine translation in foreign language learning: Language learners' and tutors' perceptions of its advantages and disadvantages. *ReCALL*, *21*, 241-258. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0958344009000172

Niño, A., Gaspari, F., & Somers, H. (2014). The role of TESL in the age of (highly accurate) MT. *Contact*, *40*(4), 35-42.

Strauss, V. (2017, December 20). Analysis: The surprising thing Google learned about its employees—and what it means for today's students. Washington Post. https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/answer-sheet/wp/2017/12/20/the-surprising-thing-google-learned-about-its-employees-and-what-it-means-for-students

Tekwa, K. (2018). Increasing willingness and opportunities to

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

communicate in a foreign language with machine translation and instant messaging. Unpublished doctoral thesis, University of Ottawa, Canada.

Thomas, D. R. (2006). A general inductive approach for qualitative data analysis. *American Journal of Evaluation*, *27*, 237-246. https://doi.org/ 10.1177/1098214005283748

Tsai, S.-C. (2019). Using google translate in EFT drafts: A preliminary investigation. *Computer Assisted Language Learning, 32*, 510-526. https://doi.org/ 10.1080/09588221. 2018.1527361

Witte, A., Harden, T. & Ramos de Oliveira Harden, A. (Eds.) (2009). *Translation in second language learning and teaching*. Peter Lang.

Yamada, M. (2015). Can college students be post editors: An investigation into employing language learners in machine translation plus post-editing. *Machine Translation*, *29*, 49-67. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10590-014-9167-7

APPENDIX A

Instruction for Translation Portfolio

In this portfolio, please include the followings:

1. The original WVT text assigned to you.

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

2. The final Chinese translation of the WVT text.
3. A thorough explanation of how you used Google Translate and other tools (such as online dictionaries and translation apps.) to help you complete the task. Please provide screen-captured images of your computer or smartphone screen when necessary. You can also include drafts from different stages of your translation endeavor to delineate your translation process.

When compiling your portfolio, please pay attention to:
1. The translation quality of your WVT text
2. Your explanation of the translation process; it should include answers to these two questions:
   (1) How did you use Google Translate during the translation process?
   (2) How did you try to refine your translation?
● Please note that any evidence of unedited machine-generated errors should be avoided.

APPENDIX B

End-of-Semester Questionnaire

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

<u>Please try your best to answer each question.</u>

1. **In the past**, have you used Google Translate? If so, what did you use it for? Did Google Translate help you complete the task?

2. When was Google Translate **most helpful** when you translated for WVT?

3. When was Google Translate **least helpful** when you translated for WVT? What did you do to compensate for GT's shortcomings?

Chen, W. (2020). Using Google Translate in an authentic translation task: The process, refinement efforts and student perceptions. *Current Trends in Translation Teaching and Learning E,* 7, 213-238. 10.51287/cttl_ e_ 2020 _7_cheryl_chen_wei-yu.pdf

4. How did you feel about this GT-assisted translation process? Did you enjoy it?

5. Other comments about the translation assignment and using Google Translate in the translation process (optional)