

GOOGLE TRANSLATE'S QUALITY IN TRANSLATING AN ENGLISH LITERARY TEXT INTO INDONESIAN PERFORMED IN 2017 AND 2019: A DIACHRONIC STUDY

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ABSTRACT

The rapid development of technology, especially in translation machine, has brought a sizable amount of changes in terms of how human beings handle translation tasks, such as the time allocated for finishing a translation project, the role of translators as perceived by clients, the diminishing profession as a translator and many more. However, for translating a certain text type, namely literary text, the translation machines are still facing considerable obstacles. This is due to fact that literary texts have some unique characteristics irreplaceable by the machines. Nevertheless, as technology is developing, the translation result of literary texts performed in the past might have been different as of now. Therefore, it is interesting to see how translation machines are changing whether it is from good to better or vice versa.

This paper attempts to measure the performance of Google Translate (GT) in translating a short story, "Cat in the Rain" by Ernest Hemingway, seen from two different period of time, 2017 and 2019. The 2017 translation result from Ariany's paper (2017) is compared to the one taken in 2019. The comparison focuses on measuring the translation quality of GT by applying Koponen's theory, which categorizes the errors' occurrence in GT translation results obtained in 2017 and 2019.

The method applied in this study was explicatory, which "entails a careful, close, and focused examination of a single major text, or of evidence surrounding a single complex event, in an attempt to understand one or more aspects of it" (George, 2008, p.5). This research is a diachronic study which investigates the GT development from 2017 to 2019 in translating a literary text. The primary data were collected in October 2019, while the secondary data were taken from Ariany's study. The result confirms the belief that the translation machine develops and shows improvement in literary text translations.

Keywords: Google Translate, literary text, diachronic study

INTRODUCTION

There has been a considerable amount of research concerning computer as a machine which can be used to translate one language into other languages. Since its first invention around 1950s, machine translation (MT) it is still developing into more complex systems, as stated by Hutchins that MT has developed into a large-scale, commercial system as a part of computers' program (2003: 161-174).

MT has offered some practicality, and efficiency to many people to solve the communication barrier between different languages. MT has been able to shortcut the translation process, which makes MT provide less effort to produce translation product (Roberts, 2002:430). Users simply put a text (or voice) in MT and it renders the text (or voice) speedily into the desired language.

The most famous and widely-used MT, Google Translate (GT), is chosen to be discussed because it is most famous and widely-used MT, especially for Indonesian users. According to Google Translate Official Blog, there are more than 500 million users of Google Translate. The use of Google Translate among Indonesian in their every daily life aspects is very common. Indonesian is one of the five most common TLs translating from English as SL along with Spanish, Arabic, Russian, and Portuguese (Google Official Blog, 2016).

Inspite of its efficiency, practicality, and simplicity, MT still has some limitation. Human beings cannot completely depend on it. Most MT users are not quite aware of such limitation and take it for granted. The MT's rapid development is not in line with users' awareness that the product of MT is not completely reliable. However, like a living being, MT has undergone a considerable growth and development. A text translated by MT a month ago might result differently if translated today. MT learns from mistakes or error they made and tries to rectify them.

Therefore, the paper tries to analyze an MT's performance, that is GT, in translating a literary text done in 2017 compared to the translation by GT done in 2020. The aim of this research is to find out whether the MT has undergone a significant progress in terms of its translation product.

METHODOLOGY

The object of the study is the sentences in literary text, that is Hemingway’s “Cat in the Rain”, which was translated in 2017 and translated in November 2019. The data from 2017 were taken from Ariany’s thesis (2017) which sought to find the performance of GT in translating literary and academic text. The literary text was chosen as the object of the study due to its complexities and difficulties, especially when translated by MT. The performance is measured by analyzing the errors committed by GT in 2017 and 2019. The error analysis applies Koponen’s category which groups the errors into omitted concept, added concept, untranslated concept, mistranslated concept, substituted concept, and explicitated concept. Koponen categorizes a translation error as “semantic components not shared by source text (ST) and target text (TT) in which semantic components are individual concept and the semantic relations between two concepts” (Koponen, 2010: 3). The paper focuses on the individual concept which emphasizes on errors based on the mismatches between source and target concepts.

The detailed explanation and its examples for each concept can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Koponen’s Individual Error Category with Examples

Types of Concept Error	Meaning	Example
Omitted Concept	ST concept that is not conveyed by the TT.	ST: I’m going down and get that kitty. TT: Aku akan mendapatkan kucing itu.
Added Concept	TT concept that is not present in the ST.	ST: The motor cars were gone. TT: Motor mobil pergi.
Untranslated Concept	SL words that appear in TT.	ST: I’m going down and get that kitty. TT: Aku akan mendapatkan kitty itu.
Mistranslated Concept	A TT concept has the wrong meaning for the context.	ST: They were big palms. TT: Ada telapak tangan besar
Substituted Concept	TT concept is not a direct lexical equivalent for ST concept but can be considered a valid replacement for the context.	ST: His wife looked out of the window. TT: Istrinya menjenguk dari jendela.
Explicitated Concept	TT concept explicitly states information left implicit in ST without adding information.	ST: They were big palms. TT: Ada pohon besar.

ANALYSIS

The error analysis was done by focusing on the individual concept which refers to the errors created by GT on a single concept represented by content words, such as words that function as noun, verb and adjective. What it means by one concept here does not necessarily consist of one word. Concepts may be reflected by “units larger than individual words, for example in the case of compound noun, names and idioms” (Koponen, 2010: 3). Individual concept errors are divided into six subcategories: omitted, added, untranslated, mistranslated, substituted and explicitated concepts.

Ariany (2017) has found out that GT performance in 2017 when translation “Cat in the Rain” shows the following result:

Chart 1. Concept errors done by GT in 2017

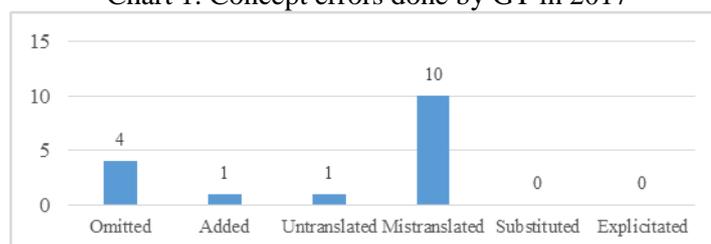


Chart 1 indicates that the most errors done by GT in 2017 is mistranslated concept, that is, A TT concept has the wrong meaning for the context, the second most error occurrence is omitted concept in which the ST concept that is not conveyed by the TT, the third is untranslated concept which indicates the

existence of ST not translated in the TT, and the least error occurrence is added concept, that is, the addition of concept which is non-existent in the ST. Substituted and explicitated concept are not found. The following table shows the detailed description of the types of error in GT 2017.

Tabel 2. Error Types in GT 2017

No.	ST	No.	GT 2017	Type of Errors	
Omitted Concept					
1.	3/ST/CR/2	They did not know any of the <u>people</u> ...	3/TT/CR/GT/2	Mereka tidak tahu salah satu <u>orang</u> ...	Omitted Concept- plural noun
2.	8/ST/CR/7	Artists liked the way the palms <u>grew</u> ...	8/TT/CR/GT/7	Artis menyukai cara telapak tangan tumbuh ...	Omitted Concept-plural noun
3.	8/ST/CR/7	... and the bright colors of the <u>hotels</u> facing the gardens and the sea.	8/TT/CR/GT/7	... dan warna-warna cerah dari hotel yang menghadap taman dan laut.	Omitted Concept- plural noun
4.	15/ST/CR/14	The <u>motor cars</u> were gone ...	15/TT/CR/GT/14	The motor mobil pergi ...	Omitted Concept-plural noun
Added Concept					
1.	15/ST/CR/14	The motor cars were gone ...	15/TT/CR/GT/14	The <u>motor</u> mobil pergi ...	Added Concept-noun
Untranslated Concept					
1.	15/ST/CR/14	The motor cars were gone ...	15/TT/CR/GT/14	The <u>motor</u> mobil pergi ...	Untranslated Concept-determiner
Mistranslated Concept					
1.	3/ST/CR/2	... the people they <u>passed</u> on the stairs ...	3/TT/CR/GT/2	... orang yang mereka <u>diteruskan</u> ...	Mistranslated Concept-verb
2.	5/ST/CR/4	It also faced the public garden ...	5/TT/CR/GT/4	Hal ini juga menghadapi taman publik...	Mistranslated Concept-pronoun
3.	5/ST/CR/4	It also <u>faced</u> the public garden ...	5/TT/CR/GT/4	Hal ini juga <u>menghadapi</u> taman publik ...	Mistranslated Concept-verb
4.	6/ST/CR/5	There were big <u>palms</u> ...	6/TT/CR/GT/5	Ada <u>telapak tangan</u> besar ...	Mistranslated Concept-noun
5.	8/ST/CR/7	Artists liked the way the <u>palms</u> grew...	8/TT/CR/GT/7	Artis menyukai cara <u>telapak tangan</u> tumbuh...	Mistranslated Concept-noun
6.	14/ST/CR/13	... to <u>come up</u> and break again ...	14/TT/CR/GT/13	... untuk <u>datang</u> dan istirahat lagi ...	Mistranslated Concept-phrasal verb
7.	15/ST/CR/14	... from the <u>square</u> by the war monument.	15/TT/CR/GT/14	... dari <u>alun</u> dengan monumen perang.	Mistranslated Concept-noun
8.	16/ST/CR/15	<u>Across</u> the square ...	16/TT/CR/GT/15	Di alun-alun ...	Mistranslated Concept-adverb
9.	18/ST/CR/17	... one of the <u>dripping green</u> tables.	18/TT/CR/GT/17	... salah satu meja hijau <u>menetes</u> .	Mistranslated Concept-adjective

In its development during the last two years, GT showed a little significant progress. Some similar errors are still found in the translation product of 2019. The following table shows the comparison of the translation product of GT 2017 and GT 2019:

Table 3 The comparison of GT 2017 and GT 2019

No.	ST	No.	GT 2017	No.	GT 2019
2/ST/CR/1	There were only two Americans stopping at the hotel.	2/TT/CR/GT17/1	Hanya ada dua orang Amerika berenti di hotel.	2/TT/CR/GT19/1	Hanya ada dua orang Amerika mampir di hotel.
3/ST/CR/2	They did not know any of the people they passed on the stairs on their way to and from their room.	3/TT/CR/GT17/2	Mereka tidak tahu salah satu orang yang mereka diteruskan tangga dalam perjalanan mereka ke dan dari kamar mereka.	3/TT/CR/GT19/2	Mereka tidak tahu ada orang yang mereka lewat di tangga dalam perjalanan ke dan dari kamar mereka.
5/ST/CR/4	It also faced the public garden and the war monument.	5/TT/CR/GT17/4	Hal ini juga menghadapi taman publik dan monumen perang.	5/TT/CR/GT19/4	Itu juga menghadap ke taman umum dan monumen perang.
6/ST/CR/5	There were big palms and green benches in the public garden.	6/TT/CR/GT17/5	Ada telapak tangan besar dan bangku-bangku hijau di taman umum.	6/TT/CR/GT19/5	Ada telapak tangan besar dan bangku hijau di taman umum.
8/ST/CR/7	Artists liked the way the palms grew and the bright colors of the hotels facing the gardens and the sea.	8/TT/CR/GT17/7	Artis menyukai cara telapak tangan tumbuh dan warna-warna cerah dari hotel yang menghadap taman dan laut.	8/TT/CR/GT19/7	Seniman menyukai cara telapak tangan tumbuh dan warna-warna cerah dari hotel yang menghadap ke taman dan laut.
10/ST/CR/9	It was made of bronze and glistened in the rain.	10/TT/CR/GT17/9	Itu terbuat dari perunggu dan berkilau di tengah hujan.	10/TT/CR/GT19/9	Itu terbuat dari perunggu dan berkilau di saat hujan.
14/ST/CR/13	The sea broke in a long line in the rain and slipped back down the beach to come up and break again in a long line in the rain.	14/TT/CR/GT17/13	laut pecah di garis panjang dalam hujan dan menyelinap kembali ke pantai untuk datang dan istirahat lagi di garis panjang dalam hujan.	14/TT/CR/GT19/13	Laut pecah dalam garis panjang di tengah hujan dan menyelinap kembali pantai untuk datang dan istirahat lagi dalam garis panjang di tengah hujan
15/ST/CR/14	The motor cars were gone from the square by the war monument.	15/TT/CR/GT17/14	The motor mobil pergi dari alun dengan monumen perang.	15/TT/CR/GT19/14	Mobil-mobil motor sudah hilang dari persegi dengan monumen perang.
16/ST/CR/15	Across the square in the doorway of the cafe a waiter stood looking out at the empty square	16/TT/CR/GT17/15	Di alun-alun di depan pintu kafe pelayan berdiri melihat keluar di alun-alun kosong	16/TT/CR/GT19/15	Di seberang alun-alun di pintu kafe seorang pelayan berdiri memandang keluar di alun-alun kosong
18/ST/CR/17	Outside right under their window a cat was crouched under one of the dripping green tables.	18/TT/CR/GT17/17	Di luar tepat di bawah jendela mereka kucing meringkuk di bawah salah satu meja hijau menetes	18/ST/CR/GT19/17	Di luar tepat di bawah jendela mereka, seekor kucing berjongkok di bawah salah satu meja hijau yang menetes

The errors types occurred in GT 2019 can be found in the following table:

Tabel 2. Error Types in GT 2017

No.	ST	No.	GT 2019	Type of Errors
Omitted Concept				
1.	3/ST/CR/2 They did not know any of the <u>people</u> ...	3/TT/CR/ GT/2	Mereka tidak tahu <u>ada orang</u> ...	Improved
2.	8/ST/CR/7 <u>Artists</u> liked the way the palms grew...	8/TT/CR/ GT/7	<u>Seniman</u> menyukai cara <u>telapak</u> tangan...	Improved
3.	8/ST/CR/7 ... and the bright colors of the <u>hotels</u> facing the gardens and the sea.	8/TT/CR/ GT/7	... dan warna-warna cerah dari <u>hotel</u> yang menghadap taman dan laut.	Omitted Concept- plural noun
4.	15/ST/CR/ 14 The <u>motor cars</u> were gone ...	15/TT/CR/ GT/14	Mobil-mobil sudah hilang..	Improved
Added Concept				
1.	15/ST/CR/ 14 The motor cars were gone ...	15/TT/CR/ GT/14	The <u>motor</u> mobil pergi ...	Added Concept-noun
Untranslated Concept				
1.	15/ST/CR/ 14 The motor cars were gone ...	15/TT/CR/ GT/14	Mobil-mobil sudah hilang..	Improved
Mistranslated Concept				
1.	3/ST/CR/2 ... the people they <u>passed</u> on the stairs ...	3/TT/CR/ GT/2	mereka <u>lewati</u> di tangga dalam perjalanan	Improved
2.	5/ST/CR/4 It also faced the public garden ...	5/TT/CR/ GT/4	<u>It</u> juga menghadap ke taman umum dan <u>monumen perang</u> .	Mistranslated Concept-pronoun
3.	5/ST/CR/4 It also <u>faced</u> the public garden ...	5/TT/CR/ GT/4	<u>menghadap</u> ke taman umum dan monumen perang	Improved
4.	6/ST/CR/5 There were big <u>palms</u> ...	6/TT/CR/ GT/5	Ada <u>telapak tangan</u> besar dan bangku	Mistranslated Concept-noun
5.	8/ST/CR/7 Artists liked the way the <u>palms</u> grew...	8/TT/CR/ GT/7	Artis menyukai cara <u>telapak tangan</u> tumbuh...	Mistranslated Concept-noun
6.	14/ST/CR/ 13 ... to <u>come up</u> and break again ...	14/TT/CR/ GT/13	... <u>urut datang</u> dan istirahat lagi dalam garis panjang...	Mistranslated Concept-phasal verb
7.	15/ST/CR/ 14 ... from the <u>square</u> by the war monument.	15/TT/CR/ GT/14	... hilang dari persegi.	Mistranslated Concept-noun
8.	16/ST/CR/ 15 <u>Across</u> the square ...	16/TT/CR/ GT/15	Di seberang alun-alun	Improved
9.	18/ST/CR/ 17 ... one of the <u>dripping green</u> tables.	18/TT/CR/ GT/17	... salah satu meja hijau <u>menetes</u> .	Mistranslated Concept-adjective

Some errors have been rectified in GT 19, but most of the errors lie on the mistranslated concept. A somewhat surprising result is the word of “palms” which were translated into “telapak tangan” both in GT17 and GT 19. There is no improvement in this part. The following chart summarizes the result of GT 19:

Chart 2. Concept errors done by GT in 2019

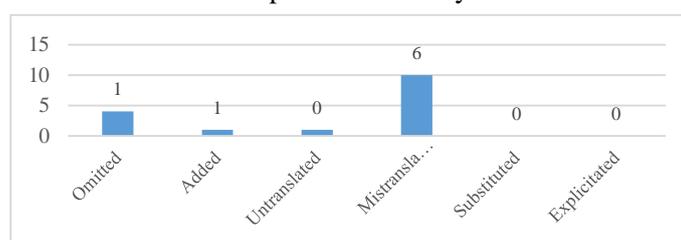


Chart 2 indicates that there are some improvement in the translation result of the literary text “Cat in the Rain” by Google Translate in 2019.

CONCLUSION

The paper proves that Google Translate shows some improvement in their machine translation. Some errors in GT 17 are no longer found in GT 19. In the translation of the literary text, GT 19 makes fewer errors showing a better performance than GT 17. The difference between both MTs, however, is a very slight one. GT 19 demonstrates a steadier performance regardless the text type and despite the limitation of the MT, it also portrays its ability to recognize Indonesian (TT) complex sentence structure better. Nevertheless, this result does not mean that MT has become a trusted tool in terms of translating a complex text. MT can serve as a tool to facilitate human being in the process of translation, not to change the role of human in doing the translation activity.

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