



A SYSTEMATIC REVIEW ON THE UTILIZATION OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE IN LEARNING ENGLISH AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Abstract:

This paper aimed to present a systematic review of the extent of Arab learners' utilization of Google Translate as a tool in learning English as a foreign language through a literature review methodology. Fifty related articles were searched and reviewed from Google Scholar, ERIC, DOAJ, WoS, and Scopus published over the last ten years. Based on the collected information, most Arab college learners used Google Translate as a tool for learning English to understand vocabulary, write sentences and paragraphs, and comprehend reading texts and passages. The reviewed articles reported that Arab learners benefit from using this tool on their classroom tasks and activities, where they learn independently and solve language learning difficulties. However, translation using GT from English to Arabic and vice versa is far from perfect, so the learners need to do post-editing to ensure the correctness of the translated information. A GT word choice comprises an impassive detection of meaning and may not benefit the learners to use that word in their active vocabulary register.

Keywords: Google Translate, supplementary tool, grammar translation, language learning, vocabulary acquisition, critical thinking skills

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1. Introduction

The advent of modern technologies and new application tools has greatly transformed the teaching methodology and learning English as a foreign language. It provides both language learners and teachers an avenue to explore digital devices to acquire English vocabulary, which helps them understand reading text and writing paragraphs. The birth of the Grammar-Translation Method (GTM) in the field of language teaching and learning has been used especially in reading, writing, grammar and vocabulary acquisition (Richards, 2001). Google Translate (GT) is one of the digital applications developed by Google that has become a prevalent translation tool for language students. Since English is still counted as a foreign language in the Arab countries, many Arab learners use GT to help them learn English. This application tends to help learners get the translation instantly and effortlessly.

Certainly, many people around the globe exploit the facility of GT for translation, including Arab learners, daily. Language learners are using this tool to learn a new language. Nevertheless, the benefits of this new tool for language learning might affect their critical thinking skills. Some teachers expressed reservations about the way students deal with these technologies both inside and outside the classrooms (Davis, 2006 and Watkins, 2004). Thus, this study was conducted to present findings from previous studies on how Google Translate, as a tool in learning English, was utilized by Arab college learners and how it helped them learn English as a foreign language. The research sought specific answers to the following questions:

- 1) To what extent do Arab learners utilize GT in learning English as a foreign language?
- 2) What benefits and drawbacks do Arab learners get from using GT as a tool in learning English as a foreign language?
- 3) How does GT, as a language tool, affect Arab learners' critical thinking skills?

2. Literature Review

2.1 Google Translate (GT) and Its Role in Learning English

Dagilene (2012) and Cook (2010) believed that due to the recent globalized world, there is a resurgence of the GTM approach to language teaching and learning. One digital application tool that has been helping students improve their language learning skills is Google Translate. It is a digital translation provided by Google free of charge, where anyone can translate text from one language to another. It can be accessed using mobile devices connected to the internet through Application Programming Interfaces (APIs). GT can translate more than 100 languages by evaluating millions of natural bilingual text pairs (Koehn, 2009).

For EFL students, GT is a common translation tool that can translate words, sentences, or paragraphs quickly. It helps EFL learners complete their academic tasks, particularly in writing, which is considered the toughest of all four English language

skills. EFL learners normally use GT to find the meaning of the word. They usually write their ideas in their first language (L1) and then translate them into English. In addition, they use GT to understand and verify some grammatical mistakes in simple sentences. The other phase of using GT is to find out the correct spelling of words (Raza & Nor, 2018). They concluded that GT has a significant role in helping EFL students in the classroom. GT can also be used in learning activities, particularly in reading.

This classroom activity requires a lot of words and needs to translate some unfamiliar words that they don't know. Murtisari *et al* (2019) found that students generally use GT to translate words from the reading texts and even in assignment writing. It is mostly utilized in interpreting a reading text to understand what the paragraph says. GT is also used by EFL students to translate the whole text. Chandra and Yuyun (2018) realized that students use GT as supplementary tools in learning. Raza and Nor (2018) stressed that GT is an effective tool to learn English quickly and easily.

Of the core skills in English, writing is deemed a hard skill for students to learn (Al Darwish & Sadeqi, 2016). Learning English contains many components that learners ought to master for a better reading, writing, speaking, and listening performance, like the subject-verb agreement, word order, and diction. The main issue in the English language proficiency of Arab learners is the inadequate vocabulary, as well as the lack of exposure to the English language outside the classrooms. Since insufficient vocabulary will lead to a lack of comprehension, GT can play a significant role in helping them understand English easily (Ahmed, 2010).

2.2 GT as a Language Tool for Learning English Language

GT was first introduced in 2007 by Google as a platform to provide automatic translations from over 50 languages. In 2009, Google Translation Toolkit was introduced as a shared web-based translation program in which users upload texts and present them for translation. It has optimistic outcomes if used properly, as well as with the aid of the post-editing process (Veritas, 2009). As a supplemental tool for learning the English language, it was found beneficial for learning English as it improved learners' vocabulary and made them more interested in their own learning. Alhaisoni and Alhaysony (2017) said that roughly, all students used GT for the purposes of learning vocabulary, writing sentences, and understanding reading text. Getting the meaning of unfamiliar words, translating text for writing assignments, and reading activities in the EFL classes are the usual activities where GT can be used.

However, GT is unable to translate all words properly, and it occasionally provides unacceptable meanings for words. Nugraha, Ratnawati and Surachmat (2019) affirmed that the usage of GT aided them in understanding vocabulary because it can be used easily from their mobile devices. It is sometimes used as a quick dictionary for translating text and paragraphs to enrich their vocabulary.

2.3 Grammar Translation Method in the EFL Class

The word translation was defined by Newmark (1982) as a process of replacing the note from one language to another while keeping the meaning of the main statements. The most crucial objective of any change is to retain the original message of the text and to maintain the quality of the translation. GTM is a method used for teaching traditional languages, which centers on grammar and translation in reading Greek and Latin texts and literature (Singsatit, 2019). In GTM classes, students mainly acquire rules on grammar and then relate those rules by converting sentences between L1 and L2. It is thought that this technique can help the learners to comprehend the target language in writing and speaking.

The philosophies of GTM are based on the notion that acquiring diverse languages can increase the learners' communication. If the students remember the language, they can use their language skills in translation. Furthermore, GTM makes language learning simpler because learners grasp the structures of the language and its meaning. Mallikamas (2004) indicated that GTM is efficient and simple because the teacher can describe the gist and recap to the learners the language rules and structures. In GTM classes, learners are trained on the rules of grammar, which contain the meaning of words from simple to complex levels. Learners apply those rules and structures to sentences from L1 to L2.

This approach was primarily taught in learners' mother tongue and was frequently considered a major tool in EFL/ESL classes. It is also a conventional method used in translation classes worldwide. Aqel (2013) stated that by means of GTM, it developed grammar competency and attained enormous self-confidence in using the language. This approach influenced a meaningful approach to the real use of L2 since it did not entail a difficult learning process, and the learners can practice the target language accurately.

2.4 Vocabulary Acquisition through Google Translate

Vocabulary is deliberated as one component in learning a language. Acquisition of which is challenging for most learners. The difficulty of word forms and structure exhibits complications for beginners trying to master English vocabulary (González & Schmitt, 2015). Lately, several translation "apps" have been developed and used as an alternative tool for learning English vocabulary. GT is an app that utilizes online digital tools in multi-language translation actions (Graesser *et al.*, 2014). Learning new vocabulary is vital to improving English proficiency and competency. Thus, scholars and investigators are constantly looking for a reliable method for teaching vocabulary. However, approaches to learning English can be characterized into cognitive, metacognitive, affective, and social (Chen, 2016). GT's definition of words is subject to the learner's understanding of the meaning of the word.

The use of GT can be used in teaching and learning English when needed as an alternative tool in finding the meaning of unfamiliar words. Oktaviana (2018) claimed that a thorough analysis of the meaning generated from GT might not be an applicable instrument in learning, unless it is supported by human translation.

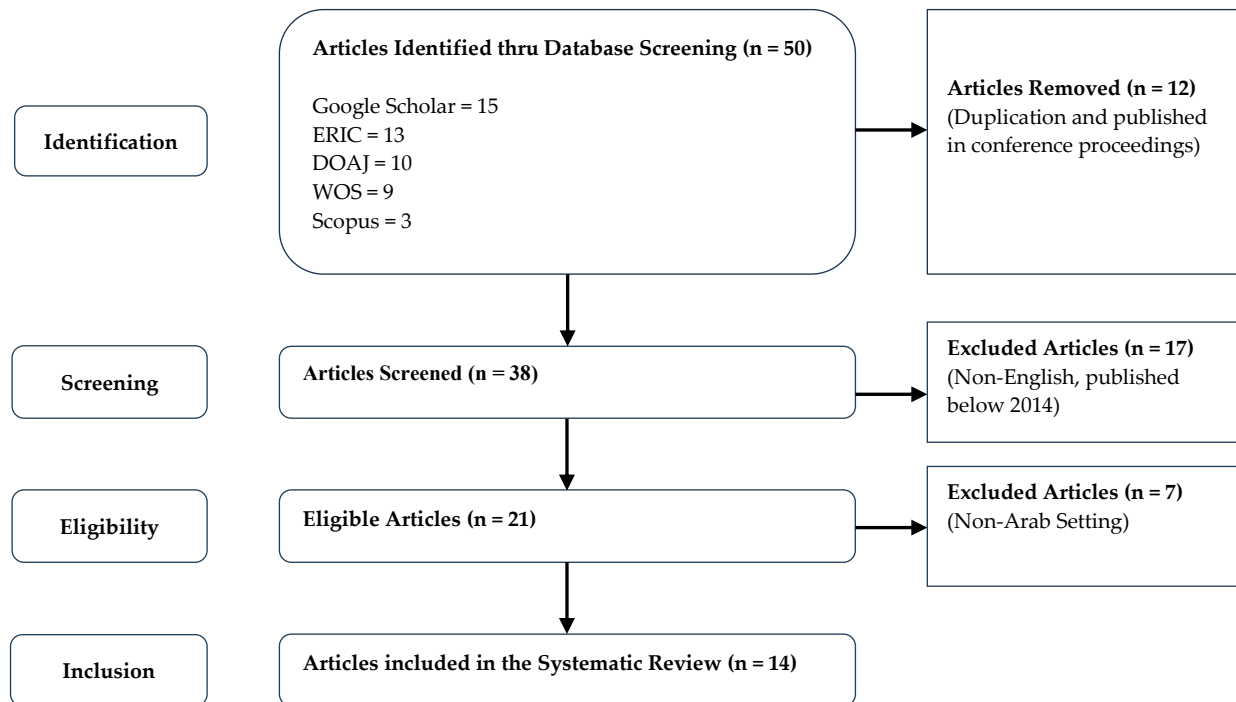
2.5 Critical Thinking Skill

Developing critical thinking is one of the principal goals at the academic level and one of the most valued outcomes. According to Moon (2008), critical thinking is the capability to reflect on a range of evidence drawn from many diverse sources to handle this evidence in an imaginative and analytical manner to arrive at a considerable conclusion which is justifiable. Critical thinking is a self-monitored procedure that entails problem-solving abilities (Colby, 2009). Effective critical thinking is not an innate ability for most learners, but it can be demonstrated through efficient instructional methods, and learners can develop the skill. Students not only need competence to probe, judge, and consider substitute viewpoints but also to assess their own preferences, values, claims, and principles. On the other hand, translation technologies like electronic dictionaries, proofreading tools and Machine translation systems like GT play a major role in the translation of one language to another, but they affect students' drive to learn (Alsalem, 2019) and lose critical thinking skills.

3. Methodology

This research employed a systematic literature review methodology. A systematic literature review is a comprehensive method of reviewing and synthesizing scientific evidence from published research to answer research questions transparently (Guillaume, 2019). A comprehensive review was conducted from published articles in the last 10 years guided by the preferred items for systematic reviews and meta-analyses (PRISMA) model (Moher *et al.*, 2009). It consists of four stages, namely identification, screening, eligibility, and inclusion. The systematic review process involved the following steps:

Figure 1: Flowchart in Article Screening and Selection based on PRISMA



3.1 Sources of Information

The sources of information were taken from various databases like Google Scholar, Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC), Directory of Open Access Journals (DOAJ), Web of Science (WoS), and Scopus. The exploration of relevant existing articles was carefully selected, synthesized and made sure that a clear account of the topic is relevant to ensure reliability of the information. The diverse topics led to the way of choosing and reviewing these databases.

3.2 Search Strategy and Data Collection

In performing the literature search, “Google Translate” or “Machine Translation” were used as keywords. These keywords were used in searching from Google Scholar, ERIC, DOAJ, WoS, and Scopus. Articles from Web of Science were mostly taken from the Arab World Journal of English Language with the same keywords, since the focus of the study is to identify the extent of using GT of Arab learners.

3.3 Selection Procedures

3.3.1 Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

After searching the target relevant articles, the authors recorded the articles searched by date, by name of databases, and by the number of related articles relevant to the study. The researchers gathered 50 relevant articles from electronic databases for the past ten years (2014-2024). Articles retrieved from 2013 and below are excluded from the eligibility criteria. For the last ten years, there were several studies about Google Translate and Machine Translation. Fifty of which are studies related to the use of GT,

which are needed in the study. The majority of them were from Google Scholar (15), ERIC (13), DOAJ (10), WoS (9), and Scopus (3). However, duplicated articles and those published in conference proceedings were excluded. Also, studies relevant to GT and MT where the language used is not English and the settings are not in the Arab settings were also excluded.

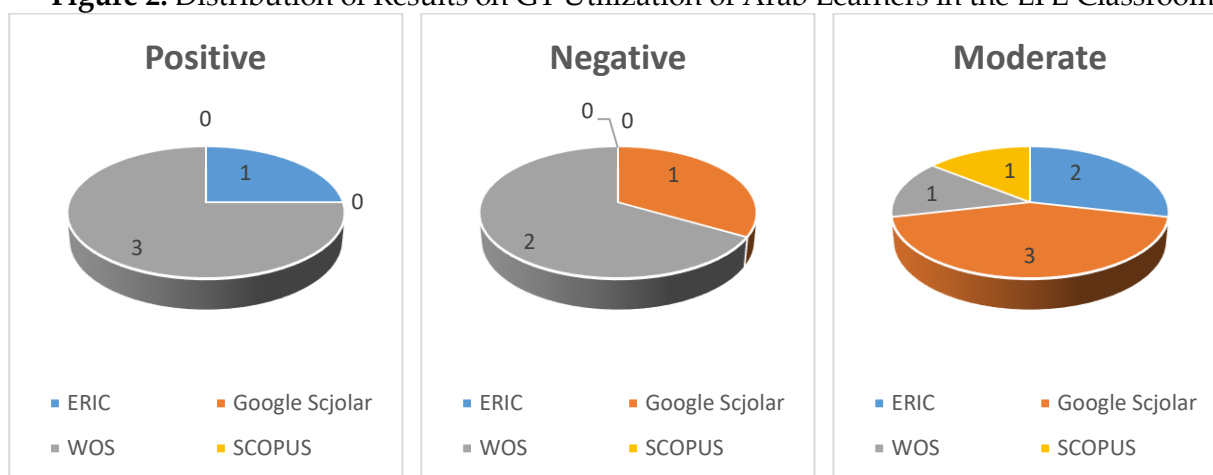
4. Results and Findings

The use of GT has garnered significant attention for Arab learners due to the benefits they get in translating English to Arabic. The result below provides a balanced analysis of the merits and demerits of GT based on findings from previous studies mentioned in the review.

4.1 Extent of GT Utilization of Arab Learners in the EFL Classroom

Table 2 below presents the significant findings of various scholars from different databases on the extent of utilizing GT of Arab learners in the EFL classroom.

Figure 2: Distribution of Results on GT Utilization of Arab Learners in the EFL Classroom



Out of 14 relevant articles reviewed, the majority of the findings from seven scholars revealed that Arab learners' utilization of GT was moderate or neutral; four of them said that the use of GT is purely positive or beneficial to the learners, while three of the studies showed that the use of GT among Arab learners has adverse effects.

This suggests that utilizing GT, as a tool in learning English, has both merits and demerits for the learners. According to Al-Tuwayrish (2016), machine translation like GT is an important tool in translating scientific materials that provide translation proficiency slightly better, but it needs to be used with caution. Aldawsari (2024) also noted that translation results from GT are comparable to Bing AI Chat when it comes to Arabic colloquial expressions, but oftentimes, inaccurate translation output is presented. In addition, Alhaisoni and Alhaysony (2017) opined that GT is repeatedly used by Arab learners for learning vocabulary, writing, reading and translation, respectively. Learners

believed that utilizing GT has a positive impact on their language learning. However, GT cannot transform all words accurately and gives inappropriate word meanings. It can be gleaned from the findings that the majority of the Arab learners are utilizing GT as a tool to translate English vocabulary into Arabic. GT is also utilized to translate reading text to comprehend the gist of the information, despite the inaccuracy of the translation results.

4.2 Strengths of GT Usage

After careful review of the findings from various relevant studies, it is revealed that using GT has a lot of advantages for learners.

4.2.1 Effective Tool for Language Translation

Al-Tuwayrish (2016), in his study *“An evaluative study of machine translation in the EFL scenario of Saudi Arabia”*, concluded that GT is an effective tool for language translation for learners. He added that this is manifested in the learner’s point of view which perceived that GT helped them translate English to Arabic. Aside from convenience to use, GT helps students to translate unfamiliar words and text quickly. Thus, for them, GT is an effective tool for translation tasks. He also posited that GT is the most potent tool in the case of scientific materials where the traces of language are not involved, but to be used with caution. It was also affirmed by Amin (2020), saying that GT is a successful tool for translation tasks that is convenient to use by Arab learners in the classroom. He even concluded that Google Docs, Google Machine Translation, Google speech recognition systems, and Google Earth had substantial effects on enhancing the English language among learners.

4.2.2 Enrich Vocabulary

Using GT can enrich vocabulary, which can be used in constructing sentences. Dahmash (2020) in her study highlighted that learners’ English vocabulary is improved with GT usage by using the definition and transforming it from English to Arabic and vice versa, and by saving the translated word. It can help learners understand English reading text and translate English text to Arabic as an alternative medium to enhance vocabulary. He also revealed that GT is advantageous to learners struggling with the accurate enunciation of English words, as the tool provides them with the opportunity to rehearse uttering it before speaking in class.

In addition, GT assists learners in a different way to cope with the difficulties they face in the classroom. Reluctant learners refer to the GT app to help them reach their potential. This demonstrates that GT facilitates learners to share discussions and strengthen their participation with their classmates and the teacher to develop their reading and vocabulary skills. These findings are consistent with the study of Alhaisoni and Alhaysony (2017), who concluded that GT was tapped by EFL learners to help them comprehend the meaning of unknown words to upgrade their reading skills. It is also like what Alkhofi (2024) studied, which highlighted students’ and instructors’ perceptions regarding the quality of GT, which is generally viewed as an effective tool

for translation tasks. About half of the students and most of the instructors consider GT to be somewhat or very effective, particularly in improving vocabulary choices.

4.2.3 Facilitate Understanding Reading Text

Utilizing GT apps helped learners understand sentences and text written in English. In a reading class, Arab learners struggle to understand long passages. Through GT, it helps learners to facilitate reading and comprehension. According to Alkhofi (2024), students not only rely on GT for single words but also use it for translating larger segments such as sentences and paragraphs.

Students consistently perceive GT as a useful device for translating sentences, and some even use it for longer texts such as paragraphs or essays. Alhaisoni and Alhaysony (2017) highlighted that students used GT for the purpose of writing paragraphs and understanding reading passages in language classes. EFL learners used GT mainly to help them comprehend English texts, including those on websites. Similarly, Karnal and Pereira (2015) investigated the influence of GT on reading comprehension and the application of GT and found that GT usage has stimulated learners to use it more often to stimulate understanding.

4.2.4 Improve Writing Ability

According to Kumar (2012), GT provides students with technical terminologies for writing assignments. Most Arab students frequently used GT tools in writing assignments and coursework. Moreover, his findings found that Arab learners used GT to learn English easily. He claimed that most students used GT to engage with the teacher inside the classrooms and used it more frequently in writing assignments and other coursework. Since writing skills are believed to be a difficult skill to acquire, students manage to use this tool in writing. Fredholm (2014) discovered that the use of GT does not really influence the students' writing performance, but it can assist the students in language learning, especially in the EFL classes.

4.3 Limitations of GT Usage

Despite the significant merits of using GT, reviewed relevant studies concluded that it also has demerits or limitations.

4.3.1 A Cheating Tool

GT can't be used in a positive way all the time. Some students use GT to cheat in writing their assignments. Murtisari *et al* (2019) said that students have a bad mental attitude toward GT usage. Most of them use GT as a cheating tool to accomplish their class activities (Chompurach 2021). It is also supported by Mulyani and Afina (2021), who concluded that GT doesn't provide good models. It gives students a chance to cheat. Their study showed that students' attitude toward the use of GT is deemed unfair practice depending on how it is used because the use of GT is seen as cheating when it is used for tests and graded assignments.

4.3.2 Lack of Accuracy and Clarity

Translated text from GT among L1 and L2 is far from perfect (Alsalem, 2019), and it still needs massive effort to improve. He claimed that a GT word choice implies inert recognition of a vocabulary item, which doesn't help the learners to store that word in their active vocabulary register. Results of his study showed that the learners often relied on the translated words provided by GT without post-editing. There are cases where students may alter a GT equivalent and switch it with another wrong word.

According to Al-samawi (2014), GT's accuracy varies with the complexity of the sentence and vocabulary, and by language. If the guidance of translation is from English into Arabic, there will be a syntactical error in the results. Since flexibility of Arabic starts with either the subject or the verb and is based on the meaning, the minor sentence starts with the subject to show firmness, while the verb starts with the verb to show actions at certain times. GT used a nominal sentence in place of the verbal sentence. Thus, the word's meaning and its accuracy are slightly altered, which resulted in mistranslation.

4.3.3 Mistranslation

Jibreel (2023) pointed out that mistranslations or awkwardly worded sentences are common results of using GT. He concluded that GT mistranslated the implied meaning of the sentence. Most of the translations generated by machine translation, including GT, are grammatically weak. When English texts are converted to Arabic, only GT and Bing AI chat kept somewhat similar translations, but still literal. Though it can still provide the desired meaning of a text if translated literally, it is still unacceptable. The weak structure and wrong order of sentences, like word order and some grammatical mistakes, might break the entire sense of a sentence.

4.3.4 Distorted Meaning

Distorting the whole meaning and structure of the translated text is one of the worst results of GT. In some cases, the result is entirely distorted. The findings of Jibreel (2023) postulated that the meaning of the words when English is translated to Arabic using GT will either be ambiguous or completely undesirable. The archive of these MTs could not recognize some words, though both are words used in Standard Arabic dictionaries.

4.4 Factors that Affect Critical Thinking on GT Usage

Considering the drawbacks of using GT, findings of various scholars show that overreliance of learners on machine translation creates a negative impact on learners' critical thinking.

4.4.1 Too Much Trust in GT

Arab learners trust too much in the presence of MT in learning English. In the study of Alsalem (2019), he investigated the impact of using GT on students' translation skills. He found out that when students are given translation tasks (English to Arabic), they do not consult the dictionary for post-editing to check if the translation is nearly accurate. Post-

editing is a must for students to evaluate the results if there are words that need to be replaced. Some students do substitution, but with words they already knew, without checking the dictionary, which resulted in an inappropriate meaning. Doing all this needs critical thinking on the part of the learners. This indicates that the students are too reliant on GT's choices, which is not a healthy habit for them to adopt. In the study of Depraetere (2010), she noted that GT usage in understanding the meaning is part of the students' passive vocabulary. However, since the learners are only detecting and accepting rather than creating words independently, the vocabulary is likely to remain passive. Thus, the students will still be unable to remember them when doing translation in the future.

4.4.2 Dependency on GT

Dependency on GT does not help students to grow and learn English proficiently, which eventually affects their critical thinking. Though the use of MT has huge capacity, students who want to develop language skills must not rely on machine translation too heavily. Frequent use of GT leads to learners' dependency and reliance on translation technology. When the learners are dependent on translation technology, it reduces their motivation to learn the target language and eventually hinders learning. Using GT is not wrong, but using it frequently will lessen students' motivation and critical thinking because they are dependent on GT application tools (Maulidiya, *et al.* 2022).

5. Discussion

The objective of this paper was to present a comprehensive review of relevant papers on the use of GT in language learning. The findings revealed that Arab learners are using GT in the classroom as a tool for learning English. It can be gleaned that the extent of utilizing GT by Arab learners is at a moderate level in terms of translation results. Though the findings of each of the articles reviewed vary from positive, negative and moderate levels, most of the articles have similar conclusions. It can be gleaned that the GT usage in the EFL classroom is utilized moderately, as concluded by (Al-Tuwayrish, 2016; Alharbi, 2023; Aldawsari, 2024; ALhaisoni and Alhaysony, 2017; Maulidiya, *et al.*, 2022; Alkhofi, 2024; and Mohammed, 2023) respectively. They claimed that the use of GT has its pros and cons. It can't be considered purely beneficial for Arab learners as a language tool because it has its strengths and limitations. It implies that the use of GT can't be relied on in terms of the accuracy of the results. It can be a tool to learn a language to translate vocabulary and text from English to Arabic, as it is now the most popular app to translate between Arabic and English. This is supported by Turovsky (2016), who said that translation from Arabic to English was among the most popular on the GT app. However, it must be used properly and needs post-editing to ensure the accuracy of the result. This aligns with Fan (2000), who asserted that translation using GT from English to Arabic is far from perfect and requires students to revise it, as GT word choice involves passive detection of a vocabulary item.

The findings also show that the use of GT provides positive effects for learners. These include effective tools for language translation, enrich vocabulary, facilitate understanding of text and passages, and improve their writing skill. It is supported by Al-Tuwayrish (2016) and Amin (2020), claiming that GT is a successful tool for Arab learners, particularly in translating English words and text to Arabic. Arab learners widely use GT, particularly those studying at the university (Dewaele, 2018). Since the first language in Saudi Arabia is Arabic, English is taught as a second language as a requirement of the educational system, which resulted in learners using GT. This is also relevant to the study of Chompurach (2021), who asserted that GT is used as a supplemental tool instead of working as the primary translation tool.

In terms of enriching vocabulary, GT provides high accuracy in translating phrases and technical words (Alkhofi, 2024). This finding is supported by Josefsson (2011), who studied the use of GT in the learning strategies of students in vocational training, found that GT, as a supplemental tool, achieved much better than old-style tools such as dictionaries in translating words. Moreover, GT was also claimed to help learners facilitate understanding of reading passages (Alhaisoni and Al Haysony, 2017; and Alkhofi, 2024). It implies that Arab learners depend on translation to understand the paragraph or passages during reading class to cope with language problems. The study of Almahasees & Albudairi (2021) asserted that GT provides instant translations, enabling users to quickly understand the general meaning of a text or conversation, which also implies that GT continues to improve its translation quality over time.

The positive aspect of using GT is also claimed to have merits in the learner's writing ability. Alkhofi (2024) posited that students overwhelmingly prefer the convenience of GT due to its usefulness in writing sentences and paragraphs. He added that the students' perception of the importance of GT helps them reduce grammatical and content errors in their writing. This finding is relevant to the study of Mujtaba *et al.* (2022), who claimed that using GT, either with or without training, can positively involve learners in finishing an L2 writing task. It can be inferred that learners use GT to help them generate words and ideas to be used in writing tasks. It is also supported in the study of Iswara *et al.* (2024), who claimed that GT is used in practice by university students in academic settings, especially in writing assignments. Similarly, it was revealed by Puspa *et al.* (2023) that the learners used GT even for a single "word" due to most of them having difficulty with the essay writing task.

Though the extent of GT usage by the learners in terms of translated versions is moderate, it still has several weaknesses, as shown in the results of some studies. It implies that the GT's accuracy is far from perfect, especially when translating English to Arabic and vice versa. Thus, this risk is alarming for both learners and teachers. One of the downsides of GT usage is being used as a cheating tool. The advent of digital technology, like AI, urges students to utilize it in the wrong way. It gave students a chance to use its features in the belief that it would help them survive their language struggle. GT is not always used in a positive way, but sometimes it is used to cheat or to write their assignments. Murtisari *et al.* (2019) said that students used GT to finish their

work and test (Chompurach 2021). It is also supported by Mulyani and Afina (2021), who concluded that GT doesn't provide good models. It gives students a chance to cheat. Their study also showed that students' attitude toward the use of GT is deemed cheating depending on how it is used because the use of GT is considered cheating when it is used for tests and graded assignments.

Secondly, mistranslation is another drawback of GT usage. Though it can generate the meaning of the desired language, it still yields faulty translation. Most of the time, the captured meaning is literal and contains grammatical errors. A mistranslation of a single word can alter the entire meaning of a sentence, which leads to undesirable output and significant misunderstanding (Hidayat & Hasyim, 2024). It implies that translating a text using a translation machine, especially GT, cannot provide perfect results as good as those produced by the human mind. The quality of the GT translated text is still far from the quality of human translation. This is aligned with Amilia and Yuwono (2020), who asserted that in some cases, GT failed to grasp the intention of the sentence and made errors in the important message in the target sentence. This error made the translation incomplete and resulted in a different meaning.

Lastly, the distorted meaning and structure of the translated text is one of the worst results as revealed in the findings. This is a common issue for Arab learners who depend so much on GT to translate English text. In the study of Al-Jarf (2016), he posited that GT presents equivalent English terms to Arabic, which contain limitations in terms of semantical, syntactical, morphological and orthographical boundaries. According to him, the limitations are associated with the use of the SMT model, where transformations are produced based on statistical models, wherein the limitations are based on the assessment of multi-lingual text corpora. When GT creates a translation, it looks for patterns in millions of records to help decide on the best translation for a particular user. This implies that GT creates intelligent guesses as to what the correct transformation should be, which somehow resulted in a distorted meaning.

It is also revealed that there are two key factors that affect learners' critical thinking on the reliance on GT. These include too much trust and dependency or overreliance on GT. Learning a foreign language needs analytical skills. This ability empowers learners to perform careful analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and decision-making. When learners are dependent on the use of GT in all their academic tasks, their creativity and critical thinking are jeopardized. Students will not attempt to have deeper initiative to perform the task because GT is there for them to provide all the necessary information. According to Saud (2020), learners must have significant initiative to enhance their translation abilities from Arabic to English, applying critical thinking. However, since GT can provide the necessary translation, learners become lazy in the belief that GT can provide them with what they need. It implies that students also need to think critically when using GT tools, but students are doing the other way around.

6. Conclusion

This study aimed to present a systematic review on the extent of Arab learners' utilization of Google Translate as a tool in learning English as a foreign language through a literature review methodology. It aimed specifically to answer the following questions: 1) To what extent do Arab learners utilize GT in learning English as a foreign language? 2) What benefits and drawbacks do Arab learners get from using GT as a tool in learning English as a foreign language? 3) How does GT, as a language tool, affect Arab learners' critical thinking skills? Based on the findings, as the world is embracing the use of modern technology, GT as a language tool is now the most used translation tool that students are relying on. Language learners perceived that GT is an alternative tool to enrich their vocabulary, help them understand reading text, and improve their writing skills. However, the presence of the new language apps cannot help language learners perform their basic academic tasks in terms of language learning. Overreliance on GT does not help students to strengthen their language skills. Students must not rely on it too heavily. It is significant to warn the students that language application technologies are there to help them equip themselves with the necessary language skills. Learners must avoid using technology, which could eventually lead to less learning. Technology is an ambiguous sword, enormously strong but risky if misused. The correctness of GT is still far from perfect because GT's accuracy varies with sentence and vocabulary complexity and by language." Even with more advanced programs, machine translation is still in need of massive effort to improve it, which requires Arab learners to remain aware of its limitations. To offset this loss of learning, classroom strategies should be employed by teachers. These include giving students enough chances to do translations using various forms of machine translation, like GT, with utmost care and assistance. Students must not be overly reliant on GT in the production of language learning. Awareness should be given by repeatedly reminding students that overreliance on GT affects their critical thinking skills. Students should keep away from using technology, which could ultimately lead to less learning.

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Conflict of Interest Statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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