INTEGRATING FREE WEB-BASED TRANSLATION RESOURCES INTO CLASSROOM PRACTICE: STUDENT PERSPECTIVES FROM STAI HUBBULWATHAN DURI

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Abstract: *This study investigates the use of free online translation tools to support students' learning in translation classes. The participants were eight fourth-semester students from the English Education Program at STAI Hubbulwathan Duri, Indonesia. They used Happy Scribe, a free web-based subtitle creation tool, during their Translation course. Data were collected through interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of students' subtitle files. The findings revealed three main themes: translation quality, ease of use, and learning experience. Approximately 75% of the students reported that Happy Scribe was easy to use and helped them complete tasks more quickly. Around 50% of the more skilled students produced accurate translations and edited subtitles effectively. However, 25% of the students experienced difficulties with subtitle editing and timing. The majority of students (87.5%) expressed positive attitudes towards learning with the tool and felt more independent in their work, while a smaller group (12.5%) indicated they required additional guidance and support. This study suggests that free online translation tools, when combined with effective instruction and practice, can enhance students' translation learning outcomes.*

Key word: *Translation tools, online resources, translation in practice, student perception*

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, the integration of digital technologies in language education has brought about significant transformations in the way translation is taught and learned. Among these innovations, the use of free web-based translation resources—such as Google Translate, DeepL, Reverso, and Linguee—has gained increasing popularity among students and educators, especially in regions where access to paid translation tools is limited. These

platforms not only offer instant translation results but also provide learners with exposure to various lexical, syntactic, and contextual alternatives, which can enhance their translation competence when used critically.

Several recent studies have attempted to examine the use of online translation tools in English language learning and translation education. Siumarlata et al. (2024), for instance, conducted a study on students' perceptions toward the use of translation applications in EFL classrooms and found that while students appreciated the speed and convenience of such tools, they also acknowledged the potential for misuse and the limitations in handling figurative or culturally nuanced language. Similarly, Aulia et al. (2024) investigated how English education students utilize Google Translate in their coursework, revealing that although students used it extensively, they remained skeptical about its grammatical accuracy and contextual appropriateness. In another study, Zuhairo and Kembaren (2024) highlighted students' awareness of the advantages and limitations of machine translation, emphasizing the need for guided, critical use of these tools in formal education settings.

For students in *Translation in Practice* courses, particularly those in English language teacher education programs such as the *Tadris Bahasa Inggris* Department at STAI Hubbulwathan Duri, Indonesia, such tools serve both as aids and as potential pitfalls. Therefore this study use technologies which can support student learning and reduce translation anxiety, there are concerns about overreliance, lack of critical analysis, and the possibility of reinforcing incorrect or overly literal translations.

These realities raise several important questions: (1) How do students perceive the integration of free web-based translation tools in classroom activities? (2) What are the perceived benefits and drawbacks of using such tools from the students' perspective? (3) How do these tools affect students' learning outcomes and translation strategies? Addressing these questions is essential to better understand the pedagogical impact of digital translation tools and to inform the development of more effective

instructional approaches. Therefore, the main objective of this study is to explore the perceptions and experiences of *Tadris Bahasa Inggris* students at STAI Hubbulwathan Duri regarding the integration of free online translation resources into the *Translation in Practice* course. Specifically, the study aims to identify how these tools influence student engagement, translation accuracy, and learning autonomy.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Related Theory

This section outlines the theoretical foundations relevant to the integration of free web-based translation tools in translation teaching and learning. The discussion is organized into four main areas: (1) Translation competence, (2) Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL), (3) The role of machine translation tools in language education, and (4) Happy Scribe.

Translation Competence

Translation competence refers to the ability to render a message from a source language (SL) into a target language (TL) accurately and appropriately, considering linguistic, cultural, and contextual factors. PACTE (2003) defines translation competence as a combination of sub-competences, including bilingual, extra-linguistic, instrumental, strategic, and psycho-physiological components. These sub-competences allow learners not only to understand and reproduce meaning but also to manage the translation process effectively.

In translation pedagogy, developing students' translation competence is a central goal. This involves enhancing both linguistic skills and the ability to evaluate and make decisions during the translation process. The use of digital tools can support some of these sub-competences, particularly instrumental and strategic ones, provided that their use is guided by critical thinking and reflective practices.

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL)

The integration of technology into language education is broadly grounded in the principles of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL). CALL emphasizes

learner-centered, interactive, and resource-rich environments that use digital tools to enhance language acquisition (Chapelle, 2001). Within this framework, online translation tools can be considered as part of the learner's technological toolkit, offering access to linguistic input, immediate feedback, and diverse translation solutions.

CALL theory also promotes the idea of learner autonomy, where students actively engage in selecting, evaluating, and utilizing resources to support their learning objectives. When applied in translation courses, this perspective encourages students to explore, assess, and refine their translation strategies through the thoughtful use of available digital platforms.

Machine Translation Tools in Language Education

Machine translation (MT) tools such as Google Translate and DeepL utilize artificial intelligence, neural networks, and large multilingual corpora to provide fast, automated translations. While their primary purpose is not pedagogical, their widespread use among language learners has made them an inevitable component of language education. Research by Bowker and Ciro (2019) suggests that integrating MT tools into the curriculum can have positive outcomes, including increased translation awareness and error analysis skills, provided they are used with pedagogical intent.

Several studies have emphasized that MT tools, when incorporated critically into classroom activities, can help students reflect on differences in grammatical structures, register, and meaning. However, uncritical dependence on these tools may lead to shallow language processing and reinforce poor translation habits (O'Neill, 2016). Therefore, the challenge for educators is to frame the use of MT within an instructional model that promotes metalinguistic awareness, error correction, and guided comparison.

Web-Based Translation Tools: Focus on Happy Scribe

In the landscape of digital language learning, Happy Scribe emerges as a powerful, user-friendly platform that offers automatic transcription and translation services for audio and video files. As a web-based application, it allows users to

upload multimedia content and generate transcripts, subtitles, and translations in multiple languages, including English and Indonesian. Its features include time-coded subtitles, AI-generated translations, and export options in various formats (e.g., `.srt`, `.txt`, `.vtt`), making it suitable for use in academic, professional, and educational contexts.

From a pedagogical perspective, Happy Scribe supports authentic learning by exposing students to real-world materials, such as podcasts, interviews, and short video content, which are increasingly common in global communication. According to Vanderplank (2016), the use of subtitles and transcription tools in language education enhances learners' comprehension, vocabulary acquisition, and listening skills**,** while also promoting metacognitive awareness during translation tasks.

Moreover, the machine translation feature embedded in Happy Scribe enables students to compare automated output with human-edited results. This aligns with O'Neill (2016) and Bowker & Ciro (2019), who argue that when students critically engage with machine-generated texts, they develop analytical skills necessary to evaluate accuracy, appropriateness, and contextual meaning.

Happy Scribe can also be positioned within the framework of instrumental competence (PACTE, 2003), a subcomponent of translation competence that involves the ability to effectively use tools and resources—including digital platforms—to support the translation process. By using Happy Scribe, students engage in semi-professional translation workflows**,** such as subtitle editing, quality control, and revision, which are valuable skills in the multimedia and localization industry.

Finally, as a premium tool, Happy Scribe introduces learners to accessible and scalable translation solutions, which is especially important in resource-constrained academic environments. It fosters learner autonomy, as students take charge of both the technical and linguistic aspects of their translation tasks, echoing principles of Computer-Assisted Language Learning (CALL) and technology-enhanced translation pedagogy (Chun, 2011; García & Pena, 2011).

METHODOLOGY OF STUDY

This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach to investigate students' perceptions and experiences in using the Happy Scribe platform—a free web-based transcription and translation tool—during translation practice in the classroom. The aim of this study is to describe how students interacted with the tool, how they assessed its usefulness, and how it impacted their translation strategies and learning engagement.

Research Participant

The participants in this study were eight (8) fourth-semester students from the Tadris Bahasa Inggris Study Program at STAI Hubbulwathan Duri, Riau, Indonesia**.** These students were chosen through purposive sampling, with the main criterion being their direct involvement in a classroom translation task using Happy Scribe. All participants had prior knowledge of basic translation techniques from previous coursework.

Data Collection

To gather relevant data, the researcher utilized three main instruments: semi-structured interviews**,** classroom observations**,** and document analysis of student translation outputs**.** The semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore students' perceptions of using Happy Scribe in their translation assignments, focusing on aspects such as usability, translation quality, and their learning experience. The interviews provided rich, descriptive data on students' cognitive and affective responses toward the tool. In addition, classroom observations were carried out during the translation activity to capture real-time student engagement, interaction with the digital platform, and problem-solving strategies. The researcher used an observation checklist to ensure consistency in recording observed behaviors. Finally, the students' translated outputs in the form of *.srt subtitle files* were collected and analyzed to assess how effectively the students revised the machine-generated translations, including grammar, semantic accuracy, and synchronization with video content. The combination of these three instruments allowed for data triangulation and a comprehensive

understanding of the impact of using Happy Scribe in the translation classroom.

These are the score rubric for the students' translated output:

Table 1. The Score Rubric of The Students' Translated Output

Assessment Aspect	Criteria	Score Range
1. Accuracy of Translation	Meaning is conveyed accurately; no mistranslation or omission.	1 – 5
2. Grammar & Language Use	Proper use of Indonesian grammar, punctuation, and appropriate vocabulary.	1 – 5
3. Naturalness & Readability	Subtitle sounds natural, fluent, and easy to understand for native readers.	1 – 5
4. Subtitle Synchronization	Subtitle appears and disappears at the right time, matching the audio.	1 – 5
5. Subtitle Length	Subtitle line length is concise (max 2 lines, 35–42 characters/line).	1 – 5
6. Post-editing Effort	Evidence of revision and editing from the raw machine translation output.	1 – 5

Data Analysis

The data in this study were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the six phases proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006), namely familiarization with the data, generation of initial codes, searching for themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report. The interview transcripts were transcribed verbatim and coded manually to identify recurring ideas, perceptions, and patterns related to students' use of Happy Scribe.

Observation notes were reviewed to complement the interview data by highlighting student behaviors and reactions during the activity. Meanwhile, the students' translation products in the form of .srt files were examined for linguistic accuracy, appropriateness of subtitle timing, and revisions made to the machine-generated text. These three data sources were triangulated to ensure the credibility, dependability, and depth of the findings in capturing how the tool influenced students' translation practices and learning experiences.

To ensure the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings, several validation strategies were employed throughout the study. Triangulation was conducted by collecting and cross-analyzing data from multiple sources, namely interviews, classroom observations, and students' subtitle outputs, to strengthen the consistency of interpretations. Member checking was also applied, whereby students were invited to review their own interview transcripts to confirm accuracy and clarify any ambiguous responses. Furthermore, peer debriefing was utilized by involving an independent academic colleague to examine the coding process and thematic development, ensuring that the analysis remained objective, coherent, and free from researcher bias.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

General findings

The findings of the study were revealed from data collected through student interviews, classroom observations, and analysis of subtitle outputs generated using *Happy Scribe*, a free web-based transcription and subtitling tool. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which identified three major themes that reflect the impact of using this tool in the "Translation in Practice" course: *Translation Quality***,** *Usability***,** and *Learning Experience*. Each theme is discussed in detail to highlight students' perceptions, performance, and engagement throughout the subtitling activity. The findings are also supported by selected examples and direct student quotations to provide deeper insight into how the tool influenced their translation process and language learning outcomes.

Based on interview data, most students reported that the tool was easy to use, time-efficient**,** and helpful in understanding the flow of spoken English, particularly in fast-paced or native-level audio. Several students noted that the automatic subtitle generation reduced their initial workload, allowing them to focus more on improving the accuracy and naturalness of the Indonesian translations. Observations during the activity also showed that students were actively involved in the revision process, often pausing, replaying, and adjusting subtitle timing and content

to match both meaning and context.

Specific findings

Translation Quality

The analysis of students' subtitle outputs revealed varying levels of translation quality, particularly in terms of grammar accuracy**,** naturalness of expression**,** and subtitle synchronization. Students who demonstrated higher English proficiency which can be seen in Table 2. (e.g., S1, S5, S8) produced subtitles with grammatically accurate and contextually appropriate translations. These students were more capable of adapting the machine-generated subtitles by rephrasing awkward sentences, correcting errors, and ensuring that the subtitles read naturally in Indonesian. Their .srt files also showed a strong understanding of subtitle timing, aligning the text closely with the audio without exceeding recommended line lengths or durations.

On the other hand, students with lower proficiency (e.g., S4 and S7) tended to rely heavily on the raw machine output provided by Happy Scribe, making only minimal edits. As a result, their translations were often literal, awkward, or grammatically incorrect, and in some cases, the meaning was distorted. Subtitle synchronization in these cases also suffered, with timing mismatches and long chunks of text displayed in short timeframes, which reduced readability.

The majority of students, however, fell in the moderate range (e.g., S2, S3, S6), where they showed some effort in improving grammar and naturalness but occasionally retained machine errors or unnatural phrasing. Despite these inconsistencies, they displayed a growing awareness of translation standards, especially after classroom feedback. These findings suggest that while Happy Scribe provides a helpful starting point**,** the students' final output quality is significantly influenced by their ability to post-edit, which is a critical skill in professional translation practice.

Table 2. Assessment Criteria for Students' Subtitle Outputs

Student Code	Grammar Accuracy	Naturalness of Translation	Subtitle Synchronization	Overall Quality
S1	High	High	Good	High
S2	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
S3	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate
S4	Low	Low	Poor	Low

S5	High	High	Good	High
S6	Moderate	Moderate	Good	Moderate
S7	Low	Low	Poor	Low
S8	High	High	Good	High

Usability

The usability of Happy Scribe emerged as a central factor influencing students' engagement and overall experience during the translation activity. Most students perceived the tool as user-friendly, especially appreciating its intuitive interface, automatic subtitle generation, and language options. Participants such as S1, S5, and S8 reported that they could easily navigate the platform without prior training, suggesting that the tool's design is accessible even to those with limited technical experience. These students found that the ease of use allowed them to focus more on the editing and refining stages of the translation task rather than spending time trying to understand the system.

However, not all students shared this perception. A few, like S4 and S7, expressed difficulties with subtitle timing adjustments and found some of the editing features less intuitive. These students struggled with modifying the timestamps and felt uncertain about how much they were allowed to edit the automatically generated subtitles. Their challenges highlight the need for basic tool orientation or tutorial sessions, particularly for students unfamiliar with subtitling platforms.

Despite these individual differences, the majority agreed that Happy Scribe significantly reduced their workload by providing an automatic transcription that they could edit rather than having to start from scratch. The tool's efficiency in generating subtitles helped students manage their time better and improved their motivation to complete the assignment. This finding aligns with previous research by Suhendra & Mustofa (2021), which emphasizes the role of digital tools in simplifying the subtitling process and enhancing students' engagement in translation classes.

Overall, the usability of Happy Scribe contributed positively to the learning experience, enabling students to concentrate on linguistic and contextual aspects of translation while simultaneously familiarizing themselves with industry-relevant technology.

Table 3. Student Feedback on the Usability of Happy Scribe

Student Code	Ease of Navigation	Clarity of Interface	Overall Usability Experience
S1	Very Easy	Clear	Very Positive
S2	Easy	Clear	Positive
S3	Easy	Neutral	Positive
S4	Neutral	Confusing	Neutral
S5	Very Easy	Clear	Very Positive
S6	Easy	Clear	Positive
S7	Difficult	Confusing	Negative
S8	Easy	Clear	Positive

Learning Experience

The learning experience component highlights how students perceived their development in translation skills, autonomy, and awareness after using *Happy Scribe*. A total of 75% of students (6 out of 8) reported either a *very positive* or *positive* learning experience. These students noted that using the tool helped them understand the complexity of subtitle translation, including issues such as timing**,** readability**,** and cultural adaptation. They also gained insight into how professional translators work with digital tools, which contributed to their motivation and sense of relevance to real-world applications.

Students with a *very positive* experience (S1, S5, S8) demonstrated strong reflections on how the activity improved their editing, listening, and critical thinking skills. They felt empowered by the autonomy the task provided and expressed enthusiasm for using similar tools in the future. One student mentioned, “I didn’t know how difficult subtitling could be until I had to edit it myself. Now I appreciate it more.”

Meanwhile, the *25%* who reported a negative experience (S4, S7) cited challenges such as difficulty understanding the English audio, frustration with subtitle timing, and confusion about the task expectations. These students may require more structured guidance or scaffolding before being introduced to technology-based tasks.

Overall, the data suggests that learning through subtitling tools can promote deeper engagement with the translation process when properly supported. The integration of Happy Scribe not only enhanced students’ technical and linguistic awareness but also encouraged a more autonomous and reflective learning approach, which aligns with student-centered and project-based language learning methodologies.

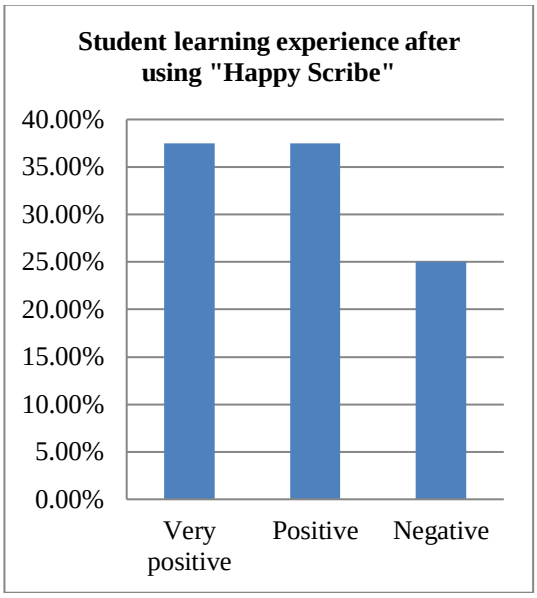

Chart 1. Students response percentage of learning experience after using *Happy Scribe*

From the chart above, A majority of students (75%) reported either a very positive or positive experience. These students appreciated the practical exposure to real-world translation tools, which enhanced their engagement and critical thinking. They found the tool helpful in developing their awareness of timing, grammar, and contextual meaning in subtitling. Conversely, 25% of students reported a negative experience, primarily due to difficulties in understanding the video content or manipulating subtitle features such as timing adjustments.

This finding suggests that while free tools like *Happy Scribe* can enrich the learning process, instructor support and training remain essential, particularly for students with lower technical proficiency.

Interview Finding

To gain deeper insights into students' experiences using *Happy Scribe*, semi-structured interviews were conducted with all eight participants. Thematic analysis of the transcripts revealed rich qualitative data supporting the three major categories previously discussed.

Translation Quality

Students highlighted the challenges and discoveries related to translating machine-generated subtitles into natural Indonesian. One participant (S5) noted:

"I had to fix many awkward sentences, but it made me think more carefully about meaning and not just words."

This reflection shows that the task pushed students beyond literal translation, encouraging them to consider tone, readability, and cultural nuances.

Usability

While most students appreciated the tool's interface, some experienced initial confusion. For example, S7 shared:

"I was confused how to adjust the timing. I just used the subtitles given by the tool even though some were too fast or long."

Meanwhile, S1 expressed satisfaction:

"I like how it gives you everything automatically. I just had to fix the grammar. That saved time."

These contrasting views underscore the importance of scaffolding for lower-proficiency students when introducing digital tools.

Learning Experience

Overall, students expressed that the activity felt practical and beneficial for real-world translation skills. S8 commented:

"This is the first time I worked with subtitles, and now I understand how translators need both language and technical skill."

S3 stated:

"I used to think translation was just typing. But this made me see it's about choices and adjusting based on context."

These insights suggest that the task not only enhanced language skills but also raised student awareness of the translator's role and process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

Conclusion

This study explored the integration of a free web-based tool, *Happy Scribe*, into the "Translation in Practice" course for fourth-semester students of the English Education Department at STAI Hubbulwathan Duri. Through the analysis of student subtitle outputs, interviews, and their reflections, the research revealed that using *Happy Scribe* not only enhanced students' awareness of real-world translation processes but also developed their linguistic and technical competencies.

The findings indicate that most students benefited positively from the experience, as reflected in their improved subtitle accuracy, appreciation for translation subtleties, and practical familiarity with digital tools used in the professional translation field. Despite some usability challenges faced by a few students, the overall learning experience was largely positive, with many students expressing increased motivation and a deeper understanding of translation as a multifaceted task.

This study supports the incorporation of free, accessible

digital tools in translation teaching. However, it also highlights the need for structured guidance to ensure all students can use the tool effectively. For future implementations, combining such tools with preparatory instruction and scaffolded support is recommended to maximize pedagogical impact.

Suggestion

While this study offers valuable insights into the integration of *Happy Scribe* in translation learning, it is limited by its small sample size and single-institution scope. Future research is encouraged to explore similar implementations across different institutions or academic levels to increase the generalizability of the findings. In addition, comparative studies between different free subtitling or translation tools (e.g., Amara, Subtitle Edit, Kapwing) could provide a broader understanding of which platforms are most effective for pedagogical use. Researchers may also examine the long-term impact of using such tools on students' translation competencies, including retention, speed, and professional readiness. Further studies might also explore how digital tool integration affects students with varying language proficiencies or learning styles, and how instructors can optimize blended learning strategies for translation courses. Including control groups or experimental designs would also add rigor to future investigations.

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