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# Online Machine Translation and Language Learning: EFL Learners' Practices and Beliefs

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## ABSTRACT

With the advancement of technology, the quality of the translation generated by online machine translation (OMT) has also improved. The OMT even have become an integral part of English language learning. This present study is conducted to investigate the English as a foreign language (EFL) students' beliefs and practices towards the use of OMT in English language learning. This qualitative study is conducted using a questionnaire as the data collection instrument. The questionnaire is administered to 22 EFL students at a university in June 2023. The data were analyzed by using frequency and descriptive analysis. The finding shows that OMTs, as believed by the students, are valuable tools in improving students' English language learning experiences. They believe that OMTs offer many benefits for students in EFL classrooms. However, the frequent use of OMTs can lead to over-reliance, decreasing students' confidence and self-reliance in learning English. The findings also show that students use the OMTs in EFL classrooms because of the benefits while realizing their potential drawbacks. OMTs have a significant role in EFL classrooms since they can be a valuable learning resource for students. English teachers are expected to harness the good potential of OMTs to improve the quality of English language learning.

**Keywords:** *Online Machine Translation, Language Learning, English as a Foreign Language (EFL).*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Technology has affected many aspects of human life, including the educational aspects (Bax, 2011; Hoopingarner, 2009; Golonka, *et al.*, 2014). The emergence of the Covid-19 pandemic in early 2020 has accelerated the impact of technology in the educational aspects. The emergence of distance learning and online learning is also the result of the inclusion of technology in education aspects. The advancement of technology in educational aspects, as explained by Asad, *et al* (2021) and Gilakjani (2017), has changed how the teaching and learning process is carried out and how we access and acquire knowledge. Technology also has surpassed the conventional limits in the teaching and learning processes such as time, geographic, and language barriers. In addition, the advancement of technology has helped teachers and students in the

teaching and learning process through various tools and systems (Amin & Sundari, 2020).

One of the technological tools used in educational fields is the Online Machine Translation (OMT). The OMT is a tool or system (software) that is used to translate text or document from the source language to the target language automatically by the use of the internet and natural language processing system (Hutchins, 2003; Goyal & Lehal, 2009; Vieira, O'Hagan, & O'Sullivan, 2021). OMT works by analyzing the context and the structure of a text or document in the source language to produce the equivalent translation in the target language. Since it has the ability to cope with diverse languages, machine translation becomes a valuable tool in language learning. That is why, OMT is widely used among language learners.

The emergence of Online Machine Translations can be dated back to the mid-1990s with the advancement of the internet (Hutchins, 2023). In its early version, the quality of the translation machine is often poor and ungrammatical (Hutchins, 2007). However, with the advancement of technology, the translation quality of OMT has been better since most of today's OMT is powered by a more advanced system, neural machine translation. Furthermore, IT companies have made significant investments in improving their translation machine. The inclusion of AI (artificial intelligence) to power the OMT has also improved the quality of translation. So, the OMT has a very big potential to help many people to overcome language barriers and help students in language learning, including English as a foreign language (EFL) learners.

The use of Online Machine Translations in language learning is not a new thing, it even offers some benefits for the language learning process. Several previous studies have shown that inclusion of the OMT in language learning give positive impacts for the students, teachers and even the learning process itself. Lee (2020), Garcia & Pena (2011), and Chung & Ahn (2022) show the use of OMT in English language learning, especially in writing activities. The use of OMT, according to Deng & Yu (2022), can assist language learners to learn better. Niño (2020) adds that using OMT can foster independent language learning. It shows us that the inclusion of OMT offers many benefits in the language learning context.

However, despite its positive impacts, the OMT also has negative impacts on language learning. Lee (2023) explains that most of EFL instructors have limited trust in the quality and effectiveness of translation generated by online translation methods. It is still believed that translation made by humans still superior compared to the translation generated by OMT (Maučec & Donaj, 2019). Another study conducted by Briggs (2018) shows that OMT can make overdependency which hinders students' efforts for learning the target language. The use of OMT should be in teachers' supervision to make sure that the students learn better. As stated by O'Neill (2016) and Klekovkina, & Denié-Higney (2022), the teacher's supervision helps the students to

maximize the full potential of OMT in language learning.

Since the quality of the translation generated by OMT has been better in recent years because of the advancement of technology, its use in language learning classrooms has also increased. The same phenomenon can be observed in EFL classrooms (Benda, 2013; Kumar, 2012; Raza & Nor, 2018; Sujarwo, 2020;). The students use OMT in EFL classroom for various purposes: as a dictionary (Sujarwo 2020), assistance for writing better in English (Garcia & Pena, 2011), and to translate long and complex documents (Groves & Mundt, 2021). Since students OMT for various purposes, it is important to understand their beliefs and practices towards the use of OMT.

Several previous studies put too much emphasis on investigating the perception and attitude of the EFL students towards the OMT (Sujarwo, 2020; Alotaibi, 2014; Ardila, 2021). Other previous studies focus on a specific online translation tool, such as google translate (Alhaisoni & Alhaysony, 2017; Tsai 2019; Tsai, 2022; Tumbal, Liando & Ollii, 2021). Since the technology has developed greatly in the recent years, more OMTs have emerged and the competition among them is also increased. It means that putting too much emphasis on a specific OMT will limit our understanding of students' beliefs and practices on the use of OMT in EFL classrooms. It is also important to note that students have the freedom to use the OMT suited their beliefs and practices.

Another limitation shown by several previous studies is focusing too much on the impact of a specific OMT such as Google Translate or DeepL on students' language skills, mostly writing (Birdsell, 2022; Chandra & Yuyun, 2018; Cancino & Panes, 2021; Sun, *et al.*, 2022). Although it is important to see the impact of the OMT on students' language skills, it is more important to understand how they use the OMT to improve their language skills. Thus, this present study is conducted to investigate EFL students' practices and beliefs on the use of OMT in language learning. It is expected that this study can assists the teachers, especially English teachers, to gain better understanding on how the students believe and use the OMT in EFL classroom.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. *Online Machine Translation (OMT)*

Online Machine Translation (OMT) can be defined as a tool or software or systems which designed to do a translation task by utilizing the internet network. The term online machine translation (OTM) comes from the term machine translation (Moussallem, Wauer, Ngomo, 2018). The word *online* is added when machine translation (MT) is combine with the advancement of technology, in this case the internet. Kenny (2022) defines machine translation are the tools that “involves the automatic production of a target-language text on the basis of a source-language text.”

Machine translations (MTs), according to Mahardika (2017), are invented to assist people in doing translation tasks from one language (source language) into another language (target language). These tools, as explained by Kastberg & Andresson (2012), can be divided into 3 types: Fully Automated Machine Translation (FAMT), Human Aided Machine Translation (HAMT), and Machine Aided Human Translation (MAHT). Ardila (2021) further explains that the types of MT proposed by Kastberg & Andresson (2012) are based on their automation degree. In other words, the types of MTs are based on who makes the final decisions for the translation: human or the software.

The emergence of MT can be dated back to 1933 (Hutchins, 1995). Hutchins (2007) then divided the development into several phases as follows: 1) the precursors and pioneers (1933 – 1956); 2) high expectations and disillusion (1956-1966); 3) the quiet decade (1967-1976); 4) operational and commercial system (1976-1989); 6) operational and commercial system since 1990 (the early 1990s); and 7) MT on the internet (the mid-1990s). Those phases indicate that machine translation has long been developed. The MTs we use nowadays are the result of those phases. The MTs become better and better with the advancement of technologies.

The launch of *Babel Fish* in late 1997 marks the first online MT service (Gaspari & Hutchins, 2007). Since then, Online Machine Translations (OMTs) become very popular and have been

through several developments. The most noticeable development happened in 2016 when Google introduced the Neural-based MT (Briggs, 2018; Lee, *et al.*, 2015). The neural-based MT changed the conventional Statistics-based MT (Im, 2007). The use of Neural-based MT means the MT “use deep learning and consider context to translate foreign language texts” (Lee, 2021). This new system makes the MTs generate better and more accurate translations. With the rise of AI (artificial intelligence), it is believed that AI will power the OMTs in the future (Kong, 2022; Chen, 2020; Zhang & Tang, 2022).

### 2.2. *Language Learning and EFL Learning*

Language learning is a process of acquiring a new language (first or second or foreign language) either intentionally or unintentionally (Schmidt, 2012). Unintentionally refers to the process of acquiring a new language without the will of the learner. An infant, for example, acquire his first language by imitating his/her parents talking. On the other hand, intentionally refers to the process of acquiring a new language (usually a second or foreign language) with the will and conscious decision of the learner or by external forces such as the circumstances demand. A high school student in Indonesia, for example, learns English as a foreign language at school because of the structure of the curriculum (external force). Another example is a student who learns English as a second language since he/she is going to an English-speaking country.

Language learning, in the context of Indonesia, is an essential part of the curriculum. The language learning aims at helping students to have communicative competence in using the national, local, and foreign languages (Gunanatar, 2016). The national refers to the Bahasa Indonesia, the local language refers to the ethnic languages in Indonesia, and the foreign language refers to the language from other nations such as English or Arabic. It means that English is taught as a foreign language in Indonesia. In addition, the students in Indonesia usually start to learn English when they are in the 7<sup>th</sup> grade (first year in junior high school).

By learning English, the students are expected to be able to communicate using English (Syakur, *et al.*, 2020; Andriani, *et al.*, 2021;

Haerazi & Nunez, 2021). It means that English learning put emphasis on improving students' language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, the process to be able to communicate effectively using English does not always run smoothly even after learning for more than 5 years. To tackle this issue students and teachers come up with their own solution. One of the solutions that can be used is integrating OMTs as a learning resource in EFL classrooms. It becomes a possible and plausible solution since access to the internet become much easier nowadays.

### **3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This study was conducted by employing the qualitative research method since it is in line with the aim of this research, investigating the beliefs and practices of EFL students towards the use of OMT in their language learning. This method was applied to gain an in-depth understanding of how the students believe and use the OMT in the EFL classroom. It means that the qualitative method used is a descriptive method. So, the authors used this method to give a clear description of the phenomenon: beliefs and practices of EFL students towards the use of OMT in their language learning.

This study was conducted on June 2023 at the English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado. 22 students are chosen to be the subject of this study. As qualitative research has no strict rules regarding the sample size, the sample size depends on the purpose: a large sample to study differences in behavior or a smaller sample size for in-depth analysis (Shaheen & Pradhan, 2019). It is important to note that the subjects of the study are chosen based on predetermined criteria, such as the students are willing to be subject the study, having the experience of using various OMTs in the process of English language learning, are in their first year in the Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado.

To collect the data, the authors used a questionnaire that consists of 2 sections. The first section consists of 4 questions that focus on the background and demographic information. The second section consists of 12 questions that collect data about the EFL students' beliefs and practices

of OMTs in English language learning. Those 12 questions are divided into 3 open-ended questions and 9 close ended-questions in the form of the Likert Scale (Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, Strongly Agree). The questionnaire used has a 0.81 Cronbach alpha value. It means that the questionnaire used has a high internal consistency (reliable). The questionnaire is administered to the subject by utilizing Google Form.

The collected data was then analyzed by using frequency and descriptive analysis. The frequency analysis is employed to analyze the open-ended questions. The data from the open-ended question was transferred to Microsoft Excel to be analyzed automatically and then interpreted by the authors. On the other hand, the close-ended questions are analyzed descriptively which means the authors present an in-depth description and analysis of the questions.

### **4. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION**

#### **4.1. Findings**

##### *4.1.1. Description of the Respondents*

The respondents of the study are 22 students of the English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado. The respondents consist of 15 female students and 7 male students. Their age is in between 17 – 19 years old. Majority of the respondents are in their 18 (16 students). It is an ideal age for the respondents since the first year students are in their 18. 2 students are in their 19 and the rest are in their 17 (4 students). It is important to note that the respondents are the second semester students (first year students).

All the respondents of the study have about 7 years experiences of learning English. 3 years of learning English in junior high school, 3 years in senior high school and 1 year in the English Education Department, Faculty of Language and Arts, Universitas Negeri Manado. It means that the respondents have the same background in term of the experiences of learning English. However, in term of the experience of using OMTs, the respondents have a slightly different background. Most of them (18 out of 22) using OMTs to learn English since they were in junior high school. It means that they have used OMT for about 6 to 7 years. The other 4 respondents have the

experiences of using OMT for about 5 years (still in their junior high school year). The 4 respondents got their first smartphone in their last year in the junior high school. That is why there is a slightly different background among the respondents in term of using OMTs to learn English.

#### 4.1.2. Students' preference

The term preference in this section refers to the students' preferences on using the OMTs. It discusses the media of using the OMTs, the platforms and students "go to" OMTs when they learn English. Understanding students' preferences in using the OMTs will give a better description about the students' practices in using the OMTs. Furthermore, it will help us to gain better understanding on how the technology affect the process of English language learning.

Based on the findings, all of the respondents using OMTs on their smartphones (mobile devices) since all of them have smartphones. 4 of the respondents even have more than 1 smartphone (mobile devices). Most of respondents (20) also use OMTs on their laptops (computers). They use OMTs on their smartphones for very practical use such as searching for the equivalent meaning of a word or to translate a short sentence. On the other hand, the use of OMTs on their laptop is for the complex task such as assisting the students to writer their task or their paper and translating long documents. It is very logical since smartphones are more mobile compared to laptop (computer) to be used.

When using OMT all the respondents prefer to use web-based OMTs. It means that they using the OMTs by accessing a specific webpage. However, there are several students (4) use application-based OMTs such as *U Dictionary Translator* on their smartphone. The interesting part is, several students (6) also have an offline dictionary application in their smartphone to be used if the internet goes down. The findings show that the students prefer to use web-based OMTs to save spaces on their smartphone or their laptop (computer). Since the application-based OMTs have a very limited function, the students think using separate application for translation only is not effective. The findings also indicate that the

environment of the students has a good internet coverage or stable internet connection.

*Google Translate* is still the respondents' "go-to" OMT when they want to translate a text or a sentence on their smartphone. However, when using a laptop, the respondents prefer to use other OMTs such as *Quillbot* or *DeepL*. *DeepL* is particularly popular among the students, when using their laptop or computer since they think it provides better translation than *Google Translate*. Even so, *Google Translate* is still the most popular OMT among the respondent since all the respondents still use it as one of the OMTs on their smartphone. It is important to note that 19 respondents use Android-based smartphones and the rest use iOS-based smartphones. It means that most of the respondents use Google as their default search engine. The students that use iOS-based smartphones also use Google as their default search engine. So, when the students want to translate a sentence they will be directed to *Google Translate* as the default OMT.

Students' preference towards the OMTs changes in time. When they first use OMTs to learn English (in the junior high school), *Google Translate* is their first to go OMT. As the students learn more, they realize that there are other OMTs than *Google Translate*. The students started to use other OMTs when they are in senior high school, because of their English teachers are sceptical about the quality of the translation generated by the *Google Translate*. Nevertheless, *Google Translate* is still their first choice when they OMT on their smartphone. When the students are in the university, the preference towards OMTs changes because of several factors such as the media of accessing OMTs (smartphone or computer), the purpose of using OMT, and the accuracy of the translation. So, there are many factors that affects students' preference of using the OMTs.

The emergence of the OMTs powered by AI (artificial intelligence) also contributes to the students' preference on the use of OMT in English language learning. Several respondents (8) explains that sometimes that they use *ChatGPT* to do translation task. It indicates that there is a potential that students' preference towards the use of OMTs in English language learning will change with the advancement of the technology. Thus,

understanding the trend of the technology will help us to understand the students' future preference on the use OMT in English language learning.

#### 4.1.3. Students' beliefs

Students' beliefs in this study refer to what the students think about the OMTs used in the EFL classroom or English language learning setting. The beliefs of the students in this study consist of several criteria. They are their beliefs on the benefits, helpfulness, accuracy, confidence level, comfortableness, and self-reliance. Understanding those criteria will help us to understand what the students believe about the use of OMTs in English language learning.

Regarding its benefits in enhancing respondents' English language learning experiences, 13 respondents strongly agree that OMT is a beneficial tool for improving the quality of their English language learning experience. Other 7 agree and the rest (2) are neutral that the OMT is a beneficial tool for enhancing students' English language learning experiences. The majority of the respondents (20) believe that the use of OMT can help them to learn English better or improve their experience of learning English. It indicates that the OMT is not just a merely translation tool but can be a pedagogical tool that helps the students to improve their experience in EFL classroom.

Although the OMT can improve the respondents' English language learning experience, majority of the respondents (15) are undecided (neutral) about the ability of the OMT to help the respondent to understand the nuances of the target language (in this case English). 6 respondents (4 agree and 2 strongly agree) believe that OMT is very helpful for students to understand the nuances of the target language. 1 respondent disagrees that OMT can help the students to understand the nuances of the target language. It shows us that the OMT can be very helpful for the students for learning English in general areas such as their general experiences in learning English. However, when it comes to a very technical area (in this case, understanding the nuances of the target language), they are still uncertain about the role. The students believe that there are still limitations to OMTs used in the EFL classroom.

With the advancement of technology, the ability of OMTs also developed. Xu, Crego & Senellart (2020) explained that the advancement of technology has boosted the accuracy of translation machines. The students also believe the same since the majority of the respondent (9 agree and 8 strongly agree) believe that the OMTs provide an accurate translation. 2 respondents remain neutral and 3 disagree that OMTs provide an accurate translation. The result is in contrast to the result previous paragraph (about the nuances). It means that accurate translation does not always means natural translation. In other words, the OMTs might produce a correct translation in terms of grammar and meaning but sometimes lacks the natural flow (nuances) of a translation generated by a human. It shows us that there is still room for improvement for the OMTs in the future to produce a more accurate and natural translation.

One of the important aspects of the students' beliefs on the use of OMTs in the EFL classroom is their confidence level without using or relying on the OMTs. 14 respondents are neutral on their confidence level without using OMTs in the EFL classroom. 3 respondents (1 strongly agree and 2 agree) believe that they are just fine without OMTs in the EFL classroom. However, 5 respondents disagree that they are going to be fine without using OMTs in the ELF classroom. The result indicates that there is a portion of students who relies too much on OMTs for English language learning. So, it is important to promote a balanced approach to EFL classrooms that combines OMTs and students' language skills. It will help the students to improve their confidence level and encourage their self-reliance.

Since OMTs can be pedagogical tools that help students to learn English better, they can also be used to improve students' language skills. 19 respondents are comfortable using OMTs for practicing their language skills and the rest (3) remain neutral on how comfortable they are to use OMTs for practicing their language skills. The result is in line with the students' belief on how beneficial the OMTs for English language learning. This also affirms the idea that OMTs can be very beneficial pedagogical tools that help students to learn English better. However, further studies need to be conducted to see the impact of integrating OMTs in ELF classrooms to improve

students' listening, speaking, and reading skills since most of the studies conducted put too much emphasis on writing skills.

The last aspect of students' beliefs is their belief in how the OMTs impact their self-reliance in EFL learning. 10 respondents are uncertain (neutral) about the impact of OMTs on their self-reliance in ELF learning. 8 respondents (2 strongly agree and 6 agree) believe that OMTs impact their self-reliance because OMTs have been their first learning resources in EFL classrooms. 4 respondents disagree that the OMTs impact their self-reliance in EFL classrooms. This result is in line with the students' belief in their confidence level in learning English without using OMTs. This result describes that the use of OMTs in language learning might give a negative impact (to some extent) on students' self-reliance in EFL classrooms. The easy access to the internet might also contribute to students' reliance on OMTs in English language learning. In other words, the students who rely too much on OMTs will decrease their self-reliance in English language learning.

#### *4.1.4. Students' practices*

Students' practices refer to how the students use the OMTs in the ELF classroom. It shows how frequent they use the OMTs in the EFL classrooms and how much they rely on the OMTs as a learning resource. It also shows the advantages students get and the limitation they face when using OMTs in the EFL classroom. By understanding that information, we can get a better understanding of how the students use the OMTs and what can a teacher do to improve the quality of English language learning while still incorporating OMTs as one of the learning resources.

The first information to know is how frequent the students use the OMTs in EFL classrooms. Majority of the respondents (9 strongly agree and 4 agree) that they use OMTs too frequent in EFL classroom. 3 remain neutral and 6 disagree that they use the OMTs to frequents in the EFL classroom. Too frequent means that the students always use the OMTs in the process of English language learning. It indicates that OMTs have been an integral part of English language learning for some students. The OMTs become students'

learning resource that helps them to learn English better. This practice is in line with the students' belief in the benefits offered by OMTs in the EFL classroom. It means that the use of OMTs has a practical impact on the students. In other words, the high frequency of using OMTs suggests that OMTs can support the students in learning better both as learning aids (assisting the students in English learning) and learning resources.

Another aspect of students' practices is the students' reliance on OMT compared to other learning resources in EFL classrooms. Most of the respondents (6 agree and 7 strongly agree) use OMTs too much as the learning resources in EFL classrooms. They rely too much on OMTs since the OMTs offer quick and almost accurate translations. 2 remain undecided (neutral) and 7 respondents disagree that they rely too much on OMTs in EFL classrooms. This result is in line with the students' belief in their self-confidence and in how the OMTs impact their self-reliance in EFL learning. However, it is important to note that all the respondents are in the area where the internet connection is stable and they have easy access to the OMTs. It means that their reliance is caused by the facility available to them. The OMTs become their primary learning resource in learning English because of the availability of the internet and the convenience of the OMTs. Since there is a portion of students who do not rely too much on OMTs as learning resources, the students still utilize other learning resources such as dictionaries.

As the students use the OMTs in EFL classrooms, they realize that the OMTs offer many advantages for them in learning English. The first advantage is the OMTs can be a dictionary for the students which helps them to find the equivalent meaning of an unfamiliar word. It also helps the students to foster their vocabulary since the OMTs usually provide similar meaning words to a certain word that students search for. Another advantage offered by the OMTs is most of them have other features than just a translator. *Quillbot*, for example, has the features of a grammar checker, paraphraser, citation generator, and summarizer. Those features can help the students especially when they have to do their task related to academic writing. *Google Translate* as the most popular OMT also offers features such as

translating a text from an image, translating entire documents, and translating entire websites.

Compared to the traditional dictionary, the OMTs are effective and convenient to use in the EFL classroom. They are effective because they provide a quick and almost accurate translation. They are convenient because the students can easily access them. The OMTs also help the students to learn the pronunciation of a particular word. Several OMTs such as *Google Translate* and *DeepL* provide audio pronunciation which can improve students speaking and listening skills. The students also explain that the OMTs help them to write better in English and can boost their confidence in using English both in spoken and written English. Several respondents also show that the use OMTs in EFL classrooms can improve self-learning and autonomy in learning English. Thus, OMTs can be a versatile and beneficial learning tool to assist students to learn English in various ways.

Despite the advantages offered by the OMTs, the respondents still face the limitations of the OMTs. The most noticeable limitation faced by the students is the words-limit. All the OMTs that have ever been used by the respondents have a word limit. *DeepL*, for example, has 1500 words limit. Other platforms such as *Google Translate* and *Quillbot* have 5000 words limit. It might affect the quality of the translation, especially the long text, since the respondents have to divide the text into several parts. This condition might make the OMTs generate a translation that lacks contextual understanding. Some respondents show that sometimes they have difficulty in language production. It means that sometimes they have difficulty expressing their idea in English independently. It indicates that the frequent use of OMTs in EFL classrooms has resulted in students' over-reliance. Another limitation of the OMTs in EFL classrooms as revealed by the respondents is the ethical issue. Some of the respondents revealed that they have ever used OMTs on their smartphones in a test.

#### **4.2. Discussions**

The findings of the study describe the beliefs and practices of EFL students regarding using the OMTs in English language learning. As revealed in the findings, web-based OMTs such as *Google*

*Translate* and *DeepL* are the preferred OMTs used by the students (respondents) in the EFL classroom. A study conducted by Lee (2021) in South Korea revealed that web-based OMT such as *Google Translate* is the most popular OMT. Another study conducted by Levy and Steel (2015) shows that web-based translators are one of the most popular technologies used to learn a second or foreign language (target language). The study in Philippine conducted by Ochoa *et al* (2022) shows that web-based translation tool (*Google Translation*) are preferred more by students compared to application-based translators.

The students (respondents) believe that OMTs are valuable and beneficial tools to help them learn English. As pointed out by Garcia & Pena (2011) the OMTs can assist students to learn English better, especially in improving students' writing skill. Murtisari *et al* (2019) show in their study that OMT (*Google Translate*) is very helpful in EFL classrooms since it helps the students in enriching their vocabulary, providing convenience, and helping them to write better. However, despite the benefits offered by the OMTs, the finding of this study shows that the use of OMTs has resulted in students' over-reliance on OMTs and decreased students' self-reliance and confidence in learning English. The finding is in line with the previous finding by Murtisari *et al* (2019) which highlights that the OMTs leads to students' dependence and makes student lazy to learn the target language (English). Yanti & Meka (2019) also highlight that the use of OMTs can boost students' confidence in doing English translation. Thus, excessive use of OMTs in EFL classrooms can give a negative impact on the students.

It is believed that the quality of translation generated by OMTs has increased in recent years as a result of the advancement of technology. Im (2017) explains that translation tools have shifted to neural-based translation machines from statistics-based translation machines. It means that the recent OMTs can produce more accurate translations (Lee, 2021). However, despite the improvement in accuracy, the respondents still think that sometimes the OMTs lack natural flows that are present in human-generated translation. In their study, Freitag *et al* (2022) highlight that the translation generated by the OMT sounds less natural compared to the human-generated output.

Läubli *et al* (2020) also show in their findings that the OMT output is not as fluent as human translation significantly.

As the OMTs are accepted as valuable learning resources or tools, the use of OTM in EFL classrooms is frequent. It means that OTMs have been integral learning resources for EFL students. Yanti and Meka (2019) also highlight this in their research in which 96% of the students use OMT (*Google Translate*). Jolley and Maimone (2015) also highlight in their findings that the students frequently used OMTs in EFL classrooms and when they did their assignments. The finding of the present study also shows that the use of OMT in EFL classrooms can cause ethical issues such as cheating during a test. Murtisari *et al* (2019) also highlight the same phenomenon in which 40.6% of their respondents believe that the use of OMT in a test is considered cheating.

The respondents of this study realize that the OMT they used to have its own limitation such as the amount of words that can be translated. Despite its limitations, the students still use the OMT since it is convenient and sometimes offers more than just a translation tool. It shows us that the OMT has developed greatly in recent years. It can help the students to learn English better. However, teachers' role in EFL classrooms become more crucial to make sure the use of OMTs as supplementary tools for students rather than the only learning sources for students to learn.

Based on the discussions it is suggested that the students need to be aware of the limitation of each OMT they use, especially the output generated by OMT which are accurate but less natural compared to human's output. English teachers should also keep themselves updated on the advancement of OMT so they can integrate the OMT as a learning resource that help student to be independent learners in EFL classrooms. A guideline for the use of OMTs in EFL classrooms needs to be constructed to tackle the ethical issues related to use of OMTs.

As this study focuses on the students' beliefs and practices on the use of OMTs in English language learning, there are several aspects that cannot be discussed in this study. Aspects such as how the teachers integrate OMTs in EFL

classrooms and how the OMTs can affect the future of EFL learning. Since this study focuses on neural-based OMTs, further research on AI-based OMTs needs to be conducted.

## 5. CONCLUSION

Based on the discussions, Online Machine Translations (OMTs) are valuable learning tools in EFL classrooms since they help EFL learners to enhance their English language learning experience. The students believe that OMTs offer benefits to help them learn English better. As technology advances, the quality of the output generated by OMTs have also become better, but it still lacks the natural flow found in human-generated translation. However, the easy access to the OMTs can lead the students to rely too much on OTMs in EFL classrooms which can decrease students' confidence in English language production (both spoken and written) and their self-reliance. Additionally, the study shows that there is a potential of ethical issues caused by the use of OMTs in the EFL Classroom.

While the students believe that OMTs are valuable tools in EFL classrooms, the optimal use of OTM can only be achieved when there is teacher intervention or guidance. English teachers need to balance the beneficial features and potential shortcomings of the OTMs to make sure that the OTMs can help the students to be independent learners. By careful consideration and proper integration of OMTs in EFL classrooms, both teachers and students can enhance their English language learning experiences.

## 6. AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS

The first author is fully responsible for conducting the research: preparing the research data, analyzing the data, and writing the research report. The second and third authors actively participate in analyzing the research data and helping the first author to write the research report.

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