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STUDENTS' COMPARATIVE PERCEPTION TOWARD THE USE OF GOOGLE TRANSLATE AND CHATGPT IN TRANSLATION TASK

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Abstract: *This study focuses on comparing students' perceptions of using Google Translate and ChatGPT as translation tools. As neural machine translation (NMT) continues to develop, understanding how students evaluate these technologies in terms of accuracy, usability, and reliability is essential for language learning and translation pedagogy. Employing a quantitative approach, this research collected data through Likert scale questionnaires from 30 university students at two different institutions: Unismuh Makassar and UIN Alauddin Makassar. Descriptive statistics and independent samples T-tests were used to analyze the students' perception of using both of the tools and its trend differences based on comparing two institutions. The findings indicate that both tools are widely used and positively perceived, though students noted differences in familiarity, accuracy, language style, contextual understanding, and user-friendliness. Nevertheless, the statistical analysis showed no significant difference in overall perception scores between the two campuses, where Unismuh and UIN Alauddin Makassar indicated similar trends. These results suggest that while both Google Translate and ChatGPT serve as helpful translation aids, students' preferences are influenced by specific features and individual user experiences. The study highlights the importance of integrating digital translation tools thoughtfully into translation education.*

Keywords: *Students' Comparative Perception, Google Translate, ChatGPT, Translation*

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Introduction

In the digital age, the landscape of language translation has evolved significantly, driven by improvements in artificial Intelligence, especially in language learning and translation tools. Google and ChatGPT are commonly used in translation tasks. Google Translate (GT), a longstanding machine translation service, provides quick and accessible translations across numerous languages, often favored for its simplicity and speed (Setyorini, 2019). In contrast, ChatGPT, a more recent development in artificial intelligence developed by OpenAI, offers dynamic, context-aware language generation that can produce more nuanced and contextually appropriate translation (Dwivedi et al., 2023).

Since these tools are integrated into educational settings, students are stimulated to understand how to perceive their effectiveness, usability, and reliability in using both GT and ChatGPT. This study aims to explore and compare students' perceptions toward the use of GT and ChatGPT in their translation assignments. By examining aspects such as familiarity, perceived accuracy, handling complex language, translation process, and user-friendliness. By examining those aspects, the research provides insights into the evolving role of AI tools in language education and training.

Understanding students' comparative perception not only informs educators and curriculum developers but also contributes to the broader discourse on AI-powered integration into academic purposes. This article discusses the findings of a study conducted in two different universities, UIN Alauddin Makassar and Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar. Both of universities have a Faculty of Teaching, and an English Study Program. Quantitatively, the data were collected from 30 English department students who were relevant to the study through Likert-scale questionnaires. Furthermore, this study demonstrates a comparison between statistical trends in translation class using GT and ChatGPT.

The study result focuses on answering 2 research questions:

a. What is the students' perception in comparing Google Translate and ChatGPT in translation?
b. What is the trend difference between Google Translate and ChatGPT usage in translation based on two different universities?

Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation). Statistical tools such as SPSS were used to compare the descriptive statistics between Google Translate and ChatGPT usage. Moreover, this study reveals students' different perspectives based on their gender.

Literature Review

The Usage of ChatGPT and Google Translate in Translation Works.

Recent studies have compared the translation abilities of two NMTs: ChatGPT and Google Translate in certain cases. ChatGPT indicated an impressive performance in translating literal and poetic text, especially in fluency and contextual understanding (Ohod Faisal Ahmed et al., 2025). Meanwhile, Google Translate surpassed ChatGPT in translating scientific text from English to Arabic; nevertheless, both tools need significant improvement (Elham Alzain et al., 2024). In fields with specialized language, such as wine and olive oil tasting notes, ChatGPT

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tended to make fewer mistakes with specific terms compared to GT. However, both tools were still considered not fully dependable, especially for users without a background in language or translation (Sanz-Valdivieso & López-Arroyo, 2023). In political text translation, ChatGPT's translations were rated as acceptable with minor edits, while GT's outputs required significant revisions (AlAfnan, 2024).

Another study indicated that students preferred ChatGPT for literary translation. In written reflections, students criticized GT for missing the cultural and linguistic depth of the original texts while they appreciated ChatGPT for producing more natural and meaningful translations (Abdelhalim et al., 2025). Differently, another research discovered that GT is able to produce professional translations in Spanish and Portuguese as good as ChatGPT. However, both tools need more performance improvement in Haitian Creole (Brewster et al., 2024). Despite these advancements, all studies emphasized the continued importance of human translators for ensuring accurate, contextually appropriate translations.

Common Students' Perceptions on the Usage of AI-Powered Translation Tools.

Recent studies have explored students' perceptions and use of AI-powered translation tools, especially Google Translate (GT) and ChatGPT. Research reveals that students commonly have positive perceptions of these tools, appreciating their efficiency, ease of use, and ability to provide immediate feedback (Almhasees et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2022; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). ChatGPT has emerged as the preferred choice for many students, especially for translation assignments (Hidayati & Nihayah, 2024). However, users face their own limitations, such as grammatical and semantic errors in translating tasks (Pham et al., 2022). To overcome these issues, students are needed to employ critical judgement cross-reference results with other sources, and seek peer or supervisor assistance (Pham et al., 2022; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Those findings advise that while AI translation tools are valuable learning tools, they require deep integration into educational practices to improve benefits and develop students' long-term learning skills.

Positive and Negative Perceptions toward the Use of ChatGPT

Recent studies indicate a predominantly positive perception of ChatGPT among students for various language-related tasks. In translation, students appreciate ChatGPT's efficiency and trustworthiness, favoring it over other tools (Almhasees et al., 2024). Higher education students across academic programs view ChatGPT positively for its academic applications, benefits, and ethical considerations (Das & J.V., 2024). EFL learners find ChatGPT valuable as a learning partner, demonstrating critical judgment in evaluating and modifying its outputs (Xiao & Zhi, 2023). ICT students perceive ChatGPT as a useful and enjoyable learning resource, with improved performance in functionality, user flow, and content comprehension compared to traditional search engines (Elkhodr et al., 2023). These findings suggest ChatGPT's potential as an effective tool for providing immediate feedback and personalized learning experiences in language education and other academic fields, while also highlighting the need for responsible integration and consideration of ethical concerns.

Although ChatGPT offers numerous benefits in academic works, it has some disruptive effects. A study revealed that ChatGPT affects students' creativity and reliability concerns even though it can save more working time and fit with students' learning preferences. Moreover, the study highlights the ethical concerns, include plagiarism and addiction possibilities (Rahman et al.,

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2024). In addition, gender, academic program, and streams of education have no significant influence on students' perception of ChatGPT usage.

Focusing on ethical misleading, teachers or lecturers' role is still irreplaceable (Ningsih et al., 2023). They face a sophisticated challenge to keep the learning environment running properly without disobeying academic norms such as plagiarism and addiction issues. The disruption of AI is potentially decreasing students' critical thinking and increasing dependency toward the tools rather than autonomous learning (Rahman & Yaumi, 2024).

Positive and Negative Perceptions toward the Use of Google Translate

The use of Google Translate (GT) as a translation assistant tool is described in two different perspectives based on students' experience. A study indicated a positive perception toward the use of GT for translation tasks. The finding explained that almost all statements received positive responses from the respondents, indicating a generally positive perception of Google Translate. Moreover, a significant majority of students (93.3%) are interested in using Google Translate, and 80% find it easier to translate with it (Tumbal et al., 2021). Furthermore, GT not only assists translation works but also improves students' lexical resources (Daeng et al., 2024). In addition, it is really convenient to use, even though students need to give more concern to its accuracy, suggesting the need to balance its use with authentic language practice (Fatkhurozi & Hidayat, 2024).

In negative perception, students often face issues with inaccurate translations, which makes it necessary for them to verify the output, even though university students view Google Translate positively (Pham et al., 2022). Furthermore, the main detrimental effect from overusing GT is negatively impacting their translation skills (Alburaih & Algraini, 2024). Beside that, students need to be more skeptical toward the translation accuracy of GT in order to avoid misunderstanding in their works (Gumartifa et al., 2022). In addition, it translates text literally and lacks the ability to construct varied or paraphrased structures (Winiharti et al., 2021). Those findings emphasize that technological tools are unable to replace authentic teaching in academic scope, which means that the teacher or lecturer must highlight the ethical guide in using it.

Methodology

This descriptive research applied a quantitative approach to elaborate and present characteristics, behaviors, or trends within a specific group using numerical data in order to measure and interpret data statistically to discover patterns and insights (Gray, 2021). This study gathered data using Likert-scale questionnaires by surveying 30 English education students at two different institutions: Universitas Muhammadiyah Makassar and UIN Alauddin Makassar. Furthermore, the population of all English education department students in the academic year 2023/2024 from both universities is 280 students. By using the purposive sampling technique, the researcher took 30 students from those campuses. Through purposive sampling, the participants were selected based on their knowledge or experience that was relevant to the topic in order to elaborate further insight into certain conditions (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The survey focused on answering students' competence in using NMTs (GT and ChatGPT) regarding their characteristics and traits during the teaching and learning process. To ensure maximum participation, the questionnaire was administered in digital formats. Participants

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were briefed on the objectives of the study, the significance of their contribution, and the assurance of anonymity and confidentiality to encourage honest and reflective responses. The collected data were analyzed using descriptive statistics in SPSS 25 to identify general trends and tendencies toward those NMTs.

Results

1. Students' Perception in Comparing Google Translate and ChatGPT in Translation

Based on data collection at two different universities, UNISMUH Makassar and UIN Alauddin Makassar, the descriptive statistic is described in the following table.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics Table

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Dev.
Google Translate	30	1	5	4.33	.994
Google Translate	30	2	5	3.73	.740
Google Translate	30	2	5	3.13	.730
Google Translate	30	1	5	2.93	.828
Google Translate	30	2	5	3.67	.844
Google Translate	30	2	5	3.17	.791
Google Translate	30	1	5	3.07	.980
Google Translate	30	1	5	3.13	.973
Google Translate	30	2	4	3.13	.571
Google Translate	30	1	5	3.87	.937
Google Translate	30	2	5	3.83	.913
Google Translate	30	2	5	3.47	.819
ChatGPT	30	1	5	4.27	.944
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.63	.928
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.27	.785
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.53	.776
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.67	1.061
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.20	.847
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.13	1.042
ChatGPT	30	1	5	2.93	.980
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.30	.702
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.80	.887
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.37	.890
ChatGPT	30	1	5	3.30	.877

Based on the table above, there are four key metrics, such as N = number of respondents, Min = minimum score, Max = maximum score, Mean = average, and Std. Dev = standard Deviation (responses variation).

In Google Translate, statements 1 to 12 indicated a range of means from 4.33 to 2.93 (from high to moderate agreement). The statement "I am familiar with GT" indicated that students are highly familiar with GT based on the highest mean score of 4.33. However, students are less confident in GT's ability to handle complex translation based on the lowest mean score of 2.93. Furthermore, standard deviation ranges from .571 to .994, indicating moderate variation,

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meaning students are somewhat consistent, but there are still some variations in how they perceive GT across different aspects.

In ChatGPT, statements 13 to 24 indicated a range of means from 4.27 to 2.93 (from high to moderate agreement). The collected data indicated that ChatGPT is almost as familiar as Google Translate since ChatGPT is widely recognized nowadays. It is proven by the statement "I am familiar with ChatGPT," which is indicated by the highest mean score (4.27). Moreover, ChatGPT is less used for personal purposes beyond translation or study based on the lowest mean score of 2.93. Standard deviation ranges from .702 to 1.061, indicating wider variation than Google Translate, suggesting more diverse opinions or experiences with ChatGPT.
For clearer insight, there is a comparative insights table that describes some aspects and their comparison between GT and ChatGPT below.

Table 2. Comparative insight between Google Translate and ChatGPT

Aspect	Google Translate	ChatGPT	Insight
Familiarity	Mean = 4.33	Mean = 4.27	Both tools are very familiar, though GT slightly leads.
Perceived Accuracy	Mean = 3.13	Mean = 3.27	ChatGPT is viewed as slightly more accurate.
Handling Complex Language	Mean = 2.93	Mean = 3.53	ChatGPT is perceived as better for complex texts.
Translation for Assignments	Mean = 3.17	Mean = 3.13	Nearly the same level of academic use.
User-Friendliness	Mean = 3.87	Mean = 3.80	Both are seen as user-friendly.

Students are generally familiar and comfortable with both Google Translate (GT) and ChatGPT. GT remains more frequently used and famous, especially for simple or quick translation, while ChatGPT shows higher perceived competence in handling complex or technical language, suggesting students may recognize its advanced processing power. Moreover, there is more variation in students' experiences with ChatGPT, indicating a learning curve of differing levels of training. Both tools contribute positively to students' motivation and confidence in translation learning; however, each has distinct strengths. Furthermore, there are two graphs that compare students' preferences in using GT and ChatGPT; the graphs are visualized below. The comparative pie charts above explain further students' competence and preferences in using two different translation tools. Those pie charts were constructed based on the overall percentage of Likert-scale responses related to Google Translate (GT) and ChatGPT. These visualizations reflect the distribution of students' attitudes across five response categories (strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly disagree).

In the first pie chart, students' responses toward GT are indicated in the Neutral (40%) and agree (33%) categories, followed by strongly agree (13%). This is emphasized that although most of the students recognize the utility of GT, their overall enthusiasm remains moderate,

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with a substantial portion expressing neutral feelings. A smaller percentage in disagree (12%), and only 2% strongly disagree, indicating that negative perceptions of GT are relatively minimal.

Differently, the second pie chart illustrates students' preference for ChatGPT, showing a slightly more favorable trend. A significant proportion of responses (45%) fall into the Neutral category as an indication that students are still uncertain or lack strong opinions about ChatGPT. Although 32% of students agree and 12% strongly disagree, showing a fair level of acceptance, these positive perceptions are slightly than GT. Negative responses remain minor, with 6% of students disagreeing and 5% strongly disagreeing.

As a comparison, it is clear that GT has slightly higher overall approval, as reflected in its combined Agree and Strongly Agree percentage (46%) compared to ChatGPT's (44%). However, ChatGPT also faces a higher level of neutral perception (45%) compared to GT's (40%), which implies that students are less familiar or confident in using ChatGPT, or they have yet to explore its full potential in translation tasks.

In summary, while both tools are generally well-received, students appear more accustomed to and slightly more confident in GT. Despite being a newer tool, ChatGPT shows promise but may require more exposure or classroom integration to alter students' perceptions.

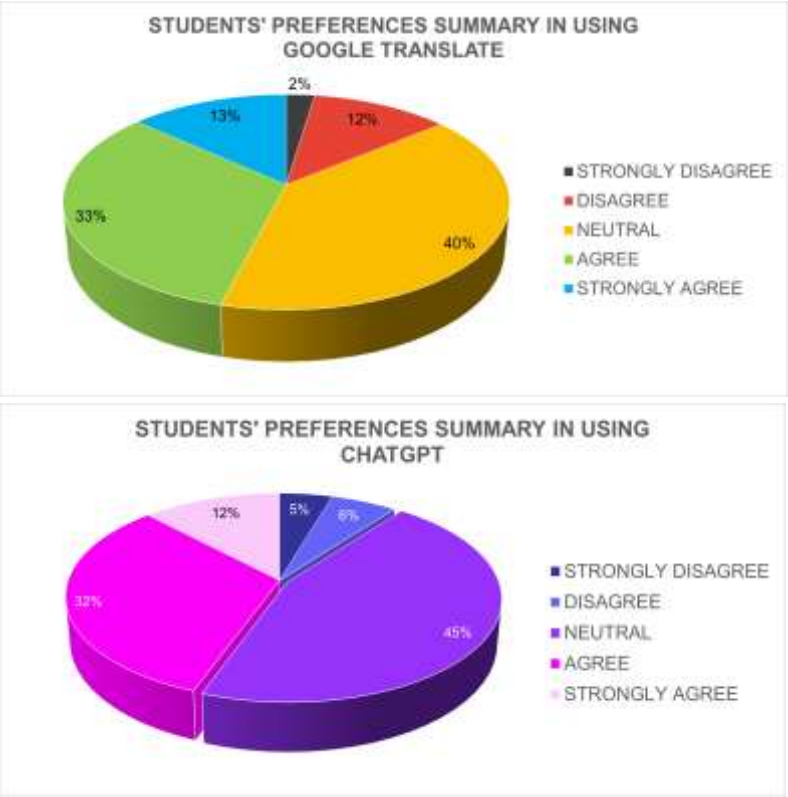

Figure 1: Percentages of students' Preferences in using GT and ChatGPT

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Different Trends between UNISMUH Makassar and UIN Alauddin Makassar

Data collection in two different universities has generated a descriptive statistic based on respondents' gender, which indicates their perception of using two different translation tools.

Comparing Trends of Google Translate and ChatGPT Use at Two Universities, this study employed an independent samples t-test to compare the usage trends of Google Translate (GT) and ChatGPT (GPT) between students from Unismuh Makassar and UIN Alauddin Makassar. The following table explains the differences.

Table 3 Different Usage Trends of GT and ChatGPT between UNISMUH and UINAM

Group Statistics

Tools	Universities	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Google Translate	UNISMUH	15	42.73	6.995	1.806
	UINAM	15	41.47	5.343	1.380
ChatGPT	UNISMUH	15	43.67	6.737	1.739
	UINAM	15	42.00	4.036	1.042

The results indicate that the average Likert score for Google Translate use was 42.73 for Unismuh students and 41.47 for UIN students. Meanwhile, the average score for ChatGPT usage was 43.67 in Unismuh and 42.00 in UIN. Although the mean scores differ slightly, the T-Test results indicate that these differences are not statistically significant. The p-values (Sig. 2-tailed) were 0.582 for Google Translate and 0.418 for ChatGPT, both of which exceed the standard alpha level of 0.05.

Therefore, we can conclude that there is no significant difference in the usage trends of Google Translate and ChatGPT between the two universities. In other words, students from both institutions tend to use Google Translate and ChatGPT at relatively similar levels in supporting their academic tasks.

Table 3 Independent samples test

Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
									95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	Lower	Upper
TOTAL GT	Equal variances assumed	.240	.628	.557	28	.582	1.267	2.273	-3.389	5.922
	Equal variances not assumed			.557	26.189	.582	1.267	2.273	-3.403	5.937
TOTAL GPT	Equal variances assumed	2.832	.104	.822	28	.418	1.667	2.028	-2.487	5.820
	Equal variances not assumed			.822	22.902	.420	1.667	2.028	-2.529	5.862

Discussion

Focusing on students' perception in comparing GT and ChatGPT in translation, students in UNISMUH and UIN Alauddin Makassar are generally familiar with those NMTs. It is common information since some research reflected similar positive perceptions toward those NMTs based on their efficiency, usability, and giving feedback immediately (Almhasees et al., 2024; Pham et al., 2022; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Nevertheless, in this research, Google Translate is

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slightly more familiar than ChatGPT. Apparently, it is related to research data explained that 93% of students are interested in using GT, and 80% find it easier to use (Tumbal et al., 2021). In other words, Google Translate is slightly more familiar than ChatGPT.

Although GT comes for more complex or technical language, ChatGPT appears to have a clear advantage in the eyes of the students. In this research, they see it as more capable of managing technical terms, academic content, or nuanced expression, while GT often struggles with it. This suggests that learners are beginning to understand and value the deeper language processing abilities that ChatGPT offers not only related to translation but also various academic applications, learning partner, and evaluation tool (Almhasees et al., 2024; Das & J.V., 2024; Xiao & Zhi, 2023; Elkhodr et al., 2023). It's not just a tool for translating words but also for helping construct more coherent and meaningful texts. Based on this research, those NMTs have nearly the same level of academic use in translating assignments. Moreover, they are indicated as user-friendly platforms.

However, students' experiences with ChatGPT vary more widely. Some students have learned how to use it effectively and benefit greatly, while others are still figuring it out. This suggests that using ChatGPT involves a learning process—students may need time and support to fully understand how to make the most of it. Unlike GT, which is quite straightforward, ChatGPT invites more interaction and critical thinking, which can be both an opportunity and a challenge. That is the reason why the students appear more accustomed to and slightly more confident in GT. Despite being a newer tool, ChatGPT shows promise but may require more exposure or classroom integration to alter students' perceptions. It is related to practical dissemination needs in using ChatGPT rather than GT to overcome some mistakes grammatically and semantically (Pham et al., 2022; Xiao & Zhi, 2023). Moreover, it may break ethical rules in academic content, including plagiarism and addiction possibilities (Rahman et al., 2024; Ningsih et al., 2023). Despite these differences, both tools seem to have a positive effect on students' motivation and confidence in translation tasks.

Although there is no significant difference in the usage trends of Google Translate and ChatGPT based on the t-test result from two universities, GT helps reduce anxiety for beginners, making the task of translating feel more approachable. It is related to a study that GT is more convenient to use since it is able to balance its use with authentic language translation (Fatkhurozi & Hidayat, 2024). Meanwhile, ChatGPT offers more sophisticated support, which can be especially helpful when students face difficult or unfamiliar texts (Ohod Faisal Ahmed et al., 2025). Each tool plays a unique role: GT offers quick help, while ChatGPT encourages deeper engagement with language. In other words, students from both institutions tend to use Google Translate and ChatGPT at relatively similar levels in supporting their academic tasks.

In summary, Google Translate and ChatGPT offer different strengths, and both have a place in students' learning journeys. Rather than seeing them as competing tools, educators might think of them as complementary. What's important is helping students learn to use these tools wisely—understanding when they are helpful, how to evaluate their outputs critically, and how to avoid over-reliance (Sanz-Valdivieso & López-Arroyo, 2023). With proper guidance, both GT and ChatGPT can support not just task completion but real learning in translation and language development.

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