

EFL learners' perception of synchronously collaborative translation-annotation system by utilizing the Google Document platform

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Abstract: Many students have difficulty in translating from English to Chinese and Chinese to English, particularly long and complicated sentences, and errors in their organizing information often result in wrong interpretation of the intended meaning in the context. Few papers offer a comprehensive guide to teaching translation in practice, especially embedding technology into a translation class rather than simply searching for vocabulary items online. The study explores the effectiveness of online collaborative translation activity. The instruments used included a pretest, a posttest, and a UTAUT survey. The results are discussed in terms of the effectiveness of the online translation tasks and suggestions are provided for future task design.

Keywords: Collaborative translation, collaborative learning, Google Document

Introduction

This work-in-progress study explores the use of Google Document with peers who are Taiwanese learners of English to translate an article in order to enhance their translation accuracy and skills through communication regarding the translation process. Based on Halliday (2004) and Liao (2006, 2007), the approach with theme and information structure used here follows three steps: 1) Analyzing the source text, 2) explaining the meaning, and 3) Restructuring the target texts. The research seeks to understand whether an online collaborative translation activity using Google docs has a significant impact on both the effectiveness and students' perceptions of the process of acquiring English translation accuracy and effectiveness (Kim, 2011; Shei, 2013).

Methodology

A total of 42 students in the Department of Applied Foreign Languages were recruited from two intact translation classes at a technical university in southern Taiwan. They were divided into two groups: a control group (n=18) and an experimental group (n=24). The experiment lasted for one semester in an advanced translation class. According to an English test administered upon admission, students were categorized as being of an intermediate level of English proficiency. Students were asked to complete a pretest with multiple choice and paragraphs, an article translation activity done by three people in a group (Chang, 2011), a posttest with similar test items and essays as the pretest, and finally a UTAUT survey. Students in the experimental group did not only work as the group, but also work online simultaneously by using the Google Document platform. The online collaborative translation activity lasted for one hour per week. In the control group, three students worked on their own computers and shared their translation answers written on the Microsoft word document 1 hour later. While in the experimental group, three peers worked online with their own computers. In addition, they translated the same online document at the same time by using Google Document. After the activity, learners

were invited to complete a web-based survey with open-ended questions. Through the collection of quantitative and qualitative data, this study aims to examine whether an online collaborative translation activity has the potential to enhance learners' translation accuracy and effectiveness as measured by the posttest.

Results

The results of the study are further discussed in terms of performance expectancy, effort expectancy, facilitating conditions, attitudes toward using technology, and learners' intention to use the system. This preliminary work indicated a significant improvement being made by the experimental group in terms of higher accuracy rates in locating the right theme and information pertaining to the translation. Students provided positive feedback regarding translating an article with three peers at the same time, especially with regards to the fact that they can see instant annotations using the Google Docs platform. An interesting outcome was that technology could be embedded into a translation class, allowing students to feel more confident in learning from each other, even though English is not their native language. The results are discussed in terms of task design in undertaking this type of collaborative translation activity

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