

Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Using Google Translate as a Supporting Media in Learning Vocabulary at Senior High School

¹ Zahratul Fikni, ² Usuluddin, ¹ Juliani, ^{1*} Laila Wati

¹English Language Education, Hamzanwadi University

² English Language Education, Hamzanwadi University

English Language Education, Hamzanwadi University

English Language Education, Hamzanwadi University

*Corresponding Author e-mail: ladyaazzurri@gmail.com

Received: May 2026; Revised: June 2026; Published: July 2026

Abstract

This study aims to identify students' perceptions and experiences in using Google Translate as an English vocabulary learning tool at SMK Islam Islahul Ummah NWDI Anggaraksa. This study used a qualitative descriptive approach, with data collected through a Likert-scale questionnaire, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Participants in this study were 15 10th-grade Management students who completed the questionnaire and 5 informants selected through purposive sampling for interviews. The questionnaire results showed that students' overall perceptions of the use of Google Translate fell into the "very positive" category with an average score of 4.24. Students considered Google Translate an application that was easy to use, accessible anytime and anywhere, and helpful in understanding the meaning of new vocabulary, both in terms of definition and pronunciation. The interview results revealed that students' experiences in using Google Translate varied and were influenced by their individual characteristics. Students who used Google Translate critically and combined it with clear learning strategies experienced increased learning independence and the ability to infer word meaning based on context. In contrast, students who used it passively tended to develop dependence, both cognitively and emotionally. This study concludes that the positive impact of Google Translate on vocabulary mastery is highly dependent on how students utilize the application, thus emphasizing the need for teacher guidance to direct students to use this tool critically and strategically during the learning process.

Keywords: Students' Perceptions, Learning Experiences, Google Translate, Vocabulary Learning, Digital Media.

How to Cite: Fikni, Z., Usuluddin., Juliani., & Wati, L. (2026). Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Using Google Translate as a Supporting Media in Learning Vocabulary at Senior High School. *Journal of Authentic Research*, 5(3), 4544-4559. <https://doi.org/10.36312/4aka6b97>



<https://doi.org/10.36312/4aka6b97>

Copyright© 2026, Fikni et al.

This is an open-access article under the CC-BY-SA License.



INTRODUCTION

English plays a vital role in various aspects of modern life, including education, science, technology, business, and global communication. As one of the most widely used international languages, English has become a compulsory subject in Indonesian schools. Mastery of English provides students with greater opportunities to access international educational resources and enhances their academic and professional prospects (Das, 2025; Haryani & Aminuddin, 2023). In learning English, students are expected to master four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, mastery of language skills alone is not sufficient; students also need

to understand language components such as grammar, punctuation, and, most importantly, vocabulary.

Vocabulary is one of the most important components in language learning because it serves as the foundation for understanding and using language effectively. Farjami & Aidinlou (2013) stated that without adequate vocabulary mastery, students will experience difficulties in understanding texts, participating in conversations, and expressing ideas accurately in English. Pratiwi et al. (2025) explain that vocabulary mastery helps students understand spoken and written language more effectively, while Setiaji & Purworejo (2024) add that vocabulary knowledge supports reading comprehension and the construction of meaningful written sentences. Despite this, vocabulary remains one of the most challenging aspects of learning English for many students. Lutfiyah Nisrina & Nuraeningsih (2022) explain that students often struggle to memorize word meanings, understand vocabulary in context, and use words appropriately in speaking and writing. Mahamed (2024) states that limited vocabulary makes it difficult for students to understand English texts and actively participate in class activities, while Rahayuningsih (2020) found that students with low vocabulary mastery tend to experience difficulties in reading comprehension.

These problems in vocabulary learning can be influenced by several factors, such as low learning motivation, monotonous teaching methods, limited opportunities to practice English, and a lack of engaging learning media. In today's digital era, one digital tool frequently used by students in learning English vocabulary is Google Translate. Pratama et al. (2026) describe Google Translate as a digital translation application that helps users translate words, phrases, and sentences quickly and practically. Boukhelef (2024) explains that Google Translate can help students recognize unfamiliar vocabulary, learn pronunciation through the audio feature, and improve vocabulary independently. Khotimah et al. (2021) state that students perceive Google Translate as a practical and flexible learning tool because it can be accessed anytime and anywhere via smartphone or computer. However, the use of Google Translate can lead to different perceptions and experiences among students depending on how they use the application in the learning process.

Language plays a fundamental role in human life because it serves as a means of communication, interaction, and the exchange of ideas, feelings, and information. Through language, every individual can build social relationships, express thoughts, and understand their surroundings. In addition to being a tool for communication, language also serves as a means of learning and intellectual development. According to M.A.K. Halliday, language has several functions, including instrumental, regulative, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative, and representational functions. In an educational context, language is a crucial component of the teaching and learning process because students use language to understand course materials, ask questions, participate in discussions, and express their opinions. Therefore, language proficiency significantly influences students' success in learning, particularly when studying English as a foreign language (Goreczna, 2025). Similarly, Sharma et al. (2022) explain that effective language use enables students to develop communication skills and gain broader access to knowledge and information.

As one of the most widely used international languages, English plays a vital role in various aspects of modern life, including education, science, technology, business, and global communication. Nguyen (2023) explains that English is

commonly used as a means of international communication and academic exchange. Consequently, English has become one of the required subjects taught in schools. According to Das A. (2025), English language learning should encourage students to use the language appropriately in everyday communication, while Haryani & Aminuddin (2023) emphasize that English proficiency provides students with broader opportunities to access international educational resources and improve their academic and professional prospects.

When learning English, students are expected to master the four main language skills: listening, speaking, reading, and writing. Sufiyah & Hidayah (2023) explain that listening refers to ability to understand spoken information; speaking relates to the ability to express ideas orally; reading involves the ability to understand written texts; and writing refers to ability to communicate ideas effectively in written form. However, mastering language skills alone is not enough because students also need to understand language component such as grammar, punctuation, and vocabulary. Farjami & Aidinlou (2023) state that vocabulary is one of the most important components of language learning because it serves as the foundation for understanding and using language effectively; without adequate may have difficulty understanding texts, participating in conversations, and accurately expressing ideas in English.

The importance of vocabulary can be observed from its contribution to the development of students' language skills. Pratiwi et al. (2025) explain that vocabulary mastery helps students understand spoken and written language more effectively, while Setiaji & Purworejo (2024) state that vocabulary knowledge supports students in understanding reading texts and constructing meaningful written sentences. Bahanshal (2025) also argues that vocabulary is one of the key factors influencing students' success in learning English. Despite its importance, vocabulary remains one of the most difficult aspects of English language learning for many students. Lutfiyah Nisrina & Nuraeningsih (2022) explain that students often struggle to memorize word meanings, understand vocabulary in context, and use words appropriately in speaking and writing activities. Mahamed (2024) states that limited vocabulary knowledge makes it difficult for students to understand English texts and participate actively in classroom activities, while Rahayuningsih (2020) found that students with poor vocabulary mastery tend to experience difficulties in reading comprehension. These problems may be influenced by several factors, such as low learning motivation, monotonous teaching methods, limited opportunities to practice English, and a lack of engaging learning media.

Previous research has largely focused on the effectiveness of Google Translate in translation activities or English language learning in general. Pratama et al. (2026) investigated the use of Google Translate to support English language learning activities, Khotimah et al. (2021) focused on students' perceptions of Google Translate in the context of online learning, and Boukhelef (2024) examined students' attitudes toward digital translation tools in general. However, research specifically investigating high school students' perceptions and experiences of using Google Translate as a medium to support vocabulary learning is still limited. This situation indicates a research gap regarding how high school students perceive and experience the use of Google Translate in English vocabulary learning. The novelty of this study

lies in its focus on exploring students' perceptions and experiences specifically in vocabulary learning at the high school level.

This research is grounded in the constructivist learning theory proposed by Piaget and Vygotsky, which states that learners actively construct knowledge through experience, social interaction, and reflection, rather than passively receiving it. In this context, Google Translate is positioned as a tool that can support an active and student-centered learning process when used critically and reflectively (Zahara & Nugraha, 2025; Freeman et al., 2014). Based on the explanation above, this study aims to identify students' perceptions about the use of Google Translate as a supporting medium for vocabulary learning, explore students' experiences during vocabulary learning activities, and investigate the benefits and challenges experienced by students in using Google Translate for vocabulary learning. Specifically, this study answers the following research questions: (1) what are students' perceptions about the use of Google Translate as a supporting medium in vocabulary learning at SMK Islam Islahul Ummah NWDI Anggaraksa, and (2) what are students' experiences in using Google Translate in vocabulary learning.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design. The descriptive qualitative approach was chosen because the purpose of the study was to understand how students interpret the use of Google Translate in their own words, rather than to test relationships between predetermined variables. This design allowed the data to remain close to the participants' firsthand accounts, which is important given that the phenomena studied – perceptions and experiences – are inherently interpretive rather than strictly quantifiable (Furidha & Sidoarjo, 2023; Regmi, 2024). This approach also allowed the researcher to gather in-depth information about students' perspectives, experiences, perceived benefits, and challenges in using Google Translate as a supporting medium for vocabulary learning.

Research Subject

This research was conducted at SMK Islam Islahul Ummah NWDI Anggaraksa in May-June 2026. This location was chosen because students at the school are accustomed to using digital media, including Google Translate, to support their English vocabulary learning. Participants were selected from the 10th grade Management major using purposive sampling based on three criteria: active participation in English learning, familiarity with or frequent use of Google Translate in their studies, and willingness to participate in the research. Fifteen students – nine boys and six girls, aged fifteen to sixteen – completed a questionnaire, while five were selected as interview informants (coded as DP, BA, IN, SHS, and MJ) to represent diverse patterns of Google Translate use, ranging from critical and selective use to routine and less reflective reliance. This sample size is consistent with qualitative research practices, where priority is given to depth of information over statistical generalization, and data collection is considered sufficient once participant responses begin to repeat without yielding meaningful new insights (Guest et al., 2020).

Research Instruments

As is common in qualitative research, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, directly collecting and interpreting the data. Three supporting instruments were used to structure this process. A Likert-scale questionnaire,

consisting of twenty five closed ended statements across five dimensions ease of use, perceived benefits in vocabulary learning, awareness of the app's limitations, user experience, and independent learning was administered to obtain a general overview of students' perceptions prior to the interview. A semi-structured interview guide, designed around a set of core questions yet open-ended enough to accommodate follow up inquiries, was used to elicit more detailed and contextual accounts from the five informants. Documentation in the form of student assignments, personal vocabulary notes, and screenshots of Google Translate usage served as a third instrument, providing concrete evidence of learning activities that could be compared with that student reported in the questionnaires and interviews.

Research Procedure

Data collection was conducted in three interrelated stages. First, a questionnaire was administered: statements were formulated based on indicators of student perception, distributed to all fifteen participants both in person and online, briefly explained so that respondents understood the purpose of each section, and then collected and checked for completeness. The results were used for two purposes to map general trends in student perceptions and to determine which students would be interviewed, based on the diversity of Google Translate usage patterns evident in their responses. Interviews were conducted afterward: interview guidelines were prepared as a reference; sessions were held in person or online in an environment comfortable for the informants; each conversation was recorded with the participants consent; and the recordings were subsequently transcribed for analysis. Documentation was collected throughout the research process; materials relevant to students' vocabulary learning activities were gathered, sorted, and grouped into categories reflecting themes that emerged from the questionnaire and interviews, so that these three data sources could be compared with one another during the analysis phase.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which views analysis as an iterative rather than a linear process. During the data reduction stage, responses from questionnaires, interview transcripts, and documentation were sorted and narrowed down to include only material directly relevant to students' perceptions and experiences, while less relevant information was set aside to keep the analysis focused on the research questions. The reduced data were then organized during the data presentation stage in the form of descriptive narratives supported by tabular summaries, making it easier to identify recurring patterns and points of divergence among informants. Conclusions were drawn in the final stage and treated as provisional until they were cross-checked against various data sources a form of triangulation between questionnaire data, interviews, and documentation intended to ensure that interpretations were grounded in what participants actually reported, rather than in researcher's assumptions.

Data Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability of the findings, this study used triangulation of data sources and collection methods (questionnaires, interviews, and documentation), member checking by providing interview transcripts to informants for confirmation, as well as detailed descriptions

of the research setting, participants, and procedures (Ahmed, 2024; Ul & Kakar, 2023; Morgan, 2024).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Questionnaire Results

The questionnaire was completed by 15 10th-grade Management students, consisting of 7 boys and 8 girls, aged 15 to 16. Regarding the frequency of Google Translate use per week, 3 respondents used Google Translate daily, 6 respondents used it 3-4 times per week, 4 respondents used it 1-2 times per week, and 2 respondents used it once a week. These findings indicate that the majority of respondents (60%) have made Google Translate a tool they use regularly, at least several times a week; therefore, their reported experiences can be considered fairly representative of students' interactions with the application in their daily learning activities.

Data were collected using a Likert-type questionnaire consisting of 25 statements covering five dimensions: (a) ease of use, (b) benefits in vocabulary learning, (c) limitations, (d) usage experience, and (e) learning autonomy. A consolidated summary of responses from the 15 respondents across all statements and dimensions is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Results of the Questionnaire on Students' Perceptions and Experiences of Using Google Translate (n = 15)

No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	ΣScore	Average
A. Perceptions of the Ease of Use of Google Translate								
1	Google Translate is easy to use for looking up word meaning.	11	4	0	0	0	71	4.73
2	It can be accessed anytime via a smartphone.	10	3	2	0	0	68	4.53
3	The features (text, voice, camera) are easy to understand.	5	7	3	0	0	62	4.13
4	Provides translation results quickly.	8	7	0	0	0	68	4.53
5	The interface is not confusing.	7	6	2	0	0	65	4.33
<i>Mean of Dimension A</i>							334	4.45
B. Perceptions of the Benefits in Vocabulary Learning								
6	Helps understand the meaning of new vocabulary.	10	4	1	0	0	69	4.60
7	Helps expand vocabulary.	7	5	3	0	0	64	4.27
8	The pronunciation feature helps with learning pronunciation.	5	6	4	0	0	61	4.07
9	Helps understand meaning in sentence context.	4	8	3	0	0	61	4.07

No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	ΣScore	Average
10	Increases confidence in reading English texts.	8	7	0	0	0	68	4.53
<i>Mean of Dimension B</i>							323	4.31
C. Perceptions of the Limitations of Google Translate								
11	Aware that Google Translate translations are sometimes inaccurate for complex sentences.	7	7	1	0	0	66	4.40
12	Google Translate fails to accurately translate idiomatic expressions.	5	8	2	0	0	63	4.20
13	Feels dependent on Google Translate, resulting in a lack of independence.	2	9	4	0	0	58	3.87
14	Unstable internet connection is a hindrance.	4	8	3	0	0	61	4.07
15	Always verifies Google Translate results against other sources.	0	7	5	3	0	49	3.27
<i>Mean of Dimension C</i>							297	3.96
D. Experiences Using Google Translate in Learning								
16	Using Google Translate when working on vocabulary assignments.	10	3	2	0	0	68	4.53
17	Using Google Translate regularly when reading texts.	8	4	3	0	0	65	4.33
18	Google Translate encourages more active word lookup.	9	5	1	0	0	68	4.53
19	Utilizing the vocabulary storage feature (phrasebook).	0	6	5	4	0	47	3.13
20	After using Google Translate, trying out vocabulary in one's own sentences.	3	8	4	0	0	59	3.93
<i>Mean of Dimension D</i>							307	4.09
E. Perceptions of Learner Autonomy								
21	Google Translate encourages independent vocabulary learning outside of class hours.	6	6	3	0	0	63	4.20
22	Can continue reading/writing without waiting for the teacher.	9	5	1	0	0	68	4.53
23	Google Translate increases motivation to learn more vocabulary.	8	4	3	0	0	65	4.33

No.	Statement	SA	A	N	D	SD	ΣScore	Average
24	Google Translate helps reduce anxiety when facing difficult texts.	6	8	1	0	0	65	4.33
25	Overall, Google Translate has a positive impact on vocabulary learning.	10	5	0	0	0	70	4.67
<i>Mean of Dimension E</i>							331	4.41

Based on Table 1, the ease of use dimension received an average score of 4.45, which is categorized as very positive. The highest score was found in statement number 1 regarding the ease of using Google Translate to look up word meanings, with an average of 4.73, indicating that all students agreed that Google Translate is an easy-to-use tool and does not require special technical skills. The lowest score in this dimension was found in statement number 3 regarding the ease of understanding additional features such as voice and camera, with an average of 4.13, which is still categorized as positive. These results are consistent with the findings of Hutagalung et al. (2024), who noted that high school and vocational school students consistently preferred Google Translate over printed dictionaries due to its ease of access, speed, and free availability.

The usefulness dimension in vocabulary learning received an average score of 4.31, which is categorized as very positive. The highest-scoring statement was number 6 regarding the usefulness of Google Translate in understanding the meaning of new vocabulary, with an average of 4.60. Meanwhile, statements regarding understanding meaning in the context of a sentence and pronunciation features each received an average of 4.07, which is still considered positive. These findings indicate that students perceive real benefits from Google Translate in expanding their vocabulary and increasing their confidence when dealing with English texts.

The limitations dimension of Google Translate received an average score of 3.96 in the positive category. Interestingly, statement number 11, concerning the awareness that Google Translate translations are not always accurate for long and complex sentences, received the highest score in this dimension, with an average of 4.40, indicating that students have developed a critical awareness of the tool's limitations. Conversely, statement number 15, concerning the habit of verifying translations with other sources, received the lowest score of all twenty-five items, with an average of 3.27, which falls into the neutral category and indicates that not all students consistently verify translations.

The experience dimension of use received an average score of 4.09 in the positive category. Statements 16 and 18 received the highest scores, with an average of 4.53, indicating that using Google Translate while working on assignments and increasing activity in looking up word meanings were the most frequently reported experiences for students. Meanwhile, statement number 19 regarding the use of the phrasebook feature obtained the lowest score with an average of 3.13 which is in the neutral category and indicates that this feature has not been optimally utilized by students.

The learning autonomy dimension received an average score of 4.41, in the very positive category. Statement number 25, regarding the overall positive impact of Google Translate on vocabulary skills, received the highest score, with an average of

4.67. Statement number 22, regarding the ability to continue reading and writing activities without waiting for the teacher's help, received an average of 4.53, reflecting Google Translate's significant contribution to supporting students' learning independence outside the classroom.

Table 2. Summary of Questionnaire Results by Dimension

No.	Dimension	Total Score	Average	Category
A	Perceptions of the ease of use of Google Translate	334	4.45	Very Positive
B	Perceptions of the benefits in vocabulary learning	323	4.31	Very Positive
C	Perceptions of the limitations of Google Translate	297	3.96	Positive
D	Experiences using Google Translate in learning	307	4.09	Positive
E	Perceptions of learner autonomy	331	4.41	Very Positive
Grand Mean		1,592	4.24	Very Positive

Overall, the questionnaire results obtained from 15 respondents show a grand mean of 4.24, which falls into the "very positive" category. The ranking of dimension scores from highest to lowest is dimension A (4.45), dimension E (4.41), dimension B (4.31), dimension D (4.09), and dimension C (3.96). This pattern indicates that students' perceptions of Google Translate's contribution to independent learning is the aspect they feel most strongly about, whereas awareness of Google Translate's limitations though still in the positive category receives the lowest score compared to the other four dimensions. These quantitative findings are further enriched and explored through the interview results in the following section, particularly to understand how this awareness of limitations manifests in students' real-life experiences.

Interview Results

To further explore the quantitative findings above, this study also collected qualitative data through semi-structured interviews with five tenth-grade Management students who were purposively selected based on variations in their patterns of Google Translate usage. The interviews were conducted in June 2026, on school grounds. Based on the results of the interview data analysis, the responses of the five informants were grouped into five main themes aligned with the research questions.

Initial Patterns and Development of Google Translate Use

All informants reported first becoming familiar with Google Translate while in junior high school, typically prompted by assignments to translate English text or song lyrics. DP explained that this use evolved from simply translating sentences for homework to a more targeted approach: typing a single word, examining example sentences, playing the audio repeatedly, and then noting it down in his personal vocabulary notebook.

"Now that I'm in 10th grade, I use Google Translate almost every day, but mostly to check the nuances of words whose meanings I've already guessed, rather than to translate them directly." (DP, interview, June 2, 2026)

BA showed a different pattern of development, admitting that the frequency and scope of his translation actually increased over time, from translating word by word to translating sentence by sentence and even paragraph by paragraph.

"Actually, I'm translating more, not less. I know it's not good, but it's hard to stop." (BA, interview, June 2, 2026)

IN described a somewhat different experience, in which Google Translate serves as a gateway to English-language content that interests her, such as fan fiction, YouTube comments, and online forums, so that her usage pattern evolved toward a more patient and reflective approach over time. SHS explained that her habit of checking Google Translate has actually become more intense due to her perfectionist tendencies and fear of making mistakes.

"Now I find myself checking the same word over and over again during the same study session because I don't trust my memory. This is what worries me – this isn't learning; this is anxiety." (SHS, interview, June 3, 2026)

Unlike the other four informants, MJ admitted that his usage pattern has remained relatively unchanged since he first encountered Google Translate in middle school; he uses it without any specific strategy, only spontaneously when he comes across a word he does not understand.

Google Translate's Contribution to Vocabulary Mastery

All informants agreed that Google Translate is quite helpful in understanding receptive vocabulary, although the depth of their mastery varies. DP explicitly distinguished between receptive and productive vocabulary and provided a concrete example of how he successfully mastered vocabulary through Google Translate's corrections.

"I once manually translated the phrase 'nasi putih' as 'rice white,' but after using Google Translate to translate it, I realized I was wrong – the correct translation is 'white rice.'" (DP, interview, June 2, 2026)

Both BA and SHS acknowledged that vocabulary learned through Google Translate tends to be quickly forgotten if it does not appear repeatedly. BA cited the word "sustainable" as one of the vocabulary items he successfully mastered because it frequently appeared in environmental topics in class, while SHS emphasized that the benefit she felt most was actually a sense of security from anxiety, rather than a deep mastery of vocabulary.

"Come to think of it, the benefit might be more about feeling secure rather than anxious, rather than a truly deep mastery of vocabulary. I can write essays that get good grades, but when asked to speak off the cuff, my vocabulary feels limited." (SHS, interview, June 3, 2026)

IN demonstrated a different pattern of vocabulary mastery, where words learned in contexts she enjoys such as music, fan fiction, and popular culture are much easier to remember and are even actively used in her own writing, such as the words "nostalgia," "melancholy," and "ethereal." MJ stated that the only vocabulary she truly remembers are words that repeatedly appear across various subjects, such as "pollution" and "deforestation," while other vocabulary that she only looks up occasionally via Google Translate tends not to stick in her memory the next day.

Experiences with Inaccurate Translation Results

All five informants had similar experiences with the inaccuracy of Google Translate's results, particularly regarding idiomatic sentences, informal expressions, and cultural context. DP recounted an experience where he tried to convey the phrase "don't lose heart," which Google Translate literally translated in a way that led to a misunderstanding when heard by someone with a better command of English.

"Google Translate rendered it as 'jantung kecil' [small heart], even though I wanted to encourage my friend not to always lose heart." (DP, interview, June 2, 2026)

BA had a similar experience when translating the proverb "still waters run deep," which resulted in a nonsensical English translation, as well as a misunderstanding of the word "elaborate" that led to an inaccurate answer on an assignment. IN highlighted the unique challenges of translating humor and wordplay in English-language memes.

"Once I shared a translated meme with my friend, and they said it wasn't funny at all because the translation was too literal, even though the humor was in the wordplay." (IN, interview, June 3, 2026)

SHS made a mistake that had a significant impact on her assignment grade when she translated the word "compromise" without considering the context of the sentence, resulting in her work being corrected by the teacher. MJ admitted that he did not yet have the ability to recognize on his own when Google Translate's results were incorrect, and only realized it after being corrected by the teacher — as in the case of the word "frank," which was mistakenly understood as a person's name rather than an adjective meaning "honest/forthright." In response to these experiences, more critical informants such as DP, IN, and SHS began to make a habit of cross-checking with other sources such as the Cambridge Dictionary, Merriam-Webster, and Urban Dictionary, or using the back-and-forth translation technique, while BA and MJ still relied on corrections from teachers or friends as the only way to identify translation errors.

Learning Independence Versus Reliance on Google Translate

This theme yielded the most varied findings among the five informants. DP and IN tended to report that Google Translate actually enhanced their learning independence, as its critical use opened up access to authentic English-language sources that had previously seemed difficult to reach.

"Google Translate actually enhances my independent learning, but only because I use it actively and critically." (DP, interview, June 2, 2026)

IN even once tested her own abilities by reading English-language fan fiction without Google Translate for a week and managed to understand 70–80% of the content, a result she felt far exceeded her initial expectations. BA and SHS, on the other hand, openly acknowledged a fairly deep level of dependence.

"I'll be honest, I'm dependent on it. If my phone suddenly dies while I'm studying English, I get completely lost and can't continue." (BA, interview, June 2, 2026)

"I'll be honest: Google Translate has created a fairly deep emotional dependence in me. It's not just cognitive dependence, but more of a dependence on it to alleviate anxiety." (SHS, interview, June 3, 2026)

SHS's dependence on Google Translate had a tangible impact when she took a mock national exam without access to the tool, resulting in a significant drop in her score a turning point that motivated her to start studying more independently. MJ

took a relatively passive stance on this issue; she acknowledged her reliance on the tool, but the instances where she reduced her use of Google Translate were more often accidental such as due to a weak internet signal or a dead phone battery rather than the result of conscious decision-making or a specific learning strategy.

Overall Impact Assessment and Informants' Recommendations

In the final evaluation, all five informants provided complementary perspectives on the impact of Google Translate and recommendations for future learning. DP assessed the overall impact of Google Translate as positive and significant, particularly in expanding receptive vocabulary and boosting confidence with English-language content, with the caveat that these benefits are realized only when the tool is used consciously and strategically. He recommended that teachers introduce a kind of "Google Translate usage protocol" from the very beginning of the learning process.

"I feel like I'm constantly walking with a cane, but my legs have never been trained." (BA, interview, June 3, 2026)

IN viewed Google Translate as an enabler that allows her to learn from her personal interests and explore English far beyond the school curriculum, while also recommending that teachers link vocabulary learning to students' interests. SHS offered a more personal reflection, noting that Google Translate helps her "look good on paper" more than it actually develops her ability to speak English spontaneously and fluently; she recommended that teachers also consider the psychological aspects of students' use of translation tools, not just the technical aspects. MJ concluded that Google Translate helped her "get by" in English class but had not yet encouraged her to actively improve, and recommended that schools and teachers provide concrete guidance on how to use Google Translate productively, rather than simply banning it or allowing its use without direction.

In general, the interview results both reinforce and enrich the quantitative findings from the questionnaire. All informants perceived Google Translate as an easy-to-use tool that was quite helpful in understanding English vocabulary, particularly in the receptive aspect. However, the interview data revealed variations in usage patterns not fully captured in the questionnaire, ranging from critical and reflective use (DP, IN) to patterns of cognitive and emotional dependence (BA, SHS), as well as passive use without specific strategies (MJ). These findings also highlight the gap between students' awareness of Google Translate's limitations and their actual verification practices, which are rarely carried out, as reflected in the low scores on the verification items in dimension C of the questionnaire.

Students' Perceptions of Using Google Translate as a Supporting Media in Learning Vocabulary

The research findings indicate that students' overall perceptions of Google Translate are very positive, with the ease-of-use dimension scoring the highest. This finding aligns with the perspective of Pratama et al. (2026), who described Google Translate as a digital translation application that helps users translate words, phrases, and sentences quickly and conveniently. This practicality is the primary reason students at SMK Islam Islahul Ummah NWDI Anggaraksa prefer Google Translate over printed dictionaries, as expressed by informants DP and MJ, who emphasized speed and ease of access via smartphones.

Students' positive perceptions of Google Translate's benefits in understanding new vocabulary also align with the findings of Khotimah et al. (2021), who stated that students view Google Translate as a practical and flexible learning tool because it can

be accessed anytime and anywhere. Furthermore, Google Translate's ability to translate meaning according to the context of a sentence, as noted by informant IN, reinforces the findings of Boukhelef (2024), who explained that Google Translate can help students recognize new vocabulary, learn pronunciation through the audio feature, and improve overall vocabulary mastery.

However, this positive perception is not without criticism. The relatively low scores on items regarding translation verification habits and use of the vocabulary saving feature indicate a gap between students' perceptions of Google Translate's benefits and their actual learning practices. This finding aligns with the perspective of Novan & Nugraha (2020), who stated that Google Translate output is sometimes inaccurate and fails to align with the context of the sentence, suggesting that students should ideally verify the translation results. Students' awareness of this limitation, reflected in a score of 3.96 on the limitations dimension, indicates that they have developed a critical attitude, although this attitude has not yet fully manifested in consistent verification behavior.

Informant IN's experience translating humor and puns that Google Translate failed to accurately translate also reinforces previous findings regarding the limitations of machine translation in addressing the idiomatic and cultural aspects of language. Thus, students' perceptions of Google Translate can be understood as dualistic: they view the application as a very useful and easy-to-use tool, but at the same time acknowledge that its translations are not always completely reliable, especially when dealing with complex language structures.

Students' Experiences Using Google Translate in Vocabulary Learning

The research findings indicate that students' experiences using Google Translate can be understood through the constructivist theoretical framework underlying this study. Consistent with Piaget's and Vygotsky's views on active and contextual learning, the experiences of informants DP and IN demonstrate that Google Translate can function as a tool that supports active learning, particularly when students use it as a starting point for exploration, which is then verified and practiced in real-life communication contexts. DP's strategy of using Google Translate as a "first draft" and then verifying the results with other sources represents a form of constructive learning, where students construct their own understanding through exploration, verification, and reflection.

Informant IN's experience using Google Translate as a gateway to access English-language content that aligns with her personal interests also aligns with the perspective of Pratiwi et al. (2025), who stated that vocabulary mastery helps students understand spoken and written language more effectively. When vocabulary is learned in meaningful contexts relevant to students' interests, the vocabulary acquisition process tends to occur more organically and persists longer in memory, as demonstrated by IN's experience learning vocabulary from song lyrics and fan fiction.

On the other hand, the experiences of informants BA and MJ, who demonstrated a reliance on Google Translate without a clear recording or verification strategy, confirm the findings of Lutfiyah Nisrina & Nuraeningsih (2022), who stated that students often struggle to remember word meanings, understand vocabulary in context, and use words appropriately. Reliance on Google Translate without actively memorizing and using encountered vocabulary can lead to temporary vocabulary acquisition, where students understand the meaning of a word at the time but are unable to recall it later, as MJ acknowledged.

An interesting finding from this study is the experience of informant SHS, who indicated that reliance on Google Translate is not only cognitive but also related to psychological aspects such as academic anxiety. SHS's experience of feeling compelled to recheck vocabulary she already knows to reduce anxiety suggests that the use of digital media in language learning cannot be separated from students' affective factors. This finding broadens understanding of the impact of using digital translation tools, which has previously been discussed primarily from cognitive and pedagogical perspectives.

Overall, the findings regarding student experiences indicate that the impact of Google Translate on English vocabulary acquisition is conditional, depending on how students use the application. For students who use Google Translate reflectively and with a clear learning strategy, the app serves as a tool that supports independent learning and expands access to new vocabulary, both in academic contexts and contexts that align with students' personal interests. Conversely, for students who use Google Translate passively without specific strategies, the app has the potential to hinder the development of their ability to infer meaning from context and their productive language skills. These findings underscore the importance of teachers' role in guiding students to use Google Translate critically and strategically, as recommended by nearly all informants in this study.

CONCLUSION

This study aimed to answer two questions regarding 10th-grade Management students at *SMK Ilam Islahul Ummah NWDI Anggaraksa*. Regarding the first questions how students perceive Google Translate as a tool for learning vocabulary the evidence obtained indicates a very positive overall perception (overall average 4.24), based on the app's ease of use and its perceived contribution to understanding new vocabulary, while students also recognize, albeit inconsistently, the app's limitations with long or idiomatic texts. Regarding the second question what experiences students reported when using the app's the responses were more varied: students who combined Google Translate with deliberate strategies, such as systematically noting down vocabulary and cross-checking, experienced increased learning autonomy and the ability to infer meaning from context, whereas students who used it passively tended to experience dependence both cognitive and, in at least one case, related to academic anxiety. Overall, these findings support the conclusion that Google Translate is contribution to English vocabulary learning is real but conditional, determined not by the app itself but by how students choose to use it.

RECOMMENDATIONS

For students, these findings suggest a habit worth cultivating intentionally: trying to guess the meaning of a word from context before opening Google Translate, then verifying the app's results against supporting sources such as online dictionaries, and noting down new vocabulary to actively reuse in speaking and writing rather than treating the translation results as a completed task.

For teachers, more a productive response to the presence of Google Translate in the classroom is neither a ban nor a hand-off guidance for example, encouraging students to translate only words or short phrases they truly do not understand, rather

than entire sentences or paragraphs, and remaining sensitive to the possibility that some students' reliance on the app is linked to academic anxiety, not merely a skills gap, thus requiring an approach that builds self-confidence alongside language proficiency.

For schools, developing clear guidelines on when and how digital translation tools can be used during English language instruction will help transform the individual best practices of teachers into a more consistent approach across the school, so that students can take advantage of the practicality of these applications without letting them replace the active development of their language skills.

For future researchers, the scope of this study is limited to 10th-grade students majoring in Management at a single school, which limits the extent to which these findings can be generalized. Future research using a more diverse sample encompassing various grade levels, majors, and school types will help determine whether the patterns identified here apply more broadly, and further examination of the effective, rather than merely cognitive, dimension of reliance on translation tools potentially through a mixed-methods design will expand upon the foundation laid by this study.

REFERENCES

- Ahmed, S. K. (2024). Handling data in qualitative research: A practical guide. *Journal of Medicine, Surgery, and Public Health*, 2, 1-3.
- Bahanshal, D. A. (2015). The effect of vocabulary learning strategies on EFL learners' vocabulary retention. *International Journal of Humanities and Social Science*, 5(8), 1-10.
- Boukhelef, F. (2024). Investigating students' attitudes towards integrating machine translation in the EFL classroom: The case of Google Translate. *AWEJ for Translation & Literary Studies*, 8(2), 264-277.
- Das, A. K. (2025). Applied English for everyday communication. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 6(6), 1-5.
- Farjami, F., & Aidinlou, N. A. (2013). Analysis of the impediments to English vocabulary learning and teaching. *International Journal of Language and Linguistics*, 1(1), 1-5.
- Freeman, S., Eddy, S. L., McDonough, M., Smith, M. K., Okoroafor, N., Jordt, H., & Wenderoth, M. P. (2014). Active learning increases student performance in science, engineering, and mathematics. *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences*, 111(23), 8410-8415.
- Furidha, B. W., & Sidoarjo, U. M. (2023). Comprehension of the descriptive qualitative research method: A critical assessment of the literature. *Journal of Qualitative Research*, 2(1), 1-15.
- Góreczna, D. (2025). Success and struggles in English language proficiency: A close examination. *Journal of Applied Linguistics*, 22(1), 1-15.
- Guest, G., Namey, E. E., & Chen, M. (2020). A simple method to assess and report thematic saturation in qualitative research. *PLoS ONE*, 15(5), 1-17.
- Haryani, R. N., & Aminuddin, M. (2023). The role of English in preparing students to face global challenges. *Journal of Language Education*, 6(2), 1-10.

- Hutagalung, G. U., Ningsih, W., Rohliah, L., & Lestari, P. (2024). Google Translate in vocabulary learning: The positive impact and the drawbacks. *Journal of English Education and Technology*, 5(1), 1-12.
- Khotimah, K., Wahyudin, W., & Rohbiah, T. S. (2021). Students' perception of Google Translate in online English learning. *Journal of English Language Teaching*, 4(2), 78-85.
- Lutfiyah Nisrina, Nuraeningsih, & Rusiana. (2022). The obstacles in learning vocabulary of EFL students. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 5(2), 114-125.
- Mahamed, N. R. (2024). The crucial function of vocabulary development for students improving their English language skills. *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Research and Analysis*, 7(5), 1910-1918.
- Morgan, H. (2024). Using triangulation and crystallization to make qualitative studies trustworthy and rigorous. *The Qualitative Report*, 29(7), 1844-1856.
- Nguyen, M. V. (2023). Google Translate for writing in an online English class: Vietnamese learners' perceptions and performances. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 30(1), 5-17.
- Novan, D., & Nugraha, S. (2020). Grammatical and diction inaccuracy in English-Indonesian translation on Google Translate. *Proceedings of the International Conference on Education and Psychology*, 399, 35-39.
- Pratama, R., Harikurniawan, E., & Muchyidin, S. (2026). Character education into ethical use of Google Translate at vocational schools. *Journal of Educational Research*, 9, 382-394.
- Pratiwi, T. L., Trisannia, Y., & Zaki, L. B. (2025). Enhancing pre-school students' vocabulary skills through digital storytelling: A classroom action research. *Journal of Early Childhood Education*, 10(2), 144-156.
- Rahayuningsih, R. (2020). The effect of reading habit and vocabulary mastery towards students' reading comprehension. *Journal of Language and Literature*, 12(2), 1-10.
- Regmi, B. P. (2024). Understanding qualitative research methodology: A comprehensive review. *Journal of Research Methodology*, 9(1), 37-45.
- Setiaji, C. A., & Purworejo, U. M. (2024). Implementasi model modifikasi pengembangan penguasaan kosakata mahasiswa untuk. *Jurnal Pendidikan Bahasa*, 8(3), 367-374.
- Sharma, M., Devi, M., Dangoria, R., & Jain, V. (2022). Literature enhances communication skills: A comprehensive review. *World Journal of English Language*, 12(3), 157-163.
- Sufiyah, N., & Hidayah, L. (2023). Mastering language skills: Exploring key aspects in ELT (English Language Teaching). *Journal of English Language Education*, 2(3), 1-10.
- Ul, Z., & Kakar, H. (2023). Criteria for assessing and ensuring the trustworthiness in qualitative research. *CUNY Academic Works*, 1-15.
- Zahara, Z., & Nugraha, M. E. (2025). Constructivism in English language teaching. *The Journal of Humanities, Community Service, and Empowerment*, 2(1), 21-29.