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APPLIED ENGLISH STUDENTS' PERCEPTIONS ON COMPUTER ASSISTED TRANSLATION (CAT TOOLS)

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Abstract

Today, technology has a significant role in every human aspect including translation. Various computer applications which are called Computer Assisted Translation (CAT) Tools made to help the translators completing their job and increase their productivity. Those tools are not only for translators but also for English students in dealing with their task. The applied English students ideally use all possible technologies to finish their tasks since most of them are generation Z who spent most of their time in the online computer or mobile phone. However based on interviews with them showed that they are not familiarize and realize with the CAT Tools as what to be expected. Therefore, this study is aimed at exploring their perception on CAT Tools. The study employed a mixed method to answer the research questions. The questionnaire survey was distributed to get their perceptions on CAT Tools in general followed by interview to get more information related. The study showed that the students realize the advantages of the CAT Tools but they never rely on that tools only. They still used their knowledge to check the quality of the translations. Finally, this study recommends to introduce and to integrate technology into translation curricula to maximizing their translation skill.

Keywords: Applied English, Students Perception, CAT Tools

I. INTRODUCTION

Globalization and the rapid change of the human life have resulted in demand of for translations services. The translators face the problems related to the deadlines as well as their workload. Dealing with the problems, the Computer assisted/aided Translation (CAT) Tools appeared as the best solutions. The CAT Tools created to ease translation process, to minimize the costs and to reduce time consuming. The tools are not only for professional translators but also for applied English students in dealing with their task whose will became the professional translators in the future. Ideally, the CAT Tools are not strange things anymore for them since they are the gadget generations whose familiarize with technology since baby. So, it is expected that

the applied English students in Indonesia can maximize technologies to finish their tasks like the CAT Tools easily.

In addition, in the last decades the translation technology has become an integral part of the translation process and has changed the nature of this process in quite fundamental ways (Christensen 2010: 1; O'Brien 2012: 1). It means that pen-and-paper translation are inevitably coming to an end. This is evidenced, for example, by Gouaded (2007/2010: 156), who analyzed 650 job advertisements for translators and found that all of these advertisements require translators to have knowledge of translation memory (TM) systems. Also, younger generations of translators entering the translation market today will often have been educated in

universities featuring state-of-the-art computer infrastructure and translation technology and will probably feel that computer-assisted translation (CAT) is the natural way to translate.

Generally, the adoption of the CAT tools is considered to have both advantages and disadvantages. For example, the use of TM systems may entail, on the positive side, a higher process standardisation, productivity and cross-document consistency and lower translation costs and, on the negative side, a possibly higher focus on individual translation segments (to the detriment of the textual perspective) or the uncritical adoption of low-quality translation units from contaminated TMs (cf. Christensen 2011: 128; Ehrensberger 2014a: 200). In addition working with the CAT tool may be rather time-consuming at the beginning, since the translator has to invest some time in training, referring to manuals, or seeking technical support (Elimam, 2007). Leblanc (2013) reports some drawbacks that may be involved in the use of CAT tools including hindering creativity among translators and propagating errors through translation recycling. He argues that “the main drawback of TMs is that they force translators to use a sentence-by-sentence approach, thereby requiring them to work with segments (or translation units) instead of the whole text” (Leblanc, 2013: 7).

With both positive and negative attitudes being reported about CAT tools, as well as with their significant impact on the translation process and profession in today’s world, it has become interesting to explore students’ perceptions on the CAT Tools in order to get produce the better generations and translators.

II. LITERATURE REVIEWS

Several studies have contributed to the literature on translators’ attitudes to CAT tools, as outlined below. Moore and Benbasat (1991) and Dillon and Fraser (2006) are of particular relevance to the present research. Moore and Benbasat (1991) investigated how potential users’ perceptions of an information technology innovation influence its adoption. For this purpose, they propose a key instrument for the study of the adoption and

diffusion of information technology innovations based on theories of innovation diffusion. According to Moore and Benbasat (1991: 196), “innovations diffuse because of the cumulative decisions of individuals to adopt them. It is not the potential adopters’ perceptions of the innovation itself, but rather their perceptions of using the innovation that are key to whether the innovation diffuses”. Dillon and Fraser (2006) then made use of a simplified version of the aforementioned instrument to examine the perception of UK-based translation professionals to Translation Memories (TMs). They tackle the same eight constructs but this time using only 24 statements. They argue that:

- 1) Younger translators and those who are relatively new to the translation industry have a more positive general perception of CAT tools than experienced translators;
- 2) Translators who use CAT tools have a more positive general perception of it than translators who do not;
- 3) Perceived computer proficiency positively correlates with translators’ perception of the importance of CAT tools.

In the literature on CAT system evaluation, two key studies are particularly widely referred to: Rico (2001) and Höge (2002), both of which emphasize the importance of a user-oriented perspective for evaluation based on context of use (see also Zaretskaya et al., 2015). The former proposes a rigorous methodology for evaluation that takes context into account and identifies a number of relevant features along with the relative weight of each feature. An apparent shortcoming, nevertheless, is that the model is purely theoretical and remains without application. Höge (2002) also highlights the importance of the reusability of an evaluation framework.

As for the English-Indonesian translations, very few studies have tackled the use of CAT tools in general and even fewer have attempted to explore user attitudes to CAT tools. One of the reasons may be that these tools only used by the professional translators. Thawabteh (2013) suggests that CAT tools may usually seem too complicated, even frustrating when first introduced to students.

From the above discussion, it may be argued that the significance of the present study lies in the fact that it investigates theof students' perception on actual users of CAT tools. A comparison is also drawn between the attitudes of undergraduate students and professional translators to provide an additional dimension.

III. METHODOLOGY

A mixed method approach is employed in order to integrate both quantitative and qualitative data. Combining both questionnaires and semi-structured interviews is meant to give a more in-depth view of students' perceptions.

The survey comprises two sections: the first is devoted to demographic data, including age, years of experience, computer skills, etc. The second is adopted from the instrument developed by Moore and Benbasat (1991) to examine user's attitudes to a new technology (see also Dillon & Fraser, 2006). The original instrument comprises 34 statements based around eight different constructs. For the purpose of the present study, however, only three of these constructs are selected for a shorter and more applicable version. The wording of the original items was sometimes slightly modified to be tailored to the specific topic of study, i.e., CAT tools.

Therefore, in addition to seven demographic questions, the researcher ended up with 30 statements targeting three main constructs. Respondents were asked to choose one of five possible responses on a 5-point Likert scale, the most commonly used scale for attitudinal research. Responses range from Strongly Agree to Strongly Disagree, in which strongly disagree corresponds to 1 point, while strongly agree corresponds to 5 points. Middle point Neutral was included for users who may feel uncertain about any of the statements. The questionnaire was carried out using Google form, online software for creating, disseminating and processing questionnaires, in order to make it accessible to all participants.

The participants in the present study are applied English students in Diponegoro University, Indonesia. The participants are applied English students in semester 2 and 4.

The cluster random sampling was applied to determine the participants.

Semi-structured interviews were then conducted with eight participants (four students and four translators) in which the researcher asked further questions to the respondents in order to obtain a more profound view of their attitudes. The questions particularly addressed what they liked/disliked most about CAT tools. These interviews are meant to complement the quantitative data.

IV. FINDING AND DISCUSSIONS

Based on the interviews and surveys were conducted with the participants showed that the responses mainly point to the following positive aspects of CAT tools as perceived by the users (in order of recurrence):

1. Saving time and increasing productivity, especially when translating similar or repetitive documents, e.g., legal or technical texts.
2. User-friendly, uncomplicated interface.
3. Making translation easier by dividing texts into segments and indicating the finished and remaining portions of translation.
4. Maintaining original text formatting which may be difficult to track otherwise.
5. Consistency of terms between a team of translators.
6. The well-organized layout offers helpful features by aligning the two documents side by side, zooming, etc.
7. Backing up work to prevent it from being lost due to any technical problem that may arise.
8. Compatibility with different document formats.
9. Cost-effectiveness since they save time and effort due to matches.
10. Allowing translators to benefit from previous experience through TM and TB.

Although there were many positive side found, the participants still believe that they may not relay on the CAT Tools only since it is machine. It is true that using CAT tools particularly speeding up the translation process and increasing productivity. Although most participants believe that knowledge of CAT tools enhances their career, they still do not think they would lose much without them. Students revealed lack of knowledge on many aspects of CAT tools as indicated by their

numerous neutral responses. More experienced translators, on the other hand, surprisingly display more unfavorable attitudes to CAT tools in many respects, despite their supposedly greater familiarity with them.

Participants mostly consider CAT tools user-friendly and easy to use, especially those with better computer skills, with facilitating teamwork and work recoverability in case of system malfunction being the most prominent points of agreement in this respect. The need for thorough training is, nevertheless, suggested by the responses.

The most obvious shortcoming according to the results of both the survey and the interview is the unaffordability of CAT tools, as most participants believe they are too expensive. Several negative attitudes also point to the tools hindering translators' creativity and sometimes resulting in segmented incoherent texts.

The semi-structured interviews have served to provide further insights into users' attitudes. Whereas most interviewees agree that the basic benefits of CAT tools lie in saving time and increasing productivity, they show mixed, even contradicting opinions on several aspects. Regarding cost, some translators said that CAT tools are cost-effective since they enable them to accomplish more translation tasks in less time, thus increasing their profit. Others, by contrast, claim that the tools negatively affect their pay since matches, whether perfect or fuzzy, reduce the word count of their work. Moreover, whereas translators indicated that TM and TBs save time, students mentioned that creating and updating these files are already time-consuming. Another point of contradiction involves depending on previous translation, which is viewed by some as a good opportunity to benefit from previous experience and by others as posing the risk of inaccurate translation. In addition to these opposing views, while some consider segmentation a helpful feature to guide the translation process and highlight finished and remaining portions, others believe it may result in incoherent texts. Overall, almost all interviewees agreed that CAT tools are not affordable.

It may thus be argued that the findings of the present study are in line with Dillon and Fraser's (2006) findings that self-rated computer skills positively correlate with user attitudes to CAT tools. They also show some agreement with their finding that translators who are relatively new to the translation profession have more favorable attitudes to CAT tools than more experienced ones, although this correlation cannot be spotted in all aspects.

V. CONCLUSIONS

The use of CAT has clearly brought about many advantages to all players in the translation process, but this has not happened without significant changes to work practices and serious challenges for the translation profession and translator trainers (O'Brien, 2010). In the literature, the question of how technology will impact the work of translators in the future is often recurrent. Some view computers as a 'job killer' to translators. The ubiquity of translation technologies has resulted in the emergence of new types of translation-related roles, such as localization, post-editing, project management, and quality assessment (Doherty, 2016).

According to Christensen and Schjoldager (2010), there is a consensus among scholars that CAT technology is here to stay. Krüger (2016) also suggests that "the good old days of pen-and-paper translation are inevitably coming to an end" (p. 114). As Elimam (2007) highlights "the question now for translators is not whether to use electronic tools or not but rather which tools to buy, learn, and use" (par. 10). He suggests that "a translator is no longer someone sitting at a desk with a pen in hand, sheets of paper before him/her and a number of dictionaries within reach (Elimam, 2007, par. 12). CAT tools are likely to affect the image of the translator and the translation profession as a whole. Unlike what some may think, the image and role of the translator in Egypt and probably in the entire Arab world may be witnessing a turning point due to the proliferation of CAT tools.

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