

## Vietnamese EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of using Google Translate in the classroom

Ngan Cam Hong<sup>1\*</sup>, Le Thi Hong Van<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Nam Can Tho University, Vietnam

<sup>2</sup> Tay Nguyen University, Vietnam

\*Corresponding author's email: hongcamngan@gmail.com

 <https://orcid.org/0009-0004-3125-8247>

 <https://doi.org/10.54855/callej.252638>

®Copyright (c) 2025 Ngan Cam Hong, Le Thi Hong Van

Received: 10/11/2024

Revision: 19/06/2025

Accepted: 01/07/2025

Online: 02/07/2025

### ABSTRACT

**Keywords:** Google Translate (GT), Appraisal Theory, Vietnamese students, Ecological System Theory

Google Translate (GT) has become a widely used tool in EFL education. In Vietnam, GT is commonly used among EFL students, but few published studies have explored its use in classrooms. This research aims to fill that gap by examining the perceptions of both EFL teachers and students regarding their awareness, practices, and appropriateness of using GT in classrooms. It involved 450 students and 12 teachers in a Vietnamese private university. Its design included a cross-sectional survey and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire design was based on the appraisal theory, and the ecological system theory was used to interpret data. The findings show that both students and teachers recognized GT's value for learning English in classrooms, but teachers and English-majored students used it less than non-majored students. The results offer insights for educators, policymakers, and researchers on GT's role in EFL education, promoting effective language instruction and ethical technology use.

### Introduction

With the advanced technology in our current life, using information and communication technologies such as Google Translate (GT) to facilitate EFL learners is common in classrooms. Today, GT has demonstrated benefits including enhancing language learning through improved accuracy and writing skills, as evidenced by studies such as Jolley and Maimone (2015), Lee (2020), and Maamujav et al. (2021). However, other authors such as Mundt and Groves (2016) and Can (2023) cautioned against potential negative impacts like plagiarism and reduced learning outcomes. Furthermore, although most students in Vietnamese contexts also use GT in EFL classrooms, there are few published studies that investigate both teachers' and students' perceptions. Specifically, Phan and Chen (2020) and Pham et al. (2022) provided some insight into GT's effectiveness and limitations but were limited in scope due to small sample sizes and methodological constraints. Additionally, these studies often focused on specific student groups

or did not include both teachers and students.

Therefore, while existing literature highlights both the benefits and drawbacks of using GT in EFL education, significant gaps remain in understanding how GT is perceived by different stakeholders, specifically EFL teachers and students. Thus, there is a significant gap in comprehensive research that examines both Vietnamese EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of GT's use in the classroom regarding their awareness, practices, and evaluations of its role and effectiveness. Addressing this gap is crucial given the different levels of perceptions that may influence how GT is integrated into the classroom. The findings are important for developing informed strategies that can enhance GT's effectiveness and mitigate its drawbacks in the Vietnamese educational context. It offered valuable insights that can lead to more effective language instruction and ethical technology integration in the field of language education.

## Literature review

### *Appraisal Theory*

In order to investigate the teachers' and students' perceptions of using GT, the Appraisal Theory is likely an appropriate conceptual framework. The Appraisal Theory proposed by Martin and White (2005) is a sociolinguistic framework that focuses on how language is used to express subjective evaluations, attitudes, and emotions. This theory explores how speakers or writers appraise and assess various aspects of their social reality through language. There are three interrelated systems or dimensions involved in the process of appraisal. The initial notion has to do with the mindset of the writer or speaker when they write or talk. The second element pertains to the engagement of speakers, authors, or other persons in communication. The graduation proposition is the subject of the third idea. These three dimensions work together to shape the appraisal resources available in language and contribute to the construction of meaning in discourse. Researchers can uncover how individuals evaluate and express their attitudes and emotions within social and cultural contexts by analyzing linguistic features such as lexical choices, grammatical structures, modality, and adverbs.

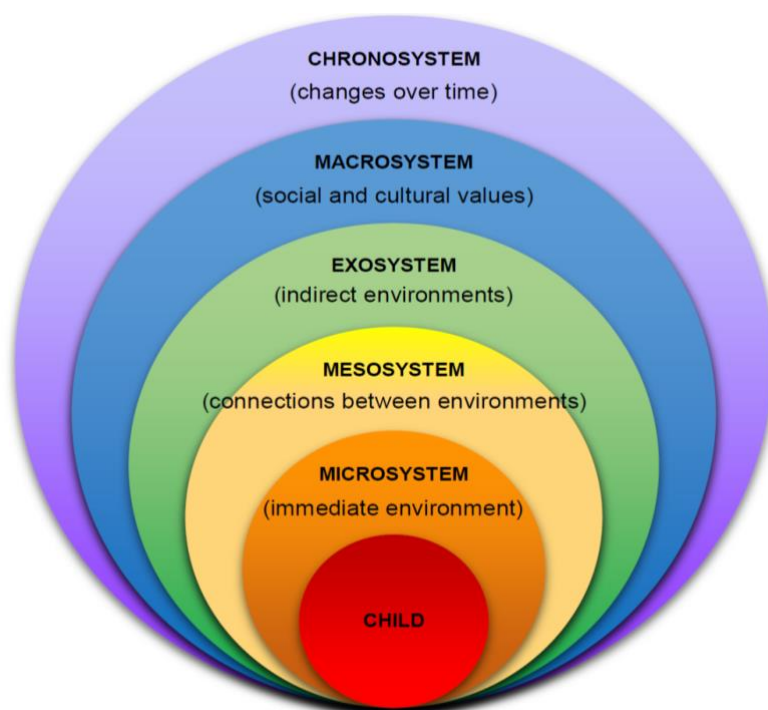
In this study, this theory provides analyses of the meanings in which texts convey positive or negative evaluations, the intensity or directness of these attitudinal utterances is enhanced or weakened, and where speakers or writers enter into dialogue with previous speakers or with potential responders to a current proposal or idea about using GT in EFL classrooms. These tools for creating meaning are referred to as the "language of evaluation" since they all serve as a vehicle for revealing the speaker's or writer's unique evaluative engagement in the text as they take positions regarding phenomena or the use of GT in EFL classrooms (White, 2015). Applying the Appraisal Theory to the use of GT in classrooms offers a comprehensive framework for investigating how awareness of the tool's features influences its initial appraisal, how practice with the tool affects engagement and skill development, and how evaluations of its effectiveness shape future use. This approach provides valuable insights into how GT can be effectively utilized in language learning and teaching, highlighting the importance of understanding users' appraisals, practices, and evaluations in optimizing educational outcomes.

### *Ecological Systems Theory*

One of the most recent iterations of the systems models used in social work is the Ecological Systems Theory (EST). This model characterizes the following behavior principles as presumptive: dialectical change, inner consistency, and exchange equilibrium. Ecological systems thinking is seen as a framework that can broaden and integrate our conventional viewpoints. Conversely, the theory is a framework that combines and highlights people's inter-subjective experiences, which are presented and contrasted with self-organizational viewpoints (Spencer et al., 1997). Therefore, EST is appropriate to use for interpreting the results of teachers' and students' perceptions of using GT in EFL classrooms. According to this assumption, the many settings we experience throughout our lives may have varied degrees of an impact on our behavior. Nesting spheres of influence are typically used to illustrate these systems (Buckley & Budzyna, n.d.) (see Figure 1).

#### **Figure 1**

*Ecological Systems Theory by Urie Bronfenbrenner (1917-2005) (Adopted from Buckley & Budzyna, n.d., <https://rotel.pressbooks.pub/>)*



Spencer (1995) highlights the importance of integrating a phenomenological approach with Bronfenbrenner's EST for effective analysis. The synthesis aids in recognizing the crucial and fundamental roles that developmental shifts in social cognition, multi-level social context character and content, and social experiences that are pertinent to a particular stage of life play in influencing meaning-making processes in different ways throughout life (Spencer, 1982, 1985; Spencer et al., 1997). Overall, applying EST to the study of GT in EFL classrooms offers a multi-dimensional perspective on how different layers of environmental influence affect the GT's use and effectiveness. This approach provides valuable insights into the complex interplay

between individual experiences, educational practices, and broader societal factors, ultimately informing better integration of technology in language education.

### *Related studies*

Regarding several related studies around the world, the studies were carried out to find out how teachers or students felt about utilizing GT to learn languages, as well as the advantages and disadvantages of GT. First, a study by Jolley and Maimone (2015) looked into how teachers and Spanish learners perceived GT's ethical and quality-related attitudes and beliefs. According to the data, almost all pupils have employed GT language learning at different frequencies, primarily to decipher the meaning of specific words. Most students thought GT was beneficial to their education and that professors had given them more choices for implementing it successfully. Additionally, teachers believed that employing GT for specific unknown words was more suitable for language learning (Jolley & Maimone, 2015).

In another research on using GT in higher education, Mundt and Groves (2016) showed that GT may be seen incorrectly as a solution to poor writing language competency because it currently does not correspond with the sociolinguistic writing requirements at the university level. Moreover, it might cause the problems like academic misconduct and plagiarism. This paper suggests that higher education institutions should create a policy and guidelines for using this technology and prospective directions for future studies will be discussed (Mundt & Groves, 2016).

Then, there are studies regarding a number of abilities, like writing and speaking English, in relation to GT. In particular, a study by Lee (2020) looked into how utilizing GT affected the writing abilities of English majors at a Korean institution. According to the findings, GT could help students enhance their vocabulary, grammar, and expression in English writing while also having a good impact on their revision method. Nevertheless, GT still had certain shortcomings because it was not originally intended for language learning, including faulty grammar and vocabulary, literal translation, ambiguity, insufficient or deceptive cultural awareness, and contextual problems (Lee, 2020). Additionally, Muzdalifah et al. (2020) indicated that students' speaking abilities have improved as a result of using automatic dictionary tools like GT. This implied that employing automatic dictionary media in the form of GT can help students become more proficient speakers and that GT media can be used as a tool to help students communicate in English (Muzdalifah et al., 2020). According to the results of another study by Maamuujav et al. (2021) on the advantages of GT for writing skills with narrative assignments, the group that had access to GT scored higher on syntactic complexity and accuracy (Maamuujav et al., 2021).

Currently, in a study by Can (2023), the effectiveness, ethics, frequency, and reasons why students use GT in language learning were examined as perceived by instructors of students. The findings showed that almost all of the participants' students regularly used GT in their reading and writing classes. Students utilized GT for much more than just dictionary purposes, and this excessive use severely eroded teachers' impression have of GT's morality and efficacy. Teachers did not support outlawing its use in language lessons because of its ease of use and practicality, despite their worries about its long-term use and potential negative consequences

on students' learning. Therefore, it is crucial to create a working policy to minimize the harmful effects of GT and to use them effectively (Can, 2023). Besides, a study by Gunawan and Khairunnisa (2023) also investigated on the perception of lecturers on GT. The results showed that there were four groups into which lecturers' perceptions of the use of GT may be categorized: satisfied, unsatisfied, happy and unhappy. Lecturers loved GT because it is easy to use, readily available, reasonably priced, has voice recording capabilities, and does not require a lot of language skills. Meanwhile, they were unhappy with GT because they found it difficult to understand because of its literal translation, ambiguity, and inadequate input in the source language. When GT helped the professors with their assignments, they were satisfied; when GT could not translate cultural words, they were not so satisfied (Gunawan & Khairunnisa, 2023).

In Vietnamese contexts, few published studies investigated GT in EFL education focusing on EFL learners' perception of its benefits and drawbacks, and some recommendations for using GT effectively. For instance, a study by Phan and Chen (2020) examined how GT was used to learn TOEIC by a group of engineering students at a university in Southern Vietnam. The results showed that the students thought this translation tool provided some advantages in general. For instance, it aids students in quickly understanding the meaning of the original language. However, if the original texts contain technical terms, complex words, uncommon phrases, and meanings that confuse students, GT will not support reliable and understandable translation. Thus, learners who are not intermediate or advanced in English should be fully aware of GT's limitations (Phan & Chen, 2020).

Another study conducted by Nguyen and Khau (2021) investigated the opinions of educators and recent graduates on the effectiveness of GT in translating English modals into Vietnamese. The outcomes showed that by using the English modal verbs, GT was able to translate these functional texts into Vietnamese while preserving the intended meanings of distinct social functions. The majority of instructors and graduates agreed with these translated materials that GT gave, according to the data. Furthermore, both groups shared the conclusion that while translating English modal verbs into Vietnamese, GT was unable to convey the past tense of the verbs with any more subtle or courteous meaning. Also mentioned were several suggestions for enhancing GT's English-Vietnamese translation (Nguyen & Khau, 2021).

A study of Pham et al. (2022) sought to investigate students' perspectives of utilizing GT to help their learning as well as their issues and GT-derived remedies. This study involved more diverse majors of participants than previous studies. The results indicated that students supported using GT in the classroom. Specifically, they used GT as a learning tool because of its practical benefits including multilanguage translation, saving time, convenience of use, and pronunciation improvement. However, a number of issues have caused original words to be misunderstood including frequently occurring errors in grammar and semantics. Students learned that in order to solve these issues, they were required to consult a peer or supervisor for assistance as well as double-check the results in dictionaries and other translation software. They concluded GT is a useful machine translator, but a better translation version requires students to make some judgment on the initial results from GT (Pham et al., 2022).

In summary, findings from previous studies showed that GT is popular and useful in the EFL learning process but has weaknesses as well. Almost every student has utilized GT language

learning at different frequencies (Jolley & Maimone, 2015). The students employ GT as a dictionary to understand the meaning of certain words. Most students believe that GT would improve their language learning, and they wish their teachers had given them more opportunities to properly integrate it. Actually, students use GT for much more than merely dictionary purposes. The majority of students utilize GT on a daily basis for their writing and reading assignments. Meanwhile, GT still consists of certain drawbacks, including literal translation, inaccurate grammar and lexis, ambiguity, contextual errors, and inadequate or misleading cultural understanding. Those drawbacks come from the original purpose of designing GT which is not for language learning. Thus, creating a working policy to reduce the negative effects and to increase the positive effects of using GT is crucial.

### *Research gap*

Previous studies focused mostly on students who used GT frequently, and they concentrated less on teachers. There is a gap in exploring both EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of using GT in the classrooms in Vietnam. Therefore, this study was conducted to find out the EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of GT in the classrooms with respect to their awareness, practices and evaluations of GT.

Specifically, this research aimed to answer the following research questions:

1. What are EFL students' perceptions of using GT in the classrooms?
2. What are EFL teachers' perceptions of using GT in the classrooms?

## **Method design**

### *Pedagogic setting and Participants*

#### *Participants for the questionnaires*

The study involved 450 students and 12 teachers in a private university in Can Tho City in Vietnam. 440 students used GT regularly, while ten students did not. For teachers, 10 teachers used GT, but 2 teachers did not. This study used the convenience sampling technique (Fraenkel et al., 2012) to select the participants. One kind of nonprobability or nonrandom sampling is convenience sampling, sometimes referred to as haphazard or accidental sampling. Convenience sampling is mostly used to get data from subjects who are readily available to the researcher, such as when enlisting study participants from providers who attend staff meetings (Etikan et al., 2016). This kind of research fulfills the purposes regards easy accessibility, proximity of geography, availability at a certain time, or the willingness to participate. The criteria for selecting the participants were that they must be EFL teachers and university students whether they used GT in EFL classrooms or not.

Among the 450 students who responded to the questionnaire, 46.67% were males and 53.33% females. The majority of respondents were in their fourth year (41.11%), followed by third-year students (23.11%) and second-year students (21.33%). Only 5 students were in their fifth year, as most academic programs last four years; however, certain majors like Architecture and General Medicine may extend beyond that. The students represented a total of 29 different

majors.

The 12 teachers who responded to the questionnaire included 5 males and 7 females. Most teachers had more than five years of teaching experience, while one had between 1 and 3 years of experience. In total, the 12 teachers taught 20 different courses. Some teachers taught as many as four courses, while others taught only one. On average, each teacher taught 1.67 courses. The most commonly taught courses were Speaking and Listening, and General English, each accounting for 11.76% of the courses. Next were Reading, Writing, and Grammar courses, which comprised 8.82%. Translation and Introduction to Language were taught by 5.88% of the teachers, and the remaining courses were taught by only one teacher each.

#### *Participants for the interview*

Twelve participants were selected for the semi-structured interview, including three teachers and nine students. The participants were selected using both convenience and purposive sampling techniques. Based on their GT usage frequency and perception levels, participants were divided into three groups for interviews: high, average, and low. This approach allowed us to delve deeper into their individual experiences and opinions. Etikan et al. (2016) state that judgment sampling is another name for the purposive sampling method. It is a purposeful decision made by the individual in light of their personal attributes. It is a nonrandom strategy in which the researcher determines what information is required and then searches for sources who, because of their expertise or experience, can and will offer it. This entails locating and choosing individuals, or groups of individuals, who are knowledgeable and skilled in a topic of interest.

#### *Design of the study*

This research was designed as exploratory research with mixed methods. The aim of this kind of case study is to understand how a phenomenon takes place (Yin, 2003). Using GT in EFL classrooms is a phenomenon in the current linguistic context. The researcher used the cross-sectional survey by questionnaires with 5-point Likert scale to find out EFL students' perception on using GT in classrooms, and to clarify EFL teachers' perception on using GT in classrooms. This study used the convenience sampling EFL students and teachers in a private university in Can Tho City in Vietnam.

In addition, to explain and obtain insight into the quantitative results, the study also used semi-structured individual interviews to identify more specific information in relation to participants' perceptions. The chosen interviewees were participants who volunteered to participate in interviews. They were representatives of three groups: (1) those who had the highest level of the perceptions (the highest means of values based on the data from questionnaires), (2) the lowest level of the perceptions (the lowest means), and (3) who had never used GT in EFL classrooms.

#### *Data collection and analysis*

Two instruments were used to measure the variables of this study. First, using questionnaires via Google Forms was to find out the perceptions in terms of awareness, practices and evaluations on the appropriateness of using GT in the classrooms of EFL teachers and students.

Second, semi-structured interviews via email were used to explore the depth of the reason why they used or have not used GT in EFL classrooms, and recommend solutions for teachers' and students' using GT.

### *Questionnaires*

The questionnaire was developed based on the Appraisal Theory and adapted from previous studies, including those by Jolley and Maimone (2015), whose participant group closely mirrored that of the current study. Pham et al. (2002) also informed the questionnaire design, whose tool, proven to be clear and easily referenced in the Vietnamese context, served as a model. It comprised 35 items, divided into three categories: "awareness," "practices," and "evaluations" regarding the use of GT (see Appendix). The questionnaire was administered via Google Forms. A pilot version was tested with 62 participants, yielding a high reliability score (Cronbach's  $\alpha = 0.97$ ), confirming the tool's reliability for the study. As a result, no revisions were necessary. Following the pilot, the official questionnaire link was distributed to participants, including EFL teachers and academic advisors, after obtaining agreement from faculty members. A total of 462 participants completed the questionnaire. The final version demonstrated strong reliability, with a Cronbach's  $\alpha$  of 0.96, supporting its suitability for data collection.

The quantitative data gathered from the questionnaires were analyzed using SPSS Version 20. First of all, a scale test was run by Cronbach's Alpha to test the reliability of the questionnaire. Then, many statistics tests were calculated to assess the participants' perceptions, compare among some specific groups, or clarify the correlation between some variables. The results were interpreted based on the evaluation criteria given in the following table (Oxford, 1990). And the detailed data were interpreted through the EST.

**Table 1.**

*Key to understand the averages*

Level	Range
Very high	4.5 to 5.0
High	3.6 to 4.4
Medium	2.5 to 3.5
Low	1.0 to 2.4

*(Source: Oxford, 1990)*

### *Interviews*

The qualitative data were collected using semi-structured interviews. One benefit of semi-structured interviews was that the interviewers could clarify the question in case it was unclear or ambiguous to the interviewees. Besides, depending on the answers given by the respondents, the researchers could ask them to expand on the answers that were particularly important or interesting (Fraenkel et al., 2012). Teachers and students are invited to participate in the interview through e-mail when they visit a link of certain form, then some unclear answers would be found out more detailed via phone calls. Some advantages of internet-based interviews include their quick execution and ease of organization. Certain software allows for dynamic modifications of questionnaires based on respondents' answers, reducing bias and

interviewer distortion. As a result, responses are less influenced by the social context, and the process is easier to manage. Internet interviews are relatively low-cost (Roopa & Rani, 2012).

The open-ended questions of the semi-structured interview were grounded in the EST and designed to explore the factors influencing teachers' and students' perceptions of using Google Translate (GT) in EFL classrooms. The interview included six key open-ended questions, addressing: (1) participant background; (2) the purposes of using GT; (3) the strengths and limitations of GT; (4) the appropriateness of GT use; (5) challenges in GT practice; and (6) strategies for using GT effectively. Prior to conducting the interviews, a pilot test of the questions was carried out to ensure clarity and prevent misunderstandings.

The interviews were conducted in Vietnamese, using convenience and purposive sampling, and followed a four-step process. In the first step, the researcher selected two teachers and five students from each group and emailed them the interview. In the second step, twelve participants responded to the interview questions. Any unclear answers were clarified through follow-up phone interviews to ensure alignment with the study's objectives. Finally, in the last step, the transcripts were prepared with line numbers to facilitate easy citation during data interpretation.

The data from the interview was thematically analyzed using as step-by-step process. Based on the EST, the researcher interpreted the qualitative data from the interviews to understand how different environmental factors impact the GT's use and effectiveness. This approach reveals the intricate interactions between individual experiences, educational practices, and societal influences, ultimately guiding more effective and contextually relevant integration of GT into language education.

## Findings

### *EFL students' perceptions of using GT in the classrooms*

Students had high perceptions on the awareness of using GT related to the benefits, drawbacks and the suitable behaviors, and high evaluations on the appropriateness of using GT in the classrooms, meanwhile the practices were medium level. The specific results are displayed in the following table.

**Table 2.**

*Descriptive statistics of students' perceptions*

Clusters	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	SD
Students' awareness (MA)	1.00	5.00	4.05	.72
Students' practices (MP)	1.00	5.00	3.52	.98
Students' evaluations (ME)	1.00	5.00	3.64	.95
Students' perceptions of using GT (MPC)	1.00	5.00	3.76	.76

(N = 450)

As can be seen from the table, students' awareness, and evaluations on the appropriateness of using GT were high in light of Oxford framework (2009) for interpreting of Likert scale data. These findings were well aligned with the data based on the interviews. However, the students'

practices are at the top of medium level with 3.52, and it is the lowest one. A the highest one is the students' awareness with 4.05 while the mean of the evaluations is 3.64 and the mean of the perceptions is 3.76. And the standard of deviation of the practices and the evaluation is highest with 0.98 and 0.95.

The findings from interviews related to students' awareness were well aligned with the results of questionnaire data. For instance, Student C1 said that "this tool is considered to be the most popular translation tool at the moment, just select the language you want to translate, and filling in the information then it will tell us the meaning." Specifically, among nine students who participated in the interviews, six students understood GT and how to use it from community around them such as family, teachers, friends, social media. Other students recognized GT and its usage from advertising on social networks or gadgets suggested by Google. That is the evidences of the influence of their immediate social environment regards the EST.

They agreed that GT can translate various languages and it is easy to use. Most EFL students supposed that GT is useful and necessary for learning English. For instance, Student B1 answered that "especially for long or difficult paragraphs, GT can provide a basic translation so students can understand the general meaning of the text", and "GT offers a pronunciation feature, helping students practice listening and improve pronunciation". In addition, "using GT in English classes can help us more conveniently understand and know the meaning of words, sentences, and paragraphs that we wonder about" supposed by Student C3. Their purpose of using GT was translating new words that they did not know. Specifically, one comment was GT's lots of updated useful functions. There were some benefits from using GT such as translating texts quickly, helping students save time and pronouncing words.

However, there were also some drawbacks of using GT. For example, "the biggest disadvantage is incorrect grammar" answered Student A3, or Student B1 said that "despite its vast improvements, GT can still be inaccurate in terms of wording or grammar, making it easy for students to make mistakes." Additionally, the students agreed that some negative impacts of using GT were making students lazy to think, and dependent on GT in learning English of the poor students were more than the average and good student's. Overusing GT might impact students' analytical abilities, lose the ability to think for self-understanding, reduce students' creative learning and problem-solving abilities, risk of discourse competence of students, and students' lack of basic English knowledge. This result is similar to Pham and Luong's (2025) that concluded reliance on AI stool causes the ruin of critical thinking. Moreover, the problems associated with using GT in the EFL classrooms were the mistakes in meaning and grammar towards the contexts and then lack of motivation to learn English.

Furthermore, students acknowledged that GT is a facilitation tool but not a replacement for learning. They recognized that it was plagiarism if using GT's translation results without judgment. Thus, students supported that they should paraphrase the GT's translation results.

In terms of students' practices of using GT in the classrooms, there were two groups with 440 students using GT in EFL classrooms and 10 students never using GT. Regarding the reasons of students' rarely or never using GT in the EFL classrooms, most of them indicated that many words that are too literally translated and are not suitable for their needs or GT cannot translate

the idioms and proverbs, GT's lack of more naturally interaction and facilitation to improve English skills, drawbacks of exactness and reliability of information, lack of other functions such as finding antonym, synonym, and verb.

Impressively, the result indicated that the group of students using GT had the higher levels of the awareness and evaluation than the group of students never using GT, with a statistically significant difference. Students often practiced growingly using GT in the EFL classrooms for translating individual words, short phrases, paragraphs, and sentences. They sometimes practiced using GT for writing assignments, workbooks or online exercises, reading assignments, translating entire texts, any types of assignment, and the lowest level of using GT for speaking assignments.

Regarding students' evaluations, students assessed high level of appropriateness of using GT for translating individual words, short phrases, sentences, paragraphs, workbook or online exercises, reading assignments, writing assignments, and translating entire texts. And they were not sure of the appropriateness of using GT for listening assignments, any types of assignments, and speaking assignments. From the interview, there were seven among nine interviewed students who agreed EFL students should use GT in the classrooms because of its benefits including supporting students who lacked of vocabulary capacity that aligned with Mundt and Groves's (2016) study, learning vocabulary quickly, translating short sentences and save time, suitable for students who lacked of vocabulary capacity. However, they suggested that students should not overuse it and only use GT when necessary. Most students suggested the strategy that they should check again the meaning or grammar of GT's translation results by other applications, websites or dictionaries for learning English. Moreover, they should not utilize GT to translate the complex sentences and specialized terms. Meanwhile, teachers should control the appropriate use of GT. They should supply other supporting learning resources for students' comparison of GT's results and the results of other tools or dictionaries. Furthermore, they monitor and evaluate their student's competence, then provide the suitable solutions.

Interestingly, while the English-majored students had a higher level of awareness of using GT, their levels of practice and the evaluations were lower than the non-majored students. Specifically, the English-majored students showed a medium level of practices and the evaluations meanwhile the non-majored students had a high level. Especially, English-majored students indicated a higher agreement about the necessity of paraphrasing GT's translation results than non-majored students.

In short, the data of first question from both the questionnaire and interviews showed that students had a high awareness of GT's capabilities, influenced by their immediate social environment. Most students used GT moderately, mainly for translating individual words, but they recognized common issues like translation inaccuracies. Generally, they found that GT is useful for quick translations, however, they also cautioned students against over-reliance on the tool. Remarkably, non-majored students showed higher practical engagement and more positive evaluations of GT compared to English-majored students. Based on the EST, the different perceptions were from their awareness, experiences of practices through the time of using GT, and learning environments. Students suggested strategies for using GT effectively. For instance, students should paraphrase the GT's translation results, check again the meaning or grammar

by other tools or dictionaries. They should use GT in case it is necessary and not overuse as well. In addition, teachers' guidance and supervision is needed.

### *EFL teachers' perceptions of using GT in the classrooms*

As shown in Table 3, teachers' overall perceptions of using GT were at a moderate level, with a mean score of 3.25. However, teachers' awareness of GT was rated at a high level (4.12), while their practices of using GT in EFL classrooms were at a low level (2.35). Teachers' evaluations of the appropriateness of using GT were at a moderate level (3.14). Table 3 shows that teachers' practices were overall lower than students'. Teachers' evaluations were also lower than those of students. However, teachers' awareness was higher than that of students.

The results from the interview revealed that all teachers have already known how to use GT for teaching English. For instance, Teacher B said, "I know it through teachers in classes, friends and even Google advertising news." The purposes of using GT in the EFL classrooms of the two teachers A and B were translating difficult words that they did not know or the long texts, or "I myself sometimes have to use GT to check the meaning of a word or to solve urgent pedagogical situations" said Teacher B. Teachers agreed with very high level about ability of translation various languages and easy to use of GT and lots of benefits such as enhancing students' vocabulary capacity, saving time, ability of hearing pronunciation. They supposed neutral agreement to plagiarism when using GT's translation, and GT's inability to translate proverbs and idioms.

**Table 3.**

#### *The perceptions of teachers and students*

Clusters	Participants	N	Mean
MA	Students	450	4.06
	Teachers	12	4.12
MP	Students	450	3.52
	Teachers	12	2.35
ME	Students	450	3.64
	Teachers	12	3.14
MPC	Students	450	3.76
	Teachers	12	3.25

Regarding teachers' practices, 10 teachers used GT in the EFL classroom while 2 teachers never used it. This finding was different from Alonso's (2022) finding that only 36.7% of the teachers had used online translators. The reasons of teachers' rarely or never using GT in the EFL classrooms were that their translation competence is better than GT's capacity and drawbacks of using GT could impact on their students, as "it will reduce the desire to explore in learning, acquire incorrect meaning, and make it difficult to recognize word pronunciation." (Teacher B). As the same case with student's view, the problems when using GT were the mistakes in meaning and grammar. These reasons align with to Alonso's (2022) research.

Finally, EFL teachers' evaluations on the appropriateness of using GT in the classrooms were the medium level to translate short phrases, individual words, and using it for writing assignments, and low level of using GT for listening and speaking assignments. However, most

teachers agreed that EFL teachers and students should use GT in the classrooms because of its benefits. Thus it was necessary to set the limitations for using it, as Teacher B said that “students should be advised to limit the use of GT because it will make them lazy to think and reduce the effectiveness of their studies.” Additionally, teachers suggested strategies for using GT in the EFL classrooms more effectively, similar to students’ results.

## Discussion

### *EFL students’ perceptions of using GT in the classrooms*

Students demonstrated a high level of awareness of GT’s capabilities and limitations. These findings support the EST because the participants’ awareness was influenced by the microsystem (family, friends, teachers), the mesosystem (social networks, gadgets suggested by Google).

Most students supposed that GT is useful and necessary for learning EFL. They appreciated GT’s ability to quickly translate vocabulary and short phrases, look up grammar and practice pronunciation. Moreover, it facilitates students’ catching the gist or the general meaning of the original language promptly (Phan & Chen, 2020). They agreed that GT can translate various languages, and it is easy to use. This aligns with previous research that highlights GT’s efficiency in providing translation into multiple languages, saving time, using easily, and enhancing pronunciation (Pham et al., 2022). In addition, Hoang et al. (2022) investigated 505 EFL students enrolled in undergraduate programs in a public university in Vietnam. The findings showed that almost all students (98.6%) owned smartphones and more than 70% of them used mobile devices for vocabulary. However, despite their positive perceptions, students’ practices of using GT in the classroom were at a medium level. This discrepancy suggests a gap between theoretical understanding and practical application. While students acknowledge GT’s usefulness, issues such as translation inaccuracies (Lee, 2020), difficulties with idiomatic expressions, and the potential for fostering passive learning behaviors mitigate its widespread use (Mundt & Groves, 2016). Among the items of students’ practices of using GT, the highest level is using GT in the classrooms to translate individual words. That is the same results with Jolley and Maimone’s study that most students use GT as a dictionary (Jolley & Maimone, 2015). They sometimes practiced using GT for writing assignments, workbooks or online exercises, reading assignments, translating entire texts, speaking assignments, any types of assignment, and the lowest level of using GT for speaking assignments. These findings are similar to Can’s (2023) study that most students not only utilize GT for a dictionary function but also employ GT in their reading and writing classes.

Regarding the drawbacks of using GT, there were some difficult GT’s outcomes to understand with confusing meanings of words, literal translation, some errors in grammar, lack of translating proverbs and idioms, and inadequate or misleading cultural understanding. That made its low accuracy and low efficiency. These findings resonate with concerns from other studies that report the limitations of GT with several problems regarding a frequent basis of errors in grammar and semantics that have caused misunderstanding of words in the source texts (Pham et al., 2022). These drawbacks are still presented because it was not originally

intended for language education (Lee, 2020). However, through the past time, many early “errors” of GT have already been corrected (Ducar & Schocket, 2018). Besides that, the students agreed that some potential negative impacts of using GT were making students lazy to think. They reflected that the average and good students are not dependent on GT in learning English as much as the poor students. Overusing GT might impact to analytical abilities of students, lose the ability to think for self-understanding, reduced students’ creative learning and problem-solving abilities, risk of discourse competence, and lack of basic English knowledge.

Then they supported that GT is a facilitation tool but not a replacement for learning. Students recognized that plagiarism takes place when using GT’s translation results without revising or judgment. However, most students agreed that they should use GT in EFL classrooms because of its benefits. According to Maamuujav et al. (2021), the group with access to GT got higher syntactic complexity and accuracy scores. Nevertheless, they suggested that students should only use GT when necessary and do not overuse it. Regarding the macrosystem and the chronosystem of the EST, their comments were from their awareness, experiences of practices, and some negative effects were predicted through the time of using GT inappropriately. Most strategies were the necessary checking again the meaning or grammar GT’s translation results by using other applications, websites or dictionaries for learning English, or getting the help from a peer or supervisor (Pham et al., 2022). Besides, students do not translate the complex sentences and texts such as specialized terms. Additionally, they recommended teachers should have students prepare the lessons at home in advance, guide and monitor or give feedback on using GT, have students do self-assessment and comparison, and supply other supporting learning resources, then provide the suitable solutions. Establishing of a working policy to use GT effectively and minimize the potential negative effects of GT in EFL education is necessary (Can, 2023).

Interestingly, non-majored students exhibited higher levels of practical engagement and positive evaluations of GT compared to English-majored students. This may indicate that English-majored students, who are likely more accustomed to traditional language learning methods, view GT as a supplementary rather than primary resource. On the other hand, non-majored students might be more inclined to use GT as a valuable tool in their language learning toolkit, reflecting different levels of dependency and technology integration in their learning processes.

#### *EFL teachers’ perceptions of using GT in the classrooms*

Teachers showed a high level of awareness about GT’s potential benefits but demonstrated relatively low practical use of the tool. Teachers agreed with a very high level about the ability to translate various languages and the easy-to-use GT that were the same with the previous study (Pham et al., 2022). This gap between awareness and practice may stem from concerns about GT’s accuracy and its impact on students’ language skills. Teachers’ cautious approach reflects the broader pedagogical debate about the reliability of translation tools and their effects on learning outcomes. According to Phan and Chen (2020), GT cannot supply understandable and reliable translation if the original texts include complex words and technical terms. Regarding evaluations of GT’s appropriateness, teachers were moderately positive but less enthusiastic than students. These highlighted a need for a more nuanced understanding of GT’s

role in the classroom. Teachers are particularly skeptical about GT's effectiveness for tasks involving idiomatic expressions and oral skills, which aligns with research emphasizing the limitations of machine translation in these areas (Jolley & Maimone, 2015).

However, most teachers agreed that EFL teachers and students should use GT in the classrooms. They suggested the strategies for using GT more effectively than just checking again the meaning, the grammar, and the context what teachers or students want. In addition, students can compare GT results with their own ability results or verify their suspicions with more reputable sources. These findings align with Pham et al. (2022), Alonso (2022) and Can (2023).

## Conclusion

In conclusion, the findings revealed a complex landscape regarding EFL teachers' and students' perceptions of the use of GT in the classrooms, highlighting its potential and limitations. Students and teachers alike demonstrated a high level of awareness about GT's capabilities, recognizing its utility in efficiently translating vocabulary, phrases, and sentences, which can facilitate vocabulary acquisition and provide quick translation support. Both teachers and students demonstrated a high awareness level but a lower level of practical application. Teachers used GT less frequently than students, primarily for translating short phrases and individual words, due to concerns about its accuracy and potential negative effects on students' learning outcomes. Teachers' evaluations of GT were moderately positive but less enthusiastic compared to students, reflecting a cautious stance towards integrating GT into classroom practices. To optimize its benefits and mitigate potential drawbacks, both teachers and students should leverage GT as a supplementary tool rather than a primary resource, ensuring that it supports rather than supplants traditional language learning methods. This finding aligns with a study of Nguyen et al. (2025) which supported AI translation tools play a role as valuable teaching and learning supplements. Therefore, by adopting a balanced approach and incorporating targeted strategies, both students and teachers can leverage GT effectively while maintaining robust language learning practices.

**Implications:** The findings of this study have several important implications for the use of GT in EFL classrooms, influencing both teaching practices and student learning strategies. Both students and teachers should approach GT as a supplementary tool rather than a primary resource. Educators should encourage students to use GT judiciously, emphasizing its role in complementing rather than substituting for their language skills development.

Professional development programs should include training on effectively integrating GT into EFL teaching. They should focus on strategies for leveraging GT's strengths while addressing its limitations. First, given the limitations of GT in translating idioms, proverbs, and complex texts, teachers should emphasize the development of these language skills through alternative methods. This includes using instructional materials and activities that focus on understanding and producing complex language structures that GT struggles with. Second, teachers should create classroom environments that support the effective use of GT while addressing its limitations. This includes setting clear guidelines for when and how GT can be used, providing additional resources for students to consult, paraphrasing GT translations and integrating their

own insights into their work, and ongoing monitoring and offering regular feedback on their use of GT in assignments.

**Limitations:** Although this study indicated valuable insights into the perceptions of EFL teachers and students on using GT in the classrooms, it has several limitations that should be considered when the findings are interpreted. Specifically, the study's sample size may not be fully representative of the larger population of EFL learners in the explored university. It was found in self-reported data and a lack of longitudinal data which may affect the validity of the findings.

**Recommendations:** Future studies should be longitudinal studies to examine the long-term impact of GT on language learning. Additionally, further research could explore the effectiveness of different training programs and support structures for teachers in integrating GT into their teaching practices.

## References

- Alonso, A. N. (2022). Online Translators in Online Language Assessments. *Computer Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal (CALL-EJ)*, 23(3), 115-135.
- Boyatzis, R. (1998). *Transforming qualitative information: Thematic analysis and code development*. Thousand Oaks: SAGE Publications, Inc.
- Buckley, D., & Budzyna, D. (không ngày tháng). *Ecological Theory*. Pressbook. <https://roTEL.pressbooks.pub/whole-child/chapter/ecological-theory/#:~:text=The%20ecological%20systems%20theory%20holds,by%20nesting%20spheres%20of%20influence.>
- Can, S. (2023). Instructors' Perceptions of Students' Google Translate Use in Language Learning. *Soylem Journal of Philology*, 474-482. <https://doi.org/10.29110/soylemdergi.1186593>
- Ducar, C., & Schocket, D. H. (2018). Machine translation and the L2 classroom: Pedagogical solutions for making peace with Google translate. *Foreign Language Annals*, 51, 779-795. <https://doi.org/10.1111/flan.12366>
- Etikan, I., Musa, S. A., & Alkassim, R. S. (2016). Comparison of Convenience Sampling and Purposive Sampling. *American Journal of Theoretical and Applied Statistics*, 5(1), 1-4. <https://doi.org/10.11648/j.ajtas.20160501.11>
- Fraenkel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2012). *How to design and evaluate research in education*. (8th, Biên tập viên) New York: McGraw-Hill Humanities.
- Gunawan, F., & Khairunnisa, A. (2023). Lecturer's Perception of Google Translate as an Academic Tool: Appraisal Analysis. *Indonesian Journal of EFL and Linguistics*, 8(1). <https://doi.org/10.21462/ijefl.v8i1.606>
- Hoang, D. T., Johnson, N. F., & McAlinden, M. (2022). Students' Perceptions and Real-Life Use of Mobile Technologies in EFL Learning. *Computer Assisted Language Learning Electronic Journal (CALL-EJ)*, 23(3), 186-206.
- Jolley, J. R., & Maimone, L. (2015). Free online machine translation: Use and perceptions by Spanish students and instructors. In A. J. Moeller (Ed.), *Learn languages, explore*

- cultures, transform lives* (pp. 181-200). 2015 Central States Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages.
- Lee, S. M. (2020). The impact of using machine translation on EFL students' writing. *Computer Assisted Language Learning*, 33(8), 1571-1575. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09588221.2018.1553186>
- Maamuujav, U., Olson, C. B., & Chung, H. (2021). Syntactic and lexical features of adolescent L2 students' academic writing. *Journal of Second Language Writing*, 53. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jslw.2021.100822>
- Martin, J. R., & White, P. R. (2005). *The Language of Evaluation: Appraisal in English*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan. <https://doi.org/10.1057/9780230511910>
- Mundt, K., & Groves, M. (2016). A double-edged sword: the merits and the policy implications of Google Translate in higher education. *European Journal of Higher Education*. <https://doi.org/10.1080/21568235.2016.1172248>
- Muzdalifah, I., Handayani, S., & Walhidyat, &. (2020). Improving English Speaking Competence by Using Google Translate on Campus Environment. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*. 469. International Conference on Environment and Technology. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/469/1/012039>
- Nguyen, H. T., & Khau, H. A. (2021, November). Investigating Teachers' and Graduates' Remarks on the Translation of English Modals into Vietnamese Provided by Google Translate. *GEMA Online Journal of Language Studies*, 21(4), 172-185. <https://doi.org/10.17576/gema-2021-2104-09>
- Nguyen, N. T., Tran, T. T., Nguyen, A. N., Lam, P. H., Nguyen, S. H., & Tran, T. N. (2025). The Benefits and Challenges of AI Translation Tools in Translation Education at the Tertiary Level: A Systematic Review. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 5(2), 132-148. <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25527>
- Oteiza, T. (2017). The appraisal framework and discourse analysis. Trong Routledge, *The Routledge Handbook of Systemic Functional Linguistics* (trang 457 - 472). Routledge.
- Oxford, R. L. (1990). *Language learning Strategies*. Boston: Heinle and Heinle Publications.
- Pham, A. T., Nguyen, Y. N., Huynh, K. D., Le, N. T., & Huynh, P. T. (2022). University Students' Perceptions on the Use of Google. *International Journal of Emerging Technologies in Learning (iJET)*, 17(4), 79-94. <https://doi.org/10.3991/ijet.v17i04.28179>
- Pham, D. T., & Luong, H. M. (2025). Students' Challenges in Employing AI Tools in Legal Writing. *International Journal of TESOL & Education*, 5(2), 75-86. <https://doi.org/10.54855/ijte.25524>
- Phan, N. T., & Chen, C. (2020). Vietnamese Engineering Students' Perceptions of the use of Google Translation tool. *Journal Of Science And Technology*, 48(6), 156-165. <https://doi.org/10.46242/jst-iuh.v48i6.1610>
- Roopa, S., & Rani, M. (2012). Questionnaire Designing for a Survey. *J Ind Orthod Soc*, 46(4), 273-277. <https://doi.org/10.5005/jp-journals-10021-1104>
- Spencer, M. B. (1995). Old issues and new theorizing about African-American youth: A phenomenological variant of ecological systems theory. Trong R. L. (Ed.), *Black youth: Perspectives on their status in the United States* (trang 37-69). Westport, CT: Praeger.

- Spencer, M. B., Dupree, D., & Hartmann, T. (1997). A Phenomenological Variant of Ecological Systems Theory (PVEST): A self-organization perspective in context. *Development and Psychopathology*, 9(04), 817-833. <https://doi.org/10.1017/s0954579497001454>
- White, P. (2015). Appraisal Theory. Trong I. John Wiley & Sons, & K. Tracy (Biên tập viên), *The International Encyclopedia of Language and Social Interaction*. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118611463/wbielsi041>
- Yin, R. K. (2003). *Case Study Research: Design and Methods*. Thousand Oaks: Sage Publication.

## Biodata

**Ngan Cam Hong**, M.A in TESOL and M.Sc in Environmental Management, is a lecturer in Nam Can Tho University, Vietnam. She is also a master candidate at Can Tho University majoring in Principles and Methodology of English language teaching. Her research interest includes EFL teaching and learning, ICT, Environmental Strategies, waste recycling and management. She can be reached with [hengan@nctu.edu.vn](mailto:hengan@nctu.edu.vn) or [hongcamngan@gmail.com](mailto:hongcamngan@gmail.com).

**Dr. Van Thi Hong Le**, Ph.D in TESOL from the University of Central Florida, USA, is a senior English lecturer at Tay Nguyen University, Vietnam. Her research interests include strength-based teaching, oral communication, instructional technology, language skill development for English learners, and ESL/EFL teacher education. Dr. Van Le has received numerous national and international awards and fellowships for her academic achievements and community services in professional development. Her email address is [lthvan@ttn.edu.vn](mailto:lthvan@ttn.edu.vn).

## Appendix: Questionnaire

PERSONAL INFORMATION				
I sincerely hope that you will be happy to share your personal information in order to build the research. All information will be kept confidential. Please fill in the questionnaire individually with your own idea, do not discuss with anyone.				
1. Full name (e.g. Hồng Cẩm Ngân)				
2. Gender	Male		Female	
3. Years of teaching experience ( <i>for teachers</i> ) / Class ( <i>for students</i> )				
4. Courses of teaching ( <i>for teachers</i> )				
<b>Part 1: Participants' awareness of using GT</b> There are thirteen items addressing participants' awareness of using GT. The participants will be asked to rate each item on a five rating scale by the 5-point Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015) in terms of their agreement scales in ascending order ranging from 1 (strongly disagree), 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), 4 (agree), and 5 (strongly agree).	1 Strongly Disagree	2 Disagree	3 Neutral	4 Agree
Question 1: Google Translate can translate texts quickly.				
Question 2: Google Translate is easy to use.				
Question 3: Google Translate can help students to pronounce words.				
Question 4: Google Translate can help students save time.				
Question 5: Google Translate can translate various languages.				
Question 6: GT gives some grammatical errors from the translation results.				
Question 7: Sometimes GT's outcomes are difficult to understand.				
Question 8: GT makes confused about the meanings of words.				
Question 9: GT is unable to translate proverbs and idioms.				
Question 10: Using GT's translation results is plagiarism.				
Question 11: Google Translate makes me lazy to think.				
Question 12: Poor students depend more on GT in learning English rather than average and good students.				
Question 13: I paraphrase the translation results from GT.				
<b>Part 2: Participants' practices of using GT</b> There are eleven items addressing participants' practices of using GT. The participants will be asked to rate each item on a five rating scale by the 5-point Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015) in terms of their frequency of use in ascending order ranging from 1 (never), 2 (rarely), 3 (sometimes), 4 (often), and 5 (always)	1 Never	2 Rarely	3 Sometimes	4 Often
Question 14: I use GT in EFL classrooms for any types of assignment.				
Question 15: I use GT in EFL classrooms for reading assignments.				
Question 16: I use GT in EFL classrooms for writing assignments.				
Question 17: I use GT in EFL classrooms for speaking				

assignments.					
Question 18: I use GT in EFL classrooms for listening assignments.					
Question 19: I use GT in EFL classrooms for workbook or online exercises.					
Question 20: I use GT in EFL classrooms to translate individual words.					
Question 21: I use GT in EFL classrooms to translate short phrases.					
Question 22: I use GT in EFL classrooms to translate sentences.					
Question 23: I use GT in EFL classrooms to translate paragraphs.					
Question 24: I use GT in EFL classrooms to translate entire texts.					
<b>Part 3: Participants' evaluations on the appropriateness of GT use</b> There are eleven items addressing participants' evaluations on the appropriateness of GT use. The participants will be asked to rate each item on a five rating scale by the 5-point Likert scale (Joshi et al., 2015) in terms of the scales of their evaluation in ascending order ranging from 1 (completely inappropriate), 2 (somewhat inappropriate), 3 (not sure), 4 (somewhat appropriate), and 5 (completely appropriate).	1 Completely	2 Somewhat inappropriate	3 Not sure	4 Somewhat appropriate	5 Completely appropriate
Question 25: Students use GT in EFL classrooms for any types of assignment.					
Question 26: Students use GT in EFL classrooms for reading assignment.					
Question 27: Students use GT in EFL classrooms for writing assignment.					
Question 28: Students use GT in EFL classrooms for speaking assignment.					
Question 29: Students use GT in EFL classrooms for listening assignment.					
Question 30: Students use GT in EFL classrooms for workbook or online exercises.					
Question 31: Students use GT in EFL classrooms to translate individual words.					
Question 32: Students use GT in EFL classrooms to translate phrases.					
Question 33: Students use GT in EFL classrooms to translate sentences.					
Question 34: Students use GT in EFL classrooms to translate paragraphs.					
Question 35: Students use GT in EFL classrooms to translate entire texts.					
<b>PART 4: Thank you and Any comments</b> Thank you for your contribution to this questionnaire. And please feel free to drop any comments (if yes).					