

Google Translate – What do the wider academic community think?

Mike Groves - The University of Birmingham



What do these have in common? And which is the odd one out?



<http://www.nrm.org.uk/ourcollection/photo?group=Euston&objid=1997-7409> LMS 8185

<http://www.royalmailheritage.com/accessible.html>

<http://someinterestingfacts.net/what-did-blacksmiths-make-in-medieval-times>

https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Piano_tuner_3.jpg



Two Economic Concepts

- Creative Destruction (Schumpeter, 1942)
- Capitalism develops by destroying

- Disruptive technologies
- Major or minor impacts

- " Even though disruptive technologies initially underperform established ones in serving the mainstream market, they eventually displace the established technologies. In the process, entrant firms that supported the disruptive technology displace incumbent firms that supported the prior technology" (Daneels, 2004 p.247)



Outline

- Where we were in 2014 and where we are now
- Interviews with academics
- Implications for foundation and EAP



In 2014

- Error analysis of Chinese and Malay- Pre UG
- GT can write at a level of 6-6.5 (error count)
- It was a clumsy tool, but could work with human post editing
- Grammar only- not beyond the sentence
- Absolute or relative quality

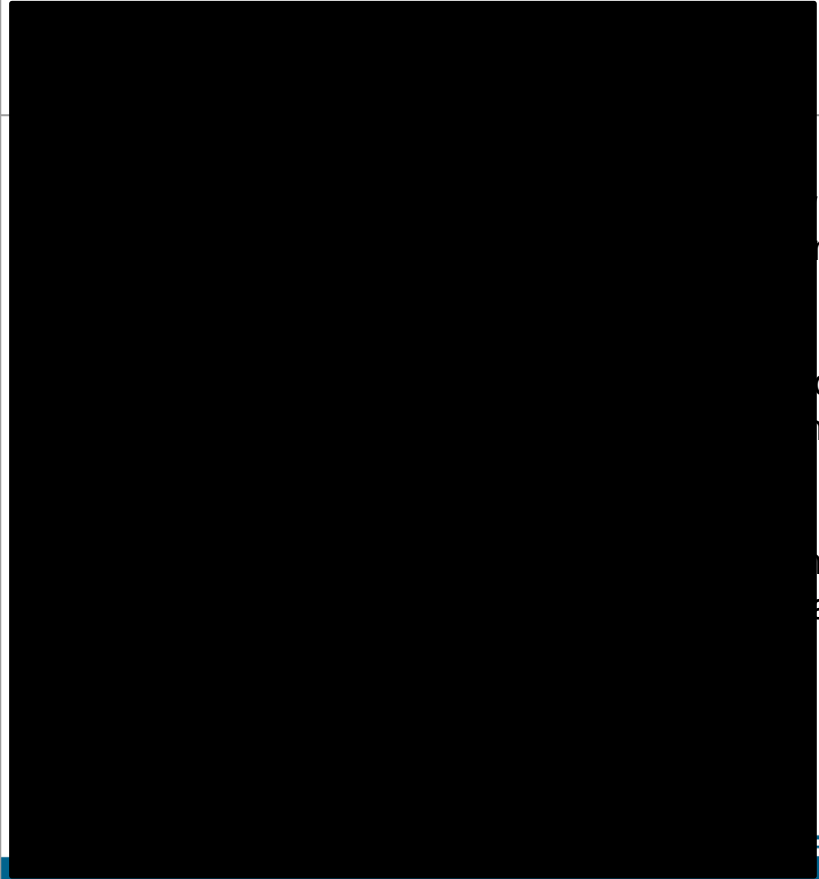
- (Groves and Mundt, 2015)



Comparison - errors highlighted, student writing

2014

In my opinion , the examination is very important to evaluate the individual but its relevance to today's society, **there are limitations**. **Early age** , the students were taught to learn in order to achieve excellent results by their parents , but in reality, **not so easy to accept**. Intelligence or **excellence of a person** can not be assessed through exams. Activities such as **off-site** is very dominant and **practical lessons for the students to learn something** . Such evaluation also plays an important role in testing and evaluation of students' skills . Activities that stimulate the minds of students can teach them to be critical and **creative thinking** . The only school -based learning in the classroom and **on** exams memory , will only make the learning process **is not very** efficient **and** effective



An abstract

🔗 This paper evaluates the policy of President Kim Dae - jung 's National Government and President Roh Moo - hyun' s participation government for 10 years (1998 ~ 2007). The new government is trying to deny the performance of the past government and to present a new direction of national policy. The policy should be based on an objective evaluation of past government policies. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the performance of national childcare policies over the past decade and to suggest future policy directions. Based on the central government 's child care policy plan and its performance, unlike the existing evaluation studies, it tried to evaluate accessibility, suitability of cost burden, service quality, service diversity, and publicness. As a result of the evaluation, the accessibility to the childcare facilities does not lack the total supply at the national level but there is a variation in accessibility by region. The institutional basis for the quality management of the service is prepared according to the plan, but the content is not sufficient. In terms of the national financial allocation rate is still below the target, the diversity of services is being promoted as a limited category. In terms of publicity, the installation of national and public childcare facilities was very low compared to the national plans, but the number of subjects covered by the childcare fund satisfied the plan, and the support for private childcare facilities expanded. The 10-year policy of the Democratic Party has contributed to expanding the childcare policy, but it still seems to have left the task of securing publicity and institutional maturity. Based on the results of this analysis, we proposed the task of the new government 's childcare policy.



A sample in detail

🔗 The new government is trying to deny the performance of the past government and to present a new direction of national policy. The policy should be based on an objective evaluation of past government policies. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the performance of national childcare policies over the past decade and to suggest future policy directions. Based on the central government 's child care policy plan and its performance, unlike the existing evaluation studies, it tried to evaluate accessibility, suitability of cost burden, service quality, service diversity, and publicness



So what?

- The improvement of this technology is undeniable
- Students are likely to use technology that facilitates their studies
- It could be argued it is becoming “a mundane ...digital practise” (Henderson et al, 2017:1574)
- Does not necessarily mean tech literacy and using tech responsibly and purposefully (Davies, 2011)



Students' use

- A survey at Birmingham found that out of Pre-sessional students who answered a survey
 - 2/3 use GT for reading
 - 4/10 use GT to for writing
 - 6/10 think it is somewhat or very reliable
 - 1 in 20 thinks is inappropriate to ever use
- De Vries and Groves (2019)



So we asked some academics

- Not directly connected to EAP (some through foundation)
- 10 participants
- 2 UK universities
- Lecturers, senior lecturers, professors, policy makers, quality assurance officers - across the disciplines
- 1:1 semi-structured interviews
- Questions about GT as reading & writing tool and the acceptability & desirability of its use



Emerging themes

- 🔗 Policy
- 🔗 Academic Integrity/Writing
- 🔗 The wider academic community/Employability
- 🔗 Transition



Policy

...the university doesn't have a regulation on translation, only on proof reading. And acceptable proof reading is really only sentence level spelling and sentence level grammar, basically. So you know... is the implication of all of that is I think all of our rules and regulations are premised on the assumption that students would be writing in English in the first instance.

Associate Professor, Social Sciences



Academic Integrity/Writing

Where in our codes of practise does it say that students have to write all their work in English?

Senior lecturer, Biology

... the sort of classic thing in academic misconduct, we've got suspicions of **false authorship, which this clearly isn't...**

Associate Professor, Social Sciences

Well, I think this is **a minefield**. I think institutions have got a bit of **a nettle to grasp** here [...] you are identifying **a very significant problem**.

Professor, Social Sciences

... **they would be submitting something that is not their own work** in the sense that the English words that had been selected would not have been their own creation.

Academic Services



Control

I think at the moment I'm much more comfortable with the idea that the German student is using GT for checking various things, but not for a wholesale translation of a finished product.

How you police that, I have *no* idea.

Professor, Social Sciences



Employability

... if we think of what message we give to future employers ...

We are saying that these students are capable of producing English text, understanding and producing English text, for themselves.

And if they were using GT, that isn't actually what would be happening.

Now, if the use of GT became so universal that an employer wouldn't really have that expectation, ... I think I would be much more relaxed about it.

Academic Services

There are a whole range of skills [...] you expect from a [...] Graduate and I believe that the ability to hold a conversation in English and to write a reasoned report or essay in English are inherent to that.

If the end employer doesn't care about the ability to formulate something in English, maybe the market will decide what a degree is.
Senior Lecturer, Medicine

...it's not just what's good for the university, its precious ideas of its own standards. What does the economy need? What do employers need? ... We've got to look at what the external recipients of students, actually need.
Professor, Social Sciences



The wider academic community

When they are at some sort of conference, or when they are writing anything that is meant for publication, they would not have the benefit of a translation machine.

Lecturer, Humanities

Actually I think for science subjects it should be easier if people can do that. In the old days in China and Japan they had very good scientists - they didn't have to do that in English... The language issue can prevent these kind of discoveries from being spread all over the world [...] But in that case certain translation can help I think.

Senior Lecturer Biology



Transition

So when we talk about early years students where we're asking them to demonstrate understanding and knowledge - yes...later years three and four I don't think it's as appropriate. Lecturer, English

No, I don't think it's a problem particularly at the start of a degree [...] At the exiting of a degree they should be able to deal with English as a native English speaker can ...
Senior Lecturer, Medicine

...if they are using software [...] it's possible that their English language competency will decline [...] Although the translation software may be very good – again, it will still depend on the quality of the information that's gone in it.
Professor, Social Sciences

... trying to get students a *critical* understanding to see it as a scaffold and to understand that you kind of grow out of scaffolds and that scaffolding should be gradually withdrawn. Associate Professor, Social Sciences



Themes and their relevance to EAP and foundation

Policy

- There is none. We will need one.

Control

- There is none.

Academic Integrity/Writing

- It seems that this is generally acceptable.

The wider academic community/Employability

- However, there is a contradiction here between acceptability and employability
- Is English competence part of the graduate brand? Should it be?

Transition

- Some see this- but is it realistic?

In summary

- Academics are not generally opposed to GT, but also not ready for it to take over



Three positions- 1) *Embrace the change*

- Foundation programmes wholeheartedly embrace this technology
- IELTS requirements and EAP progression requirements fall to the wayside.
- As does any meaningful EAP provision on foundation courses
- Students are expected to rely on GT

- Who's happy?
- What's lost?



Three Positions 2) *Resist*

- Nothing must change
- Students must be able to demonstrate their abilities without online help
- Universities must continue to fund expensive EAP departments and modules
- Google must helpfully block Translate from academic servers
- Students must delete the Translate App from their phones
- Who's happy?
- What's lost?



Three Positions 3) *Evolve*

- EAP and foundation programmes evolve
 - There is a contextual shift away from the sentence level discourse
 - There is a greater focus on the higher level aspects of EAP sooner
 - However, the ability to produce and understand English is not lost.
Students also need to prepare for vivas, presentations and exams
-
- Who's happy?
 - What's lost?



How?

- 🔗 We need to be open and honest with our students about what GT can and cannot do
- 🔗 We need to consider our marking criteria
- 🔗 We need to recognise that all writing is somehow assisted
- 🔗 We need to combine controlled and uncontrolled assessment
- 🔗 We need to communicate to the wider academic community about this, ***and what we are doing about it***



What is our over-riding goal?

- 🔗 To enable students to take their place at the centre of the academic community
- 🔗 This means more than the ability to manipulate language at the level of the sentence
- 🔗 We need a realistic, pragmatic and student focused approach to meeting our goals in a new environment.



Some more final questions

- Do EAP courses need to be as long as they are now?
- Is it fair to ask a student heading towards a non-exam based degree to write exams?
- Is a student writing with GT actually writing? Or should computer mediated writing carry equal kudos?
- What if the real university education happens between the lectures? (citation needed)
- Why should the next generation of global engineers be limited to those with an aptitude for language learning?



Thank you for listening

🔗 Any questions?



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