

# Matecat.com: Why is It Worth to Try?

Ratih Laily Nurjanah  
{ratih.laily@gmail.com}

English Literature Department, Universitas Ngudi Waluyo, Indonesia

**Abstract.** The students were asked about the use of *matecat*. It has strength points; (1) providing field categories of the source text, (2) breaking down the text into parts so it is easier for translator to work with without having to copy-paste the parts, (3) recording the process of translating so the translator can leave their works anytime without losing them, (4) giving the results in form of various types of file so it is easier to edit or proofread it, (5) producing text based on the original format without changing numbering or paragraph spacing, (6) providing free-account. Its weaknesses are; (1) it works only with the internet, (2) it needs editing and proofreading processes since there are some parts from the original text that are not translated. Despite the weaknesses, *matecat.com* is worth to try since it offers efficiency and practicality.

**Keywords:** *matecat*, translation, internet-based, proofreading.

## 1 Introduction

Technology nowadays plays important roles in daily lives. The change from human-power to computer-assisted happens in every aspect started from household to education. This development also influences how translation works.

Translating text is no longer done by working on word per word. The assisting tools like computer-assisted or machine translation now take part in the process on translation. Efficiency and high-accuracy become two main points offered by this technology.

Human translation is although still considered the most accurate since it involves human-power, it is seen as taking too much time while everything runs so fast in this era.

This study aims to describe how *matecat.com*, as one of the CAT tools, is considered useful by students or on these cases are users of this website. Some disadvantages will also be revealed in this study.

Though sound similar, basically there are some differences among human translation, machine translation (MT) and Computer Assisted Translation (CAT).

**Table 1. Classification of Translation Methods**

Human Translation	Machine Translation	Computer Assisted Translation
Involve only human effort	No human effort	Blend of human and technology
High accuracy, more time needed	Low accuracy, low times needed	High accuracy, less time needed
Context-based translation	Non-context-based	Context-based translation

	translation	
Require source knowledge	Inability to work with idioms, phrases, dialogues, etc	Ability to work accurately regardless the language and context
Require cost to pay	Require no cost to pay	Many require no cost to pay

When it comes to traditional method of translation classroom, usually teacher only gives text to students to read. Then, students are asked to translate the text either orally or written in form of take-home assignment. These procedures result high dependency from students to teacher since they think the teacher is the only source to believe instead of believing their own works. Many mistakes or errors occurring during the process of translation experienced by students cause them to have low motivation of learning. They will set their standard based on teacher's example and tend to memorize it for the exam. Developing their critical thinking in writing needs more models of practicing translation to be applied in the classroom. More activities instead of translating text by themselves to adjust the teacher's standard should be created. (1)

Related to the application of translation tools in the classroom, there are some considerations on how the tools influence the students. The comparison among the MT and human translation are presented as;

#### 4.1. Polysemy

That is, a word has different meanings when collocated to different words. For instance, the word "branch" has several different meanings, such as "a division of a plant's stem" and "an administrative division of some larger or more complex organization". Human translation will adjust the meaning to the context while machine translation cannot select the appropriate meaning based on the context. The word chosen is usually the one appears first in the dictionary.

#### 4.2. Part of speech In English,

Because a word usually has more than one part of speech, it causes a problem for machine translation. For example, "do" and "have" are categorized into verb and auxiliary verb. When a word occurs with same form as predicate verb, computer usually acknowledges it as verb. In this case, machine translation fails in analyzing the grammar of a whole sentence to place words based on the part of speech such as, verb, attribute, or adverbial modifier. serve both as notional verb and auxiliary verb, but computer usually treats them as notional verb.

#### 4.3. Syntactic ambiguity

It is usually caused by modifier where the application is usually unclear, for example, different implications can be produced by a same sentence. On the other side, listeners may also have different acceptance or reactions to a sentence. Human to human communication is based on context. The ambiguity syntax of language causes inability to analyze context that becomes a challenge for machine translation in terms of handling this problem.

#### 4.4. Dictionary volume

While new words are found constantly, this causes the natural language growing to gigantic system of endless words where those are cited from literature, international

affairs, major events and movies. This causes difficulties for the system to keep up with the development of dictionaries to prevent the ambiguity resulted.(2)

Based on these considerations, it is important for teachers to make sure students are aware of the problems may caused by using machine translation in the classroom or in the process of translation.

Prepare them with adequate knowledge on both text language and target language is viewed important so later they can analyze the errors produced by system related to context.

With all the influences given as stated above, machine translation does not seem helpful to be implemented in the teaching and learning activities in translation class. While human translation still needs to be implemented as the main focus, the CAT application may be another alternative for teacher and students.

Although it seems useful, CAT tools are not quite often used in learning language activities because good command of language is needed before translation process. These tools are designed to accommodate the needs of language translation process instead of language learning but it changes because nowadays schools and universities deliver translator training programs along with the language learning programs. It is very possible to expand the usefulness of CAT to Foreign Language Learning curriculum. Some components in CAT can be used to support and enhance the skills in language learning. (3)

Since every CAT requires the process of proofreading, this will motivate students to improve their awareness of vocabular, grammatical tenses, even context. The less time consumed by CAT compared to human translation prevents students from getting anxiety due to time allotment given by teachers. Explaining to students about the aspects of CAT that need to be paid more attention is considered important so they can prepare themselves to work on proofreading process.

From some researches, it can be concluded that students have positive perceptions on translation technology. It can be seen from their frequency of using the technology and how they believe that the technology is useful for them although it has some weaknesses. (4) Mostly, the usefulness of translation technology is assessed based on how it is able to save time. The time allotment will be mostly used for proofreading activity which is considered easier or less problematic than translating word per word based on human translation only. CAT nowadays is also proven to have high accuracy so students struggle less with the proofreading.

CAT has become a dominant technology in translation industry that leads to the importance of implementing it in the teaching and learning activity to meet the purpose of education itself; meet the society demands. This is supported by the facts that; 1) CAT has become a trend in the information age facilitating translators to produce high-quality, high efficient translation in limited time. This urges teacher or even lecturer at university to take action by applying CAT in translation course. When students master CAT at school, they can meet the requirement of the society related to expectation and satisfaction towards translation products, 2) CAT mastery has become an advantage for students especially those taking translation study. It will be very difficult for students to adapt with the working procedures of translation without any familiarity with the technology, 3) CAT becomes the standards of literary translation covering various fields such as insurance, telecommunication, law, costume, engineering, aeronautics, chemical industry with a lot of fixed terminologies and expressions, 4) CAT teaching system supports a student-centered, computer-and-internet-based translation teaching platform that can be founded to establish and continuously add the resource base of teaching translation and to establish the active interaction between teacher and students leading to the improvement on teaching effects and stimulate students' positivity,

5)CAT enhances students ability to apply what they have learnt by analyzing and solving concrete problems in their practice of translation. CAT teaching system, with the support of huge translation resources, discussion between teacher and students and online exchange among students, can accommodate the needs of students for more practical teaching and learning beyond mastering theories (5)

Computer-assisted translation system is applied in teaching learning activities to reach students' practical translation skill by using man-machine interaction translation platform, translation memory, and translation instance mode. Meanwhile, the translation project can be used to teach students cooperation in translation project management. To be able to work on translation, translators must master the capabilities such as: bilingualism, encyclopedic knowledge, the knowledge of translation strategies and techniques, and the technical translation capabilities. Among all, technical translation capability is important due to the development of technology nowadays where translator is forced to employ indirect experience to improve the quality and speed of translation process. For the task they are not familiar with, using the monolingual or bilingual corpus then comparing the translated version with those in corpus to then deciding the most authentic version is considered helpful. While for the term translation, a translator can also get aid from CNKI online dictionary or National Science and Technology Terminology Committee's official Website ([www.term.gov.cn](http://www.term.gov.cn)) to check the standardized expression of terms. Common tools such as these are basically prominent to master by translators (6)

There are still some misunderstandings in many teachers' perceptions of CAT. First, teaching functions of CAT can be explored more but the idea of designing CAT to promote efficiency of teaching is not accepted. This goes along with the illogical thinking that Photoshop is a teaching software. The fact is, teachers mix up CAT in translation with CAT teaching. To be able to use CAT properly in teaching translation, teachers first need to have comprehensive understanding about CAT and master computer knowledge or take part in training programs. (7)

Although CAT requires some proofreading because of the errors or mistakes produced, it is still considerable to be applied in teaching and learning program. Some strategies may be needed to remove or reduce the errors(8)

CAT technology is dependable in terms of helping satisfy bigger social market in the future. The efficiency and quality of the translation products will both be important standards for future translators. While global market develops, the number of documents transferred or exchanged may increase too. CAT technology is qualified enough to finish the documents in shorter time. Universities, in this case, should prepare or produce useful translators for the society and those who are trained under the conventional translation teaching will not be able to keep up with the demand that is getting higher. The application of CAT is considered imperative and helpful to enhance the efficiency of translation classrooms. By giving shorter training time with higher quality, university can provide proficient translators for market or society. With the help from translation memory and terminology database, large amount of knowledge can be saved and accessed faster. Looking up words in dictionary will no longer need to do by teachers nor students.

Usually, in CAT class, translation memory and terminology database are set by teachers to provide richer storage. It is possible for students to get more professional and matched words in the database. It does not only help them finish their works quicker but also enrich their vocabulary unconsciously.

With CAT technology, work efficiency increases meaning that students mastering this knowledge will finish their work in shorter time with higher quality. While theoretically the

maximum speed of manual translation is 5.000 words man-day, with CAT people can translate twice as fast as the ultimate speed of human being. It is convinced shorter work with higher speed causes more competitiveness among students. Thus, it is important to grow the sense of teamwork on students.

Teamwork is something common in translation world. Students who learn translation must have good ability on teamwork even those contemporary translators work in teams to accommodate the large number of translation tasks and the time. This teamwork, in the other hand, will cause inconsistency because different translator can have different style or even choice of words. With CAT, students can share ideas and discuss so they can improve their skill fast and in the end, they will get the idea of why teamwork is important. To sum up, good mastery of CAT tools is enough attractive and competitive to the huge market of translation. It is an urgent task to introduce CAT technology into translation teaching.

Unfortunately, there are some negative aspects influencing the possibility of applying CAT in the classroom; 1) small numbers of proficient teachers in CAT, 2) CAT may have high price. Those problems should be tackled first by giving training or education for teachers to get familiar with CAT and using various free-accessed CAT through the internet. Universities, as the provider of translation study, need to give more-relevant extracurricular activities to encourage the learning process using CAT and they also need to provide professional CAT classrooms to train those human-resources in terms of producing reliable products for CAT users (9)

Some guidelines concerning possible activities influencing translation and language teaching learning can be formulated as;

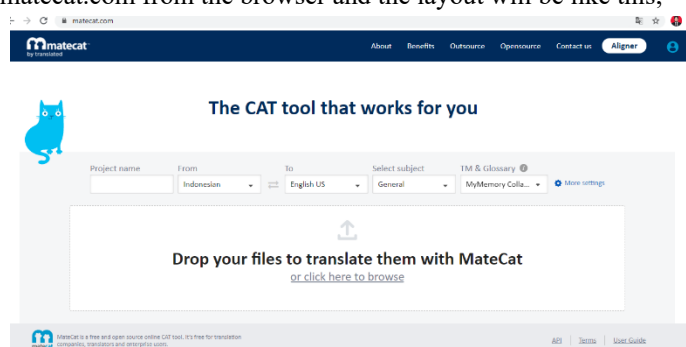
1. Translation as communication  
Some steps are needed to initiate the view of translation as a communication form to achieve certain goals that is compatible with teaching methods used dominantly by providing interactive knowledge about both languages and cultures. This should include the spoken form (interpreting) and audio-visual form (subtitling). Translation does not need to be proposed as a stand-alone teaching method.
2. Translation as a fifth language skill  
The idea that translation as a fifth language skills besides speaking, listening, writing and reading is accepted by teaching community since it also works with complexity as in other language skills.
3. Translation as something teachers can learn  
Language teachers can always learn translation through various media or sources. It is important especially in English teaching since all textbooks are produced in English.
4. Translation as having a measurable impact  
The effects given by translation teaching on language skills are measurable as other skills too. Whether it is in forms of improvement, numbers of interactions, or students' satisfaction, those aspects can be easily measured. Some approaches are also provided to help the research be conducted.
5. Translation as mediation  
In situations where the term 'translation' is locked into a narrow, non-communicative view, the term 'mediation' should be explored as a term for all communicative activities, including translation, that involve more than one language. Care should be taken, however, not to accept that translation is only the most linguistically restricted mode of mediation, and not to accept that translation somehow runs counter to the gaining of intercultural competence. (10)

Overall, there are some advantages from CAT; 1) it saves time, 2) it is free to use, 3) it is convenient to work with various fields of text. While there are also some disadvantages; 1) it can be low-accuracy, 2) it is still less trusted than human-translation (11)

But actually, those disadvantages can be overcome by involving human-translation in the process of translation. Proofreading step is considered prominent to handle the problems.

One of CAT that becomes more popular nowadays is matecat.com. It is a website of CAT where users can sign up freely and use it for free without any trial period.

Visit matecat.com from the browser and the layout will be like this;



**Figure 1. matecat.com homepage**

Sign up to matecat.com to be able to use the website. Users can upload the text they need to translate in the box then choosing the criteria of the files such as subjects of text, languages.

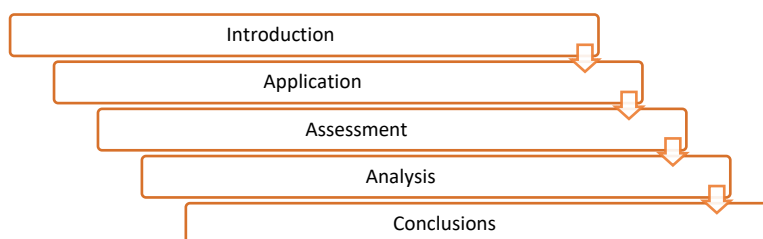
After clicking “process”, this tool will analyze the file in terms of words contained and part the text to segments so it is easier for users to check or proofread the products.

After finishing the translation work, users can choose which type of files they want for the products. They can select words, pdf, or even power point. If they choose the same file as the original file, the format of the file will not change. Users do not have to deal with spacing, paragraphing.

## 2 Methods

The method used in this study is descriptive qualitative to explain how matecat.com is used in the teaching and learning and what are students perspectives on matecat.com.

The steps were done as;

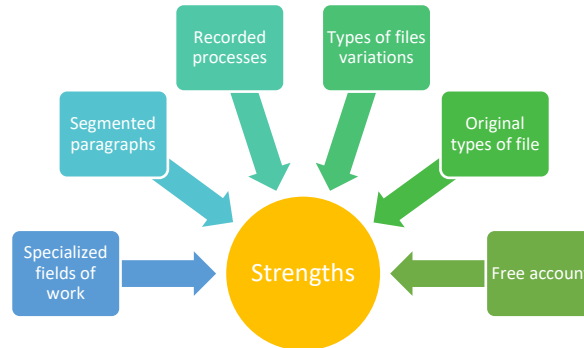


**Figure 2. Steps of research**

1. Introduction  
Students were introduced to matecat.com including how to create an account, the procedures of using matecat.com and how they can produce a translation work by using it.
2. Application  
Students were then given various texts to work with. They were asked to translate the text using matecat.com. Their process of working with matecat.com was guided by lecturer.
3. Assessment  
The assessment was meant to get students' perception by working with matecat.com. An open questions questionnaire was distributed to students to see the advantages and disadvantages of using matecat.com
4. Analysis  
The results from the questionnaire were then recorded and analyzed to create a big picture of the advantages and the disadvantages.
5. Conclusions  
The big picture describes the advantages and disadvantages of using matecat.com felt by students.

### 3 Findings and Discussion

#### Strengths:



**Figure 3. Strengths of matecat.com**

The strength points of matecat.com according to students are;

1. Specification of field  
The users, in this case are students, can choose specific field for the text they are translating. Matecat.com will automatically adjust the choice of words based on the context of the field.
2. Segmented text

The text is broken down into segments and it helps students to work with the text faster since they do not need to type word per word and they can monitor their progress of working easily.

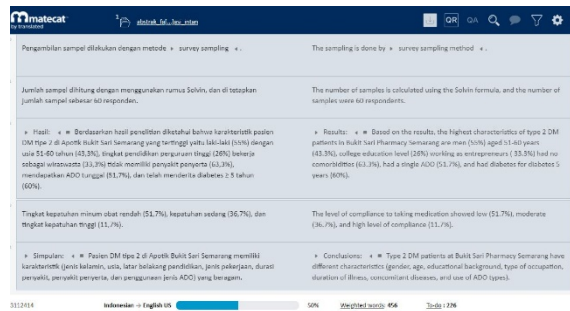


Figure 4. Working page of matecat.com

3. Recorded process  
Working with long texts may be tiring and it takes much time. It is possible for students to leave their works temporarily and back to their last part easily since matecat.com will automatically save their draft of works.
4. Types of file variations  
Users can upload various types of file to matecat.com to be translated. Even the power point file uploaded will be produced as a power point with the same design and layout as the original file.
5. Similarity with the original file  
matecat.com produces similar format of text with the original ones. This is one of the most enjoyable things from matecat.com since users do not need to work on formatting sessions after doing the proofreading activity.
6. Free account  
Users can use this site freely without any trial periods.

## Weaknesses

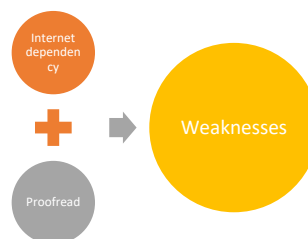


Figure 5. Weaknesses of matecat.com



There are only 2 weaknesses found by users after working with matecat.com:

1. Internet dependency  
Since this is a website, the internet connection is needed to work with matecat.com.
2. Proofread requirement  
For those who are not capable of using English, this can be a weakness. That is why matecat.com can be used in teaching and learning because students can practice their own ability and skill in translation through the process of proofreading.

#### 4. Conclusion

Matecat.com as one of Computer-Assisted Translation tools that can be accessed freely by users offers some advantages and disadvantages. The application of CAT in English Language Teaching (ELT) needs to be supported by the knowledge of the lecturer related to CAT and also requires the guidance so students can improve their ability in translation by mastering more vocabulary based on context-used.

Despite some disadvantages showed by matecat.com, it is still considered as being applicable in ELT process. This motivates students to master and keep up with the technology development to later be a part of globalization.

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