

Possibilities and Challenges of Using Machine Translation in Foreign Language Education

Authors : Miho Yamashita

Abstract : In recent years, there have been attempts to introduce Machine Translation (MT) into foreign language teaching, especially in writing instructions. This is because the performance of neural machine translation has improved dramatically since 2016, and some university instructors started to introduce MT translations to their students as a "good model" to learn from. However, MT is still not perfect, and there are many incorrect translations. In order to translate the intended text into a foreign language, it is necessary to edit the original manuscript written in the native language (pre-edit) and revise the translated foreign language text (post-edit). The latter is considered especially difficult for users without a high proficiency level of foreign language. Therefore, the author allowed her students to use MT in her writing class in one of the private universities in Japan and investigated 1) how groups of students with different English proficiency levels revised MT translations when translating Japanese manuscripts into English and 2) whether the post-edit process differed when the students revised alone or in pairs. The results showed that in 1), certain non-post-edited grammatical errors were found regardless of their proficiency levels, indicating the need for teacher intervention, and in 2), more appropriate corrections were found in pairs, and their frequent use of a dictionary was also observed. In this presentation, the author will discuss how MT writing instruction can be integrated effectively in an aim to achieve multimodal foreign language education.

Keywords : machine translation, writing instruction, pre-edit, post-edit

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