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EFFICIENCY OF ONLINE TRANSLATORS FOR LANGUAGE LEARNING

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Since the beginning of the 21st century a great number of new technologies and developments have been introduced into our life. Online translators are one of such innovations which have become an integral part of the language learning process. More and more people nowadays prefer online translators to paper dictionaries.

Online translators (also called machine translators) are tools designed for translating separate words, phrases or whole texts in the written and verbal form from one language to another. In spite of the fact that different web sites provide their own online translators, all of them have similar advantages and disadvantages.

The major advantages of online translators are: 1) high speed of translation (some programs can translate simultaneously as you type); 2) no cost (you do not have to buy an online translator as you do with paper dictionaries); 3) convenience (you have to type or paste the text in the box provided and you will get the translation); 4) saving time (using paper dictionaries is time-consuming compared to online translators).

Nevertheless, one of the crucial disadvantages of online translators is poor accuracy of translation. The learner obtains word to word translation which he/she has to correct manually. Most online translators cannot provide appropriate versions of proper names, metaphors and idioms. Moreover, the context, grammar and syntax rules are not considered by machine tools, thus the learner can get translation which is unnatural or even incorrect.

Generally, online translators should be judged as useful tools to provide opportunities for translating texts from one language to another in a short period of time. However, using them appropriately requires profound knowledge and strong language skills [1].