

Adoption of Google translator to promote reading literature in foreign languages.

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Abstract

Most of the libraries in Sri Lanka does not containing publications from different languages. Mostly the text is limited to Sinhala, Tamil, and English. Closest reason for this lacuna is low literacy of foreign languages among library staff and the patrons. There are donated foreign text materials in the libraries and the library staff is facing lot of difficulties while accessioning, cataloguing, and classifying them. There is also a demand from foreign students who are willing to read text in Sinhala language. Thus, the objective of this study is to bridge this literacy barrier and promote reading foreign literature. Study investigates the ability of Google Translate app to translate foreign texts in Unicode. A section from a paragraph with ten sentences were selected from English, Tamil, Hindi, Sanskrit, and German languages. All these languages were translated to Sinhala language and compared them with a valid translation to recorded how far the languages are translated with a meaningful sense. This were replicated 5 times for different paragraphs from different publications. Average percentage of translating to Sinhala in a meaningful sentence among replicates, per language showed, 98.4% for English, 98.4% for Tamil, 95% for Hindi, 98.4%, and 98% for German. Google translator did not support Sanskrit. It was evident that, translator is poorly response when the sentences are too long, indirectly written, contains idioms, and with different punctuations. Google Translator work offline, provide a range of mobile platform compatibility. It supports 109 world languages, and the translated text can be saved and export to be used later or for any other word processing platform. The app also narrating the translated content in a preferred language by extending the translator support to visually impaired readers as well. It has a character limit of 3900 at a time. However, it can be concluded that Google Translator provide a considerable support to understand foreign literature.

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