



# Beginning Level Templates

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## Project-level Learning Outcomes

After engaging with all instructional materials, students will be able to:

- Describe how machine translation tools work
- Describe how MT tools can and cannot be used to support language learning
- Describe ethical issues inherent in MT tools
- Critically analyze the use of MT tools in various classroom, workplace, and interpersonal contexts based on these ethical issues
- Reflect on the role that machine translation tools play in the global world (personal and professional domains)

## Beginning Templates Learning Outcomes

After engaging with these beginning instructional materials, students will be able to:

- Use online tools, including MT tools, to distinguish register in the case of formal and informal greetings and farewells.
- Identify the grammatical gender of nouns using MT tools.
- Explore potential gender biases in the functionality of MT tools and their implications.
- Identify which language varieties are represented in online tools, including MT tools, with regards to individual food items and/or dishes.
- Explain why language varieties are not represented in certain online tools and outline the possible implications of this omission.
- Explore different MT tools and their functionalities.



- Compare and contrast differences in outputs based on different inputs across MT tools.
- Recognize the role of context to support reading comprehension
- Connect the importance of context with applications of online tool use.
- Explore the limits of MT tools in verifying the accuracy of student-generated text in the target language by back translating them into English.

## Tool Functionality

### I. MT and Register

#### 1. Suggested Level: Beginning

#### 2. Learning Focus: Tool functionality

#### 3. Learning Goals:

- To use online tools, including MT tools, to distinguish register in the case of formal and informal greetings and farewells.

#### 4. Instructor Notes:

This activity can be used at the beginning of the first semester when introducing greetings and farewells. Prior to assigning the activity:

- Review the inputs provided and explore the outputs using a variety of MT tools, noting the outputs. For example, MT tools translate the informal <howdy> to a register neutral variety in Spanish and the question <how are you?> is rendered with the impersonal form of address, with no formal option provided.
- In some cases, learners may not be able to find sufficient information using the online tools to adequately determine or distinguish register. You may want to make notes on this so that you can provide this additional information during the Reflection discussion.
- Identify one focus MT tool (Step 2) and one online dictionary (Step 3).

#### 5. Background:

Register refers to a variety of language that is used for a specific purpose or in a specific communicative context. In this activity you will explore formal register, language that is used in formal situations (such as a meeting in which a student is addressing the president of the university), and informal register, which is used in informal situations (such as a student chatting with a good friend over lunch).

MT tools have a difficult time discerning register since the language produced is not language in use; it is stripped of its context. Additionally, MT tools are trained on large collections of spoken and written texts that broadly speaking were produced for more formal contexts, such as legal proceedings or political meetings. Therefore, the language that is



produced can be biased towards the formal. The infrastructure of MT tools is more deeply explored in the Probability & MT Tools activity, in the Foundational Templates.

## 6. Activity:

In this activity you are going to explore the potential and limitations of using online tools like MT tools and dictionaries to distinguish register, understood as words or expressions that you would use in formal or informal situations. You will practice with greetings and farewells.

**STEP 1:** *Indicate with a ✓ if you would use the following words or expressions in formal situations (e.g. addressing the president of the university), informal situations, (e.g. speaking to a good friend), or both in an English-speaking context?*

|                | Formal | Informal | Both |
|----------------|--------|----------|------|
| Hello          |        |          |      |
| Howdy          |        |          |      |
| Good afternoon |        |          |      |
| How are you?   |        |          |      |
| Goodbye        |        |          |      |
| See you soon   |        |          |      |

**STEP 2:** *Look up each of the expressions in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate MT tool). First, write output(s) in the appropriate column. If there is more than 1 output include only the top 2. Then, based on the translation, indicate if you think you would use that output in a formal situation, informal situation, both, or if it is unclear. If there is more than one output you can use separate lines to distinguish your responses.*

| Input | Output(s) | Use    |          |      |         |
|-------|-----------|--------|----------|------|---------|
|       |           | FORMAL | INFORMAL | BOTH | UNCLEAR |
| Hello |           |        |          |      |         |
| Howdy |           |        |          |      |         |



|                |  |  |  |  |  |
|----------------|--|--|--|--|--|
| Good afternoon |  |  |  |  |  |
| How are you?   |  |  |  |  |  |
| Goodbye        |  |  |  |  |  |
| See you soon   |  |  |  |  |  |

STEP 3: Look up each expression in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate online dictionary). First, write the top 2 outputs in the second column. Then, based on the information you receive, indicate if you think you would use it in a formal situation, informal situation, or both, or if it is not clear. You will not do anything with the column labeled <Alternative> for now.

| Input          | Top Output(s) | Alternative (formal or informal) | Use    |          |      |         |
|----------------|---------------|----------------------------------|--------|----------|------|---------|
|                |               |                                  | FORMAL | INFORMAL | BOTH | UNCLEAR |
| Hello          |               |                                  |        |          |      |         |
| Howdy          |               |                                  |        |          |      |         |
| Good afternoon |               |                                  |        |          |      |         |
|                |               |                                  |        |          |      |         |



|              |  |  |  |  |  |  |
|--------------|--|--|--|--|--|--|
| How are you? |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Goodbye      |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| See you soon |  |  |  |  |  |  |

STEP 4: *Read through the other options provided by the online dictionary and identify one additional alternative. If the top 2 alternatives were both informal, find one that is formal, and vice versa. Alternatively, you can also look for options from specific language varieties (i.e., specific varieties spoken in different regions of the world).*

## 7. Reflection:

*With your class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:*

- In Steps 2 and 3, how easy or difficult was it to find information on the formality and informality of the expressions?
- Are there any other differences or similarities that you found in the translation in general and specifically with respect to register in Steps 2, 3, and 4?
- Can your instructor or textbook provide any additional clarifying information regarding how to identify register? Why or why not?
- Overall, what has this exercise taught you about how these different tools function? How (if at all) will this understanding impact your future use of them?

## 8. (Optional) ChatGTP add-on:

- Write a prompt(s) to request an explanation of how to greet someone in a formal and an informal context, such as the example provided here.
- Submit the Shared Link to your instructor (see the Guide to ChatGTP add-ons for instructions).
- Compare this information with what you found using MT tools and online dictionaries and in relation to what you found in your textbook and/or the information your instructor provided. What is most helpful or useful in terms of the ease of finding the information? What is most helpful or useful in terms of understanding how to use the words and expressions?



## II. MT and Gender of Nouns

### 1. Suggested Level: Beginning

### 2. Learning Focus: Tool Functionality

### 3. Learning goals:

- To identify the grammatical gender of nouns using MT tools.
- To explore potential gender biases in the functionality of MT tools and their implications.

### 4. Instructor Notes:

This activity can be assigned in a chapter that covers the grammatical gender of nouns and noun – adjective agreement. Prior to assigning the activity:

- Review the inputs provided in Steps 2 and 3 and test the MT outputs, which can vary, making note of particular aspects you want to address in the examples and in the Reflection discussion. Understanding these variations across tools is part of the purpose of the activity. The inputs were selected based on Spanish so you may need to make alterations, taking into consideration the following:
  - o Step 2: The input in noun form, <city>, does not always yield information about its gender (feminine, in Spanish), although this varies by MT tool. In a similar way, the input <small> may or may not yield both the feminine and masculine endings, MT tools commonly only provide the masculine form.
  - o Step 3: The example <professor> was chosen because it has a masculine and feminine form. If this is not the case in your language, select another noun referring to a person that does (such as mechanic, director, or nurse). Note that in many MT tools, the input <the professor> only yields the masculine form of professor and the sentence <the professor is nice> also produces the masculine form of professor, despite no gender being identified.
- Identify one focus MT tool for Step 2 and two focus MT tools for Step 3 (you can repeat the MT tool used in Step 2).

### 5. Background:

MT tools translate from languages, like English, that do not have grammatical gender, to languages like Spanish or French that do have grammatical gender. In some cases, the input is sufficient for the MT tools to either discern gender or, if it is not, both masculine or feminine options are provided. However, in many cases, MT tools default to masculine forms, which is a form of gender bias inherent in MT tools.

The presence of this gender bias comes from MT tool infrastructure: MT tools are trained on large collections of spoken and written texts. These texts are inscribed with larger societal biases, including gender bias. This is why MT tools often default to masculine forms when



the gender of the subject is not clear. The infrastructure of MT tools is more deeply explored in the Probability & MT Tools activity, in the Foundational templates.

## 6. Activity:

In this activity you are going to explore how you can use MT tools to identify the grammatical gender of nouns and to ensure noun – adjective agreement. In the process, you will become aware of some limits of these tools, including their inherent gender bias.

*STEP 1: First you will work with an inanimate object, a city. For the following sentence circle the noun and underline the adjective: It is a small city.*

*STEP 2: Look up each of the inputs in the first column in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate one MT tool). Write all of the output(s) in the appropriate column. Then, respond to the questions.*

| Input               | Output(s) | See questions below. |
|---------------------|-----------|----------------------|
| city                |           |                      |
| the city            |           |                      |
| small               |           |                      |
| It is a small city. |           |                      |

- For the first input, <city>, are you able to identify the grammatical gender of the noun based on the output(s)? Why or why not? If so, what is it?
- For the second input, <the city>, are you able to identify the grammatical gender of the noun based on the output(s)? Why or why not? If so, what is it?
- For the third input, <small>, are you able to identify the grammatical gender of the adjective based on the output(s)? Why or why not? If so, what is it?
- For the fourth input, what form of small is used, the masculine or feminine form? Why?

*STEP 3: Now, you will work with a noun that refers to a person, a professor. Look up each of the inputs in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate TWO online MT tools). Write all of the output(s) in the appropriate column. Then, respond to the questions.*



| Input                  | Output(s) |        | See questions below. |        |
|------------------------|-----------|--------|----------------------|--------|
|                        | Tool 1    | Tool 2 | Tool 1               | Tool 2 |
| professor              |           |        |                      |        |
| the professor          |           |        |                      |        |
| nice                   |           |        |                      |        |
| The professor is nice. |           |        |                      |        |

- For the first input, <professor>, which form is provided: the masculine or the feminine or both?
- For the second input, <the professor>, which form is provided: the masculine or the feminine or both?
- For the third input, <nice>, which form is provided: the masculine or the feminine or both?
- For the fourth input, <the professor is nice> which form of professor is provided: the masculine or feminine form or both? Why? Does the adjective for the word <nice> change? If so, why do you think that the change occurs?

## 7. Reflection:

*With your class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:*

- For Step 2, how easy or difficult was it to identify the grammatical gender of the word <city>? Did you receive the appropriate form of the adjective <small> to agree with the gender of the word <city>? What did you need to input to ensure that the grammatical gender was correct?
- For Step 3 the gender of the professor is not clear in English. How was the professor gendered by the MT tools (as masculine or feminine)? Why do you think that the professor was gendered in this way?
- Are there any other differences or similarities that you found in terms of the translations provided in general and specifically with respect to grammatical gender in Steps 2 and 3?



- Can your instructor or textbook provide any additional clarifying information regarding how to identify grammatical gender? Why or why not?
- Overall, what has this exercise taught you about how these different tools function? How (if at all) will this understanding impact your future use of them?

#### 8. (Optional) ChatGPT Add-on:

- Write a prompt to request a translation from ChatGPT of the inputs below (column 1). Write the outputs in column 2 and indicate in column 3 the grammatical gender of the outputs (masculine, feminine, or both).

| Input                  | Output | Grammatical Gender |
|------------------------|--------|--------------------|
| professor              |        |                    |
| nurse                  |        |                    |
| the professor          |        |                    |
| the nurse              |        |                    |
| The professor is nice. |        |                    |

- Compare this information with what you found using MT tools above. What is the same? What is different? What has this taught you about how ChatGPT works for in relation to identifying grammatical gender that you will want to keep in mind when using it?

### III. MT and Language Varieties

#### 1. Suggested Level: Beginning

#### 2. Learning Focus: Tool Functionality

#### 3. Learning Goals:

- To identify which language varieties are represented in online tools, including MT tools, with regards to individual food items and/or dishes.
- To explain why language varieties are not represented in certain online tools and outline the possible implications of this omission.

#### 4. Instructor Notes:

It is recommended that this activity be integrated into a chapter focusing on food. Prior to assigning the activity:



- Identify three or four food words or vocabulary related to food dishes that have regional variations and write these in the <Input> column. For example, words for Spanish / French might be: avocado, cake, potato, and blueberry.
- Identify one focus MT tool (Step 1) and one online dictionary (Step 2).
- Double check the translations of the food items/dishes to determine if language varieties are indicated or not. Ideally, you'll want the online dictionary to provide some indication of usage related to regional varieties.
- Decide if you would like the learners to approach this task inductively or deductively: providing them with the background information (section 5) first or asking them to deduce from the activity itself.

## 5. Background:

Languages have many varieties that are spoken in different countries or regions. It is common, however, for there to be a “standard” variety, one that is privileged as being the “best” or most “correct” one, even if this is a subjective belief. This bias towards one version of a language is known as a standard language ideology. This standard variety is most often used and maintained (and, some might say imposed) by privileged institutions, including the legal system, the educational system, and the media. As standard language ideologies create language hierarchies, those who do not speak this standard variety don't have access to the institutions where it is used and are sometimes considered inferior.

One of the goals of this activity is to highlight the standard language ideology underpinning many MT tools. Its presence comes from MT tool infrastructure: MT tools are trained on large corpora of texts—Internet-scale collections of spoken and written texts. These texts are primarily produced in standard languages by institutions (such as legal documents produced by the European Union). The composition of this training data means that non-standard language varieties are not represented or translated well by MT tools. The infrastructure of MT tools is more deeply explored in the Probability & MT Tools activity, in the Foundational templates.

## 6. Activity:

Languages have many varieties that are spoken in different countries or regions. One of the ways these varieties show up is in vocabulary to talk about food and food dishes. In this activity, you will explore the potentials and limitations of online tools to help you to identify these varieties so that you know when and where to use them.

STEP 1: *Look up the following words in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate MT tool) and write the output(s) in the appropriate column. Based on the information you receive, indicate where you might use each of the terms (regions, countries, etc.). If the information is not provided simply write <unclear.>*

| Input | Output(s) | Use |
|-------|-----------|-----|
|       |           |     |



|  |  |  |
|--|--|--|
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

STEP 2: Look up the following words in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate online dictionary) and write the output(s) in the appropriate column. Based on the information you receive, indicate where you might use each of the terms (regions, countries, etc.). If the information is not provided simply write <unclear.>

| Input | Output(s) | Use |
|-------|-----------|-----|
|       |           |     |
|       |           |     |
|       |           |     |
|       |           |     |

## 7. Reflection:

*With your class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:*

- Based on your results, are you able to identify what might be considered the “standard” word for each of the food items / dishes?
- Were you able to identify language varieties using the different online tools (comparing Steps 1 and 2)? In which cases?
- Can your instructor or textbook provide any additional clarifying information regarding the different options, who might use them, and where they might be used?
- Do you think that it is important to be aware of these varieties beyond the standard ones? Why?
- Why do you think that certain online tools provide information on specific varieties and others do not? What are the potential implications of not providing these varieties?
- Overall, what has this exercise taught you about how these different tools function? How (if at all) will this understanding impact your future use of them?

## 8. (Optional) ChatGPT add-on:

- Write a prompt(s) to request information about the varieties of vocabulary to talk about one of the food items/dishes from above and how and when to use it.
- Submit the Shared Link to your instructor (see the Guide to ChatGTP add-ons for instructions).
- Compare this information with what you found using MT tools and online dictionaries and in relation to what you found in your textbook and/or the information your instructor provided. What is most helpful and thorough in terms of representing these



language varieties and the ease of finding the information about differences? What is most helpful or useful in terms of understanding where to use the words?

## Tool Use

### I. Input Matters

#### 1. Suggested Level: Beginning

#### 2. Learning Focus: Tool Use

#### 3. Learning Goals:

- To explore different MT tools and their functionalities.
- To compare and contrast differences in outputs based on different inputs across MT tools.

#### 4. Instructor Notes:

Prior to assigning the activity:

- Identify one MT tool for Step 1 and one MT tool for Step 2.
- Review the inputs provided and test the MT outputs in both tools as these can vary by language. Identify potential problem areas that you will want to highlight or respond to in the Reflection discussion. Some issues that have been identified include:
  - “Fly” is sometimes only translated as a verb or as a bug, not the fly of a pair of pants.
  - The infinitive “to fly” is sometimes translated with a preposition, when none is required.
  - In some languages “to fly” means to pilot, not to travel by plane. MT tools do not make this distinction and only include the option <to pilot.>
  - “Fly by night” is an idiom and is generally rendered literally, even if it has no meaning in the target language.
- The example of “fly” can be modified if a different example is more appropriate.
- After discussing the outputs in class, the instructor can provide additional suggestions on how to cross reference the outputs, with online dictionaries for example.

#### 5. Background:

Input, what is put into an MT tool, influences the output. This may seem obvious, but it can have implications if, for example, part of the information that is needed in order to use the output correctly depends on also knowing appropriate articles, prepositions, or even parts of speech, for example, for words that are the same in English as both nouns and verbs (such as the word “burn”). Understanding how the tool functions can help to anticipate what input is needed. The infrastructure of MT tools is more deeply explored in the probability and MT tools activity in the Foundational Templates. Additionally, learning to pay attention to these differences in output can help to better inform decisions about input, because it matters!

**6. Activity:**

In this activity you are going to explore how changing the input impacts the output of various MT tools.

STEP 1: Look up each of the inputs in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate MT tool) and write the outputs in column 2.

STEP 2: Look up each of the inputs in \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate MT tool) and write the outputs in column 3.

STEP 3: Compare the outputs in column 2 and 3 and note any observations or differences in column 4.

| Input: Target word / phrase | Tool 1: Output | Tool 2: Output | Notes |
|-----------------------------|----------------|----------------|-------|
| fly                         |                |                |       |
| a big fly                   |                |                |       |
| the big fly                 |                |                |       |
| the fly                     |                |                |       |
| to fly                      |                |                |       |
| fly to                      |                |                |       |
| I fly to Rome on Tuesday.   |                |                |       |
| fly by night                |                |                |       |



## 7. Reflection:

*With your class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:*

- What did you observe? How does the output change based on your input?
- What happens to MT outputs when you include or exclude articles (the/a), adjectives (big), or prepositions (to)?
- Can your instructor provide any additional insights into the outputs, including their accuracy and appropriateness, in addition to what may be missing or lost in translation?
- Overall, what has this exercise taught you about how these different tools function? How (if at all) will this understanding impact your future use of them?

## 8. (Optional) ChatGPT add-on:

- You are going to practice using ChatGPT to receive grammatical / vocabulary help. Write at least one prompt to request additional information / explanations of one or two observations you made in Step 3 that involve language outputs that you find confusing or unclear. In your prompt, indicate that you want ChatGPT to play the role of teacher and indicate your language learning level (beginning, intermediate, advanced). Request examples and indicate that you would like opportunities to practice and the types of practice you would like.
- Submit the Shared Link to your instructor (see the Guide to ChatGTP add-ons for instructions). Be sure to complete some of the practice activities as well so that you receive feedback.
- When reviewing the ChatGPT output, consider the clarity of the information / explanation, how helpful the practice opportunities were, and what additional explanations you might want from your instructor.

# II. Language in Context

## 1. Suggested Level: Beginning

## 2. Learning Focus: Tool Use

## 3. Learning Goals:

- To recognize the role of context to support reading comprehension
- To connect the importance of context with applications of online tool use.

## 4. Instructor Notes:

This activity can be used at any point, although it is recommended to use it later, once students have already had the opportunity to develop some reading comprehension skills. It can be used alongside the teaching of other reading strategies or separately. Prior to assigning the activity:

- Select a reading. Identify some words that you anticipate learners not knowing and try out the activity to test what the different outputs are.



- Identify one focus MT tool (steps 3 and 4) and one online dictionary (step 5).
- Optional modification: You can request that students only identify nouns or verbs that they don't know, for example.

## 5. Background:

Context in language refers to the idea that words mean things in relationship to other words, as well as in relationship to when and how they are used, and by whom. For example, the word “fan” can actually mean many things, the only way one would know if a speaker means a mechanical / electrical object with swirling blades that produces air or a person who is a devotee of a sports team is if context is provided (or, if the speaker happens to be standing in a sports stadium). Understanding context can support the process of comprehension, particularly for language learners who can rely on it to fill in gaps when they don't know a word.

MT tools also rely on a form of context to discern meaning, although in this case context is based on the statistical probability of words appearing together. One common way that users interact with MT tools is to input single words, this is commonly referred to as “using machine translation tools like a dictionary.” However, this is not an effective strategy as there is not enough for the tool to be able to successfully discern the context. If you input <fan> into Google Translate, for example, it translates it as a sports devotee, and, if one is on the online platform (vs. the browser) the other meanings only appear below (with no sample sentences to see language in use - for this one must consult a dictionary).

## 6. Activity:

In this activity you will explore the role of context to support reading comprehension and in online tool use.

STEP 1: *Select 5 to 6 words from the assigned reading that you do not know and write them in the first column.*

STEP 2: *Without using any additional tools, try to guess the meaning of the words based on your understanding of the ideas expressed in the reading. Write this educated guess in column 2.*

STEP 3: *Using Google Translate (or other MT tool) look up the individual word. Write the output in column 3.*

STEP 4: *Now input the entire sentence that the word appears in into Google Translate (or other MT tool). Write the output in column 4.*

STEP 5: *Look up the word in Word Reference (or other online dictionary). Write the output in column 5.*

| My words | My definition | MT definition<br>(single word output) | MT definition<br>(entire sentence output) | Online dictionary |
|----------|---------------|---------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1.       |               |                                       |                                           |                   |



|    |  |  |  |  |
|----|--|--|--|--|
|    |  |  |  |  |
| 2. |  |  |  |  |
| 3. |  |  |  |  |
| 4. |  |  |  |  |
| 5. |  |  |  |  |

## 7. Reflection:

*With your class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:*

- Were there any differences between your educated guess (column 2), the translation provided by MT with the word only (column 3), the translation provided by MT with the entire sentence (column 4), and the definition(s) provided by the online dictionary? What are the differences (or similarities) and how do you account for them?
- Re-read the entire text. What do you feel like is the best definition of each word based on your overall understanding of the reading, and why? Can your instructor or textbook provide any additional clarifying information on what might be the most accurate translation?
- What has this exercise taught you about the role of context in understanding words? How will this understanding impact your approach to classroom readings in the future?
- What has this exercise taught you about how these different tools function? How (if at all) will this understanding impact your future use of them?

## 8. (Optional) ChatGPT Add on:

- Complete the same activity but use ChatGPT. Ask it to provide translations of the single words you identified (add to column 2) as well as the entire sentences (add to column 3). Note the similarities and differences with MT tools and online dictionaries.



| My words | ChatGPT definition<br>(single word output) | MT definition (entire<br>sentence output) |
|----------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|
| 1.       |                                            |                                           |
| 2.       |                                            |                                           |
| 3.       |                                            |                                           |
| 4.       |                                            |                                           |
| 5.       |                                            |                                           |

- Write a prompt to request that ChatGPT provide an explanation of any differences in the translations. Submit the Shared Link to your instructor (see the Guide to ChatGTP add-ons for instructions).
- Reflect on the explanations provided. Do they provide you with the information you wanted / needed? If not, what additional information do you want / need?

### III. Back Translation

1. **Suggested Level:** Beginning

2. **Learning Focus:** Tool use

3. **Learning Goals:**

- To explore the limits of MT tools in verifying the accuracy of student-generated text in the target language by back translating them into English.

4. **Instructor Notes:**

Prior to assigning the activity:

- Identify two focus MT tools (steps 1 and 2).
- Generate a list of 4 or 5 common novice-level errors in sentence form with the error in the target language and write these sentences in the first column of the table.
  - Example 1: In Spanish, age is expressed with the verb “to have” and not “to be” (one has 20 years vs. one is 20 years old). If you input the incorrect sentence in Spanish (one is 20 years old) Google Translate renders the sentence correctly in English such that students who would use this strategy to verify accuracy would not detect the error.



- Other considerations: Google Translate will erroneously back translate gender and subject-verb agreement errors as correct in English.
- Explore how both featured tools render these erroneous sentences in English. Take notes of particular issues or problems that you will want to be sure are addressed in the Reflection discussion.

## 5. Background:

A common learner strategy is to write a text in the target language and then input it into an MT tool in order to verify accuracy via the English output. This is called back translation. While there are instances where errors in the target language are rendered as errors in the English back translation, it is more common for these errors to not appear, the tools render them correctly. Therefore, overall, this is not a strategy that is recommended.

## 6. Activity:

In this activity you will be exploring the strategy of back translation: writing a text in the language you are studying and then using an MT tool to verify the grammatical and lexical accuracy of the text. Some of the sentences in the first column contain errors.

STEP 1: *Input the sentence into \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate MT Tool) and write the English output in column 2.*

STEP 2: *Input the same sentence into \_\_\_\_\_ (indicate a different MT tool) and write the English output in column 3.*

STEP 3: *Are there any errors in the English sentences from either tool 1 or 2? Write these in column 4.*

STEP 4: *Based on your own determination, do you think that there are any errors in the original sentence? Write these in column 5.*

| Sentence | Tool 1: English output | Tool 2: English output | Do the MT outputs reveal an error? | Can you identify any errors? |
|----------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|          |                        |                        |                                    |                              |
|          |                        |                        |                                    |                              |
|          |                        |                        |                                    |                              |



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|  |  |  |  |  |

### 7. Reflection:

*With your class or in small groups, discuss the following questions:*

- Discuss your responses to steps 1-4 focusing on the errors that were revealed in the MT output and the errors you were able to identify. Can your instructor provide any additional information on the errors in the original sentences?
- Overall, what has this exercise taught you about the use of back translation as a strategy to detect errors in your writing? How (if at all) will this understanding impact your future use of them?

### 8. (Optional) ChatGPT add-on:

- Input the sentences into ChatGPT and ask it to translate them back into English. Note the sentences below.

| Sentence | ChatGPT English output |
|----------|------------------------|
|          |                        |
|          |                        |
|          |                        |
|          |                        |

- Input the sentences into ChatGPT and ask if it detects an error. If it does, request an explanation of the error.
- Submit the Shared Link to your instructor (see the Guide to ChatGTP add-ons for instructions).
- Compare this information with what you found using the MT tools and the reflection you had with your instructor. Did the information ChatGPT provided help you to understand the error? If not, why?



#### ATTRIBUTION

These Beginning Level Templates were created by Kimberly Vinall and Emily Hellmich for the Berkeley Language Center (BLC) at the University of California, Berkeley.

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