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## **CHALLENGES OF AI-ASSISTED TRANSLATION IN THE EFL CLASSROOM**

This research examines the integration of AI-assisted translation (AIAT) tools, such as generative AI and machine translation, into the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Its purpose is to review the core challenges: over-reliance on technology, intellectual property issues, and academic integrity, and learning opportunities that AIAT tools provide for learners and educators. The main points focus on how AIAT affects writing, reading, and vocabulary, and emphasize the importance of responsible integration models.

The emergence of complex AI-assisted translation technologies marks a paradigm shift in applied linguistics and second language pedagogy. Although machine translation has been used for decades, neural machine translation (NMT) and large language models (LLMs) now produce far superior outputs. These advances enable learners to take a more active role in language learning, giving them greater autonomy, wider access to materials, and more opportunities for independent and creative language use. Consequently, EFL educators are encouraged to adapt to this technological evolution by supporting learner-centered approaches that align with the capabilities of AIAT.

There are numerous opportunities that AIAT brings to the EFL classroom, as identified in the literature. First and foremost, AIAT supports personalized learning and scaffolding. Research by Chen and Lee [1] demonstrates that AIAT can serve as an effective scaffolding tool, enabling students to process complex texts and produce more sophisticated written output than they could achieve at their current proficiency level. By decreasing the fear of error, encouraging risk-taking (as per Krashen's hypothesis), and increasing learner motivation, the affective filter is lowered. For example, students might participate in a guided back-translation activity using climate change articles. They start translating a text from English into their own native language and then, through AIAT, translate it back into English. This practice enables students to identify differences and understand the subtleties of translation, while receiving immediate guidance and personalized learning experiences. In such hands-on practice, students can improve not only their writing skills but also build confidence and reduce their fear of making errors.

Moreover, AIAT is recognized as an innovative approach to supporting writing, learning, and feedback. Research by O'Dowd and Wambach [2] shows that, when applied strategically, AIAT can serve as an advanced tool for editing and revising. Learners may translate their drafts back into their native language to detect structural or semantic issues, or compare their output with a near-native equivalent generated by AIAT. This process promotes deeper metalinguistic awareness, as learners become active critics of language produced by both humans and machines.

In addition, AIAT ensures immediate access to vocabulary and idiomatic expressions, which accelerates incidental language learning, especially in reading and comprehension activities. Notwithstanding these opportunities, the literature also

outlines significant challenges in the ethical and effective integration of AIAT. The most common problem is the risk of overdependence and deskilling. Johns and Smith [3] caution that if learners engage with AIAT as a means of avoiding cognitive processing demands, for example, by using the tool to complete entire writing tasks, this may stifle the development of basic language competences, especially in productive skills such as writing and speaking. Such an approach transforms the learner's task from an act of creation to a form of evaluation that, if not properly managed, can hinder the development of independent language production.

Another critical challenge concerns academic integrity and assessment. The high quality of NMT outputs makes it difficult for teachers to accurately differentiate between student-generated text and AI-generated work, potentially undermining established assessment practices. According to scholars such as Jones [4], this situation necessitates greater use of process-based assessment and supervised in-class tasks that limit the potential for unrestricted AI assistance. This implies designing assignments that emphasize critical thinking and revision processes rather than focusing solely on the final product, thereby ensuring that AIAT functions as a purposeful tool rather than a replacement.

Lastly, AIAT presents significant challenges for nuanced language and cultural education. While AIAT can translate words and grammar, it usually does a poor job of conveying deep levels of cultural context, tone, and pragmatics—the “how” and “why” of language use. Brown and Keller [5] argue that EFL teaching should shift focus not only to how AIAT is used, but also to when and why a machine translation might not make sense linguistically or culturally. This requires the development of higher-order cognitive abilities, critical thinking, and translation literacy.

The present debate is shifting beyond the question of prohibiting AIAT toward developing Pedagogical Translation Literacy (PTL) – that is, education for students to become informed, critical consumers of translation technology. Future research must therefore develop clear, evidence-based guidelines for integrating AIAT as an assistive technology that complements, rather than replaces, the crucial cognitive work of language learning.

## REFERENCES

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