



AI Translation Tools Applied to Students in Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) Strategies: How Can They Be Effective?

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ABSTRACT

Artificial Intelligence (AI) translation programs such as Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT are increasingly utilized by students studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL). They offer quick translation, vocabulary support, and writing support that can help in Self-Regulated Learning (SRL). This study investigated the use of AI translation by students in planning, monitoring, and evaluating learning. A qualitative design was adopted with 30 EFL students from a North Sumatran state university. Questionnaires and semi-structured interviews were used to gather data and thematically analyze them. The results suggested that AI tools are commonly applied to read difficult texts, practice vocabulary, and proofread writing. They applied them to all stages of SRL, but with different levels of reflection. The study showed unquestionably benefits in the form of easier access to material, effectiveness, and assurance, but unequivocal risks of overdependence, mistranslation, and reduced critical thinking. It means that AI tools can assist self-directed learning if used judiciously with supervision and clear moral guidelines.

Keywords: AI Translation, Self-Regulated Learning, Indonesian Students



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1. Introduction

Artificial Intelligence (AI) is transforming higher education, particularly in language learning. AI translation tools, including Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT, are some technologies that are familiar to English Foreign Language (EFL) students. Since those tools have become more accessible, they provide students with instant translation, definition in context, and augmentations to their vocabulary. Their use as dynamic resources in learning introduces a new dimension of freedom and flexibility, consistent with Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) principles.

Research on Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) among Indonesian university students shows that most of students are motivated. However, the students may not do so in a consistent, systematic, and methodological manner. The absence of strategies indicates that technological solutions, such as artificial intelligence (AI) tools, are needed to make self-regulated learning (SRL) more effective. The use of AI-based translation and language tools has had a significant impact on language teaching and learning. In fact, students' language achievement has improved, while they have become more motivated, and their self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies have developed. Several studies show that language teaching with the help of AI technology, such

as the use of translation tools, chatbots, and adaptive feedback systems, produces much higher language learning outcomes compared to traditional methods. Students who use tools show greater progress in grammar, vocabulary, reading comprehension, writing, and especially speaking skills, and at the same time, they become more engaged and motivated to learn languages (AbuSahyon et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2025; Chang et al., 2023; Mohebbi, 2025; Rahimi et al., 2025; Wei, 2023; Ying Soon et al., 2024). These tools help create a more engaging and personalised learning environment, thereby enhancing students' intrinsic motivation and encouraging them to take initiative in their language studies (AbuSahyon et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2025; Chang et al., 2023; Rahimi et al., 2025; Wei, 2023; Ying Soon et al., 2024). This study aims to investigate the extent to which EFL university students employ artificial intelligence (AI) tools and the impact of these tools on students' learning.

Self-Regulated Learning (SRL) is a student-centred strategy that intentionally sets students' purposes, selects suitable strategies for them to use, and monitors their performance and learning processes (Zimmerman, 2002a). In this strategy, the students take an active role in the learning process by setting their goals, selecting the strategies to use, and monitoring their progress. Artificial intelligence (AI)-based translation tools can help facilitate self-regulated learning (SRL) in translating such texts, as these tools enable learners to decipher more complex academic texts, assess the extent to which they understand these texts, and receive mediated revisions to their linguistic production.

Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a theoretical model that emphasises learning control, self-monitoring, and self-reflection. In his work, Zimmerman (2002) states that SRL can be recognised in three interrelated stages: planning, monitoring, and reflection, evaluation, and adjustment. The importance of applying SRL in English as a foreign language (EFL) learning situations stems from the fact that language learning is a process that requires practice, which in turn requires awareness and adjustment (Pintrich, 2004a). By defining self-regulated learning as a key factor, Boekaerts (2011) demonstrates its importance for competence, motivation, and academic success. The study provides data indicating that mastery of self-regulated learning skills helps students overcome cognitive difficulties, sustains motivation, and is positively correlated with academic achievement.

The integration of SRL and AI translation tools also presents both opportunities and risks. AI translation tools can enhance SRL by improving planning, monitoring, and reflection. Thus, students can plan by dividing the work through reading abstract translations, monitor by understanding the feedback generated by AI, and evaluate by identifying the differences between their efforts and machine translations (Briggs, 2018a; Zimmerman, 2002a). In addition, artificial intelligence (AI) tools provide students with greater autonomy in the learning process, allowing them to set their own goals, monitor their progress, and practice independently. Learners become more curious and enthusiastic, thereby often seeking resources and opportunities to practice outside the classroom. Furthermore, this type of intrinsic motivation has been linked to more consistent and effective language learning behaviour (AbuSahyon et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2025; Jingyi, 2025; Rahimi et al., 2025; Wei, 2023).

Artificial intelligence (AI) translation tools can be a very useful support for student self-learning by providing instant, personalised, and adaptive feedback. When students interact with AI-powered exercises, monitor their learning through real-time analysis, and receive recommendations, they naturally develop important skills in self-monitoring and self-correction, which are hallmarks of SRL (AbuSahyon et al., 2023; Ahmed et al., 2025; Chang et al., 2023; Kruk & Kałużna, 2025; Lan & Zhou, 2025; Wei, 2023; Wu & Yu, 2024). With these resources, learners are not only supported but also motivated to evaluate their progress, adapt strategies as needed, and become leaders in their own learning.

In the context of higher education in Indonesia, where language and cultural barriers can limit English language proficiency, AI translation software is a good first step toward independence and confidence. However, to maximise the benefits of this tool, students need to be taught to use it properly, so that the exchange of technological convenience can lead to a more active and deeper understanding.

Although AI tools can significantly improve students' motivation, empirical studies consistently show that these effects peak when supported by human assistance. The role of teachers is very important in building trust, providing emotional support, and guiding the use of AI tools. Learners are more likely to follow AI recommendations and maintain higher levels of motivation when supported by teachers and a learning environment that fosters relationships and trust (Lan & Zhou, 2025; Li et al., 2025; Nguyen & Pham, 2024; Urbaite, 2025). One of the most notable improvements in artificial intelligence translation software is the fluency, contextual accuracy, and user-friendliness of neural machine translation (NMT) tools such as Google Translate and DeepL. In this case, the software functions as a direct linguistic resource, providing learners of English as a foreign language (EFL) with instant feedback and access to authentic texts and complex academic writing. Several points raised by various studies regarding the benefits of this software are: (1) Planning which

means the use of AI translation by learners to preview challenging readings and set personal and achievable learning goals; (2) Monitoring which means real-time comprehension checks through comparison with AI output; and (3) Reflection means reflective of AI-generated translations by students to identify differences in machine and human language use (Briggs, 2018b).

However, the argument is that these tools can lead to excessive dependence. Stapleton & Leung (2019) raised this concern, noting that excessive dependence can weaken mastery of essential language skills in reading, listening, and speaking. Teaching methods respond to this risk by recommending that students be taught to use AI tools alongside awareness and support for their learning, so that these tools serve as aids rather than substitutes for the actual learning process. Although the students have high expectations, excessive reliance on AI translation tools raises serious concerns. These tools may increase efficiency, independence, and motivation. However, excessive use can hinder the mastery of natural language and development of critical thinking, as students may avoid important skills related to contextual inference and metacognitive self-testing (Briggs, 2018a; Stapleton & Leung, 2019). The issue prompted the study of whether Indonesian students integrate AI translation into their SRL practices—as a complement rather than a substitute for authentic language learning routines. Drawing on the gaps found in the literature, the study addresses several research questions as follows.

1. To what extent are AI Translation tools employed by Indonesian EFL students in learning English?
2. What are students' purposes of using AI Translation tools and why?
3. How do Indonesian EFL students perceive AI Translation tools integration in their learning practices?

2. Method

To investigate how students use AI translation tools in their self-directed learning (SRL) activities, this study conducted a mixed-method study (qualitative and quantitative research methods). The research participants were university students in Indonesia studying English as a Foreign Language (EFL) at a state educational institution in North Sumatra. Thirty students were selected through purposive sampling to ensure variation in academic backgrounds and English proficiency. The number of interviews was deemed sufficient to achieve data saturation, as no new themes emerged during the analysis.

2.1 Instruments and Procedures

2.1.1 Questionnaire

This survey aims to collect basic data on the use of artificial intelligence (AI)-based translation tools by students and on their applications of self-directed learning (SRL) strategies. The survey consists of two parts, namely (1) the use of AI-based Translation Tools. This section includes questions about the types of AI-based translation tools that are frequently used (e.g. Google Translate, most common ways of using them (e.g. to translate text, check vocabulary, or assist with writing tasks); and (2) Self-Regulated Learning Strategies – Based on Zimmerman's SRL model (2008), this part includes items for planning, monitoring, and self-assessment in learning. Students were asked to recall how they used AI tools in these three stages.

The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale from 'Strongly Disagree' (1) to 'Strongly Agree' (5). These tools provide an overview of how students use AI translation software as a tool for their independent learning and helps to determine areas to explore further in interviews.

2.1.2 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews help to gain a deeper understanding of the ideas, feelings, and problems faced by students when using AI translation tool. The main questions in the interviews were: (1) How do students organize their learning activities with the help of AI translation tools? (2) How do they check their understanding and measure their performance when using these tools? (3) What are their opinions about the advantages and disadvantages of AI translation in their learning process?

The interviews helped clarify the participants' answers to the questionnaire and also provided richer and more detailed insights into their learning habits.

Each interview lasted approximately 30-40 minutes. The interviews were recorded with the participants' consent and then transcribed for analysis.

2.2 Procedures

2.2.1 Data Collection Process

The data collection process was conducted in three steps, namely, (1) questionnaire distributions, (2) selection of interview participants, and (3) conducting semi-structured interviews.

2.2.1.1 Questionnaire Distribution

At the beginning of the study, a questionnaire was administered online via Google Forms. The main objective was to gather preliminary information about their use of AI translation tools and their SRL habits. The responses obtained were analysed to identify emerging trends and areas that needed further research.

2.2.1.2 Selection of Interview Participants

Based on the questionnaire results, 15 participants were deliberately selected for interviews. The selection criteria were based on differences selected in the frequency of artificial intelligence (AI) tool usage and variations in self-regulated learning (SRL) strategies reported, to ensure that different perceptions were represented.

2.2.1.3 Conducting Semi-Structured Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were then conducted, either in person or online (depending on the availability of participants). These interviews followed up on the questionnaire findings, exploring in detail how students integrated AI translation tools into their learning routines, the challenges they faced, and the impact of these tools on their autonomy and motivation.

Ethical protocols were followed throughout the process. Participants provided informed consent, were assured confidentiality, and were reminded that participation was voluntary.

2.3 Data Analysis Procedures

The data from the questionnaire were described and analyzed to provide an overview of students' use of AI translation tools in their learning process. Responses were recorded and analysed using frequency, percentage, and average score. This analysis aimed to identify patterns such as the most frequently used devices, the main purposes for using these devices, and the extent to which students utilize these devices in the planning, monitoring, and evaluations stages of their independent learning. This analysis is not intended to support statistical inferences, but rather to provide background information for themes that will be revealed and require more in-depth discussion in the interviews.

The interview data were analyzed using a thematic analysis approach in accordance with the method proposed by Braun & Clarke (2006). The researcher first read and reread the interview transcripts to become thoroughly familiar with the data and to gain an initial overall impression. Next, the researcher generated initial codes by identifying important statements and phrases related to the use of AI translation tools and independent learning activities, then underlined them. After that, these codes were sorted into main themes that reflected recurring patterns in participants' statements about, among other things, how AI tools were used as comprehension aids, the use of AI in writing activities, limitations and problems with relying on AI, and the development of learning autonomy. Finally, these themes were discussed in relation to the theoretical framework of self-directed learning (Zimmerman, 2008), focusing on how AI translation tools facilitate or change the processes of planning, monitoring, and evaluation for students.

Triangulation was conducted to cross-verify data from questionnaires with interview data, thereby providing results with a certain level of reliability. In participants verification, interview transcripts were returned to participants to check with other researchers who participated in discussions and clarified emerging themes. This enhances the credibility and reliability of the research results, as the study can present a complete picture of the use of AI translation tools in independent learning among students.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

This study aims to investigate the use of AI translation tools (Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT) by students as part of their self-regulated learning strategies. The findings from quantitative questionnaire data and qualitative interviews with students describe in detail the use of AI translation software by students as a self-regulated learning (SRL) strategy. The combination of data sources in this study provides insights into the influence of AI translation tools, such as Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT, on the planning, monitoring, and reflection stages of students' independent learning tasks.

3.1.1 Trends and Patterns of AI Translation Tool Usage

The findings showed that students consider themselves to have used AI translations tools quite frequently, with average scores for statements such as

"I use DeepL or other translators to compare translations" (average = 3.8) and *"I use Google Translate to understand difficult English texts"* (average = 3.6), being at a moderate to high level.

In fact, as revealed in interviews with students, the students' statements reflect these results. Most student stated that they would use AI tools as their first method for understanding texts, especially in the case of scientific articles:

"I always use Google Translate when reading scientific journals, especially to make sure I understand the main ideas correctly," (Students interview).

"ChatGPT helps me break down complex academic writing. It's like having a study buddy who explains things clearly," (Student interview).

Artificial intelligence (AI)-based translation tools serve as mental scaffolding to help students understand the original text in English. The significant use of these tools indicates the planning phase in Zimmerman's (2002b) SRL model, in which students design learning strategies and select supporting resources before beginning their learning activities.

3.1.2 Use of AI Across Self-Regulated Learning Phases

The use of artificial intelligence (AI) as a translation tool is in line with the three fundamental phases of self-regulated learning (SRL) – planning, monitoring, and reflection.

As part of the planning stage, students use artificial intelligence (AI) systems to preview texts, assess their level of difficulty, and plan their studies. Interview notes show that students decided to use AI as a tool to save time and extract key points before reading the text, as seen in the following results.

"Before reading the entire article, I translated the abstract first to understand the content of the article," (Student interview).

"I use DeepL to see if an article is good enough for my topic before spending too much time on it," (Student interview).

In addition, the findings show that AI tools allow users to set goals, manage resources, and organize time, which is in line with (Pintrich, 2004b) definition of self-regulated learning.

During the monitoring phase, students used AI tools for self-assessment and writing checks. The student utilized AI feedback for error correction and comprehension checks when referring to the following statements.

"I compared my English sentences with ChatGPT's suggestions to see if they sounded natural." (Student interview).

"I check translations from Google and DeepL to ensure I get the correct meaning," (Student interview).

This implementation method shows that students use AI for self-evaluation and self-monitoring, enabling them to assess their understanding in real time. The reflection points conveyed to others show a major

difference in the depth of reflection. Some students who reflected on AI feedback considered it to be very profound.

“After I wrote, I looked at the AI corrections and tried to understand why they were wrong,” (Student interview).

Some students only showed superficial consideration in their comments, such as,

“Sometimes I just copy the AI suggestions so that my writing is more acceptable,” (Student interview).

The difference in the depth of reflection between different students impacts the argument put forward by (Stapleton & Leung, 2019) that although AI can encourage independence, excessive dependence can interfere with the user’s ability to engage in higher-level linguistic processing and critical thinking. This finding is similar to their responses in the questionnaire in the following.

3. I use DeepL or other translators to compare translations.
25 responses

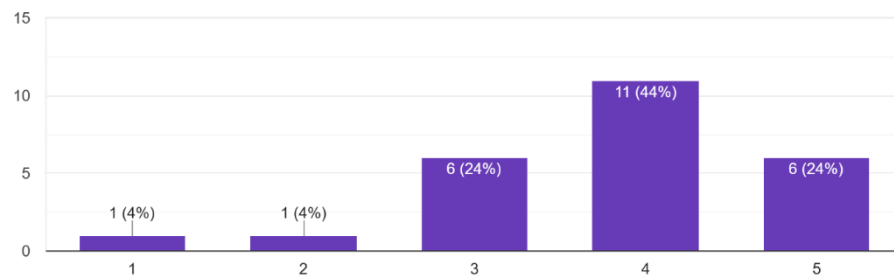


Figure 1. The use of AI tools to compare translations

3.1.3 Strengths and Motivational Impact

Both qualitative and quantitative data show that AI translation tools have a positive impact on student’s motivation and cognitive abilities. For all students, AI is a tool that makes their work more efficient, reduces anxiety, and increases confidence in writing English assignments. One student shared their experience with the following statements.

“AI gives me more confidence to write in English because I can check everything without any problems,” (Students interview).

“Using translation tools saves times and makes English less intimidating’ (Student interview).

The Findings of this study are in line with the research of Briggs (2018) which has proven that AI translation programs are motivational scaffolding that support student autonomy and learning resilience. In the context of learning English as a foreign language in Indonesia, AI translation is a tool that allows learners to access authentic English resources, thereby increasing their confidence and motivation (Boekaerts, 2011; Zimmerman, 2002b).

The questionnaire reveals that 36 per cent of students employ AI tools to better understand the materials they read.

10. I use AI translation to check if I understand the material correctly.
25 responses

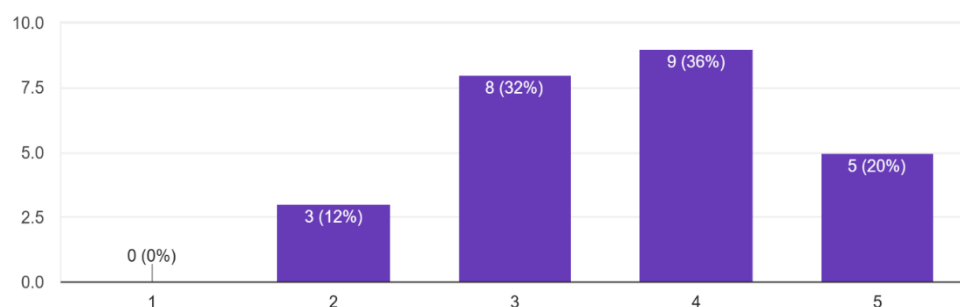


Figure 2. The use of translation tools for better comprehension

3.1.4 Challenges, Over-Reliance, and Ethical Awareness

All of the data show that artificial intelligence (AI)-based translation tools provide both motivational and cognitive benefits. In general, students reported that AI-assisted tasks allowed them to allocate their time more efficiently, reduced their anxiety levels, and increased their confidence in completing English language tasks.

However, the findings of this study also highlight limitations such as overdependence, misinformation, and ethical uncertainty. Most students acknowledged that although AI facilitates the learning process, they tend to become dependent on it and are uncertain about what constitutes acceptable academic use.

“Sometimes I’m too lazy to think because AI gives me the answer right away,” (Student interview).

“AI translations aren’t always perfect, so I’ve learned to verify them myself,” (Student interview).

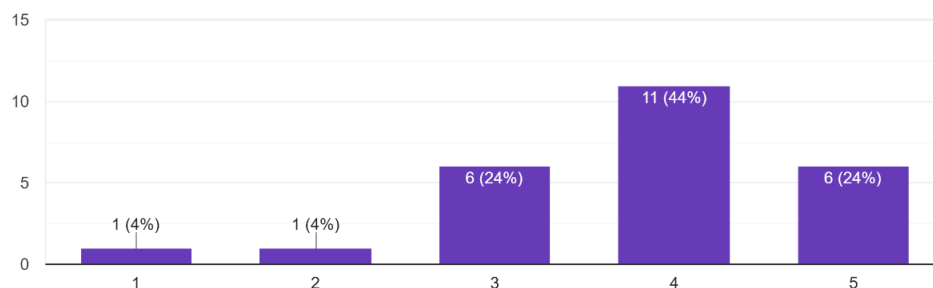
“I’m not sure if it’s okay to use ChatGPT for summarizing or not,” (Student interview).

The opinions expressed in these statements show that students are aware of the intellectual and ethical limitations of AI use, but a significant number of them lack guidelines for responsible AI use. Stapleton & Leung (2019) also offer a similar warning that if one becomes too dependent on AI, it can lead to a lack of engagement in language processing, so higher-order thinking skills may not develop. However, some students are aware of metacognitive control, as they state that they check the accuracy of translations and compare the results of various AI tools, thus becoming more responsible users.

The students responded similarly in the questionnaire stating that AI tools enhanced their confidence in learning English.

19. AI tools make me more confident when learning English.

25 responses

**Figure 3.** The proportion of students confidence in using AI

3.1.5 Pedagogical Implications and Responsible AI Integration

Interviews with students also revealed a shared demand for teaching methods that teach the socially responsible use of AI.

“Lecturers teaching the right way to use AI—for example, what is allowed and what is not—would be very helpful,” (Student interview).

“I hope there will be lectures that teach the correct use of AI for writing,” (Student interview).

The students’ comments highlight the role of education in helping students use AI not only effectively but also morally correctly. As emphasized by Godwin-Jones (2023), English teachers should improve their AI literacy through teacher-led activities, such as translation comparisons, AI feedback reflection, and error analysis journals, to engage students in reflective and ethical use. These interventions will develop students’ metacognitive, ethical, and digital literacy skills, ensuring that AI remains a tool that supports them, not a

replacement. Similarly, as revealed by the questionnaire, students are not overly concerned about using AI tools as long as they are taught the ethical principles of AI.

25. I worry about whether using AI for assignments is ethical.

25 responses

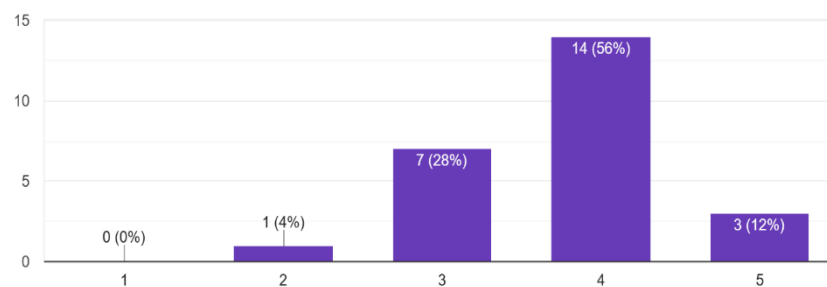


Figure 4. The proportion of students who are worried about AI tools

3.1.6 Synthesis, Interpretation, and Research Novelty

Face-to-face interviews with student revealed that pedagogical guidance on the responsible use of AI was a common request among them.

“Lectures who teach us how to use AI properly that is, what to do and what not to do, would be every helpful,” (Student interview).

“I hope there will be lectures on how to use a properly for writing,” (Student interview).

When student interview data is combined with quantitative results, a holistic picture emerges of how AI-based translation tools have become a means for students to engage in self-regulated learning (SRL). Findings show that students who use AI technology reflectively are able to plan learning tasks, goes beyond previous studies that tended to focus on either cognitive or linguistic aspects of AI translation tools (e.g., accuracy or ease of use) without considering both.

In contrast, this study focuses primarily on the metacognitive and self-regulatory aspects of AI use—explaining how students integrate AI feedback into their learning habits to become more independent. Findings show that AI translation software not only facilitates linguistic decoding but also students' strategic behavior through goal setting, self-monitoring, and reflective assessment. This means that AI tools are now fully integrated into students' self-regulation cycles and therefore impact not only what they learn, but also how they do so.

Furthermore, interview data from students reveal the emergence of ethical and reflective aspects of use, which describe students' digital literacy as a period of transition. Although students' metacognitive negotiations with AI translation tools are rarely recognized in research on the Indonesian EFL context, this study reveals that students actively negotiate between independence and dependence and choose between convenience and criticality. This bipolarity—between empowerment and over-dependence – is one of the most significant contributions of this study.

Therefore, the uniqueness of this study lies in the conceptualization of AI translation technology as part of the SRL theoretical model and its empirical validation through student interview data that reflects their

real experiences. While most previous studies view AI translation tools only as linguistic aids, this study places them as metacognitive mediators – tools that can facilitate and limit student learning autonomy.

Furthermore, this research provides new empirical contributions that support the responsible use of AI in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL). It shows that pedagogical interventions should not only focus on technical skills, but also on AI literacy, ethical awareness, and reflective practices. By linking AI use to SRL theory, this study has gone further in providing a single explanation of how digital tools influence students' motivational, cognitive, and ethical aspects in the context of Indonesian higher education.

Based on the explanation above, it is known that the results of this study show that AI translation technology should not be considered merely as a language aid. Instead, this technology should be seen as a key driver of students' independent learning process. The uniqueness of this study lies in its demonstration of how AI is involved in the cycle of independent learning, thereby connecting technology, cognition, and metacognition within a single analytical framework.

3.2 Discussion

3.2.1 *The Extent to which AI Translation Tools were Employed by Indonesian EFL Students in Learning English*

Results demonstrate that students do not use AI translation tools solely to decode language but rather to embed AI-generated feedback into their continuous learning routines, thereby influencing how they plan for, monitor, and evaluate their progress. Such embedding represents evidence that AI tools have become part of self-regulation cycles, influencing not only the outcomes of learning but the very processes that underpin learner autonomy. Students' interactions with AI reveal deliberate goal setting, moment-to-moment self-monitoring, and reflective assessment behaviours that map well onto the phases of self-regulated learning. Therefore, AI translation tools serve as a metacognitive scaffold that enables students to become more strategic, independent, and reflective learners.

Further, qualitative data from the student interviews reveal an added layer of complexity that goes beyond cognitive strategy use. Students reported a growing awareness of the ethical and reflective dimensions of AI use, indicating that digital literacy in today's learning environments is evolving. While technology affords convenience and efficiency, students are aware of the need for a balance between relying on AI and developing their linguistic competence. In other words, this negotiation of independence and dependence, or convenience and criticality, demonstrates a bipolarity that has not been duly discussed in Indonesian EFL research. The tension between the empowerment gained through confidence and autonomy by means of AI and the risk of over-dependency is one of the major findings in this research. Such a nuanced understanding contributes substantially to the existing literature and underscores that AI-supported learning is not a linear progression toward autonomy; rather, it is a dynamic process shaped by students' metacognitive judgments and ethical considerations.

3.2.2 *Students' Purposes of Using AI Translation Tools*

The second research question of the study centres on the purposes of using AI tools in learning English. It is clear that students employ various AI tools in learning English as a foreign language, and, more interestingly, the study conceptualises AI translation tools as an integral mediator within the SRL theoretical model. Rather than positioning AI simply as an external linguistic resource, the research empirically shows that AI is a metacognitive tool that both facilitates and constrains autonomous learning. The integration of students lived experiences, as captured in interview data, provides empirical validation for this theoretical positioning. Students reported that AI helped them resolve linguistic uncertainties, assess the accuracy of their own output, and reflect on discrepancies between AI-generated content and their personal understanding. At the same time, the students mentioned instances where AI use reduced their motivation to engage in deeper language processing, pointing to the dual nature of technology as both an enhancer and possible inhibitor of learning autonomy.

These findings provide empirical evidence to inform the responsible use of AI in EFL teaching. The results indicate that pedagogical interventions should extend beyond technical proficiency to encompass AI literacy, ethical awareness, and reflective learning practices. This extends current views in the EFL pedagogy by showing that AI's role is not limited to surface-level language outcomes but shapes students' motivational orientations, cognitive strategies, and ethical decision-making processes. By situating AI use within the core constructs of SRL, this research offers a more comprehensive account of how digital tools interact with learners in Indonesian higher education. Overall, the results highlight that AI translation tools should not be regarded merely as supplemental language tools but rather as central drivers of students' independent learning processes. The key contribution of the research is to document how AI is interwoven into the self-regulated learning

cycle, thereby creating a conceptual bridge among technology, cognition, and metacognition within a single analytic framework. From a pedagogical perspective, this perspective has far-reaching implications because it underscores the necessity of embedding the reflective, ethical, and strategic dimensions when considering the use of AI in forthcoming EFL instructional practices.

3.2.3 Indonesian EFL Students' Perceptions on AI Translation Tools

It is notable that students perceive AI as crucial to learning English, indicating that, in the era of advanced technology, both students and teachers need to interact with it judiciously. As there are no explicit rules governing the use of AI in Indonesian universities, it is important for lecturers to develop their students' AI literacy so that they can access and use AI tools responsibly. Although it is shocking that students do not worry much about using AI tools in their English learning, we, the lecturers, should be the first to worry. That is, European students, particularly in Finland and Australia, are banned from using social media and tablets in school learning, thereby encouraging students to return to reading paper books. For these critical emerging issues, we Indonesian lecturers and teachers need to think wisely about how to help our students use AI independently and wisely.

4. Conclusion

The findings of this study show that students used artificial intelligence (AI) based translation tools such as Google Translate and Deepl. And ChatGPT as an important part of their independent learning strategies. Additionally, the findings show that agreement that these AI tools were useful for students in the three main phases of independent learning, which are planning, monitoring, and reflection. Students shared that they use AI to understand difficult English texts, check grammar, improve vocabulary, and correct their writing, enabling them to plan and organize their learning process more independently and with a higher level of confidence.

AI translation tools function not only as language tools but also as metacognitive tools that aid in goal setting, self-evaluations, and reflective thinking. However, findings also show differences in levels of reflection: Some students indicated that they engaged critically and used the tools wisely, while others indicated that they relied on the tools and accepted the result without critical thinking. These patterns show that when AI is used as a tool for efficiency and to increase motivation, it still has the potential to limit higher-level language processing and critical thinking if users do not regulate themselves properly.

In addition, students expressed moral doubts and questions about the boundaries between right and wrong in the use of AI in the school environment, underscoring the need for institutionally mediated AI literacy policies and education. Such pedagogical interventions are necessary, which can be realized through ethical sensitization, reflective practice, and critical thinking.

Furthermore, the study that AI translation tools have great potential to support students' independent and regular learning is used reflectively and responsibly. These tools are not only tools for understanding, but also cognitive, motivational, and moral intermediaries in the learning process. The core of this study is to reinterpret the use of AI translation software as part of a self-regulated learning (SRL) framework and to measure this relationship empirically through qualitative interview data—an approach that deepens the current understanding of AI use in language learning.

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