

I, Translator: Rethinking Pedagogy in Times of Gen-AI

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Abstract

This exploratory study investigates the potential of GenAI-based resources in addressing translation challenges in both translation and EFL classrooms (Duarte et al, 2023; Talgatov, Kassymova & Nurtanto, 2024) with a focus on culture-specific items related to food. Culinary practices and the preservation of food traditions are profoundly intertwined with the essence of human culture (Manganas & Duruz, 2024). As such, this study seeks to investigate the translatability and inherent challenges of rendering such cultural references, aiming to assess how nuanced meanings can be effectively conveyed through translation.

The study compares the application of the same pedagogical strategies across two distinct student groups: one comprising undergraduates specialising in Translation and the other consisting of students enrolled in a Social and Cultural Communication Studies undergraduate program. In both settings, students are tasked with translating texts related to food and cultural-specific items. They are then requested to integrate AI into the translation and recreation process and carry out a comparative analysis of the outcomes across the two groups. The study highlights not only the limitations of the AI in both the translation and EFL classrooms, but also demonstrates that a deeper student understanding of these limitations along with the intricacies of the translation process, enhances their ability to critically reflect on and envision how GenAI and human translation can effectively coexist in the future.

The study shows how Translation students more accurately handled culturally specific content, while Communication students showed creative strengths through transcreation, drawing on their own disciplinary knowledge. The research also highlights students' over-reliance on generative AI tools like ChatGPT, which often lead to rigid and literal semantic renderings of the text, as well as reduced confidence in personal linguistic choices.

Overall, the findings underscore the need for critical engagement with AI in translation education (Pavlik, 2023) as well as a (re)turn of/to translation practice (Carreres, Á & Noriega-Sánchez, M., 2021) into the EFL classroom not only to enhance translation literacy, but also to improve students' overall linguistic proficiency.

Keywords: HEI, translator training, collaborative activities, Gen-AI and language teaching, EFL

1. Introduction

In light of the recent developments and the revolutionary impact of artificial based tools in the field of Higher Education, educators must now consider the skills required of future translation professionals, as well as the pedagogical methodologies that will help enhance and adapt students' learning outcomes in response to this new reality.

1.2 AI and Higher Education Institutions

As Machine Translation (MT) and Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) become more present in students' personal and classroom tasks, they are also reshaping the dynamics of education in the Higher Education landscape, presenting not only promising opportunities but also challenges. Educators must now stop and rethink about the pedagogical methodologies that will help enhance and adapt students' profiles to this new reality. Since their emergence in late 2022, generative artificial intelligence tools, also known as AI-chatbots, have increasingly entered educational contexts either explicitly, through deliberate pedagogical usage by teachers in their class methodologies, or implicitly, as students covertly use them to assist with their research and assignments. On the one hand, when properly used GenAI can offer personalised learning pathways, automate administrative tasks, and support teachers in delivering content more effectively (Talgatov et al., 2024). These technologies also facilitate real-time feedback, i.e., personalised tutoring for students engaged in individual tasks and contribute to greater efficiency in teaching and learning processes (Duarte et al., 2023) helping to



clarify complex concepts, and encouraging self-paced learning (Kasneci et al., 2023). Some researchers also point to increased student engagement as a result of AI integration (Micheni et al., 2024). On the other hand, the use of GenAI in education also raises important concerns. Recent studies have pointed out the inherent limitations and imperfections of AI systems which may include algorithmic bias, limited contextual understanding, and data security risks, (Bogdashin et al., 2022). A particularly pressing issue is the potential for students to become excessively dependent on AI tools, which may translate into potentially impairing the development of their critical thinking and independent learning abilities (Talgatov et al., 2024). Ultimately, these developments highlight the need of rethinking pedagogical frameworks which include different approaches to lesson planning, instructional delivery, and assessment design.

1.3 AI and Translation

Within the realm of Translation Studies, scholars have increasingly highlighted the use and pedagogical benefits of machine translation (MT) in translator education (Bowker 2002; O'Brien 2012; Pym 2014). While MT tools like DeepL and Google Translate have significantly broadened access to translation by enabling fast and convenient renderings of source texts, their outcomes (still) remain largely limited to direct, often literal translations. On the other hand, Large Language Models (LLMs), which underpin GenAI, can be instructed to adapt and/or modify their translations according to specific instructions. As such, GenAI offers human-like outputs that are increasingly fluent and can render contextually appropriate translation solutions for context-sensitive texts. This marks a notable shift in the automation of translation processes, bridging the gap between machine-generated and human-quality translation. While some stakeholders highlight the benefits in terms of efficiency and ease of use, others express concern about the potentially disruptive effects of GenAI. The media in particular has intensified these debates, drawing attention to issues such as the quality of AI-generated translations, questions around authorship, and broader ethical implications. One of the most persistent concerns is the fear that the role of human translators may become obsolete, as automation begins to replace or devalue their expertise in the translation process. These developments must be addressed within both academic curricula and professional practices. From improving translation speed and consistency to raising ethical concerns and questions about translator agency, the impact of AI highlights the need to update and adapt translation curricula and competencies.

Firstly, it is important to acknowledge that these technologies are here to stay. Rather than resisting them, educators should focus on how to integrate them effectively into the learning process, i.e., its presence should prompt critical engagement and pedagogical innovation. Secondly, GenAI should be viewed as a complementary tool in the learning process. It has the potential to enhance, rather than replace, human translation literacy. For instance, the 2024 European Language Industry Survey (ELIS) highlighted that independent translators who saw GenAI as a positive development used it in practical and empowering ways: for tasks like terminology extraction, as a source for editing work, and even as a means to reaffirm the value of human translation when clients encountered the limitations of AI tools. This aligns with a broader vision of GenAI as a collaborative technology, one that supports and extends human agency rather than undermining it. Within this scope, the concept of human-centered artificial intelligence (HCAI) becomes particularly relevant. Shneiderman (2020), states that HCAI offers an alternative to dystopian narratives in which AI dominates or replaces humans. Instead, it emphasises the role of AI in amplifying human abilities, preserving control, and promoting empowerment, laying the foundation for what might be called "*augmented translation*". (our emphasis). O'Brien (2023) further supports this approach, advocating for HCAI as a framework that not only enhances translators' capacities but also reinforces their agency and autonomy. It is our perspective, that for this potential to be realised, efforts must be twofold. Firstly, it is important to develop students' translation literacy skills. This includes, for instance, guiding students to understand the intrinsic nature of the translation process, an intellectual and interpretive activity that goes far beyond the mechanical substitution of words. While a few decades ago students may have over-relied on literal renderings from dictionaries, today they risk falling into a similar pattern of overdependence on Neural Machine Translation (NMT) systems and AI-based tools or bots (Moorkens 2018; Massey & Ehrensberger-Dow 2020). Within this context, a persistent and pressing challenge is to equip students with robust translation literacy, a concept articulated by Pym (2014). Translation literacy involves not only technical competence but also critical awareness of how meaning is negotiated, transformed, and interpreted across languages and cultures. As digital tools become increasingly integrated into professional workflows, fostering this literacy becomes essential for developing reflective, responsible, and adaptable translators. Secondly, alongside the traditional core skills required for professional



translation, students must now develop a new set of skills to master the GenAI-enhanced working environment. These include the ability to critically assess the capabilities and limitations of GenAI tools, make informed decisions about which systems or bots to use, evaluate the quality of AI-generated content, and effectively engage in prompt engineering to produce useful outputs. To meet these emerging demands, educators need to design new pedagogical strategies that not only introduce GenAI into the classroom, but use it as a means to foster these evolving skills. This calls for a shift in the teacher-student dynamic: at this stage, both educators and learners are in the same boat, exploring the implications of GenAI together. As such, teachers must move toward a more collaborative model, working in partnership with students to explore, experiment, and reflect. A promising direction involves the adoption of qualitative, learner-centered approaches that promote student agency, responsibility, and autonomy. These might include critical reflection exercises, guided self-assessment, exploratory tasks with different AI tools, and classroom activities focused on self-regulation and ethical uses of GenAI.

1.4 The Translation of Culture-Specific Items: Food

Food is deeply intertwined with human existence and holds a central place in all cultures. As such, translating discourse about food involves much more than simply identifying ingredients or naming dishes. Instead, it may be considered a meaningful process of navigating cultural values and expressions of identity. Culture-specific items such as food referents are particularly challenging to translate because they carry embedded cultural values, rituals, and practices. As González-Vera (2015, p. 253) notes, effective translation in this domain requires not only advanced linguistic proficiency but also deep intercultural awareness. As such, the process requires more than linguistic accuracy; it demands an understanding of cultural context, symbolic meaning, and emotional resonance. Human translators are uniquely equipped to navigate these intricacies. They can interpret the broader context of a phrase and choose culturally appropriate equivalents. Without such awareness, translations risk being misunderstood or rejected by the target audience. Moreover, when translating culinary texts, translators must consider both the intention of the source text and the needs of the target audience. The register, tone, and level of specificity may vary significantly depending on whether the intended audience consists of culinary professionals, connoisseurs, or lay readers. By contrast, AI translation systems still struggle with cultural nuance and emotional depth. It is our perspective that while AI has made considerable advances in speed and general accuracy, it remains limited in its ability to interpret culturally loaded language. Given these considerations, food discourse and provides an ideal site for examining the limitations of AI translation. This study proposes to use food as a culturally specific domain to highlight the contrast between translations produced by human translators and those generated by AI. In doing so, it will also underscore the importance of developing students' translation literacy skills, while encouraging them to critically engage with texts and recognise the cultural complexities that lie beyond surface-level meaning.

1.5 Research Questions

The aim of this exploratory study is to examine the role of ChatGPT as a complementary learning tool in the Translation classroom. It should be note that our perspective is not that of presenting ChatGPT as a replacement for the critical thinking and hands-on practice essential to translation training. Instead, by integrating ChatGPT transparently, the study explores how it can support the development of translation literacy, creativity, and soft skills, while also raising awareness of its limitations. As an AI bot, ChatGPT lacks the inferential and interpretive abilities of human translators and may produce errors or alter meaning, highlighting the ongoing need for human oversight and intervention. Our research was guided by the following research questions: 1. *To what extent can ChatGPT be effectively used as a complementary tool in the Translation classroom?* 2. *Can translation literacy skills be explicitly taught, and how does this impact students' translation performance?* 3. *Is there a difference in translation outcomes between students who have formal training in translation and those who rely solely on linguistic competence?*

2. The Translation and EFL Group

The control group consists of first-year students enrolled in the Applied Foreign Language undergraduate program at Universidade Católica Portuguesa, with a specialisation in Translation. The objectives of the Translation of General Texts (English) course focus on students' ability to read and interpret English-language source texts and produce effective Portuguese translations. Training is focused on the development and consolidation of both linguistic and cultural communicative competence through translation practice. Students also learn to apply appropriate translation methods and strategies across various text types, while critically engaging with standard machine translation and AI tools, evaluating their benefits and limitations in the translation process. The second group, Cultural Communication and Social, also consists of 1st year students enrolled in the English II subject pertaining to the second semester. The learning outcomes for English II students focus on consolidating and advancing their English language skills to an independent B2.2 level, as defined by the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR). The course aims to build on existing knowledge of vocabulary, reading, and writing, while also enhancing students' ability to express opinions and engage with current affairs through both oral presentations and argumentative writing. The syllabus also fosters the ability to express informed opinions on current issues and to shift appropriately between formal and informal registers depending on context. Common to both groups is the fact that when they are requested to carry out their assignments, be it translation or a written task, their work tends to be overly literal, lacking sensitivity to cultural context, register, and audience. They often resort to the excessive and indiscriminate use of GenAI bots without questioning the quality or purpose of outcomes and show limited awareness of the communicative intent of the texts they translate.

3. Methodology

In the first phase of the project, both the EFL and Translation classrooms received the same texts and were asked to read and interpret them, discuss stylistic features and possible impact on the reader, as well as identify the possible target audience. A total of five texts were distributed in both classes, all featuring culture-specific items related to food, characterised by rich sensory language or strong cultural references, designed to challenge their interpretive and linguistic abilities. Due to constraints on the total number of pages permitted for this publication, only one of the analysed texts is presented herein. Nevertheless, this example is sufficient to illustrate the methodology and analytical approach employed throughout the study. Next, students were asked to translate the text from English into Portuguese individually. Each class was divided into two groups: a group A, with students translating without the help of any other dictionary or online resources and a group B that was asked to carry out translation using ChatGPT.

Upon conclusion of the exercise, students commented and carried out a contrastive analysis of the results, comparing Human vs ChatGPT results. At the end of this class and once the translation tasks were completed, the teacher collected the samples for a comparative analysis conducted between each class, i.e., the translation vs communication students' translations. Students were requested to critically compare the two versions, taking down notes, then by means of guided discussion, arrive at conclusions. The teacher then rearranged the compilation of texts this time categorising them to contrast human translations from both classes and Chatgpt outcomes. This exercise allowed them to compare writing skills and what each group prioritised when trying to convey the message out to a target audience and also how they each envisaged their readers. Students were encouraged to reflect on the varied approaches employed by their peers. Translation students, who had been trained in specific strategies aimed at faithful and accurate rendering, typically approached the texts with a focus on equivalence and cross-cultural transfer. Communication Studies students, in contrast, drew on their background in adapting content for specific audiences, showing a greater sensitivity to tone, register, and communicative intent.

3.1. The Source Text

The source text, an article *The Guardian* was chosen essentially because it centered on a culture-specific item—the *pastel de nata*—that is deeply familiar to Portuguese learners and part of their collective and emotional memory (Manganas & Duruz, 2024). By 'interacting' with this text, both Translation and Communication students were asked to consider how their own cultural knowledge interacts with language, representation, and audience expectation. The exercise pushed students to reflect critically on how cultural identity shapes meaning and how translation can represent a

challenge between cultural contexts. In doing so, it transforms the task from a technical exercise into a reflective, situated act of intercultural communication.

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Source Text | Calling pastel de nata a Portuguese custard tart is a bit like calling a pasty a Cornish calzone – similar in principle, but a very different beast in reality. Instead of a short, crumbly pastry, the pastel de nata has a crisp, slightly salty, layered crust; and, rather than the firm, egg-rich fillings of the classic British or French custard tart, the filling is almost molten, and spiced with cinnamon and lemon zest, as opposed to our peppery nutmeg or sweet vanilla. |
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Fig. 1. Excerpt from "How to Make the Perfect Pastel de Nata – Recipe" (Cloake, 2023)

3.2. Comparative Analysis Human vs ChatGPT Translation

| Human Translation | AI Generated with post-editing |
|---|--|
| Chamar um pastel de nata de tarte de nata é como dizer que um tinto do Porto é o mesmo que um tinto do Minho — semelhantes por fora, mas claramente diferentes por dentro. Em vez da massa quebrada, o pastel de nata consiste numa estaladiça e levemente salgada massa folhada; e, em vez de um recheio de ovos bem firme como o das tartes de natas tradicionalmente britânicas e francesas, o recheio é cremoso e povilhado com canela e raspa de limão, não com noz-moscada ou baunilha, como acontece nas restantes tartes de creme. (Our backtranslation): Calling a pastel de nata a Portuguese custard tart is like saying that a red wine from Porto is the same as a red wine from Minho - similar on the outside, but clearly different on the inside. Instead of shortcrust pastry, the pastel de nata consists of a crispy, slightly salty puff pastry; and instead of a firm egg filling like that of traditional British and French custard tarts, the filling is creamy and flavoured with cinnamon and lemon zest, not nutmeg or vanilla, as in other custard tarts. | Chamar Pastel de Nata, tarte de creme (incorrect literal translation) é semelhante a chamar a um pastel, calzone de frango – parecidos, mas muito diferentes na realidade. Ao invés de uma pequena massa folhada, o pastel de nata tem uma crocância com camadas ligeiramente salgadas (confusing) ; e, ao invés, de um consistente recheio rico em ovos, da tarte clássica (syntax) Britânica ou Francesa, que quase se derrete, e sendo temperado (incorrect, literal translation) com canela e raspas de limão, ao contrário do nosso recheio de noz-moscada levemente apimentada (incorrect, literal translation) ou baunilha. (Our backtranslation): Calling Pastel de Nata, a cream tart is similar to calling a pastry, a chicken calzone - similar, but very different in reality. Instead of a small puff pastry, the pastel de nata has a crispness with slightly salty layers; and instead of the consistent egg-rich filling of the classic British or French, which almost melts, and is flavoured with cinnamon and lemon zest, unlike our slightly spicy nutmeg or vanilla filling. |

Fig. 2. Translation from Translation classroom

The source text argues that calling a *pastel de nata* a Portuguese custard tart oversimplifies its distinctiveness, humorously establishing an almost impossible comparison between a pasty and a Cornish calzone. The human translation skillfully adapts the original analogy to suit a Portuguese-speaking audience. Firstly, it by establishing the comparison between a “pastel de nata” and “tarte de nata” is a relevant comparison because as the two pastries may share the same ingredients, they are in fact two different pastries not only in terms of size but also in taste. The Human Translation also replaces the British “Cornish Calzone” by establishing a comparison between *vinho do Porto* and *vinho do Minho*. This preserves the original meaning while enhancing relatability and maintaining the humorous tone. This adaptation demonstrates a deliberate effort to align the message with the expectations and cultural references of the target audience. It also reveals the students’ attempt in resorting to knowledge about translation challenges of culture-specific items and the possible strategies such as this one to solve them.

In contrast, the ChatGPT version presents literal renderings of the source text CSIs. Firstly, “tarte de creme” is not a Portuguese pastry and the Portuguese reader who immediately identify this expression as a translation mistake. Secondly the comparison between a “pastel” and a “calzone de frango” would need more explication for the pastel, as this could render many different types of food. The fact that the “pastel de nata” is described as having many salty layers also renders a different interpretation of the CSI, adding a layer of foreignisation to the text. In other words, the solution feels forced and culturally incongruent within a Portuguese context. The text fails to reproduce the informal, witty tone of the source text and produces syntactical structures that lack fluency, denoting that it is a translated text, “o pastel tem uma crocância com camadas ligeiramente salgadas”.

The human translation makes the effort of enhancing readability and the relevance of the source text to its readers. For instance, it omits subjective elements like “our nutmeg”. The text also demonstrates



a high level of fluency and idiomatic precision, rendering the text in a way that feels natural to Portuguese speakers and reflects native linguistic patterns.

| Human Translation | ChatGPT outcomes |
|--|---|
| <p>Chamar a um pastel de nata uma mera e simples tarte de nata portuguesa não poderia ser mais descabido. Seria como dizer que uma empada é o mesmo que um Calzone, que é tudo farinha do mesmo saco (addition of new referentes), não faz simplesmente qualquer sentido. O pastel de nata é muito mais que uma pequena tarte portuguesa. O contraste entre a sua camada exterior, crocante e ligeiramente salgada e o seu recheio cozinhado e fervido (translation mistake) com um toque de especiarias aromáticas cítricas, tornam-no a marca da pastelaria portuguesa, imperdível por todos os que visitam o país. Não tem aquela crosta que se desfaz nem o recheio que apenas o ovo sabe de tarte clássica Britânica ou Francesa. O Pastel de nata é nada mais nada menos do que único. (Our backtranslation): Calling a pastel de nata a simple Portuguese custard tart couldn't be more inappropriate. It would be like saying that an <i>empada</i> is the same as a Calzone, that it's all flour from the same bag, it simply doesn't make any sense. Pastel de nata is much more than a small Portuguese tart. The contrast between its crunchy, slightly salty outer layer and its cooked and boiled filling with a touch of aromatic citrus spices makes it the hallmark of Portuguese pastry, a must for anyone visiting the country. It doesn't have that crumbling crust or the filling that only the egg tastes like a classic British or French pie. Pastel de nata is nothing less than unique.</p> | <p>Chamar ao pastel de nata um pastel de nata português é um pouco como chamar a um pastel de nata um calzone da Cornualha - semelhante em princípio, mas muito diferente na realidade. Em vez de uma massa curta e quebradiça, o pastel de nata tem uma crosta estaladiça, ligeiramente salgada e em camadas; e, em vez dos recheios firmes e ricos em ovos do clássico pastel de nata britânico ou francês, (incorrect, does not make sense to the Portuguese reader) o recheio é quase derretido e condimentado (incorrect, usage is not idiomatic) com canela e raspa de limão, por oposição à nossa noz-moscada apimentada ou baunilha doce. (Our backtranslation): Calling a pastel de nata a Portuguese pastel de nata is a bit like calling a pastel de nata a Cornish calzone - similar in principle, but very different in reality. Instead of a short, crumbly pastry, the pastel de nata has a crisp, slightly salty, layered crust; and instead of the firm, egg-rich fillings of the classic British or French pastel de nata, the filling is almost melted and spiced with cinnamon and lemon zest, as opposed to our spicy nutmeg or sweet vanilla.</p> |

Fig. 3. Translation from Communication classroom

The Communication student's(human) translation takes creative liberty to craft a vivid and expressive version that not only conveys the original meaning but enhances it with idiomatic richness. This student replaces the original cultural reference to a "Cornish calzone" with a more culturally familiar comparison involving an *empada* and a *calzone*, making the text more engaging and resonant for Portuguese readers. The translator introduces, "tudo farinha do mesmo saco," which enriches the cultural identity of the text, making the message more accessible to the target audience. In contrast, the ChatGPT version is more a literal rendering of the source text. It lacks idiomatic fluency and cultural sensitivity, preserving the sentence-level logic and vocabulary and providing to "calzone da Cornualha" which is unlikely to carry the same weight or familiarity in a Portuguese context. Expressions like "pastel de nata britânico ou francês" are confusing and arguably inaccurate, since *pastel de nata* is specifically Portuguese. Furthermore, the text displays clear signs of insufficient post-editing, such as syntactic awkwardness ("chamar ao pastel de nata um pastel de nata português"), also due to lack of attention or proper proofreading. The result is a translation that, while brushing on semantic accuracy feels unnatural and does not read as an original but rather a translation that is permeated with traces of the source text.

3.3. Comparative Analysis of Human Translation between the Two Groups

The comparison between the translation produced by the human translators from the two groups highlights distinct priorities, choices in register and style, and attitude towards the translation process. The translation student adopts a more restrained approach, maintaining syntactic and lexical proximity to the source text while ensuring fluency and readability in Portuguese. The Communication student also fails in term of equivalence by adding information that was not in the source text, "uma mera e simples tarte de nata". In using the expressions, "um recheio de ovos bem firme" e "o recheio cozinhado e fervido" both fail at the translation, but also understandable due to the fact that they were



working without the aid of resources. While the human translation remains focused on clear, well-balanced comparisons and avoids over-interpretation or embellishment, there are instances where the literal translation of expression fails to grasp the correct expression that collocates with food reference, “em vez de massa quebrada”, “recheio de ovos bem firme” provides error. The metaphor involving “tinto do Porto” and “tinto do Minho” is an elegant domestic equivalent of the source’s British culinary comparison, maintaining the rhetorical function while adapting it for a Portuguese-speaking audience. This version reveals careful lexical choices and reflects culture awareness to both the source and target cultures. The version by the Communication student is markedly more expressive and emotionally charged, with a tone that borders on persuasive and promotional.

3.4. Comparative ChatGPT Analysis between the Two Groups

The Translation student’s ChatGPT text is fragmented and reads like a translation. The phrase “chamar Pastel de nata, tarte de creme” is syntactically incorrect and reveals that little time was given to post-editing or proof-reading the text. Similarly, “crocrância com camadas ligeiramente salgadas” lacks idiomaticity. While there is some effort to preserve the structure of the original, post-editing efforts seem to be minimal. The translation contains inconsistencies, misplaced commas, and a lack of clear referents, which hinder the text’s readability and reveal excessive literal acceptance of the AI’s phrasing. The Communication student’s ChatGPT version shows slightly more fluency and control, suggesting that the media student paid more attention to the translation process and relied more on their interpretation and translation skills. For instance, “*crosta estaladiça, ligeiramente salgada e em camadas*” reads more naturally than its counterpart, and the overall sentence rhythm is somewhat clearer. However, the repetition of “pastel de nata” in the simile (“chamar ao pastel de nata um pastel de nata português”) is redundant and clumsy. Additionally, references to a “pastel de nata britânico ou francês” introduce factual inaccuracies, reflecting a superficial or automatic rendering rather than an interpretive act of translation. In both cases, the two students revealed very little post-editing in ChatGPT’s translation solutions and a lack of confidence in their translation abilities when working with GenAI.

4. Final Considerations

This study examines the interplay between human translation and AI-generated outputs within a pedagogical context. It highlights how interdisciplinary training, translation literacy, and the use of AI tools, in this case ChatGPT, affect translation outcomes. Students who had formal training in translation theories and strategies demonstrated more consistent renderings of the source text’s culture-specific items, in contrast to their peers from Communication studies. This latter group, however, did not produce less interesting texts. They showed proficiency in interpreting the source texts and conveying their semantic equivalence. It was their writing style that manifested other skills. While they had not had access like their peers to translation theories or practices about translation challenges and strategies, they revealed techniques from knowledge acquired within their field of studies. Within this scope, the process revealed important pedagogical implications. Many students engaged in transcreation, i.e., they adapted the source text creatively to suit the target context, demonstrating awareness of the cultural resonances and communicative purposes of the source text.

The study also brought to light certain limitations associated with the use of GenAI, specifically ChatGPT in translation tasks. These translation outcomes often reveal rigid lexical and syntactic standardisation, with students showing a tendency to reproduce machine outputs with little variation. This reflected a diminished confidence in their own translation decisions, as students frequently deferred to the perceived authority of AI rather than trusting their linguistic instincts. A particularly notable trend was students’ over-reliance on these GenAI solutions. Rather than engaging with these tools critically or collaboratively, students often accepted their suggestions as definitive, and consequently reduced the opportunities for independent analysis and linguistic experimentation. This behaviour pointed to a gap in students’ understanding of GenAI’s limitations, especially in relation to culturally loaded or idiomatic content. Analysing and discussing these examples with students allowed them to understand the differences between the texts and how the use of GenAI is actually hindering, not boosting, the quality of their work. Finally, the study also identified key shortcomings of AI in specialised translation contexts. ChatGPT translations frequently lacked cultural sensitivity and tended to operate at a superficial linguistic level, offering literal renderings that failed to capture the conceptual and emotional depth of the source text.



5. Conclusion

The findings of this study point to a broader need for AI literacy within translation education. Students must be equipped not only with translation skills but also with the critical awareness necessary to assess the capabilities and limitations of AI tools. This includes understanding how machine learning models are trained, the biases they may encode, and the importance of human review and post-editing in ensuring translation quality. Educators should promote a model of human-AI collaboration, encouraging students to view AI as a supportive resource rather than an unquestionable authority. Additionally, reevaluating the importance of translation in the EFL classroom is also a point to be considered for future studies. Translation is still an inherently human endeavor. Our findings highlight the enduring value of human involvement in the translation process, as well as the essential role of Translation in developing students' linguistic proficiency. Our findings are in line with recent approaches in the area of language and translation pedagogy, especially in what regards bringing back translation practice into the language classroom (Carreres & Noriega-Sánchez, 2021). By fostering both technological adaptability and critical literacy, educators can prepare future translators to navigate the evolving landscape of multilingual communication with confidence.

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