Generative AI and the Transformation of Literary Translation: A Qualitative Inquiry into the Perspectives of Literature Students

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ABSTRACT

The applications of ChatGPT in the field of education have attracted widespread attention from researchers; however, scholarly investigations in the area of translation—particularly literary translation—are considerably limited. The present study explores the attitudes of English literature students toward generative artificial intelligence (GenAI), especially ChatGPT, in the context of literary translation. This research was conducted with the participation of 22 undergraduate students majoring in English literature at Hakim Sabzevari University. Qualitative methods, including semi-structured interviews and narrative frameworks, were employed to collect data and analyze participants' experiences over a twelve-week instructional period. During this interval, students utilized ChatGPT to translate a variety of literary texts, such as poetry, short stories, and excerpts from novels. The findings revealed both positive and negative aspects of using artificial intelligence in the translation process. Students praised ChatGPT for its speed, accessibility, and its role in enhancing creativity, expanding vocabulary, and facilitating the learning process. Nevertheless, limitations such as the inability to grasp cultural subtleties, emotional depth, and stylistic complexities—particularly in poetic texts—became tangibly apparent. Furthermore, concerns were raised regarding overreliance on artificial intelligence tools, ethical issues such as plagiarism, and the incapacity of this technology to replace human insight. Despite these challenges, most students evaluated ChatGPT as a supplementary tool rather than a substitute for human translators. This study underscores the necessity of developing educational strategies that prepare students for critical engagement with artificial intelligence and establish a balance between efficiency and creativity. Future studies should focus on enhancing the capabilities of artificial intelligence in understanding cultural and emotional complexities, as well as examining methods for its integration into collaborative workflows with human translators.

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Introduction

Artificial intelligence (AI), particularly tools such as ChatGPT, is rapidly and remarkably transforming various industries, including the field of language translation (Ruoqi et al., 2023; Yu et al., 2025). In recent years, technological advancements in this domain have created new opportunities for learning English as a foreign language (EFL) and for improving the translation process. Given the increasing significance of these technologies, the present study investigates the perspectives of literature students regarding the capacities and limitations of generative artificial intelligence (GenAI) in literary translation.

Literary translation entails more than the mere transfer of words and concepts; it requires the recreation of the style, tone, values, and cultural markers of the source text in the target language (Alsaqer, 2023; Kocabıyık, 2022). In other words, the literary translator must be able to convey the essence and emotions of the text in such a way that the target-language reader experiences an equivalent response to that of the source-language reader. This is especially important when the translator encounters aesthetic elements, metaphors, humor, and cultural references—elements whose precise and effective transmission often necessitates human insight and literary intuition (Gao & Yin, 2024; Robinson, 2010).

In this context, although intelligent tools can assist in analyzing and transferring linguistic concepts, they still face fundamental challenges in reproducing cultural elements and maintaining stylistic integrity (Cheng et al., 2023; Kornacki & Pietrzak, 2024; Zuo et al., 2024). Previous research confirms that AI language models often struggle to represent the aesthetic and cultural layers of literary texts. Furthermore, AI-generated translations may be susceptible to bias or errors, particularly in texts with high cultural sensitivity, which underscores the necessity of human presence and oversight (Falempin & Ranadireksa, 2024; Sasmita & Marpaung, 2025).

Despite these limitations, tools such as ChatGPT can function as supplements in the translation process. These tools enable translators to produce an initial draft more rapidly, after which human editing and revision can ensure the final quality (Bowker, 2020). A review of related studies indicates that literature students tend to perceive AI primarily as a facilitator in the preliminary stages of translation and emphasize the importance of human editing and refinement following the initial machine-generated output (Bowker, 2020; Kumar, 2023). However, a significant gap exists in the research literature regarding literature students' perspectives on the application of AI in literary translation, as most previous studies have concentrated on the technological efficiency of these tools and have given less attention to their educational and cultural implications (Ayyaz, 2025; Huang et al., 2023; Kruk & Kałużna, 2025; Kumar, 2023; Yuxiu, 2024).

Eventually, it should be emphasized that the translation of creative texts—including literary works or advertising materials—often requires a form of cultural mediation to preserve the meaning and authenticity of the text (Padash & Behjat, 2016; Sabounchi, 2015). The present study, by focusing on students' perspectives regarding the role and status of AI tools in balancing linguistic fidelity and cultural authenticity in literary translation, seeks to address this research gap and to propose strategies for improving the application of such technologies in literary translation.

Literature Review

Theoretical Foundations and Historical Context

Recent developments in the field of generative AI, particularly with the advent of neural machine translation (NMT), have brought about significant transformations in translation practices. This technology, based on deep learning and natural language processing (NLP), is capable of better understanding the semantic structure of sentences and providing more fluent and accurate translations. It can analyze the semantic structure of sentences with greater precision and offer more natural and fluent translations. Models such as the Transformer, through integrated processing of sentences, have succeeded in overcoming many of the limitations inherent in rule-based or word-for-word translation approaches, thereby enhancing translation quality (Vaswani et al., 2017). These technological advancements have laid the groundwork for the development of

translation tools that are now widely used. Nevertheless, despite significant progress, fundamental challenges persist in the field of literary and cultural text translation by AI. The most important of these challenges is the inability of AI models to comprehend deep semantic layers, metaphors, symbols, and cultural references—elements whose accurate transfer requires knowledge of the cultural context, the author's style, and the conveyance of the text's emotional undertones. In this context, constructivist learning theories, particularly Kolb's (2014) experiential learning framework, highlight the importance of active and reflective learning in interaction with new technologies. According to these theories, users and students should not settle for passively receiving translations; rather, they should engage critically and actively with translation outputs, identify their strengths and weaknesses, and thereby deepen their own learning process.

Tools such as DeepL, Google Translate, and ChatGPT, while demonstrating successful performance in translating general and technical texts (Farhad et al., 2021), still cannot replace human translators when dealing with texts that require stylistic nuances and a specific tone. This limitation becomes especially apparent when the translation is required to convey the artistic and cultural values of the original text. In response to this challenge, a hybrid approach is emerging, whereby human translators edit and revise the initial AI-generated translations to ensure the final quality of the text is maintained (Macken et

al., 2020). This collaboration combines the speed and accuracy of machines with human sensitivity and understanding, yielding a more desirable outcome.

Despite remarkable advances, most scientific research in the application of AI to translation has focused predominantly on technical and general texts, with less attention paid to the dimensions of literary translation. The practical and subjective experiences of users—especially students of language and literature, who directly engage with these tools—have been less thoroughly analyzed. Examining these experiences could help identify the real needs and challenges of users and play a significant role in improving the quality of AI-based translation tools. Accordingly, the present study investigates students' perspectives and experiences regarding their approaches to the challenges of literary translation by AI and their proposed solutions. Analyzing these perspectives can contribute to enhancing the quality of literary translations and the development of innovative educational approaches in the field of translation.

Current Trends and Challenges

In recent years, numerous studies have examined the successes and limitations of AI-based translation. NMT, particularly those utilizing deep learning technologies and integrated sentence processing, has played a key role in enhancing translation quality. These systems can preserve the overall meaning of sentences within the appropriate context and produce translations that are more fluent and accurate compared to traditional methods. Despite these advances, the translation of literary texts continues to face specific challenges, as understanding and recreating complex elements such as metaphor, wordplay, and cultural references remain beyond the current capabilities of these technologies. For example, Popel et al. (2020) emphasize that although NMT performs well in representing the meaning of sentences, it remains incapable of accurately recreating the linguistic and cultural subtleties of literary texts. Similarly, Zhai and Wibowo (2023) highlight the limitations of AI in correctly transferring metaphors and wordplays, which are essential for the depth and emotional impact of literary works.

Building on this discussion, researchers have also focused on the role of AI in hybrid translation processes. Studies have shown that AI tools can assist human translators at stages such as initial text analysis and final post-editing, thereby increasing productivity. For instance, Macken et al. (2020) found that the use of AI, especially in managing specialized terminology and large volumes of text, can enhance both accuracy and speed. Nevertheless, human expertise and judgement remain irreplaceable for ensuring the cultural authenticity and emotional resonance of translations, particularly in literary texts. Investigations in the field of education similarly indicate that, despite the relative acceptance of AI tools as useful means for increasing efficiency, doubts persist regarding the

ability of these tools to substitute for human creativity in literary translation (Khasawneh & Al-Amrat, 2023).

Within the academic sphere, the integration of AI into translation curricula has also elicited varied responses among students. The findings of Alifa et al. (2021) indicate that students often use AI tools to facilitate their work, yet they remain skeptical about the accuracy of these tools when translating complex and literary texts. Research by Ayvazyan et al. (2024) further reveals that, although post-editing of machine translations by students can improve output quality and provide new learning opportunities, students' overall attitudes toward machine translation remain negative, and they do not regard this technology as a desirable replacement for human translation. Nevertheless, the potential of AI to enhance students' performance at the editing stage is acknowledged, and there is an emphasis on the necessity of devising educational strategies that leverage AI's capabilities while also preserving the creativity and intellectual independence of human translators.

Moreover, the fundamental challenges of AI-based literary translation can be categorized into three major areas. First are the linguistic and cultural subtleties, as intelligent systems often lack a deep understanding of the cultural contexts and symbolic meanings of literary texts (Zhai & Wibowo, 2023). Second are ethical concerns, especially regarding data security and privacy when translating sensitive texts

(Steiner et al., 2021). Third is the risk of overreliance on technology, which may lead to the weakening of critical skills and creativity among young translators (Budiharjo, 2024; Falempin & Ranadireksa, 2024; Mohamed et al., 2024). These concerns underscore the need for translator training to remain focused on enhancing human abilities, and to regard AI solely as an auxiliary tool rather than a complete replacement.

Alongside these technological and pedagogical discussions, recent studies in the field of poetry and interlingual translation have also examined intertextual and historical dimensions. For example, Shahiditabar (2023), by analyzing the complex relationship between Persian and Azerbaijani Turkish poetry during the Constitutional era, demonstrates that the Persian poems of Ashraf of Gilani are not mere imitations but constitute creative recreations of Mirza Alakbar Sabir's Turkish works. This approach, through precise textual analysis and inspired by T.S. Eliot's distinction between imitation and poetic borrowing, regards Ashraf's translations and references as a form of artistic negotiation in which translation becomes a site for cultural transfer and innovation. The continuation of this research trajectory is also evident in Shahiditabar's subsequent works (2024a), where the theory of intertextuality is employed to examine the functioning of verse translations within a network of literary texts. His study of translations among English, Persian, and Turkish poetry

reveals that the success of poetic translation depends not only on lexical fidelity but also on the reproduction of generic conventions, rhythmic patterns, and even the social and political implications of the original text. Notably, his analysis of Ashraf's translations of Sabir's revolutionary poetry shows that interlingual strategies such as phonetic transfer and thematic adaptation are essential for preserving the satirical and political force of the source text. These findings highlight the active and creative role of the translator as a cultural and artistic mediator who, through intertextual dialogue, simultaneously preserves and transforms the literary heritage (Shahiditabar, 2023; 2024).

Recent Empirical Studies and Research Gaps

In recent years, numerous empirical studies have focused on examining the impact of AI on the translation process, particularly within educational environments. These studies demonstrate that AI-based tools—especially NMT and large language models (LLMs)—not only enhance the learning experience for students but also increase their autonomy and self-confidence. For example, Alharbi (2023), in a study involving 234 English language learners, showed that using Google Translate led to a positive attitude among students and improved the quality of their writing drafts; furthermore, students utilized a variety of strategies to overcome linguistic barriers.

The continuation of this research trend has included studies that investigate students' attitudes and experiences with AI-based translation tools from various perspectives. Yang (2024), employing writing assignments, surveys, and interviews, concluded that although AI tools have improved writing skills and facilitated translation, concerns remain regarding excessive dependence on technology and reduced translation accuracy. Other international studies have echoed these concerns. For instance, Dziri and Hassani (2024), in research among English language students in Algeria, found that human translation is still preferred due to its more natural output and closer proximity to the target language, although AI tools demonstrate superiority in technical accuracy and maintaining a formal tone. These findings underscore the necessity of a balanced and integrated approach between human and machine translation in educational settings.

Moreover, some studies have addressed the motivational and affective aspects of using AI in translation, which further highlights the complex nature of students' interactions with these technologies. Kruk and Kałużna (2025) found that, in addition to increasing translation accuracy, the use of AI tools also boosts student motivation; however, concerns about dependence on this technology persist. Ren's (2025) findings also emphasize the role of social and motivational factors in the adoption of AI tools, while Zhao et al. (2024) have highlighted ChatGPT's capabilities in providing instant feedback and enhancing students' critical thinking. Collectively,

these studies emphasize the dual potential of AI to improve translation skills and redefine the learning experience, while also pointing to the necessity of a balanced approach to managing challenges such as dependency and ethical considerations.

Based on these findings, the focus of research has gradually expanded from merely assessing the efficiency of AI tools to analyzing educational and organizational dimensions of AI use in higher education. Zhang et al. (2025), in a qualitative study, examined the perspectives of students at a Chinese university regarding the application of generative AI in translation. Their findings, while confirming the advantages of AI such as increased efficiency and improved translation quality, also pointed to challenges including the adequacy of machine translations, technical limitations, accountability, transparency, and the potential for dependence. The importance of institutional support and supplementary training to address these challenges was emphasized, offering a multilayered depiction of how students interact with generative AI tools.

In this context, other empirical studies have also evaluated the educational applications of AI in translation. Emara (2024), in a quasi-experimental study with 62 participants, demonstrated that combining NMT and LLMs, such as ChatGPT, leads to significant improvement in translation skills. The findings of Yuxiu (2024) and Wang (2023) also confirm increased translation accuracy and teacher

satisfaction with the use of advanced AI algorithms in translation education.

In addition to these technical and educational aspects, researchers have also considered the creative and cultural dimensions of translation. Thabet and Qadha (2024) showed that, while AI-assisted translation of poems by Saudi language learners improved fluency and coherence, these tools still face serious weaknesses in conveying cultural subtleties. Mirzaeian's (2024) findings similarly indicate that AI translations are structurally acceptable, but often fail in the accurate translation of idiomatic expressions. With a post-humanist approach, Lee (2024) argues that AI should be regarded as an extension and complement to the abilities of human translators—an approach that can transform the traditional definition of translation.

Complementing this trend, some studies have directly examined the attitudes of students and teachers toward AI tools in translation. Başer and Aral (2024) found that senior translation students, compared to newcomers, possess greater skill and confidence in using these tools, yet they have expressed concerns about the adequacy of AI-based curricula and their future professional prospects. Likewise, Jaruwatsawat et al. (2024), in exploring English learners' perceptions of AI translation programs, noted the ease of use and positive impact on grammar and vocabulary, but also warned of the threat of excessive dependence and the weakening of critical thinking.

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Although this body of research has enriched the literature, significant gaps remain that warrant further attention. Most studies have focused on language or translation students and have given less attention to literature students, who face deeper challenges such as textual interpretation, semantic layers, and cultural nuances. Qualitative research on the subjective and practical experiences of literature students working with generative AI tools also remains limited. As a result, the present study seeks, through a qualitative approach, to explore the perceptions and experiences of literature students regarding the role of generative AI in translating literary texts. The aim of this study is to document and analyze the complex, subjective, and sometimes contradictory dimensions of literature students' interactions with AI tools in literary translation. Accordingly, the central research question is as follows:

How do English literature students perceive the role of generative AI in the processes of literary text translation?

Methodology

Context and Participants

This study was conducted with the participation of 22 undergraduate students majoring in English literature at Hakim Sabzevari University. All participants were in their third year of study, during their fifth semester, and on the verge of taking the "Literary Texts Translation" course—a course centered on translating major works of English literature and prominent novels into the students' native language. Among the texts taught during this period were *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen, *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald, and selected poems by William Blake. This course aimed to enhance students' abilities in literary translation, deepen their understanding of cultural subtleties and linguistic complexities, and cultivate critical thinking and creativity.

Sampling in this study was carried out purposefully (Creswell, 2014), as the focus of the research was on the experiences and perspectives of students who actively utilized ChatGPT for the translation of literary texts. Nevertheless, the limitations of this sampling method should also be acknowledged, as such an approach does not necessarily represent the entire student population or similar groups, and the findings are mainly specific to the participants of this study (Rai & Thapa, 2015). In addition, reliance on self-reported data may also involve certain limitations, since such information can be influenced by the respondents' personal biases or inclinations (Fadnes et al., 2009).

The presence of diversity in gender, language proficiency, and cultural background among the students enabled a deeper and more comprehensive analysis of the issue under investigation. Student participation was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants before commencing the study. This setting provided a valuable opportunity to examine how students confronted the challenges of literary text

translation and engaged in critical reflection on their own experiences.

Given the qualitative nature of the study and the use of instruments such as interviews and narrative analysis, the focus was on the depth and quality of the data rather than the number of participants (Islam & Aldaihani, 2022). In qualitative research, the primary goal is to achieve a deeper understanding of participants' experiences and perspectives; thus, the sample size is typically more limited (Creswell, 2014). Although the number of participants in this study was 22, this figure is fully consistent with the objectives of qualitative research, which seeks an in-depth examination of complex phenomena. Additional information regarding the demographic characteristics of the participants is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *The Demographic Information of the Participants*

Category	Subcategory	Percentage (%)	Count (N)
Gender	Female	63.6%	14
	Male	36.4%	8
Age	21 years	40%	9
	22 years	32%	7
	23 years	28%	6
Proficiency Level (Self-reported)	Intermediate	50%	11
	Upper-Intermediate	36%	8
	Advanced	143%	3
Previous Translation Experience	Yes	45.5%	10
	No	54.5%	12

Instruments

To collect data in this study, two qualitative instruments were employed: semi-structured interviews (Appendix A) and narrative frameworks (Appendix B). Semi-structured interviews were selected due to their flexibility; this type of interview allows participants to express their experiences in greater detail and with more freedom, while also enabling the researcher to adapt the questions according to new topics and issues that may arise during the conversation (Smith et al., 2009). These interviews consisted of open-ended questions in which participants were asked to describe their experiences in detail. In these interviews, questions were designed in an open-ended manner so that students could thoroughly explain their challenges and strategies in translation.

The second instrument utilized was the narrative framework, which was used to record and organize participants' reflections. The narrative framework is essentially a semi-structured template that each individual completes according to their personal experience (Mills et al., 2014). This approach provides participants with the opportunity to express their thoughts, feelings, and reflections in a purposeful and organized manner, while simultaneously yielding valuable

qualitative data for the research (Creswell, 2014).

Data Collection Procedures

The data for this study were collected over a twelve-week period during the Fall semester of 2024. At the outset, an orientation session was held for the students in which the research objectives, ethical considerations, and the voluntary nature of participation were clearly explained. Participants were also assured that all information and responses provided would be kept confidential. Students were asked to express their views and experiences openly and transparently throughout the research process. Subsequently, the activities undertaken by the students during the research sessions, as well as their interactions with ChatGPT in completing literary translation tasks, were described in detail to facilitate a more precise examination of the tool's role in the learning and translation process.

First Phase: Introduction to Literary Translation and ChatGPT

In the first two weeks of the study, students participated in a series of training workshops aimed at introducing the principles of literary translation and the capabilities of generative AI tools, particularly ChatGPT. These workshops served as a preliminary introduction to the research, ensuring that all students, regardless of their prior knowledge of AI or translation methods, attained a shared and foundational understanding of both domains. This measure provided the necessary groundwork for effective student participation in subsequent phases of the research and prevented disparities in background knowledge among participants. The main topics covered in these initial workshops are presented in the chart below.
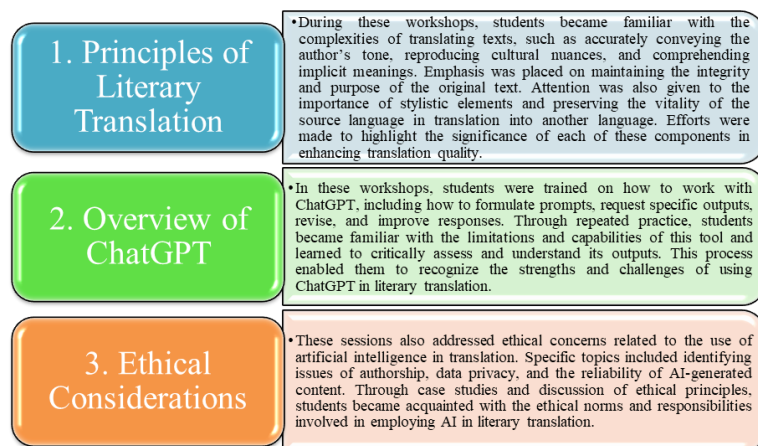
Figure 1. *Initial Workshops for the Introduction of Literary Translation and ChatGPT*

Second Phase: Practical Translation Sessions

Throughout the study period, students participated in weekly translation sessions in which they worked with a variety of literary texts, including poetry, short stories, and excerpts from novels.

• Poetry: Texts such as "Sonnet 18" by William Shakespeare, which required students to preserve rhyme and metaphor, and "If You Forget Me" by Pablo Neruda, which necessitated the accurate conveyance of emotional depth.

• Short Story: "The Tell-Tale Heart" by Edgar Allan Poe, which tested the ability to convey the tense atmosphere of the Gothic period, and "The Lottery" by Shirley Jackson, which required careful management of suspense and cultural context.

- Novel Excerpts: "One Hundred Years of Solitude" by Gabriel García Márquez, which posed challenges for preserving the poetic tone of magical realism, and "Pride and Prejudice" by Jane Austen, which required maintaining humor and wit.

Students initially produced draft translations of the literary texts using ChatGPT and then repeatedly revised and edited these translations to address issues related to tone, rhythm, and cultural nuances. Additionally, AI-generated translations were compared with professional human translations, allowing students to gain a deeper and more nuanced understanding of the complexities and dynamics of literary translation. The selected texts encompassed a diverse range of linguistic and cultural challenges and encouraged students to critically examine both the original texts and the AI-generated translations. During these sessions, students followed a systematic and structured process to enable the organized analysis of the translation process and the assessment of their individual and collective progress.

Initial Translation with ChatGPT:

At the initial stage, students input the source text into ChatGPT along with a set of precise and targeted instructions. For example, they might request the tool to provide a translation that preserves the poem's structure, accurately conveys the emotions, or replaces colloquial expressions with appropriate equivalents in the target language. The instructions were carefully tailored to the objectives of each

exercise so that the final output would align with the established expectations and criteria. For instance, a student's prompt could be: "*Please translate the following text into Persian, ensuring that the figurative language is preserved and the tone remains formal*." Depending on the complexity of the text, students typically had to repeat this process several times, each time refining and clarifying their instructions to achieve a more desirable outcome. They employed strategies such as rephrasing and clarifying prompts, requesting explanations for ChatGPT's translation choices, or asking for alternative translations with variations in tone or style (see Figure 2).
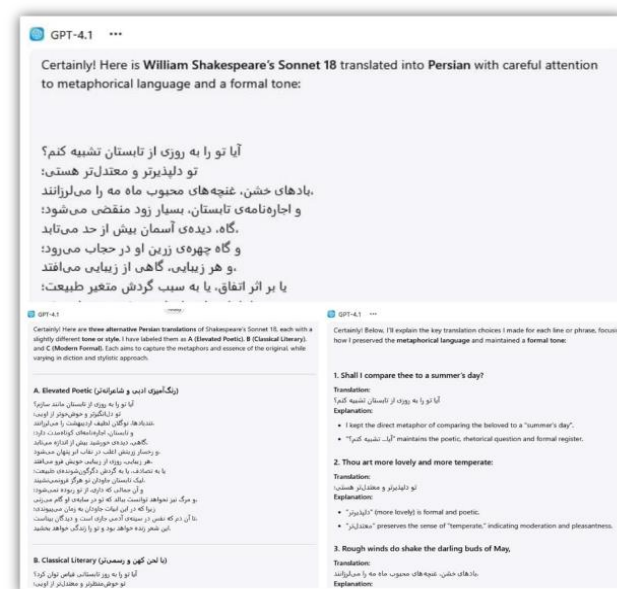
Figure 2. *Example Workflow of Student Prompt Engineering for ChatGPT-Assisted Translation*

Critical Evaluation of AI Output:

After receiving the initial translation from ChatGPT, students carefully analyzed and evaluated the output. They compared the translation with the source text to assess

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its accuracy, fluency, and fidelity to the original. This evaluation helped identify weaknesses in the AI-generated translation, such as incorrect rendering of certain expressions, loss of cultural subtleties, or unintended changes in tone. For example, one student observed that ChatGPT, when translating a cultural metaphor into Spanish, failed to convey the original meaning accurately.

Collaborative Refinement:

Next, students shared their findings in small groups and collaboratively worked to improve the translations. In this process, they combined their literary and subject-matter knowledge with the suggestions provided by ChatGPT to achieve a more accurate and enriched version. For example, a group working on a poem found that, while ChatGPT produced a grammatically correct translation, it failed to recreate the original rhyme scheme. Consequently, the students manually revised the poetic structure and used ChatGPT to obtain new lexical suggestions.

Comparison with Human Translations:

To better understand the strengths and limitations of the AI, students compared the translations produced by ChatGPT with published human translations of the same texts (where available). This comparison enabled them to evaluate ChatGPT's performance against professional translation standards.

Third Phase: Reflection and Documentation

Subsequently, after each translation session, students were required to document their experiences using narrative frameworks. These frameworks prompted them to reflect on various aspects of their work, such as ChatGPT's effectiveness in managing complex literary elements, strategies employed to revise the AI output, their satisfaction with the final result, and comparisons with human translations. These narratives provided valuable qualitative data for the research, as students often described in detail the cognitive processes and challenges, they encountered. For example, one student noted the difficulty of translating humor in a short story and remarked that ChatGPT's literal approach often failed to capture the subtleties of wordplay.

Fourth Phase: Semi-Structured Interviews

In the final phase, after analyzing the narrative framework responses, one of the researchers conducted semi-structured interviews with ten participants who had provided particularly deep and insightful reflections and had expressed willingness to be interviewed. These interviews aimed to further explore the students' experiences and perceptions regarding the use of ChatGPT in literary translation. During these conversations, students described how they adapted their use of ChatGPT over time in response to their evolving needs and challenges.

Data Analysis Procedures

The qualitative data collected through narrative frameworks and semi-structured

interviews were analyzed using thematic analysis, as described by Braun and Clarke (2006) (see Figure 3). This approach was selected for its flexibility and its suitability for identifying, analyzing, and interpreting patterns and themes in qualitative data.

The analysis process began with the familiarization stage, during which the researchers repeatedly read the texts of the narrative frameworks and interviews to gain a deeper understanding of the data's content. Simultaneously, notes were taken regarding salient, interesting, or relevant points related to the students' translation experiences. In the next stage, data coding was performed: meaningful segments of the text were identified and assigned appropriate codes or labels. These codes were then grouped into broader themes to reveal the most frequent and significant concepts across the entire data set. The extracted themes were reviewed and refined multiple times to ensure they accurately reflected the participants' experiences. Finally, the themes were organized into a coherent narrative to highlight the main findings of the study.

To ensure internal validity, several strategies were employed. The researcher presented preliminary findings to some participants and solicited their feedback (member checking) to verify the accuracy and alignment of the themes with the students' actual experiences. Additionally, methodological triangulation was used by comparing data obtained from narrative frameworks and interviews to identify consistent and common patterns. The

researcher's reflexivity was also maintained throughout the analysis process by recording personal reflections and potential biases in a dedicated journal, thereby ensuring transparency in the analytical process. For external validity, the findings were discussed in relation to the broader literature on translation studies, and similarities and differences with previous research were highlighted to increase the generalizability of the results (Darawsheh, 2014).

Various measures were taken to ensure data reliability. For internal reliability, consistency in the coding process was maintained, and a comprehensive coding manual (Roberts et al., 2019), including definitions and criteria for each code, was developed. To reduce potential biases, peer review by a colleague familiar with qualitative research was also employed (Spall, 1998); thus, the coding and development of themes were independently examined by another individual. For external reliability, a step-by-step account of the research process—including stages of data collection, coding, and theme identification—was provided in detail to facilitate replication by other researchers (Roberts et al., 2019). Additionally, examples of the coding process and portions of the coded data were presented to ensure full transparency in the analytical procedure.
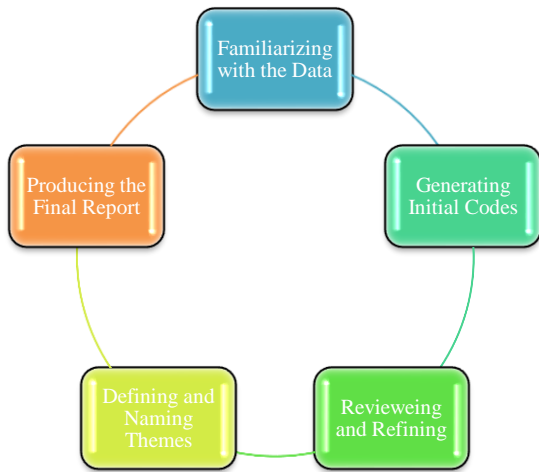
Figure 3. *Process of Thematic Analysis (adapted from Braun & Clarke, 2006)*

Findings

The findings of this study are categorized into two main sections: the "positive aspects" and the "negative aspects" of using ChatGPT in the translation of literary texts. Each of these sections contains, respectively, six and seven main themes. For each theme, relevant sub-themes were also identified and supported and explained using examples drawn from participant interviews and the collected narrative texts. In this section, only a selection of participant responses and quotations are presented as examples, to provide a clear illustration of the identified themes.
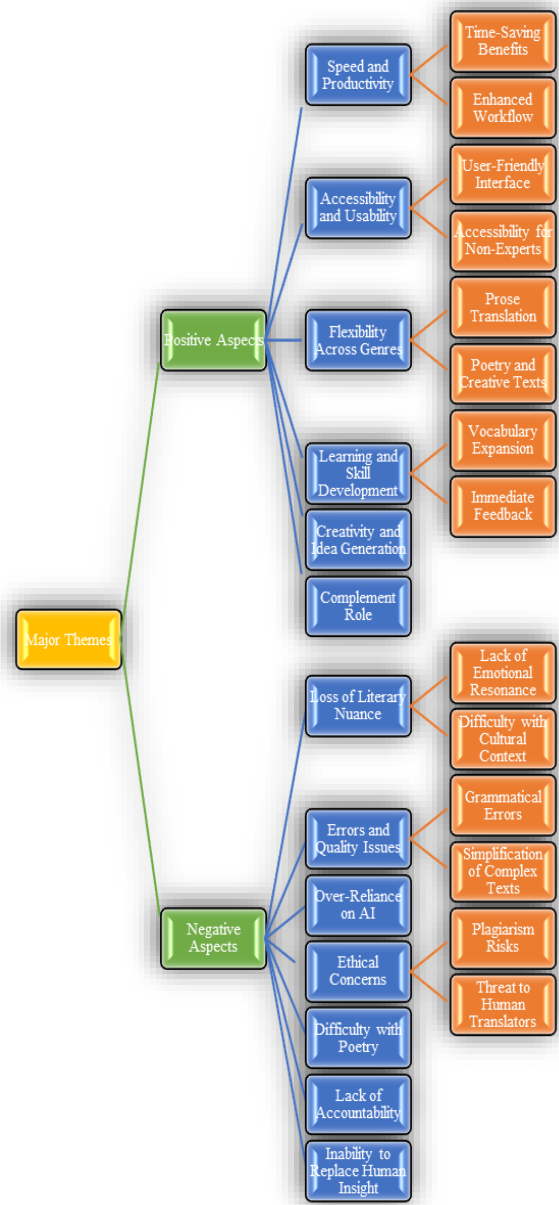
Figure 4. *Summary of the Themes and Sub-themes of the Study*

Positive Aspects

In the interviews, students referred to multiple advantages of using ChatGPT in the translation process, particularly emphasizing its high speed, ease of access, and its role in enhancing creativity. From their perspective, tools such as ChatGPT can facilitate the translation process, reduce the time required—especially under time constraints or deadlines—and make

translation more accessible for beginners and non-specialists. Participants also highlighted ChatGPT's ability to manage various types of literary texts with different levels of complexity, offer innovative suggestions, and assist in better understanding challenging texts. Furthermore, the tool's role in supporting the learning process, expanding vocabulary, and fostering the development of translation skills was regarded as valuable by the students. Overall, ChatGPT was considered an effective and complementary tool to human effort, rather than a replacement; it enables students to focus more on improving, revising, and personalizing their translations.

Theme 1: Speed and Productivity
Sub-theme 1.1: Time-Saving Benefits

Generative artificial intelligence is widely recognized for its ability to complete translations quickly and efficiently. Participants appreciated the time-saving capabilities of generative AI, especially in the drafting stage of translations. One participant wrote in their narrative draft: "*My experience with ChatGPT in literary translation was very helpful. The first time I became familiar with tools like ChatGPT was when, for this research, I had to translate a section of a novel. The greatest strength of ChatGPT is that it is extremely fast and can provide you with the translation you need in a second.*" (Ali) Similarly, Zahra stated: "*I used ChatGPT to translate a short story, and it completed the draft in a few seconds. In my opinion, there were some issues, but it*

seems that this speed can, in a way, compensate for other shortcomings."

Sub-theme 1.2: Enhanced Workflow

Generative artificial intelligence was regarded as a useful tool for streamlining the translation process. Some participants believed that ChatGPT functions more as a starting point and a booster, helping users to engage with the challenging task of translation and preventing them from abandoning or never returning to translation work. Shirin shared her ideas and said: "*It's as if you have an assistant who takes care of the basic tasks, so you can focus on reviewing the text… It's much easier to just edit a translated text rather than both translate and edit, which is itself very time-consuming.*"

Theme 2: Accessibility and Usability
Sub-theme 2.1: User-Friendly Interface

Participants pointed to the accessibility of generative AI tools, especially for beginners. They believed these tools are very easy to use and particularly beneficial for individuals with no expertise in translation. Farhad wrote: "*I first came across ChatGPT when I was searching for online translation tools a few months ago, and I found it to be so simple that even someone like me, who is not familiar with such technologies, could use it.*" In support of this, Maryam added: "*You just need to create an account with Gmail, and if you want to use the paid version, you have to pay for it—but even the free version of ChatGPT is good, and it's really easy to*

use; there's nothing strange or complicated about it."

Sub-theme 2.2: Accessibility for Non-Experts

Some participants appreciated that ChatGPT has made translation tasks more accessible for people without advanced translation skills. Kian stated: "*My field of study is not translation, but we have this course this semester, and even with the minimal knowledge I have of translation, ChatGPT allows students like me, who are still learning translation, to produce high-quality translations.*"

Theme 3: Flexibility Across Literary Genres

Sub-theme 3.1: Prose Translation

Participants emphasized the ability of generative AI to adapt to the translation of various types of literary texts. They praised ChatGPT for its efficiency in translating prose, as it produced coherent and acceptable drafts that usually required only minor revisions. However, translating poetry and other creative texts posed greater challenges due to their complex structure and artistic subtleties. Many participants believed that ChatGPT is highly effective for translating prose with minimal revisions. For example, Nasrin described her experience as follows: "*I used ChatGPT to translate a short poem for my class project. My instructor said the translation was excellent and I only made a few minor changes.*"

Given the fundamental differences between poetry and prose, it should be noted that translating poetry is considerably

more complex than translating prose. Poetry often features brevity, musicality, literary devices, and a special emotional charge, all of which are difficult to render accurately in the target language. While prose primarily focuses on the direct transmission of meaning and information, poetry requires the conveyance not only of meaning but also of emotion, aesthetics, and its unique structure. For this reason, the success of ChatGPT in translating prose with minimal revisions appears more remarkable, but in the realm of poetry, significant challenges remain in preserving the beauty and subtlety of the original text. Nonetheless, Nasrin's experience indicates that even in poetry translation, AI can yield satisfactory results, though it often requires human review and revision.

Sub-theme 3.2: Poetry and Creative Texts

Despite noting the challenges in translating poetry, participants in this study also referenced some creative attempts in the translations produced. For example, Reza said: "*Well, it's not perfect, but I've seen that sometimes it suggests creative expressions for poetry translation that I wouldn't have thought of myself.*" Nahid also stated: "*ChatGPT is generally not very suitable for literary texts or poetry, because I think translating such texts requires deep understanding. But sometimes its suggestions give me ideas that I can use to improve my own translations.*" Leila expressed it thus: "*It's true that AI can't fully convey the emotional depth of a poem, but it does have certain lexical choices that*

help me improve my work and find new creative directions."

Theme 4: Learning and Skill Development

Sub-theme 4.1: Vocabulary Expansion

Generative AI was seen as a valuable tool for learning translation techniques. Participants felt that by interacting with generative AI, they learned new words and phrases. Sahar wrote: "*This tool introduces me to new vocabulary and expressions, enabling me to gain a better understanding of both languages.*" Similarly, Morteza said: "*I know a lot of vocabulary, but sometimes ChatGPT suggests alternative expressions or idioms that never occurred to me. I think it expands my vocabulary and helps with my translation skills.*"

Sub-theme 4.2: Immediate Feedback

Some participants valued the immediate output of AI as a means to assess their own translations. Sara said: "*I compare my translations with ChatGPT's suggestions to find the parts I can improve. It's interesting that ChatGPT can identify the similarities and differences between my translation and its own.*" Another participant, Shirin, explained: "*The immediate feedback from ChatGPT allows me to experiment with different styles and quickly see how my changes impact the overall translation.*"

Theme 5: Creativity and Idea Generation

Participants found the creative suggestions offered by generative AI to be highly valuable. For example, Mohammad said: "*Sometimes ChatGPT suggests*

phrases that are very creative and profound. It's like a system that can give you ideas for hours and hours. I remember when I was stuck translating a literary passage, I asked ChatGPT for help and it suggested over thirty alternatives."

Theme 6: Complementary Role to Human Translation

Participants repeatedly noted that generative AI tools in general, and ChatGPT in particular, can be considered supportive tools rather than replacements for human translators. Shabnam wrote in her account: "*Overall, I think generative AI tools like ChatGPT can serve a supportive role, like a complement to human translation. I don't think these tools, at least at present, can replace human translators, especially in the field of literary translation.*"

Negative Aspects

Despite the advantages of generative AI, participants identified several challenges and limitations of ChatGPT in literary translation. These concerns primarily pertained to quality, creativity, ethical considerations, and the ability to capture literary nuances.

Theme 1: Loss of Literary Nuance

Sub-theme 1.1: Lack of Emotional Resonance

Generative AI was criticized for its inability to convey the emotional depth and style of literary texts. Participants indicated that ChatGPT performs poorly in transmitting the deep emotions of the original text. Parisa said: "*When I used ChatGPT to translate a poem, the result*

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was very mechanical." Similarly, Shakila said: "*With my limited translation knowledge, I can confidently say that ChatGPT and similar tools are not suitable for translating literary texts. They might work for simple texts, but for poetry? For literature? These have a feeling behind them that AI cannot comprehend. It's in the name—artificial. We need something natural, like the human mind, to translate these texts.*"

Sub-theme 1.2: Difficulty with Cultural Context

Cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions are often lost in AI translations. Many participants noted that ChatGPT cannot properly translate idiomatic expressions such as proverbs, jokes, and sarcasm. Ali said: "*Persian poetry is so rich culturally that ChatGPT simply doesn't understand. Its translations seem empty and soulless. Even in English literature, when it's translated by AI, you feel it's hollow. I think for literary texts, we need a human translator who is an expert in both literature and translation, someone who knows the culture, history, and context of the text.*"

Theme 2: Errors and Quality Issues
Sub-theme 2.1: Grammatical Errors

Participants pointed to inconsistencies and grammatical mistakes in AI-generated translations. Some translations required substantial editing to correct grammatical errors. Neda said: "*I spent most of my time fixing the grammatical mistakes in ChatGPT's translation rather than translating from scratch myself.*"

Sub-theme 2.2: Simplification of Complex Texts

Participants observed that AI tends to oversimplify complex literary texts. They believed that such texts are beyond ChatGPT's capabilities. Kaveh said: "*In this experiment, we were given some of the world's greatest literary works, with deep social, emotional, and psychological meanings, and asked to translate them with AI. I think the result was terrible. When you read the original and compare it with the AI translation, you cannot believe how the depth of meaning is lost, the hidden message blurred. For literature, especially poetry, I think humans must translate.*"

Theme 3: Over-Reliance on AI

Students expressed concerns about excessive reliance on AI tools. They considered this a negative point, making people lazy in their work. Ramin said: "*If you ask me, it's a kind of addiction. At first, you might use ChatGPT for one or two tasks, but when you see how easy, fast, and free it is, in my opinion it becomes hard to stop using it.*" Noushin echoed this sentiment: "*In this study, I faced challenges like overdependence. I had little experience with ChatGPT before, but once I learned how to use it effectively, I think it will be hard for me not to rely on it in my future projects.*"

Theme 4: Ethical Concerns
Sub-theme 4.1: Plagiarism Risks

Participants discussed ethical issues related to authenticity, ownership, and plagiarism. They were concerned about presenting AI-generated translations as

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their own work. Leila said: "*Looking to the future, I hope we learn how to use these tools effectively and ethically, because I think we are just at the beginning and these tools are set to become more advanced and better. In that case, I think it will be really hard to tell whether something was written by a human or by AI.*"

Sub-theme 4.2: Threat to Human Translators

Some participants worried that AI would eventually replace human translators. For instance, Arash said: "*If AI progresses at the rate we're seeing, I'm concerned that there will be no work left for translators.*" Zahra expressed a similar view: "*There are thousands of AI applications and websites like ChatGPT, and some of them are even better than ChatGPT. If I'm not mistaken, all these tools have spread everywhere in less than three years. For example, Google Translate had some issues, but I'm sure in the next few years, there will be highly advanced AI tools that will completely replace human translators.*"

Theme 5: Difficulty with Poetry

Participants consistently acknowledged that poetry is an area where ChatGPT faces serious challenges. They believed that, unlike prose, poetry requires a deeper understanding of rhythm, metaphor, cultural context, and emotional depth. Many participants emphasized that while AI can produce grammatically and structurally correct content, it often fails to convey the essence and stylistic intricacies of poetry. Reza said: "*In the poetry translation exercise assigned in this study,*

I realized that neither ChatGPT nor any other AI app can translate. Personally, I think even humans cannot translate poetry, let alone an artificial machine." Mahya had a similar experience: "*When I asked ChatGPT to translate a poem into Persian, it completely missed the meaning and there was no rhythm in the output. It was like reading a refrigerator manual.*" Reza also said: "*The problem isn't that AI doesn't try… It uses literary words and tries to have poetic structure. But it has no soul. Its emotions are artificial. How can I put it? It's like explaining Hafez's poetry to a five-year-old child—so simplified and strange.*"

Theme 6: Lack of Accountability

Participants repeatedly voiced concerns about the lack of accountability in AI-generated translations. Unlike human translators who can be held responsible for their work, tools like ChatGPT bear no responsibility when mistakes occur. Hossein said: "*I faced challenges like grammatical mistakes, poor word choices, lack of emotion in the translation, and many other issues. When my instructor pointed them out, I wanted to blame ChatGPT since it wrote it for me. But I'm the one at fault, because these tools have no responsibility; they are just for use. The user has to accept responsibility.*"

Theme 7: Inability to Replace Human Insight

Participants unanimously agreed that AI lacks the human insight necessary for high-quality literary translation. While ChatGPT and similar tools can produce "acceptable" translations, they often lack the emotional

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depth, cultural understanding, and interpretive creativity provided by human translators. Shirin said: "*No matter how advanced AI becomes, it can never replace the human feeling in literary translation.*" Hamed expressed the same idea: "*I faced challenges such as the inability to convey the emotional layers of the text, which made me feel something very important was missing. When I compare AI with traditional translation methods, I think AI can never replace human translators, because it lacks the ability to interpret the cultural and emotional backgrounds.*"

Discussion and Conclusion

The results of this study are aligned with previous research on the dual role of AI in translation, with particular emphasis on the technology's contribution to enhancing productivity and accessibility—especially for novice translators. However, the limitations of AI in understanding and conveying the cultural and emotional subtleties of literary texts are also highlighted. Prior studies, including Ruoqi et al. (2023), while emphasizing the complementary value of AI in the translation process, have demonstrated that this technology is not yet a suitable replacement for human translators, particularly in the translation of complex literary texts. The categorization of findings into positive and negative aspects in this study provides a more comprehensive framework, both confirming previous research outcomes and offering a more nuanced perspective on literature students' views regarding AI-assisted translation.

From a positive standpoint, this study underscores ChatGPT's capabilities in accelerating translation speed, facilitating accessibility, and fostering creativity. These results are consistent with the findings of Bowker (2020) and Dracsineanu (2024), which demonstrate the role of AI in simplifying repetitive tasks and generating editable initial drafts. Additionally, participants reported that AI tools help them become familiar with new vocabulary and structures, thereby enhancing their linguistic and translation skills—a point also noted by Zhao et al. (2024). These findings open up new horizons, illustrating how students utilize AI feedback to improve both their technical and creative skills. Overall, the results suggest that, when used purposefully and mindfully, AI can become a valuable tool in translation teaching and learning.

Nevertheless, this study also points to the significant limitations of AI in translating literary texts, especially poetry. Participants emphasized that ChatGPT has not achieved notable success in poetry translation and faces serious challenges in conveying rhythm, metaphors, and symbolic depth—an observation that aligns with the findings of Kornacki and Pietrzak (2024) and Zhai and Wibowo (2023). Although students acknowledged the role of AI in generating innovative ideas, they maintained that human translators remain essential in instances where interpretation and cultural sensitivity are paramount. This perspective highlights the importance of

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combining AI with human expertise, as also discussed by Macken et al. (2020).

The limitations observed in AI's poetry translation reflect longstanding theoretical debates in translation studies. Some researchers, such as Santos (2000), argue that poetry translation can be satisfactory when the translator possesses the necessary creativity and sensitivity to linguistic and cultural layers. Conversely, Jakobson (1959) contends that poetry is essentially untranslatable, as the complexity of the interplay among meaning, sound, and artistic features cannot be fully rendered in the target language. The advent of AI adds new dimensions to this debate, as these technologies, despite their high processing power, lack the deep textual understanding, emotional intelligence, and creative intuition required for literary translation. As a result, AI-generated poetry translations generally fail to recreate the semantic layers, rhythmic subtleties, and cultural resonances essential for successful translation. The findings indicate that AI's limitations in literary translation—especially poetry—are not merely technical but are rooted in the very nature of language and poetic expression, a point consistent with Jakobson's view of the inherent resistance of certain poetic elements to algorithmic transfer.

These results are further supported by recent studies on poetry translation mechanisms. Shahiditabar (2024b), in his case study on metrical translation, emphasizes that success in poetry translation depends not only on linguistic proficiency but also on poetic sensibility, creative adaptation, and a deep awareness of the literary traditions of both languages. Shahiditabar's analysis of multilingual translations indicates that preserving poetic structure, emotional charge, and cultural context is crucial for a translation to be accepted as poetry in the target language. This finding is in line with the results of the present study, showing that while AI is capable of rendering word-for-word content, it lacks the poetic understanding and creative intuition necessary for producing an authentic poetic translation. Therefore, in light of Shahiditabar's perspective, it can be concluded that the artistry and cultural context of poetry continue to pose fundamental challenges for current AI technologies and underscore the unique role of the human poet-translator in literary translation.

Alongside these considerations, ethical concerns such as the risk of plagiarism and overreliance on AI were also raised in this study—concerns that echo the warnings of researchers such as Falempin and Ranadireksa (2024). In educational settings, such issues are most often manifested as worries about diminishing creativity and the weakening of critical thinking, emphasizing the need for balanced and informed use of AI in translation curricula. While tools such as ChatGPT can enhance students' learning processes and productivity, their limitations in understanding and conveying cultural and emotional nuances underscore that the primary role of these technologies should

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be defined as supportive tools for, not wholesale replacements of, literary translation by humans. This finding is also consistent with theories such as Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence and Venuti's (1995) foreignization/domestication approach, as both stress the importance of interpretive and semantic dimensions of translation, which AI has yet to fully achieve.

The present study also raises important questions about the future of AI-assisted translation and its implications for translation education. While AI can support learning and productivity, its limitations— particularly in the literary domain— demonstrate the need for further research to improve the cultural and emotional sensitivity of these tools. For example, integrating more advanced models of cultural and textual understanding into AI systems could mitigate some of the challenges identified in this study. Thus, it is recommended that educators incorporate AI not as a replacement for traditional methods, but as complementary resources to enrich students' learning experiences within their curricula. This approach can help students benefit from AI's capabilities while remaining aware of its limitations. Nevertheless, limitations such as reliance on self-reported data, the focus on literature students, and the study's limited time frame underscore the necessity for further complementary studies. Future research could employ mixed methods, examine hybrid workflows, and analyze the role of AI across different disciplines to achieve a more comprehensive understanding of the place of this technology in translation and education. Bridging these gaps can better prepare students to navigate the evolving relationship between AI and human creativity in the field of translation.

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Appendices

Appendix A

1. To what extent are you familiar with generative AI tools such as ChatGPT in the context of literary translation?
2. In your view, what are the main advantages and limitations of using ChatGPT for the translation of literary texts?
3. Compared to traditional translation methods, to what extent do you think generative AI can convey literary nuances such as tone, style, cultural context, emotional aspects, etc.?
4. Have you encountered any specific challenges when using ChatGPT for literary translation? If yes, could you provide examples?
5. How do you envision the role of generative AI tools like ChatGPT in the future of literary translation? Do you think these tools could eventually replace human translators?

Appendix B

Narrative Framework

My experience with ChatGPT in the field of literary translation has been _____ so far. I first became acquainted with tools like ChatGPT when _____. In my opinion, the main advantages of using ChatGPT in literary translation are _____. However, in this process, I encountered challenges such as _____, which made me feel _____. Compared to traditional translation methods, I think generative AI _____ because _____. For example, I once used ChatGPT to translate a literary text, which _____, and this experience made me realize that _____. Overall, I believe that tools like ChatGPT can play an important role in the future of literary translation, but I also think that _____. I hope that in the future _____.