

Digital Applied Linguistics, 2, 102600 (2025)
<https://doi.org/10.29140/dal.v2.102600>



Unveiling students' experiences and perspectives of generative AI-assisted translation in a Hong Kong university: perceived benefits, limitations, and suggestions

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Abstract

Although recent studies have revealed the benefits of Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) on language education, little is known about students' experiences and perspectives on the utilization of these tools in assisting their translation practices - one of the main ways students apply digital tools to support language learning. Therefore, the current study employed in-depth interviews to explore six Hong Kong university students' perceived benefits and limitations of GenAI-assisted translation, and suggestions they provided for students and translation programs to use GenAI tools in translation. The findings revealed that participants identified several benefits of GenAI-assisted translation, including increased translation efficiency, high capabilities in specific domains, supportive functions for translation practices, and emotional support. Nevertheless, restricted translation performance, information leakage, time and energy requested to develop quality prompt engineering skills, and negative impacts on translators and employment were recognized. Some suggestions related to the establishment of GenAI guidelines and policies, course development, provision of GenAI-incorporated activities or materials, and supplementary GenAI training were proposed for the future development of the translation program. The study helps us have a more holistic understanding

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of the benefits and limitations of GenAI-assisted translation. It also provides valuable insights to translation teachers and program directors to refine the current translation courses and programs to equip students with the capabilities to respond to the rapid development of GenAI tools.

Keywords: generative AI; technology-assisted translation; benefits and limitations; suggestions, Hong Kong

Introduction

Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) tools have received substantial attention since the launch of ChatGPT in November 2022 (OpenAI, 2023). ChatGPT obtained more than one billion users from all over the world within two months of its release (Zhang et al., 2025). In addition to ChatGPT, some other GenAI tools such as Claude, GitHub Copilot, Gemini, ERNIE Bot, and DeepSeek have received a huge amount of attention as well. Empowered by advanced algorithms and deep learning models, GenAI tools can process vast amounts of data from various online resources in a limited time and respond to user prompts accordingly (Huang & Mizumoto, 2024; Huang & Teng, 2025; Moorhouse, 2024). This capability enables these tools to have the potential to transform many domains, such as healthcare (Alanezi, 2024), journalism (Pavlik, 2023), education (Huang & Zou, 2024; Li, 2024), language teaching and learning (Hao et al., 2024; Wan & Moorhouse, 2024), and translation (Sahari et al., 2023).

Digital technologies, especially GenAI tools, have already been applied to facilitate advancements in many fields (Huang, 2024; Huang & Liu, 2024). In education, for instance, GenAI tools are increasingly used to assist teaching and learning in schools and educational institutions, receiving overall positive feedback from both teachers and students (Huang et al., 2024; Yang et al., 2024). Students utilize GenAI tools to generate individualized feedback on their essays, brainstorm ideas, check grammar, and search for information (Moorhouse et al., 2024b), which is more convenient than peer feedback or teacher feedback (Wu et al., 2023). In the domain of translation, GenAI tools are regarded as effective aids for translation tasks (Zhang et al., 2025). Many scholars suggest that the application of GenAI tools could potentially transform traditional machine translation (Fu & Liu, 2024). Although traditional commercial translation tools offer instant translation, they have limitations such as limited context-specific translation, lack of personalized support, and inadequate post-editing capabilities (Tian, 2024). These limitations can be addressed by integrating GenAI tools into translation practices. In addition to providing immediate translation, GenAI offers contextualized and individualized translations and facilitates post-editing by allowing users to input follow-up requirements (Moorhouse et al., 2024a; Moreno García & Mangiron, 2024). Given the recent increased application of GenAI tools in translation and their potential to transform translation teaching, learning, and practices, it is crucial to explore student translators' experiences and perspectives of using these tools. However, to the best of our knowledge, there is a scarcity of empirical studies investigating students' experiences and perspectives regarding GenAI-supported translation. Therefore, this study aims to conduct a qualitative case study to explore students' perceptions of using GenAI to assist in translation practices.

This study can contribute to the current limited understanding of the benefits and challenges of GenAI-assisted translation from the perspective of student translators. It also deepens our context-specific knowledge of the types of support that translation programs can offer to help students overcome difficulties and utilize GenAI tools more effectively, making them more

competitive in the future GenAI-centric labor market. The findings can raise awareness among school leaders and program directors about the importance and benefits of applying GenAI tools in translation instruction and practices, enabling them to refine current AI policies to support the use of GenAI tools in translation education.

Literature Review

Empowerment of Generative AI in Translation

Recent studies have suggested that GenAI tools such as ChatGPT can demonstrate similar or even higher capability in translating texts into various target languages in comparison with traditional commercial translation tools such as Google Translate, which may have significant impacts on the future development of the translation industry (Huang & Sun, 2023; Lee, 2024; Moreno García, 2024). A comparative study conducted by Gao et al. (2024) tested the translating capability of DeepL, Google Translate (representing machine translation tools), and ChatGPT (representing GenAI tools). They found that when users provide ChatGPT with clear and accurate prompts, the quality of the translation results can be comparable to or even surpass that of traditional machine translation tools. Another benefit of GenAI tools in translation is their ability for contextualization. These tools can generate translations that are contextually appropriate based on the requirements specified in the prompts. Furthermore, the translations can be refined and enhanced through an iterative and interactive prompting process — something that traditional translation tools are unable to achieve (Lee, 2024). Furthermore, Gao et al. (2024) revealed that the translation quality of GenAI tools such as ChatGPT can be dramatically enhanced if the users can provide them with clear and well-developed prompts by engaging in several rounds of interactive prompting process. Therefore, some scholars (e.g., Moorhouse et al., 2025) have begun to explore the components of effective prompts and GenAI interactions with the purpose of optimizing the potential of GenAI tools.

Moreover, Fu and Liu (2024) investigated the lexical and syntactical linguistic features of translated texts produced by GenAI tools and human translators using translation tasks from English to Chinese. The findings revealed significant differences in translation performance between GenAI tools and human translators in two aspects. Human translators exhibited a lower level of lexical diversity, while GenAI tools generally demonstrated a higher level of lexical diversity and more accurate use of terminologies across different disciplines. Additionally, sentences produced by human translators tended to be longer on average compared to those generated by GenAI tools. However, human translators excelled in comprehending and translating lengthy and complex sentences into concise and readable text. These results suggest that GenAI tools and human translators are complementary; GenAI tools can assist human translators in achieving more satisfactory translation performance.

Limitations and Concerns of Generative AI in Translation

Despite the significant potential and benefits of GenAI tools in translation, as highlighted by numerous scholars, it is essential to acknowledge the limitations and concerns associated with their use in translation practices. For instance, some studies have indicated that translated texts produced by GenAI tools tend to exhibit similar writing patterns and language structures, which are distinct from those of human-translated passages (Barrot, 2023; Sahari et al., 2023). Additionally, due to the diverse linguistic features across different disciplines, GenAI tools have been found to perform more satisfactorily in domains such as business, law, and technology, while their performance is less satisfactory in areas like literary translation (Ayvazyan et al., 2024). Concerns have been raised about the potential risk of information leakage when

uploading original texts into GenAI tools (Gupta et al., 2023). Many researchers worry that translated texts generated by GenAI might include biased, unethical, or culturally and politically sensitive information due to the limitations of its training data (Giannakos et al., 2024; Golda et al., 2024).

Additionally, numerous studies have suggested that GenAI tools' capability in translating low-resource languages is relatively unsatisfactory because of limited training data (Bishop et al., 2024; Kornacki & Pietrzak, 2024). For example, Gao et al. (2024) compared the translation quality of GenAI tools, such as ChatGPT, with traditional machine translation tools and revealed that the translation capabilities of GenAI tools largely depend on the availability of training data, with significant differences observed between high-resource and low-resource languages. Consequently, many scholars emphasize the necessity of developing critical and evaluative awareness when applying GenAI tools to assist translation practices to avoid over-reliance on these tools (Pym & Hao, 2025; Ye, 2024; Zhang et al., 2024). Overall, despite the many advantages of GenAI tools - such as comparable or superior translation capabilities compared to traditional commercial translation tools, contextualized translations, better lexical diversity, and more accurate use of terminologies - there are also significant challenges. These include potential information leakage, biased information, unethical content, and unsatisfactory performance in translating low-resource languages (Hockly, 2023). Therefore, it is crucial for teachers to inform students about both the capabilities and limitations of GenAI tools in translation, enabling them to make informed and critical decisions when using these tools.

To date, due to the rapid development and increased utilization of GenAI in translation practices worldwide, understanding student translators' perceived benefits, challenges, and desired support mechanisms has become increasingly important. The tremendous potential of GenAI to reform translation education and practices underscores the need for understanding this matter further. However, research into students' experiences and perceptions of GenAI-assisted translation remains underexplored. Therefore, the current study employed an exploratory case study to understand students' perceived benefits and difficulties in applying GenAI tools in the translation process, by exploring their experiences and perceptions of GenAI-assisted translation at a Hong Kong university. Furthermore, even though some studies have revealed difficulties student translators experienced in using GenAI tools in supporting their translation process (e.g., Barrot, 2023; Sahari et al., 2023), little is known about what kinds of support students expect to obtain from the translation programs and courses (Chan & Hu, 2023). Therefore, this study also investigated the suggestions students want to make to their program directors and teachers to improve the development of future translation curricula and help them in using GenAI tools for translation purposes more effectively. Accordingly, two research questions were proposed:

- RQ1:** What do translation students perceive to be the benefits and limitations in using GenAI tools to support the translation process?
- RQ2:** What suggestions do translation students have for the development of future translation programs to help them use GenAI tools to support the translation processes?

The current study can enrich our understanding of students' perceptions regarding the benefits and limitations of GenAI-assisted translation within the context of Hong Kong. Additionally, the findings can provide valuable insights to translation instructors and program directors about the limitations of GenAI tools and the supportive mechanisms students prefer. These

insights could help refine current program structures and ultimately enable students to achieve more satisfying translation performance in the future.

Methodology

Research Design and Context

Given that the overarching purpose of qualitative research is to comprehend how individuals interpret and make sense of their lives and experiences (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016), a qualitative exploratory case study (Yin, 2003) was employed to obtain a comprehensive understanding of Hong Kong university students' experiences and perceptions of GenAI-assisted translation, particularly their perceived benefits, challenges, and the suggestions for development of translation program. A case study was applied in the current study for several reasons. First, a case study is well-suited for understanding intricate social phenomena when current theories fail to sufficiently explain emerging issues (Yin, 2003). Second, considering that the integration of GenAI tools in translation learning and practices is largely reliant on the specific social setting, a case study can be used to scrutinize the particular situations of a certain context (Yin, 2003). The current study was implemented at a Hong Kong public university. The Bachelor of Arts (BA) in translation and interpreting program and Master of Arts (MA) in translation and interpreting translation program offered by this university were found as two of the most well-recognized programs in terms of translating capability in the Great China area (Beijing Foreign Studies University National Translation Capability Research Center, 2024). Further, the translation programs at this university provided students with an extensive training opportunity to develop both conventional translation skills and GenAI-assisted translation skills. Therefore, students in translation programs at the university should have a holistic understanding of the issue investigated in the current study.

Sampling and Participants

Purposive sampling was applied to select the participants for the present study. Invitation information was posted to WeChat Moments, one of the most popular social networking platforms in China, to locate the qualified participants. In order to present diverse backgrounds and improve the representativeness of the findings, the current study applied several sampling criteria for the in-depth interview, including gender, study status, translation working experiences (including both full- and part-time), and frequency of using GenAI to assist translation. The demographics of the interviewees were presented in Table 1. As seen in Table 1, two were identified as male, and four were identified as female. Their translation experiences ranged from 1 to 6 years. Participants reported that they “often” or “always” used GenAI tools to support their translation practices, which means that were more likely to have a holistic understanding of the benefits and limitations of GenAI-assisted translation and offer insightful suggestions for the future development of the translation program to address the research questions.

Data Collection Tool and Process

In-depth interviews can help the researcher discover and understand individuals' perspectives of certain issues or specific circumstances/events they have experienced (Mears, 2021). Therefore, in-depth interviews were utilized as the instrument to collect data. After reviewing the previous articles regarding the application of GenAI tools in assisting translation learning and practices, an interview guide was purposefully designed, which comprised three main sections: (1) general experiences with GenAI-assisted translation; (2) benefits and limitations

Table 1 Demographic information of interviewees.

#	Pseudonym	Gender	Study status	Translation working experience (Full/Part time)	Frequency of using GenAI to assist translation
1	Olivia	Female	Bachelor of Arts (BA) in translation and interpreting student	Freelancer; 3 years	Always
2	Mike	Male	Master of Arts (MA) in translation and interpreting student	Freelancer; 5 years	Always
3	Crystal	Female	Master of Arts (MA) in translation and interpreting student	Freelancer; 6 years	Often
4	Joey	Female	Master of Arts (MA) in translation and interpreting student	Freelancer; 3 years	Always
5	David	Male	Bachelor of Arts (BA) in translation and interpreting student	Freelancer; 1 years	Always
6	Maggie	Female	Master of Arts (MA) in translation and interpreting student	Freelancer; 2 years	Often

of GenAI-assisted translation; and (3) suggestions for the development of future translation programs. All questions in the initial interview guide were reviewed by the three teammates and revised accordingly, which could strengthen its clarity and relevance (Naz et al., 2022). The final interview guide was presented in the Appendix. In addition to the questions included in the interview guide, the researcher also asked some follow-up questions based on the interviewees' real-time answers so as to have a more nuanced understanding of the interviewees' experiences and viewpoints (Mears, 2021).

Participants were told that they could use Chinese (First Language (L1)) or English (Second Language (L2)) during the interview, depending on their preference. In-depth interviews were

implemented in person in a reserved classroom, and each interview lasted between 50 to 65 minutes. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed into written transcripts. In order to enhance the credibility of the findings, “member check” was implemented by inviting the participants to read the transcripts and allow them to verify whether their real meanings were reported in the interview (McKim, 2023).

Data Analysis

The current study employed the 6-phase thematic analysis developed by Braun and Clarke (2006) to analyze the data. This is because thematic analysis has been widely applied to code qualitative data in the fields of education and translation and is conducive to obtaining in-depth information from the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). According to Braun and Clarke (2006), there are six phases involved in thematic analysis, which comprises “familiarizing with data”, “generating initial codes”, “searching for themes”, “reviewing themes”, “defining and naming themes”, and “producing the report” (Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.87). Specifically, the researcher read and re-read the interview transcripts several times and then translated the Chinese manuscript into English manually, during which the researcher became familiar with the data. Then, the researcher coded the interview transcripts, and many initial codes were constructed from the data. These codes were inductively organized and categorized into several themes by using Maxwell and Miller’s (2008) categorizing and connecting strategies. Then, the themes and codes were reviewed and refined to ensure that the codes were aligned with the themes and the themes were consistent with the overall datasets. Later, the researcher named the themes to ensure that they reflect the meanings of the overall datasets. The finalized main themes and sub-themes were illustrated in Figures 1, 2, and 3. Some representative quotes were selected to be reported and discussed in the study.

Ethics

The researchers began conducting the fieldwork for this research after the ethics application has been approved by the Human Research Ethics Committee of Hong Kong Baptist University. Participants had read and signed the informed consent before they participated in the in-depth interviews. Participants were informed that participation in this study was totally voluntary, and they could opt out of this study at any time point without any negative consequences. The participants were informed that pseudonyms would be used to ensure their privacy and confidentiality.

Findings

Perceived Benefits of GenAI-supported Translation

Thematic analysis of the data from in-depth interviews revealed that there were four overarching benefits participants found when they incorporated GenAI tools into the translation processes, including increased translation efficiency, high translation capabilities in some domains, supportive functions for translation practices, and emotional support (see Figure 1).

Participants recognized that GenAI tools can offer many benefits to translation practices. They could effectively increase participants’ translation efficiency since these tools were timesaving and energy-saving and could reduce their workload in terms of translation tasks. For example, during the interview, Joey mentioned that GenAI tools could assist her in finishing translation tasks more quickly. Similarly, Teddy said, “*I think GenAI tools are quite helpful. They save plenty of time and energy for me.*” Participants suggested that GenAI tools were recognized to have excellent translation capabilities in some domains, such as law, technologies, and

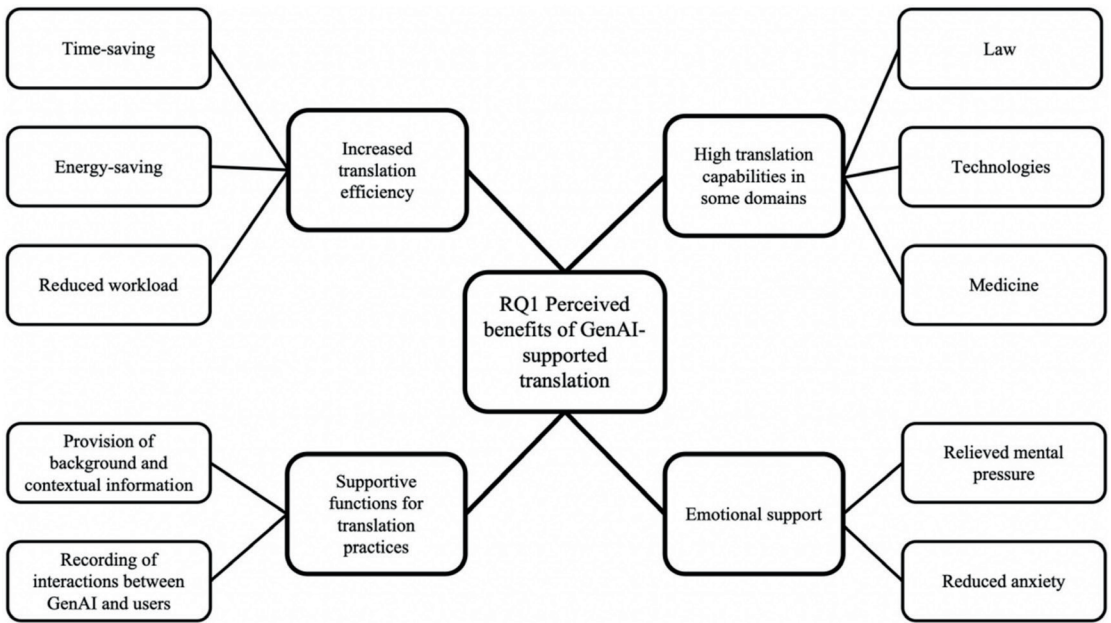


Figure 1 Perceived benefits of GenAI-supported translation.

medicine. Crystal claimed that “*Actually, GenAI tools can tackle the translation tasks in a wide range of fields. For example, it is great for GenAI tools to process technical texts such as technologies, medicine, and even law.*” Further, Kelly elaborated on this point in the interview, pointing out:

GenAI tools indeed perform well since these tools are capable of distinguishing genres, tones, and registers involved in the texts to be translated. Due to this reason, the translation provided by GenAI tools are overall accurate. (Kelly, interview, November 23, 2024)

Participants suggested that GenAI tools offered some supportive functions, which can facilitate users’ translation practices. GenAI tools are helpful in offering background and contextual information for their translation. As mentioned by Maggie, “*GenAI tools can help me supplement background knowledge*” and “*These tools will provide me with the corresponding answers as long as I ask them.*” Moreover, participants indicated that the logs of previous interactions between GenAI tools and users were recorded, and this could enable them to translate texts in similar fields in a more efficient way in the future. For instance, in the interview, Maggie argued that,

Another advantage of GenAI tools is that these tools can store the previously used vocabulary and translated texts. For translators, it is actually quite important to develop our own vocabulary list. If I encounter similar texts in the future, I can re-use the vocabulary and background knowledge previously stored in GenAI tools, which can help me dramatically reduce the time spent on reading and translating the original texts into the target language. (Maggie, interview, November 23, 2024)

Emotional support during the translation process was constructed as another salient benefit offered by GenAI tools. It was found that GenAI tools can mitigate participants' mental stress towards translation tasks as well. For example, David mentioned, *"It is sometimes difficult to complete translation tasks within a limited time period if we are solely dependent on our own ability."* Therefore, *"In this situation, to finish the task in time, I sought support from GenAI tools, and this certainly relieved my mental pressure."* In addition, GenAI tools could help participants reduce their anxious feeling that occurred in the pre-translation stage. Teddy explained this point in detail during the interview,

Personally, GenAI can alleviate my anxiety. As a translator, the most difficult time for me in a day is at the beginning phase when I open an empty word document. ... I feel threatened and confused when I look at this empty document. Although GenAI tools such as ChatGPT may include various problems, the instant assistance by GenAI offers huge emotional values and support to me. (Teddy, interview, November 24, 2024)

Perceived Difficulties and Limitations of GenAI-supported Translation

The findings of thematic analysis suggested several difficulties and limitations of applying GenAI tools in translation (see Figure 2). Participants indicated that GenAI tools had restricted translation performance in many aspects. For instance, Kelly, Teddy, and Crystal mentioned that the quality of GenAI outputs for literary translation was unsatisfactory. Kelly attributed this to the fact that *"GenAI tools are unfamiliar with the localized language expressions and cultures in the target novels."* Furthermore, GenAI tools were reported to have limited ability to offer context-specific translation and sometimes failed to recognize the implicit logical relationships within the texts. Joey mentioned that:

Although GenAI tools such as ChatGPT have an awareness of contextualization and localization, they still make mistakes sometimes. And it is challenging for GenAI to deal with implicit logical relationships. For example, 'and' can also indicate a casual relationship sometimes, but ChatGPT cannot identify it because this is too minor. (Joey, interview, November 24, 2024)

Participants indicated that they found that the translated texts produced by GenAI sometimes included omitted or added sentence(s) in comparison with the original texts, which could affect the original meanings. Further, Joey said, *"Information provided by GenAI for supporting translation might have inaccurate content, and this is likely to mislead potential readers."* Moreover, it is found that GenAI tools were more competent in translating English texts. Kelly stated that *"The translation accuracy is higher for English than other languages such as Chinese, my first language."* Additionally, it is necessary for users to spend time and energy to develop quality prompt skills, which is crucial for using GenAI tools effectively. For instance, Kelly suggested that *"It needs time and energy to grasp how to interact with GenAI, such as how to refine the prompt based on its response."*

Concerns about the potential risks of information leakage are raised by participants. As a response to this situation, Kelly said,

Some translation tasks require me to sign a confidentiality agreement, and thus I will not use GenAI tools for help since there are risks of leaking

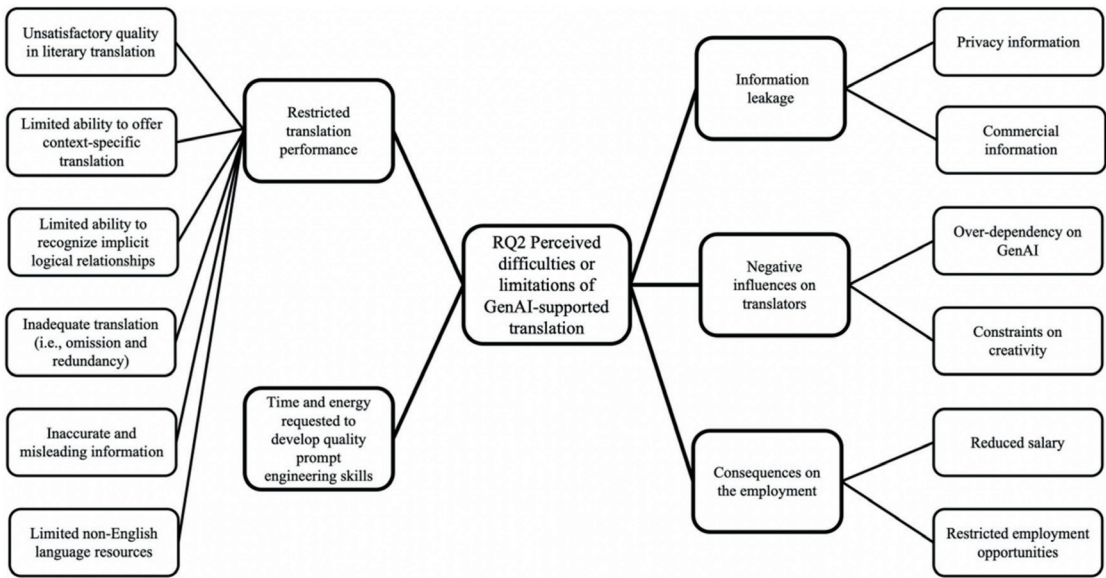


Figure 2 Perceived difficulties of GenAI-supported translation.

information. However, if I have to use GenAI tools, I will delete the confidential information included in the materials before uploading them to GenAI tools. (Kelly, interview, November 23, 2024)

Negative influences on translators, such as over-reliance on GenAI and constraints on creativity, were identified. For example, David was worried about the constraints of using GenAI on creativity, mentioning, “*I will definitely not use GenAI tools like ChatGPT in literal translation such as translating fiction or short stories because I think that they will limit my own creativity.*” Furthermore, the application of GenAI tools caused consequences on employment including the possibility of a reduced salary. Teddy explained this point in detail in the interview, arguing that “*GenAI tools saved a lot of time and energy for us. However, many of our clients have begun to discuss reducing my salary because they know the existence of these GenAI tools.*” Furthermore, participants suggested that GenAI tools have replaced the jib positions of some translators.

Suggestions for the Development of Translation Programs

During the in-depth interviews, participants proposed many suggestions for future translation programs to help them develop the competencies to effectively use GenAI tools to support the translation process, which were categorized into four main themes (see Figure 3).

First, translation programs were advised to implement GenAI-incorporated translation courses. Participants mentioned that GenAI tools can be integrated into the existing translation courses. For example, David claimed that:

I think it will be helpful for translators and students to use GenAI tools during the translation process more accurately and efficiently if the instructions of GenAI tools can be integrated into the classroom. (David, interview, November 23, 2024)

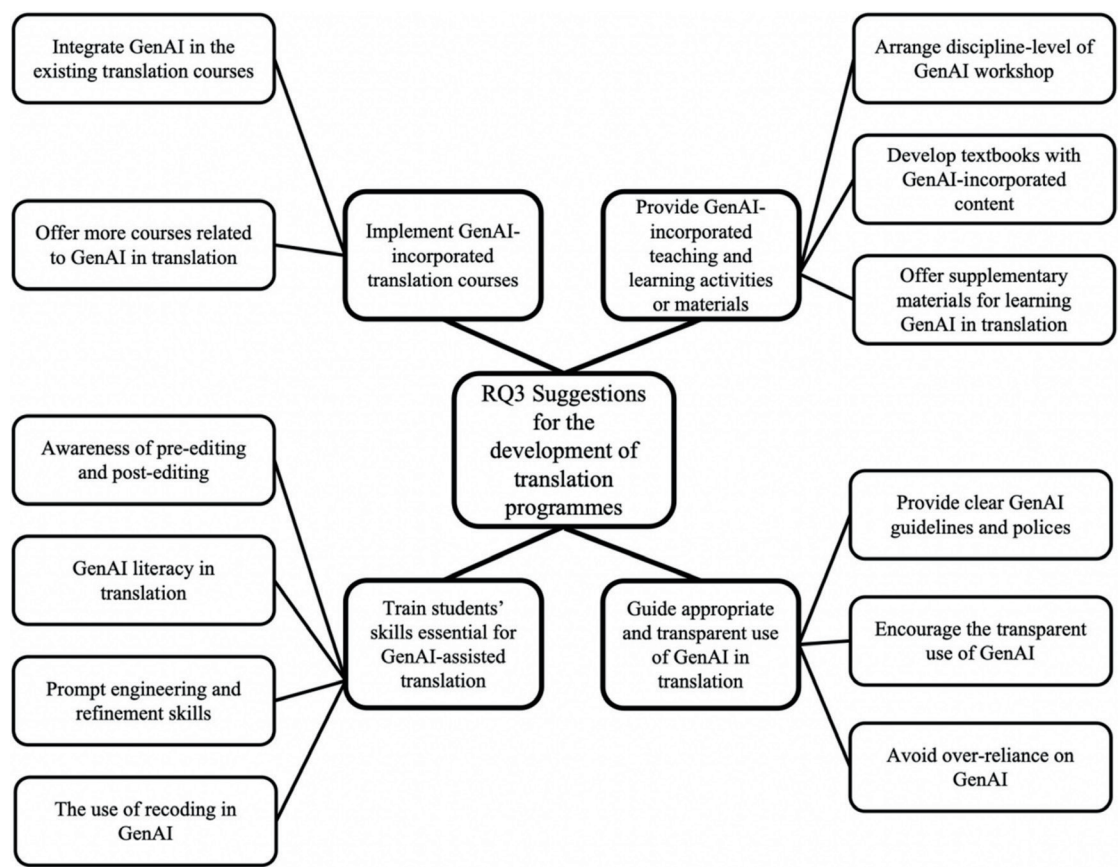


Figure 3 Suggestions for the development of translation programs.

Second, Kelly believed that “*I feel that the current courses related to the application of GenAI tools in the translation are indeed not enough,*” and therefore she suggested that more courses pertinent to the application of GenAI tools in translation can be provided. Second, participants suggested that the program should provide GenAI-incorporated teaching and learning activities or materials, and this can be achieved in various ways. Maggie argued that university-level GenAI workshops may not be suitable and cannot cover students’ needs in different disciplines since “*the use of GenAI is too broad.*” In contrast, a potential solution to this issue was illustrated by Teddy, who stated that each department can arrange “discipline-level and domain-specific” workshops so as to offer students from different discipline backgrounds more tailored instructions. Participants also believed that there is a necessity to develop textbooks including teaching and learning materials related to GenAI-supported translation. For example, Teddy argued that:

We can develop a specialized textbook with components of GenAI in translation, and for example, it can include teaching how to apply “pre-editing” and “post-editing” before and after using GenAI to support translation practices. (Teddy, interview, November 24, 2024)

It was suggested that teachers should provide students with supplementary materials for them to independently learn GenAI in translation after class. Teddy said, “*If I am the instructor,*

I will provide some supplement reading materials and documents,” and he indicated that these might include some self-learning materials such as *“TED lectures”* or *“website links for YouTube videos”* about using GenAI tools.

Third, it was advised that translation teachers should cultivate students' skills essential for effectively using GenAI tools to support their translation practices. According to participants' responses during the interviews, they emphasized four skills or techniques that were helpful for GenAI-supported translation, namely the awareness of pre-editing and post-editing, GenAI literacy in translation, prompt engineering and refinement skills, and the use of logs recorded in GenAI tools. Teddy pointed out the importance of pre-editing and post-editing, mentioning that *“I usually edit those implicit logical relationships or those difficult words in the original texts before using GenAI”* and *“I will conduct post-editing for two to three times to confirm and refine the translated texts provided by GenAI.”*

The development of GenAI literacy in translation was stressed by David, who argued that *“Translators should have the awareness to enhance their ability and GenAI literacy in translation.”* All participants realized the importance of prompt engineering and refinement skills. Maggie stated, *“I think prompting refinements are effective ... I constantly refine my prompts because this is also a learning process when interacting with them (GenAI tools).”* In addition, Kelly suggested the use of logs recorded in the GenAI tools and pointed out that *“My current teachers for translation technologies have not yet explored the potential of the logs in GenAI.”*

Fourth, participants believed that it was necessary for teachers to guide them about the appropriate and transparent use of GenAI tools in translation practices. They argued that programs and teachers should provide clear guidelines and policies about using GenAI in translation practices. Maggie explained this point, stating that:

I hope teachers can tell us about the bottom line of GenAI use and dos and don'ts. In what situations it will be treated as plagiarism and in what situations it will not. Many students are afraid to use GenAI because they are worried about the potential risks of being treated as academic misconduct and then receiving an investigation email, failing the course, and even being dismissed from the program. (Maggie, interview, November 24, 2024)

Participants believed that teachers should encourage the transparent use of GenAI tools and avoid over-dependency. Teddy explained this point in the interview: *“Although most universities in Hong Kong have required students to fill in the AI declaration form on the cover page of the assignments, I guess many students are still not fully transparent.”* Furthermore, Joey also suggested that values be developed in order to *“use GenAI to assist our translation”*, and that we *“should not be over-reliant on these tools.”*

Discussion

The current study provided valuable insights into students' experiences and perspectives of using GenAI tools to support their translation tasks and practices in the context of Hong Kong, which made responses to Fu and Liu's (2024) call for empirical studies to investigate this issue. According to the findings of the study, participants were generally positive about the utilization of GenAI tools in assisting translation, which is consistent with the findings of Kornacki and Pietrzak (2024). However, even though participants have mentioned many advantages of GenAI-supported translation (see Figure 1), a number of difficulties or limitations of GenAI-supported translation were also suggested during the semi-structured interviews (see Figure 2), which aligns with the findings of previous studies (Barrot, 2023; Bishop et al., 2024; Giannakos

et al., 2024; Gupta et al., 2023; Sahari et al., 2023). The study also revealed many suggestions for the future development of translation programs from students' perspectives, which could enable students to develop the essential skills to effectively use GenAI tools to support their translation process. This addressed the current pressing need proposed by Chan and Hu (2023) for teachers and schools to implement supportive measures to help students use GenAI tools to assist translation in an effective and appropriate way. Furthermore, the findings resonate with the three-dimensional framework of GenAI in Education proposed by Chan and Hu (2023), which comprises pedagogical, governance, and operational dimensions.

Pedagogically, it is crucial to emphasize the affordances, limitations, and ethical considerations associated with the application and integration of GenAI tools in translation education and practices. The current study identified numerous benefits and challenges related to the use of GenAI tools in translation, highlighting the need to incorporate such knowledge into the translation training and curricula. By implementing this, students can become capable of leveraging the advantages of GenAI tools and mitigating their limitations during the translation process. This is also conducive to fostering more effective and ethical translation practices. To be specific, the study demonstrated that GenAI tools can enhance translation efficiency by saving time/energy and reducing students' workload. This aligns with Moorhouse's (2024) observation that GenAI tools provide 24/7 support without any constraints in terms of time and geographical location. These tools can generate real-time feedback for revising the translations uploaded and improving the quality. Students can even ask GenAI to justify the rationales behind the revisions. This enables them to understand the translation knowledge pertinent to making these changes as well as identify potential reasons for mistranslations by the GenAI tool. Furthermore, this can help students recognize the limitations of their current translation skills so that they can avoid similar mistakes in their future translation practices. However, the content generated by GenAI may also include unreliable and inaccurate information (Giannakos et al., 2024; Golda et al., 2024). Therefore, as highlighted by Pym and Hao (2025), it is crucial for students to critically evaluate the feedback and revisions made by GenAI tools. Running translation tasks through multiple GenAI tools may be one way to help verify the quality and accuracy of the translations. Selecting tools based on their capabilities and features is also important. Some tools are better than others at translating into different languages, depending on their source and training data and algorithms. Students can try different tools and see which one works best for their translation tasks (Moorhouse, 2024).

Furthermore, the findings indicated that students believe GenAI tools possess a high level of translation proficiency across various domains. This proficiency is attributed to GenAI tools' access to extensive pre-trained datasets and information from diverse sources, enabling them to effectively translate texts in fields such as business, law, medicine, and technology (Ayvazyan et al., 2024; Pym & Hao, 2025). This capability also underpins the powerful affordance of GenAI tools in providing background and contextual information for translations. Nevertheless, although GenAI tools such as ChatGPT excel at translating texts for some disciplines, the participants also reported that they found the quality of literary translation provided by GenAI tools was more likely to be unsatisfactory according to their previous translation experiences. The reason for the limited literary translation of GenAI may be attributed to the fact that literary translation needs translators to process both the linguistic meanings and stylistic issues (Boase-Beier, 2014), whereas the latter was challenging for digital technologies, including GenAI tools.

The provision of a motivated and non-judgmental environment is crucial for students' academic progress (Huang & Wu, 2022). An empirical study conducted by Alanezi (2024) at a university in Saudi Arabia showed that over half of the participants believed that GenAI tools

could provide emotional support to users since they could offer a non-judgmental environment for users to express their opinions. Similarly, in the field of translation reported in this study, participants reported that the use of GenAI tools can provide students with emotional support by relieving their mental pressure and anxiety during the process of translation.

However, GenAI tools may generate inadequate translations, misinterpreting or omitting some information from the original texts. This highlights the importance for translators to verify the translations offered by GenAI tools to ensure their accuracy and adequacy. Participants expressed concerns about the potential leakage of private and commercial information, aligning with previous findings (Gupta et al., 2023). Beyond information leakage, the risks of intellectual property infringement, and the evaluation of sensitive, ethical, and political information should also be carefully considered when using GenAI tools in the translation process (Giannakos et al., 2024).

The current study revealed that translations provided by GenAI tend to be less contextualized than human translated texts. Translated texts generated by GenAI may not fully capture the nuances of the original texts or adequately reflect differences in languages, cultures, and ethics (Pym & Hao, 2025). However, this contrasts with the findings of Lee (2024), who suggested that GenAI can offer contextualized translations by revising them based on user prompts. This capability, however, requires users to possess sufficient prompt engineering skills to effectively fine-tune the translations (Moorhouse et al., 2025). This highlights the importance of developing prompt engineering skills to achieve more accurate and contextualized translations. However, the current study found that it was challenging and time-consuming to learn prompt engineering skills, which may influence the translation quality. Therefore, student translators should have the awareness of enhancing their own prompt engineering skills by considering the task-specific prompting practices they need to be able to effectively use GenAI tools for translation (Zhang et al., 2025).

In addition, Ye (2024) found that many translation students believed that although GenAI tools can be applied to facilitate their translation, they were concerned about becoming over-reliant on these tools. Recent studies have shown that over-reliance on GenAI tools can lead to several negative consequences, including restricted creativity, diminished information-seeking ability, reduced capacity for information judgment, and an increased risk of copyright infringement (e.g., Zhang et al., 2024). Therefore, teachers should guide students to critically analyze the benefits and negative impacts of GenAI on their translation practices, cultivating students' agency to use GenAI to assist their translation tasks and practices in an appropriate way.

The findings suggested that another challenge caused by the application of GenAI tools in the field of translation was that many translators struggled to face its adverse impacts on their employment, which was primarily represented by reduced salary and decreased employment opportunities for translators. Nonetheless, it should be acknowledged that the increasing utilization of GenAI tools to assist in completing translation is an irreversible trend. Therefore, students should not resist the use of GenAI but adapt to this trend by developing their own GenAI literacy in translation so that they can use GenAI tools to facilitate their translation efficiency and quality. This will keep their competitiveness in the future job market.

The findings suggested that the students have put forth many recommendations for translation programs by integrating GenAI tools to support their translation practices from the perspectives of governance and operation. At the governance level, it is imperative for educational institutions to develop explicit policies and guidance regarding the use of GenAI in response to its rapid development and huge potential (Chan & Hu, 2023). Higher education institutions, as well as translation-related industries, should critically evaluate and refine their

institutional policies and guidelines to account for the development of AI. Translation programs in particular can benefit from establishing guidelines and policies tailored to the specific requirements of translation activities. This could allow students/translators to make informed decisions about the appropriate use of GenAI tools in their translation tasks and assignments, thereby enhancing their learning outcomes and professional competencies.

At the operational level, the integration of GenAI-assisted translation into the curriculum necessitates careful consideration, given that technical competency is a fundamental skill for translators (Chan & Hu, 2023). Translation programs and educators are encouraged to offer a diverse range of educational resources, including courses and instructional materials that incorporate GenAI tools. By incorporating GenAI into teaching and learning activities, students will be better equipped to comprehend and proficiently employ these tools in their translation studies and practices. In other words, their GenAI literacy within the context of translation can be enhanced. GenAI literacy refers to the individuals' competencies to utilize the advantages of GenAI tools and alleviate the limitations with ethical awareness through effective iterative prompt engineering and critical evaluation and adaptation of GenAI-generated content (Ma et al., 2024). It is crucial for translation programs and teachers to develop students' GenAI literacy in translation since the integration of GenAI technologies into translation programs and courses has been recognized as an important trend by researchers and educators (Zhang et al., 2025), and graduates who are incapable of using digital tools to facilitate their translation might be at a disadvantaged position in their future career. Therefore, it is necessary for teachers to incorporate the element of GenAI literacy in translation into their regular translation training sessions, which could have positive influences on their future development (Zhang et al., 2025).

The training involved in the conventional translation programs was primarily related to teachers' explicit instructions about vocabulary, grammatical knowledge, translation theories, and translation skills (Zhao et al., 2024). However, with the favorable affordance of GenAI tools to translation, participants indicated that GenAI-incorporated translation courses should be implemented (Zhao et al., 2024). Teachers should teach students about how to select the right GenAI tools to support their translation process. Further, the application of GenAI tools can be included in the existing in-class teaching activities. For example, GenAI could be used to generate differentiated translation practices for different students according to their own translation abilities, which could ensure that each student receives practicing opportunities with the appropriate difficulty to improve learning effectiveness and outcomes.

The importance of pre- and post-editing skills when using GenAI tools should be emphasized since these skills can help students finish their translation tasks more efficiently and accurately. Students should pre-edit the source language to improve the readability of original texts for GenAI tools, such as converting the implicit logical meanings to be more explicit and replacing those obscure words with more comprehensible ones (Zhang et al., 2025). If they are unsatisfied with the translation output from GenAI, they should try to refine their prompts to optimize the translations generated by GenAI. Later, students should perform as reviewers and proofreaders to evaluate and edit the GenAI-generated translation to improve its readability, accuracy, fluency, and cultural adaptability. In addition, an increasing number of universities have arranged GenAI workshops to help students learn how to use GenAI tools to facilitate their learning. However, as suggested by the participants in the current study, most current GenAI workshops were organized by librarians at the university level, which means the content tended to be general and was unlikely to be applicable to students from different disciplinary backgrounds. Therefore, it is encouraged that each department arrange GenAI workshops tailored to their own discipline.

Conclusion

Practical Implications

In light of the findings of the current study, there are some practical implications for translation teachers, program directors, and school leaders so as to facilitate the further development of translation programs in response to the recent increasing application of GenAI tools in the domain of translation. First, it is suggested that teachers should instruct the possible affordances and limitations of GenAI tools in supporting translation tasks, which could help students gain a more comprehensive understanding of GenAI tools so that they are capable of making informed decisions on the application in the translation process. Second, considering that this study revealed that GenAI tools excel at translating texts in some domains, such as law, technologies, and medicine, teachers were advised to encourage students to use GenAI tools to improve their translation efficiency and performance in these fields. However, the study also found that GenAI tools did not have a good performance in literacy translation, and therefore, students should be informed that they need to scrutinize the literacy translation generated by GenAI tools. Third, given that the participants argued that the use of GenAI tools may have negative impacts on students' creativity and even cause their over-reliance on these tools, teachers are advised that they should guide students to regard GenAI as an advanced assistant for translation. Students should use GenAI tools to assist them in improving translation performance rather than using GenAI to replace their work. Moreover, on account of the importance of prompting engineering suggested by the participants, teachers should integrate the training of prompting engineering skills into their translation teaching syllabus so as to help students develop these skills (see Moorhouse et al., 2025 for more suggestions for how to develop students' prompting engineering and refinement skills). Additionally, teachers should cultivate students' critical awareness of utilizing GenAI tools in supporting translation since the translated texts generated by GenAI might possibly include inaccurate information, harmful information, or inadequate content. In this case, the necessity of pre-editing and post-editing can be emphasized to help students examine and revise the potentially inappropriate content generated by GenAI. School leaders and program directors should work on releasing and constantly revising the relevant GenAI guidelines and policies so as to reflect on the rapid development of GenAI tools. Furthermore, more courses for GenAI-supported translation and additional discipline-specific GenAI workshops should be organized to develop students' GenAI literacy in using GenAI to facilitate their translation practices.

Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

The current study had several limitations. First, this study only had limited participants from one university in Hong Kong, which might limit its generalizability. Therefore, future studies are suggested to recruit more participants from different institutions in various contexts in order to present more diverse perspectives on the issue. Second, qualitative data was collected through using in-depth interviews. Although in-depth interviews were a suitable method for exploring individuals' experiences and perceptions of a complex issue or phenomenon, the use of a single data collection tool may affect the credibility of the findings. Therefore, it is advised that future studies employ a mixed-methods design to collect both quantitative and qualitative data to obtain a more holistic understanding of GenAI-assisted translation (Cohen et al., 2018). Third, because GenAI tools have been constantly developing, the benefits and limitations may also change with time. Therefore, more research can be implemented to catch up with the development of GenAI tools in the future.

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Appendix

Interview Guide

General experiences with GenAI-assisted translation

1. Which GenAI tools do you currently use to support your translation process?
2. How do you feel about these tools?
3. In what ways do you use GenAI tools to support your translation process?
4. How do you feel about the role(s) of GenAI tools play in your translation practices?

Benefits and limitations of GenAI-assisted translation

5. In your opinion, what are the advantages of using GenAI tools during the translation process?
6. In your opinion, what are the disadvantages/limitations of using GenAI tools during the translation process?
7. Do you think that the advantages of GenAI in translation outweigh the disadvantages?

Suggestions for the development of future translation program

8. Are you satisfied with translation-related courses about the use of GenAI? (e.g., about current teaching and learning, about teachers)
 - If yes, what makes you consider satisfactory? Do you think there are any parts that the program still can improve further?
 - If not, please explain what your concerns are. Do you think how the program to make changes to address these issues?
9. How should a future translation program incorporate GenAI into its courses?
10. How can the curriculum balance traditional translation skills with GenAI competencies?
11. What ethical considerations should be included in the courses when teaching about GenAI in translation?

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