STUDENTS' USE OF AI IN TRANSLATION TRAINING IN VIETNAMESE HIGHER EDUCATION: STUDENT AND INSTRUCTOR PERSPECTIVES ON BENEFITS, RISKS, AND PEDAGOGICAL CHALLENGES

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ABSTRACT — Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming increasingly visible in translation training through tools such as ChatGPT, DeepL, and Google Translate. While these tools can provide immediate support, they also raise important questions about how students use AI in translation training. This qualitative study explores how students and instructors perceive students' use of AI in translation training at three higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with fifteen students enrolled in English Language programs specializing in Translation and Interpreting, along with seven instructors. The findings reveal three main patterns. First, students and instructors view students' AI use differently: students often see AI as a practical aid for idea generation, revision, confidence building, and managing difficult assignments under time pressure, whereas instructors were more concerned that over-reliance on AI might reduce students' cognitive engagement. Second, students' AI use takes place within uneven classroom expectations and unclear assessment boundaries. Third, both groups point to a growing need for clearer guidance on responsible AI use in translation training. Drawing on constructivist learning theory and self-regulated learning, the study argues that AI should be approached as a pedagogical support tool whose value depends on how critically and responsibly it is used. Clearer guidance, stronger AI literacy, and more process-sensitive assessment are therefore needed.

Keywords—Artificial intelligence (AI); students' AI use, translation training; higher education; cognitive engagement; pedagogical challenges

I. INTRODUCTION

Artificial intelligence (AI) is becoming an increasingly visible part of translation education [1], [2]. In translation classrooms and self-practice, AI-powered tools such as ChatGPT, DeepL, and Google Translate allow students to generate draft translations, compare alternatives, and revise texts more quickly than before [3], [4]. Accordingly, these tools can provide immediate support and improve efficiency, especially when students work with difficult vocabulary, complex sentence structures, or unfamiliar topics [5], [6]. Clearly, AI is no longer a peripheral technology, but a growing part of how translation is learned and practiced.

The spread of AI raises important pedagogical questions. Translation training is not only about producing an acceptable final version of a text [7], [8]. It also involves close reading, interpretation, problem-solving, and careful justification of translation choices [2], [7], [8]. While AI may help students complete tasks faster, it has also raised concerns that students may invest less effort in these processes [4], [9]. This currently creates a central tension in translation education: AI can support learning, but it may also encourage students to rely on automated output instead of engaging deeply with the source text and their own decision-making.

These concerns are especially relevant in Vietnamese higher education, where translation training continues to be shaped by established pedagogical expectations [10], [11]. In this context, the growing presence/advancement of AI brings both pedagogical opportunities and new challenges [9], [12]. It also raises broader questions about how translation training should respond to changing technological conditions while continuing to support students' development of core translation competencies [10], [11], [13]. Against this backdrop, expectations surrounding the role and acceptable use of AI in translation training remain underdeveloped.

Although research on AI in language education and translation has expanded rapidly, limited attention has been paid to how students' use of AI in translation training is perceived, negotiated, and pedagogically managed within Vietnamese higher education. This gap is pedagogically significant because AI use in translation training is no longer only a technical issue, but also a pedagogical one that affects teaching, learning, and assessment. There is, therefore, a need for research that examines how students' use of AI is understood in translation teaching and learning, and what pedagogical challenges emerge from that use.

This study addresses that need by exploring how students and instructors perceive students' use of AI in translation training at three higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City. It examines the perceived benefits, potential risks, and pedagogical challenges associated with students' AI use, particularly in relation to classroom practice and assessment. Drawing on constructivist learning theory [7], [14] and self-regulated learning [15], the

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study approaches AI not simply as a technological tool, but as a pedagogical issue that appears to be reshaping how translation is learned, supported, and evaluated.

This study contributes a context-specific qualitative account of students' use of AI in translation training within Vietnamese higher education, where the growing presence of AI is perceived to be creating new tensions within established approaches to translation teaching and assessment. Its significance lies in contributing to current discussion on how AI should be understood and addressed in translation training, particularly in relation to learning quality, assessment, and professional alignment. In this respect, the study responds to the need to prepare Vietnamese students for an increasingly AI-mediated translation environment while still supporting the development of core translation competencies.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

A. THEORETICAL LENS: CONSTRUCTIVISM AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING

This study is informed by constructivist learning theory and self-regulated learning (SRL) theory. Constructivism views learning as an active process in which learners build understanding through engagement, interpretation, reflection, and problem-solving [14], [16]. This perspective is especially relevant to translation training because translation involves more than producing a fluent target text. Accordingly, students need to interpret meaning, consider context, compare alternatives, solve linguistic and cultural problems, and justify their choices [7], [8]. Translation competence, therefore, develops through active engagement/involvement in the translation process rather than through passive acceptance of ready-made answers [7], [8]. From this perspective, the educational value of AI depends not only on whether it makes translation tasks easier, but also on whether students continue to engage with the cognitive work translation training is intended to develop when they use AI [7], [14].

Self-regulated learning theory adds a second important dimension by focusing on how learners plan, monitor, evaluate, and adjust their own learning strategies [15], [17]. In the context of translation training, SRL is useful for understanding why students may use AI in different ways [18]. Some may use it strategically to generate ideas, compare options, or revise drafts, while others may rely on it too quickly without sufficient checking or reflection. SRL, therefore, helps explain personal variation in how students approach AI-supported translation tasks, especially in terms of trust, revision, verification, and dependence [18]. It also helps explain how students make decisions about using AI in response to different learning conditions and perceived challenges. Constructivism and SRL together support an analysis of students' AI use in translation training from both cognitive and pedagogical perspectives. Constructivism highlights the importance of meaning-making, close reading, and justified decision-making in translation training [8], [14], while SRL helps explain how students manage AI as a learning resource under different task conditions [15], [17]. These frameworks make it possible to examine AI not simply as a technological aid, but as a factor that may both support and influence the learning processes involved in translation training.

B. AI IN TRANSLATION TRAINING: EMERGING ROLES AND PEDAGOGICAL POTENTIAL

AI is becoming increasingly important in translation training through the use of machine translation systems and generative AI tools [4], [6], [19]. In educational contexts, tools such as DeepL, Google Translate, and ChatGPT can support draft production, meaning clarification, wording choices, and revision [3], [4]. Accordingly, they can provide immediate linguistic support and reduce the difficulty of producing an initial translation, especially for learners who struggle with vocabulary, syntax, or expression [1], [20]. AI is, therefore, influencing multiple stages of the translation process rather than functioning only as a source of target-language output [4], [6].

This development reflects wider changes in professional translation, where AI-assisted workflows and post-editing are becoming more common [1], [5]. Translation training is then increasingly expected to prepare students for a profession in which technological competence matters alongside core linguistic and translational competence [2], [5], [6]. The current literature, therefore, positions AI not only as a reflection of changing professional practice, but also as a pedagogical resource that can support learning in translation education [4], [6].

C. PEDAGOGICAL AND ASSESSMENT CHALLENGES IN AI-ASSISTED TRANSLATION TRAINING

Although AI offers useful support in translation training, the current literature also highlights several pedagogical concerns [4], [6]. A common concern is that students may rely on AI-generated output too quickly, revise only at a surface level, and engage less deeply with source texts and translation problems [2], [20]. Under such conditions, scholars have warned that AI may reduce the close reading, comparison, and problem-solving that translation training is meant to develop [2], [9].

More broadly, existing scholarship suggests that the educational implications of AI remain contested [4], [6], [9], [21]. Some studies emphasize its value for supporting learning and reflecting current professional practice,

whereas others draw attention to risks related to dependence, originality, and the quality of learner engagement [2], [4], [9], [21]. This debate points to the need for clearer pedagogical thinking about how AI should be positioned in translation training and how AI-assisted work should be understood and assessed in educational settings [3], [9], [22].

Assessment presents a further challenge in AI-assisted translation training [23], [24]. In translation education, evaluation has often focused on the final product, but the growing use of AI complicates judgments about how far that product represents the learner's own reasoning and effort [2], [25]. Scholars have increasingly called for more process-sensitive approaches to assessment, such as reflective writing, draft comparison, and oral explanation of translation decisions [2], [25], [26]. Overall, these concerns suggest that AI in translation training needs to be considered not only in terms of efficiency and support, but also in relation to its implications for pedagogy and assessment [22], [27], [28].

D. TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING TRAINING IN VIETNAMESE HIGHER EDUCATION

In Vietnamese higher education, Translation and Interpreting is commonly taught within English Language programs rather than as a fully separate disciplinary track. Within this context, translation training has often emphasized teacher guidance, textual analysis, linguistic accuracy, and evaluation of the final product [10], [11], [29], [30], [31]. Universities are increasingly expected to prepare students for professional environments shaped by digital tools and AI-assisted translation practices [9], [30], [31]. This creates a particular challenge for translation training in Vietnam: students need to develop technological awareness and responsible AI use while still strengthening the close reading, critical judgment, and decision-making that core translation competence requires [29], [31], [32]. More broadly, the growing presence of AI places additional pressure on existing teaching and assessment practices, which were not originally designed for AI-mediated learning processes.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. RESEARCH DESIGN

This study adopted a qualitative research design to explore how students and instructors perceive students' use of AI in translation training. A qualitative approach was appropriate because the study aimed to examine participants' experiences, perceptions, and concerns in depth in an emerging context where AI use is increasing but institutional expectations remain unclear. Semi-structured interviews were used as the main data collection method because they enabled the researchers to address the research questions while allowing participants to explain their views in their own words. The study was guided by the following research questions:

- RQ1: How do students and instructors perceive students' use of AI in translation training?
- RQ2: What benefits, risks, and pedagogical challenges do they associate with such use?

B. RESEARCH CONTEXT AND PARTICIPANTS

This study was carried out at three universities in Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam, including two private institutions and one public institution. The multi-site setting was intended to capture variation in how students' use of AI in translation training is viewed across different university contexts. The participants comprised 22 individuals: seven instructors teaching translation-related subjects and 15 students from English Language programs specializing in Translation and Interpreting. For a qualitative interview study, this sample was sufficient to generate in-depth accounts while still allowing for diversity in experience and perspective. Participant selection followed the principle of information power, with emphasis placed on relevance to the research focus rather than statistical coverage [33].

Participants were recruited through convenience and referral-based sampling. Instructors were included on the basis of their experience teaching translation-related courses and their familiarity with students' use of AI in translation tasks. Student participants were drawn from basic, intermediate, and upper-intermediate translation courses to reflect different stages of training and varying levels of exposure to AI tools. This range supported a more nuanced understanding of how AI is perceived within translation training. All participants were assigned pseudonyms to protect confidentiality.

C. DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews conducted either face to face or online via Google Meet, with each interview lasting approximately 30 to 60 minutes. Separate interview guides were developed for the two groups, as indicated in the appendices. The interview questions were developed based on the study's theoretical framework, relevant previous studies, the current educational context, and informal consultation with two experienced translation instructors. Interview questions were designed to explore not only patterns of AI use but also issues of engagement, judgment, monitoring, and revision. The student guide focused on patterns of AI use in translation tasks, reasons for use, trust in AI-generated output, revision practices, and views on acceptable

AI use in coursework. The instructor guide focused on perceptions of students' AI use, its perceived effects on learning and skill development, and related concerns about classroom practice, assessment, and academic integrity. The interview protocols were structured to move from general experience to more specific pedagogical concerns, allowing participants to first describe actual use before discussing its implications.

All interviews were audio-recorded with participants' consent and later transcribed for analysis. Most interviews were conducted in Vietnamese to ensure that participants could express their views clearly and comfortably. A small number of responses included English terms commonly used in translation and AI-related contexts. For reporting purposes, quotations originally given in Vietnamese were translated into English by the researchers. To preserve meaning, the translations aimed for conceptual accuracy rather than word-for-word equivalence. Where necessary, the researchers reviewed the original transcripts during analysis to ensure that the English quotations accurately reflected participants' intended meanings. This procedure helped improve the transparency and trustworthiness of the interview data.

D. DATA ANALYSIS

The data were analyzed using Braun and Clarke's (2021) thematic analysis [34]. This approach was suitable because it enabled the researchers to identify patterns across participants' accounts while interpreting them in relation to the pedagogical and institutional context of students' AI use in translation training. The analysis followed six recursive phases: familiarization with the data, initial coding, generating themes, reviewing themes, defining and naming themes, and producing the report [34]. MAXQDA 24 was used to support data organization, coding, and theme development.

An iterative codebook was developed during the coding process. In the first stage, the researcher conducted open coding to identify recurring ideas directly from the interview transcripts. These initial codes captured participants' accounts of how students use AI in translation tasks, why they use it, how they evaluate AI output, and what concerns arise in relation to learning, classroom practice, and assessment. The codebook was then refined through repeated comparison across transcripts, with code definitions revised and related codes grouped into broader categories.

The analysis combined inductive and deductive logic. Initial coding was inductive in order to preserve participants' own perspectives and allow themes to emerge from the data. In a later stage, the themes were interpreted through constructivist learning theory and self-regulated learning theory. Accordingly, attention was paid to instances involving meaning-making, monitoring, evaluation, revision, dependence, and decision-making, in line with constructivist and SRL concerns. Constructivism informed the interpretation of issues related to students' cognitive engagement in translation training, while self-regulated learning helped explain differences in how students used AI to manage difficulty, monitor their work, and evaluate AI-generated output. Rather than serving as a fixed coding frame from the beginning, these theoretical perspectives were used to deepen interpretation after the main themes had been developed from the data.

E. TRUSTWORTHINESS

Trustworthiness was supported through several strategies aimed at strengthening credibility and interpretive rigor. Participants were invited to review their interview content after transcription and clarify meaning where necessary. The analysis also involved two coders at key stages of coding and theme development. In keeping with thematic analysis, the role of the second coder was not to establish fixed agreement, but to deepen analytic reflection through comparison and discussion. A subset of transcripts was coded independently by both coders, after which differences were discussed, code definitions were refined, and category boundaries were clarified. Inter-coder consistency was therefore supported through analytic dialogue, while intra-coder consistency was maintained by revisiting earlier coding decisions during later stages of analysis to ensure conceptual coherence over time. Trustworthiness was further enhanced by including both students and instructors with varying levels of experience and familiarity with AI. Because some participants were recruited through existing academic and professional networks, interviews followed a common protocol, participants were encouraged to share both positive and critical views, and pseudonyms were used throughout the study to reduce relational bias and protect confidentiality.

The researchers' backgrounds in English language education and translation-related teaching also informed the design and interpretation of the study. As educators concerned with AI integration in translation classrooms, we viewed translation education as a process that should develop students' close reading, critical judgment, problem-solving ability, and independent decision-making. We viewed AI as neither inherently beneficial nor harmful, but as a pedagogical tool whose value depends on how it is guided, used, and assessed in translation training. We recognized that these beliefs could shape our interpretation of participants' accounts, especially in relation to students' AI use, instructors' classroom concerns, and assessment challenges. To reduce this potential bias, we remained open to both positive and critical views of AI use, compared interpretations during coding discussions,

and revisited the data to ensure that the themes reflected participants' perspectives rather than only our prior assumptions.

F. ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

This study was conducted in accordance with standard ethical principles for qualitative research involving human participants. Ethical approval and guidance were provided by the Faculty of Foreign Languages, Ho Chi Minh City University of Foreign Languages - Information Technology (HUFLIT). Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants prior to the interviews. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, the use of audio recording, their right to decline any question, and their right to withdraw at any stage without penalty. Identifying information was removed from the transcripts, and all data were stored securely to ensure confidentiality.

IV. FINDINGS

A. THE SUPPORT-SKEPTICISM GAP: STUDENTS' PRACTICAL RELIANCE ON AI AND INSTRUCTORS' CONCERNS ABOUT OVER-RELIANCE

The first theme reveals a clear difference between how students and instructors understand the role of AI in translation training. For many students, AI is seen as a practical and useful support tool that helps them generate ideas, revise drafts, build confidence, and cope with classroom demands, especially when they are under pressure to complete difficult translation assignments on time. For many instructors, however, the same tools raise concerns about students' growing dependence on AI and the possibility of reduced engagement with the analytical and interpretive work required in translation. This gap reflects not only different levels of trust in AI, but also different assumptions about what translation training should help students develop.

1. STUDENTS' PERSPECTIVE: AI AS SUPPORT, CONFIDENCE, AND PRACTICAL ASSISTANCE

Most student participants viewed AI as an important source of support in their translation work. They valued its speed, convenience, and ability to provide immediate suggestions, especially when they faced unfamiliar vocabulary, complex sentence structures, or difficulty expressing ideas naturally in the target language. For these students, AI was not only a time-saving device but also a tool that made translation tasks feel more manageable. Linh (SV1), for example, described AI as a useful starting point that reduced initial difficulty and helped her generate an initial version more quickly and move on to revision:

'It gives me a useful starting point for translation. I use AI to generate a rough translation first. It saves time, and then I can focus on refining the details instead of struggling with the entire text.'

Similarly, Mai (SV6) emphasized the role of AI in improving confidence. When she was unsure how to phrase a sentence naturally, AI offered alternatives that she could compare before deciding on a final version:

'When I am unsure how to phrase a sentence naturally, AI gives me different options to consider. This helps me compare possible word choices before deciding on a final version.'

Several students also viewed AI as a helpful form of support when they faced difficult assignments or tight deadlines. In these accounts, AI was perceived not only as a learning aid, but also as a resource that reduced pressure and made translation tasks feel more manageable. Some students suggested that, without AI, they would feel less confident about completing certain assignments on time, especially when they were unsure about their own wording or analytical ability.

Student accounts further suggest that these positive views were closely linked to trust in AI-generated output. Some participants appeared to regard AI not only as a source of suggestions, but also as a reliable translation partner whose output was often assumed to be acceptable. Phuong (SV8), for instance, compared AI to a tutor because it often provided polished examples that seemed professionally written. Minh (SV2) similarly admitted that he tended to accept AI output too quickly because revising an existing draft felt easier and safer than translating from scratch. These responses suggest that students tended to view AI positively because it reduced uncertainty, supported confidence, and helped them cope with the immediate demands of translation coursework.

2. INSTRUCTORS' PERSPECTIVE: AI AS A RISK TO CRITICAL ENGAGEMENT AND SKILL DEVELOPMENT

In contrast, instructors tended to view students' growing reliance on AI more cautiously. While they did not necessarily reject AI altogether, they were concerned that students were using it in ways that limited the development of important translation skills. Several instructors observed that students often began with AI-generated drafts and then made only minor revisions, rather than working through the meaning, context, and stylistic demands of the source text independently. Mr. Tuan noted that students increasingly assumed AI-generated translations were correct and therefore spent less time analyzing the text itself:

'Many students don't analyze the source text as carefully as before. They take the AI translation and make minor edits, assuming it's correct without questioning its accuracy.'

Ms. Lan expressed a similar concern, but linked it more directly to the nature of translation as an interpretive and creative act. In her view, translation involves much more than replacing words between languages; it also requires contextual judgment, cultural awareness, and problem-solving:

'Translation is not just about getting words from one language to another. It's about interpretation, cultural adaptation, and creativity. AI may be making students more passive in these aspects.'

Other instructors pointed to weaknesses in AI-generated translations that students may fail to notice, particularly in relation to meaning, discourse style, and cultural appropriateness. Dr. Minh warned that students who depended too heavily on AI might appear fluent on the surface while still lacking the critical abilities required for professional translation:

'Employers won't hire translators who just edit AI-generated texts. They want professionals who can think critically and make informed translation decisions.'

These responses suggest that instructors are less concerned with AI itself than with the way it may influence students' learning habits. From their perspective, the problem is not the use of AI as support, but the possibility that students may trust it too quickly and allow it to replace the close reading, reflection, and decision-making that translation training is meant to foster.

Overall, Theme 1 reveals a clear support-skepticism gap between students and instructors. This mismatch highlights a central tension running through the study: AI can make translation training more manageable, but it may also reduce engagement with the cognitive processes that underlie translation competence.

B. UNCLEAR INSTITUTIONAL BOUNDARIES: STUDENTS' AI USE ACROSS UNEVEN CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS AND ASSESSMENT PRACTICES

The second theme concerns the institutional conditions surrounding students' use of AI in translation training. Although AI tools have already become part of many students' learning routines, both instructors and students described a lack of clear institutional boundaries regarding when and how these tools should be used. Accordingly, students' use of AI appeared to be guided less by a shared framework than by shifting expectations across different courses and instructors. This creates uncertainty not only about what kinds of AI use are acceptable, but also about how AI-assisted translation work should be understood and assessed in academic settings.

1. STUDENTS' AI USE UNDER UNEVEN CLASSROOM EXPECTATIONS

Many students described expectations surrounding AI use in translation tasks as depending heavily on the preferences of individual instructors rather than on any commonly understood policy. They perceived this situation as inconsistent. In some classes, AI was tolerated or even treated as a practical support tool, whereas in others, it was discouraged or implicitly viewed as inappropriate. Because of this variation, students often felt uncertain about when AI use might be accepted and when it might be questioned. Trang (SV4), for example, described this situation as confusing because the same type of AI use could be acceptable in one course but problematic in another:

'Some instructors let us use AI freely, while others don't allow it at all. Some even check how much AI may have been used when evaluating our assignments. I don't know what the actual university policy is, and it makes it confusing to know when I can use AI and when I can't.'

This inconsistency appeared to influence how students approached AI in practice. Rather than using AI within a clearly defined learning framework, they often used it strategically in response to classroom demands and instructor expectations. For some students, this meant being cautious and selective. For others, it meant relying on personal judgment in the absence of shared rules. In either case, students' use of AI was influenced as much by uncertainty about academic expectations as by the features of the tools themselves.

Instructors also acknowledged the absence of a common institutional position. However, their comments focused less on whether they personally approved of AI and more on the difficulty of responding consistently to students' AI use without formal guidance. Ms. Thu, for instance, recognized that students were already using AI in translation tasks, but felt unsure about how such use should be addressed pedagogically:

'I know AI is part of the industry now, but I don't know how far students should be allowed to use it or what boundaries should be set. There's no clear direction from the university.'

Her response suggests that this uncertainty was also perceived by instructors as a pedagogical problem. In the absence of shared institutional guidance, they were often left to interpret and respond to students' AI use on their own. This appears to have contributed, in participants' accounts, to uneven classroom expectations and a lack of consistency in how AI use was positioned across translation courses.

2. STUDENTS' AI USE AND THE ASSESSMENT UNCERTAINTY

Assessment emerged as a further area of uncertainty in participants' accounts of students' AI use in translation training. Both students and instructors described difficulty in determining how translation work should be evaluated when AI had been used at some stage of the process. In translation coursework, assessment often assumes that the submitted product reflects the student's own understanding, linguistic choices, and revision decisions. However, participants suggested that this assumption becomes less clear when AI is involved. Khoa (SV9) expressed this uncertainty from the student side by questioning how much AI-supported work could still be considered his own:

'If I use AI for translation but edit it heavily, is it still my work? How much should I change before it's considered original?'

This comment suggests that students perceived assessment boundaries as unclear, particularly in relation to authorship, originality, and the meaning of their own contribution. In this sense, the issue was not simply whether AI was being used, but how AI-assisted work should be interpreted within academic translation tasks.

Instructors voiced related concerns, particularly about whether student ability could still be judged fairly when AI had already shaped the output. Mr. Hoang questioned whether the final translation still provided enough evidence of the learner's own competence:

'If students use AI to produce their translations, how do we know if they truly understand the translation process? How do we separate their skills from the machine's work? I really struggle to tell what they can actually do on their own. The final version may look good, but it becomes difficult to judge their real translation ability.'

From the instructor perspective, this uncertainty was also tied to the meaning of assessment itself. Participants questioned whether a polished translation could still be taken as clear evidence of the learner's close reading, problem-solving, and independent decision-making when AI had become part of the translation process. The issue, therefore, was not only fairness in grading, but also how student performance should be understood in AI-assisted translation tasks.

Accordingly, Theme 2 shows that students' use of AI in translation training is taking place within an environment where institutional expectations remain unclear. In the absence of shared guidance, students must navigate uneven classroom rules, while instructors rely on personal judgment when responding to AI-assisted work. This makes student AI use not only a matter of individual learning practice, but also a question of institutional clarity, academic boundaries, and assessment meaning.

C. THE NEED FOR CLEARER GUIDANCE: STUDENTS' AND INSTRUCTORS' CALLS FOR SUPPORT, TRANSPARENCY, AND CONSISTENCY IN AI USE

If Theme 2 captures the existing condition of uneven expectations and unclear assessment boundaries, Theme 3 focuses on what participants believe is needed in response to those conditions. In this sense, the theme is concerned less with describing current uncertainty than with identifying the pedagogical and institutional support required to address it. Rather than presenting AI use simply as a matter of access or individual choice, participants' accounts suggest that they were concerned with how AI use should be guided, monitored, and aligned with pedagogical expectations. From the student perspective, there was a clear need for more explicit support in learning how to evaluate AI-generated output, revise it appropriately, identify potential problems, and understand what kinds of AI use were acceptable in relation to specific course requirements. From the instructor perspective, there was also a need for clearer institutional guidance to ensure greater consistency in classroom management and in the assessment of AI-assisted work. In this sense, the issue was not only whether AI was used critically, but also whether both students and instructors were given the guidance needed to engage with it responsibly and consistently.

1. STUDENTS' NEED FOR GUIDANCE ON EVALUATING, REVISING, AND USING AI OUTPUT APPROPRIATELY

Student accounts show that AI was often valued for making translation tasks easier at the stage of initial production, but students also expressed a need for clearer guidance on how to work with AI-generated output beyond that point. Although AI could quickly provide draft translations, alternative wording, or rephrased sentences, students' responses indicate that they did not simply need output; they also needed support in knowing how to evaluate its quality, how to revise it when necessary, and how to identify problems related to meaning,

tone, contextual fit, and appropriateness. Mai (SV6), for example, explained that while AI often offers several possible translations, deciding which option best suits the context remains uncertain:

'Sometimes AI gives several ways to translate something, and I can choose from them. But I'm not always sure which one is really better. I need clearer guidance on how to judge which option is most appropriate for the context.'

This response indicates that students were not only concerned with obtaining help from AI, but also with knowing how to judge that help in a principled and informed way. More broadly, student accounts highlight a need for explicit instruction on how to compare alternatives, question apparently fluent output, recognize possible weaknesses, and revise AI-generated translations in ways that reflect translation purpose and context. From this perspective, the issue was not simply that students found AI use difficult, but that they wanted clearer support in learning how to use it well.

Student accounts also suggest that this need for guidance extends to course expectations. Several participants indicated that they wanted greater clarity about what forms of AI use were acceptable, how much reliance on AI was appropriate in particular assignments, and how AI-assisted work would be interpreted in relation to course requirements. In this respect, students were not merely asking for permission to use AI; they were asking for clearer, more transparent guidance that would help them align their use of AI with academic expectations.

2. INSTRUCTORS' NEED FOR CLEARER INSTITUTIONAL DIRECTION IN CLASSROOM MANAGEMENT AND ASSESSMENT

Instructor responses reinforce the importance of guidance, but from a complementary angle. Several instructors did not frame the issue simply as whether students should or should not use AI, but as whether students were being adequately taught how to evaluate, question, and refine AI-generated translations. Ms. Hoa expressed the pedagogical side of this issue by emphasizing that students should be taught how to work critically with AI-generated translations rather than simply being prohibited from using AI:

'Instead of banning AI, we should teach students how to critique and refine AI-generated translations. That way, they can use AI effectively without losing their problem-solving skills.'

From the instructor perspective, the pedagogical issue lies not only in helping students use AI critically, but also in ensuring that teachers are not left to rely solely on personal judgment when deciding what forms of AI use to allow, what limits to set, and how AI-assisted work should be treated in assessment. Their comments also stress that instructors themselves need clearer direction from the university in order to respond to students' AI use more consistently across courses. Instructor accounts clearly indicate that responsible AI use depends not only on student judgment, but also on clearer institutional support that enables instructors to manage AI use and assess student work in more transparent and consistent ways. Without clearer institutional guidance, classroom management and grading practices may remain uneven, leaving both instructors and students uncertain about expectations.

Theme 3 reveals that the issue of AI in translation training is not limited to access, acceptance, or individual learner judgment. It also concerns the need for clearer pedagogical and institutional guidance. Students want more explicit support in learning how to evaluate AI-generated output, revise it when necessary, identify potential problems, and understand what forms of AI use are acceptable under specific course requirements. Instructors, in turn, need clearer direction from the university so that classroom management and assessment can be carried out more consistently across courses. In this sense, the findings highlight that responsible AI use depends not only on learners' critical engagement, but also on the clarity, transparency, and consistency of the guidance provided to both students and instructors.

V. DISCUSSION

The findings show that the students themselves mainly described AI as a practical resource that helps them generate ideas, revise drafts, build confidence, and manage difficult assignments under time pressure. Their instructors, by contrast, were more likely to view the same practice as a sign of over-reliance that, in their view, may reduce close reading, analytical effort, and independent decision-making. This suggests that AI in translation education is not simply a matter of tool usefulness, but also a question of what counts as meaningful learning in translation classrooms. In this respect, the study adds to earlier work by showing that perceptions of AI use are shaped by different pedagogical assumptions about the aims of translation training and the kinds of cognitive engagement it should require [4], [18], [35], [36].

Constructivist learning theory helps explain why this divergence matters. Core translation competence develops through active engagement with meaning, contextual interpretation, comparison of alternatives, and justified

choice rather than passive acceptance of ready-made answers [2], [7], [14]. From this perspective, instructors' concerns reflect a pedagogical issue rather than simple resistance to technology. One possible explanation is that AI may reduce the perceived difficulty of translation tasks and, for some students, may lessen the cognitive effort invested in source-text analysis and problem-solving. The student data also indicate that AI is not used only for convenience. In the Vietnamese context, this pattern may be interpreted as reflecting a learning environment in which correctness, teacher evaluation, and final-product quality are often emphasized, with AI therefore being experienced by some students as a form of reassurance. Students appear to trust AI not only because it is fast, but also because it may help them manage uncertainty in a learning culture where accuracy is strongly valued [9], [11], [29], [30]. This may help explain why AI is often treated by students as a stabilizing aid rather than simply a productivity tool.

The second theme indicates that students' use of AI is understood within a context of uneven classroom expectations and unclear assessment boundaries. This makes the perception gap identified in Theme 1 more consequential in practice. Participants' accounts suggest that when expectations differ across courses, students may be more likely to rely on personal judgment than on shared academic norms, while instructors are left to interpret AI use without a common framework. From an SRL perspective, this lack of shared guidance may weaken the conditions for self-regulation, since students must make decisions about AI use, revision, and disclosure without clear external criteria to guide their judgment [15], [17], [18]. In such conditions, uncertainty extends beyond classroom practice to the meaning of assessment itself [17], [18]. In translation training, evaluation has traditionally relied heavily on the final product, yet AI makes it possible to produce fluent output without making the learner's reasoning fully visible [2], [4]. The issue is, therefore, not only originality in a narrow sense, but also a mismatch between conventional product-based assessment and AI-assisted translation processes. This mismatch may also be understood as an ethical issue, because uncertainty about how much of a submitted translation reflects the student's own reasoning complicates judgments about ownership, disclosure, and academic honesty [37]. From a constructivist perspective, this is also significant because product-based assessment may obscure the meaning-making, problem-solving, and justified decision-making processes that translation pedagogy is intended to foster [7], [14]. This supports recent calls for more process-sensitive assessment in translation education, including commentary, draft comparison, and explanation of translation choices [2], [24].

The third theme highlights that responsible AI use in translation training depends not only on access to AI tools, but also on clearer pedagogical and institutional guidance. This is where self-regulated learning theory becomes especially relevant. SRL emphasizes how learners plan, monitor, evaluate, and adjust their strategies while completing academic tasks [17], [38]. In the present study, students' accounts indicate a need for more explicit support in learning how to evaluate AI-generated output, revise it appropriately, identify potential problems, and align AI use with the requirements of particular translation tasks. From an SRL perspective, this matters because responsible AI use depends not only on access to tools, but also on learners' ability to monitor quality, regulate dependence, and make informed decisions about revision [17], [18]. The findings suggest that such regulation is shaped by the learning environment rather than developed in isolation. Instructor comments reinforce this point by showing that critical AI use needs to be taught and supported pedagogically, not simply permitted. In this respect, responsible AI use in translation training may need to be understood not only as a matter of learning strategy, but also as a matter of ethical practice, including honesty about AI assistance, respect for authorship, and accountability for submitted work. Their accounts also indicate that instructors themselves need clearer direction from the university so that AI use can be guided and assessed in more transparent and consistent ways across courses. In this sense, responsible AI use can be understood not only as an individual capability, but also as a pedagogical and institutional practice shaped by the clarity of guidance available to both students and instructors [12], [17], [18].

Overall, the study points to a context-specific tension in Vietnamese translation training. Students described AI as helping them manage difficulty, reduce uncertainty, and complete tasks more confidently, yet these same affordances may also encourage patterns of trust and reliance that worry instructors. The contribution of this study lies in showing how this tension can be interpreted as arising from the interaction of student learning pressure, the cognitive demands of translation training, uneven classroom expectations, and the still-developing conditions for responsible AI use. Rather than framing AI as either wholly beneficial or wholly harmful, the findings suggest that its educational value depends on how students use it, how that use is understood and guided, and how universities define acceptable practice and fair assessment in translation training.

VI. CONCLUSION

This study explored how students and instructors at three higher education institutions in Ho Chi Minh City perceive students' use of AI in translation training. The findings indicate that AI has already become part of many

students' translation training practices, but it is not viewed in the same way by the two groups. Students mainly describe AI as a practical resource that helps them generate ideas, revise drafts, build confidence, and cope with demanding coursework. Instructors, in contrast, are more likely to view the same pattern of use as a sign of excessive dependence that may limit students' close reading, problem-solving, and independent decision-making in translation tasks.

The study further shows that students' use of AI is taking place in a setting where classroom expectations and assessment boundaries remain unclear. In the absence of shared institutional direction, both students and instructors experience uncertainty about how AI use should be understood across courses and how AI-assisted work should be interpreted in assessment. This makes the issue more than a question of individual tool use. It also becomes a matter of academic expectations, fairness in assessment, and the meaning of student performance when AI has become part of the translation process.

These findings contribute a context-specific qualitative account of how AI use in translation training is perceived, negotiated, and pedagogically understood within Vietnamese higher education. More specifically, the study highlights that the educational significance of AI in translation training lies not only in its practical usefulness, but also in the tensions it creates around learning, classroom expectations, and the interpretation of student performance. In this respect, the broader significance of the study lies in showing that, as AI becomes increasingly embedded in translation education, universities need to understand it not only as a technological development, but also as a pedagogical issue with implications for how translation competence is supported and understood.

A. IMPLICATIONS

In light of the findings, three practical implications can be drawn for translation training in Vietnamese higher education. First, students need more explicit support in learning how to use AI critically in translation tasks. This includes guidance on when AI may be useful, how AI-generated translations should be checked and revised, and how students can avoid treating AI output as a substitute for their own judgment. Such support is important if AI is to function as a learning aid rather than a shortcut that may weaken engagement with the translation process. Such support is particularly important in helping students develop the capacity to evaluate, revise, and work critically with AI-generated output as part of translation learning.

Second, universities and translation programs should provide clearer academic guidance on students' use of AI in coursework. The findings indicate that both students and instructors are working within a context of uneven expectations and limited shared direction across courses. More consistent institutional direction would help clarify what kinds of AI use are acceptable, what should be disclosed, and how the boundary between support and inappropriate substitution should be understood in translation assignments. Such guidance should also address ethical expectations explicitly by clarifying issues of authorship, ownership, acknowledgment of AI assistance, and the relationship between AI use and academic integrity in translation coursework.

Third, assessment practices should be adjusted to better reflect students' visible and explainable contribution in AI-assisted translation work. Participants' accounts suggest that when AI can shape the final version of a translation, evaluation based only on the submitted product may become less sufficient. Greater use of process-sensitive forms of assessment, such as draft comparison, reflective commentary, translation logs, or oral explanation, may help make students' reasoning more visible and support clearer interpretation of their contribution in contexts where AI is part of translation training.

B. LIMITATIONS AND DIRECTIONS FOR FURTHER STUDIES

This study should be read in light of several limitations. It drew on interviews with a relatively small group of students and instructors from three universities in Ho Chi Minh City, so the findings reflect a specific educational context rather than the full diversity of translation training in Vietnam. In addition, the study focused on perceptions and self-reported practices related to students' use of AI in translation training, rather than direct observation of classroom behaviour or direct evidence of changes in translation performance. For this reason, the study offers an interpretive account of how AI is understood and negotiated in translation training, rather than a measurable account of its effects on translation competence.

Future research could extend this work in several ways. Studies involving a wider range of institutions, regions, and learner groups would help clarify whether similar patterns appear in other Vietnamese contexts. It would also be valuable to combine interviews with classroom observation, student texts, reflective logs, or assessment data to examine how students actually use AI in translation tasks. Further research may also explore how different forms of guidance or assessment influence students' use of AI and the development of translation competence over time.

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VIII. APPENDIX

APPENDIX 1. SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR STUDENTS

1. How do you usually use AI tools when working on translation tasks?
2. In what situations do you find AI most helpful in translation learning?
3. How do you decide whether an AI-generated translation is reliable or needs revision?
4. Do you think using AI affects how you read, analyse, or solve problems in translation tasks? Why or why not?
5. What do you think counts as acceptable or unacceptable use of AI in translation coursework?

APPENDIX 2. SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS FOR INSTRUCTORS

1. How do you view students' use of AI in translation training?
2. In your opinion, how does students' use of AI affect their engagement with translation tasks?
3. What concerns, if any, do you have about students relying on AI in translation assignments?
4. How does students' use of AI create challenges for classroom practice or assessment?
5. What do you think should be considered acceptable use of AI in translation coursework?

VIỆC SINH VIÊN SỬ DỤNG AI TRONG ĐÀO TẠO BIÊN DỊCH Ở BẬC ĐẠI HỌC VIỆT NAM: QUAN ĐIỂM CỦA SINH VIÊN VÀ GIẢNG VIÊN VỀ LỢI ÍCH, RỦI RO VÀ NHỮNG THÁCH THỨC SƯ PHẠM

Trần Quang Bảo Phúc, Trần Ngọc Hà, Bùi Thị Thanh Trúc

TÓM TẮT—Trí tuệ nhân tạo (AI) đang ngày càng hiện diện rõ nét trong đào tạo dịch thuật qua việc cung cấp phản hồi ngay tức thời của các công cụ như ChatGPT, DeepL và Google Translate. Cách thức sinh viên sử dụng AI trong đào tạo dịch thuật cũng đang nhận được nhiều sự quan tâm trong thời gian vừa qua. Nghiên cứu định tính này tìm hiểu cách sinh viên và giảng viên nhìn nhận việc sinh viên sử dụng AI trong quá trình đào tạo dịch thuật tại ba trường đại học ở Thành phố Hồ Chí Minh. Các cuộc phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc được thực hiện với 15 sinh viên ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh, chuyên ngành Biên dịch và Phiên dịch, cùng với 7 giảng viên nhằm tìm hiểu quan điểm của họ. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy ba chủ đề chính. Thứ nhất, sinh viên và giảng viên nhìn nhận khác nhau về việc sử dụng AI của sinh viên: sinh viên thường xem AI là trợ lý thiết thực khi lên ý tưởng, rà soát và chỉnh sửa bản dịch, giúp sinh viên tự tin hơn, cũng như 'giải quyết' được bài tập dịch khó dưới áp lực thời gian. Giảng viên lại lo ngại rằng việc phụ thuộc quá nhiều vào AI có thể làm suy giảm năng lực tư duy phản biện của sinh viên. Thứ hai, sinh viên sử dụng AI trong bối cảnh thiếu sự nhất quán về qui định sử dụng AI giữa các lớp học phần cũng như tiêu chí đánh giá không rõ ràng. Thứ ba, cả 'thầy và trò' đều cho thấy cần có hướng dẫn rõ ràng hơn về việc sử dụng AI có trách nhiệm trong đào tạo dịch thuật. Dựa trên lý thuyết học tập theo chủ nghĩa kiến tạo và tự điều chỉnh quá trình học tập, nghiên cứu cho rằng AI nên được đón nhận như một trợ lý sư phạm thuần túy mà giá trị học thuật phụ thuộc vào mức độ phản biện sinh viên sử dụng và có trách nhiệm. Vì vậy, cần có hướng dẫn rõ ràng hơn, nâng cao năng lực hiểu biết về AI, và các hình thức đánh giá chú trọng nhiều hơn đến quá trình dịch thuật.

Từ khóa—Trí tuệ nhân tạo (AI), Sinh viên dùng AI, đào tạo dịch thuật, giáo dục đại học, tư duy phản biện/mức độ chủ động tư duy, thách thức (về mặt) sư phạm



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