Ethical issues for literary translation in the Era of artificial intelligence

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Technological advancement has brought changes to many professions across the world. Furthermore, it has triggered a discussion about ethical issues. Machine Translation (MT) or Computer-Aided Translation (CAT) has vastly increased work efficiency and technology-related ethical issues are gaining academic attention these days. However, the discussion of ethical issues for literary translation against the backdrop of Artificial Intelligence (AI) is limited. After a quick review of the stages of MT, this paper will delve into literary translation’s emerging ethical issues, for example, the literary translator’s professional identity and copyright. Copyright ethics is an indispensable part of AI-enabled literary translation since training data and participatory NMT involve copyright issues. This study revealed that technological advancement will facilitate literary translation. However, no direct evidence exists that machine translation will replace human translators. Given the new working mode of “multi-players” or participatory translation, ethical issues arising from the human and machine interaction merit further academic inquiry.

Keywords: artificial intelligence, literary translation, ethical issues, translator’s professional identity, ethics of copyright

1. Introduction

Neural Machine Translation’s (NMT) progression from a fringe research activity in 2014 to the leading MT method in 2016 is amazing. Yanisky-Ravid and Martens

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1. Neural MT is based on natural language processing (NLP), which deals with the key artificial intelligence technology of understanding complex human language communications. For a detailed discussion about NLP, please refer to the talk given by Chris Manning from the School of Engineering at Stanford University at the following link: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1xQtk2SjWWM. Accessed on August 21, 2021.
point out “that compared to human translators, AI online translation systems “are faster, more instantly accessible, cheaper, and convenient in that they operate in almost every language.” Maouche (2019, 448) points out that “Artificial intelligence’ is not an ‘algorithm’ system,” and “when discussing the application or deployment of AI, the expressions ‘AI-based systems,’ ‘AI-enabled systems,’ or ‘AI-based programs’ should be used instead of ‘AI algorithms’” (Maouche 2019, 449). For the current discussion, the terms AI translation and AI-enabled translation are used interchangeably. However, even though human translation has never been perfect, AI online translation systems lack some significant human abilities. Therefore, they present major drawbacks, limitations, and new challenges, like “the hidden biases of AI translation systems and their undesirable results” (Yanisky-Ravid and Martens 2019, 129). This paper aims to raise awareness of literary translation in the AI era and its associated ethical issues, rather than provide immediate resolutions to the questions as technological advancement offers surprising possibilities for increased efficiency and accuracy.

Recent scholarship has seen a burgeoning interest in ethical issues in translation (Koskinen and Pokorn 2021; Drugan 2019) and in translation and technology in particular (Kenny 2011; Bowker 2021; Stupiello 2008). Furthermore, recent years have seen an increased interest in the ethics of artificial intelligence (Dignum 2018; Bostrom and Yudkowsky 2014). However, while use of translation technology and its associated ethical issues has drawn increasing attention, those for literary translation in the AI era have largely been ignored. The need to address ethical issues in the AI era does not stem from excessive worry. Instead, it is intended to observe and reflect on the state of technological advancement in AI-enabled literary translation and ethical issues arising from the application of the new technologies.

2. Technological development and its impact on literary translation

The trajectories of technological advancement for machine translation have been identified by scholars in both translation and law studies (Yanisky-Ravid and Martens 2019; Bowker 2021; Kenny 2019). Undeniably, NMT has led to dramatic changes in the translation profession. Ragni and Vieira (2022) recently asked, “what has changed with neural machine translation?” and offered a critical review of human factors in the translation process. Based on the relevant corpus of papers, they investigate NMT research involving humans, in particular, the human translator.2

2. For a comprehensive and systematic research on the topic please refer to Ragni and Vieira (2022).
Both positive and negative aspects of translation technologization have been discussed, mainly concerning non-literary works. Scholars tried to explore the feasibility of the application of AI-enabled literary translation. However, AI translation is mainly based on data and statistics rather than personal understanding. Therefore, they cannot replicate all the nuances, idioms, and colloquial expressions contained in human languages. Therefore, AI-enabled literary translation results are often a distorted reflection of source texts. Undoubtedly, most translators, especially literary translators, prefer translating from scratch to post-editing the machine-translated output. Besides the fact that NMT often does not capture the nuances of language, there can also be some practical concerns from translators about post-editing – the amount of effort needed to revise the raw MT output. Although this effort is generally considered less than what is required in from-scratch translation (in the industry), the actual temporal/technical/cognitive effort expended depends on text features, the quality of the MT, and other factors. The translator’s perception of MT, or their perceived effort in post-editing, may also play a role here.

Given the low quality of its products, machine translation has been stigmatized by the general public. Therefore, understandably, the Douban reader gave a low rating to the Chinese translation of the Spanish literary work. In March 2021, Han Gao, a first-year master’s degree student in Spanish language and literature, gave a two-star rating to the latest Chinese translation of Mario Benedetti’s La Tregua and commented that the Chinese translation by Ye Han is “full of marked trace of machine translation, which ruined the literary piece.” Ye Han, the translator, defended herself by admitting that she needs to further improve. However, she said the machine translation accusation directly attacked her “professional ethics.” The translator’s friend doxed the student’s identity and wrote to her school to complain about the student’s comment on Douban. Han Gao ultimately deleted the comment and apologized to the translator. These actions triggered the “One-Star rating campaign” against Han’s translation on Douban.

While Yanisky-Ravid and Martens (2019, 122) highlight that “AI translation systems are computer systems which can translate content with or without human assistance,” it is undesirable to play down the role of the translators for literary translation. From MT to CAT, from Statistical Machine Translation (SMT) to NMT, we can observe the shift of the focus on the roles played by

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3. There is sufficient literature identifying the post-editese phenomenon or discussing the impact of post-editing. For further discussion, please refer to Castilho and Resende (2022); Guerberof-Arenas and Toral (2020); Moorkens et al. (2018); Garcia (2011).

4. For more detailed discussion about the development of MT, please refer to Poibeau (2017).
humans, particularly the human translator, and the technology. While computer-aided translation acknowledges the help of computers and technology, it highlights the decisive contribution of human translators. However, with technological advancement, the human contribution to AI translation is downplayed to a supporting role or is considered unnecessary. This assessment is discouraging for translation practitioners, particularly literary translators. While we acknowledge technological support, the indispensable role of human translators in literary translation should not be ignored.5

3. Human translators in AI-enabled literary translation

Recent articles on machine-translated literary texts express optimism based on technological advancements (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019, 690). In addition, some research has also been done discussing the application of MT to literary translation (Toral and Way 2018; Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019). Similar to AI-related shifts in other professions where the focus of human work becomes generating ideas instead of executing tasks,6 literary translators’ AI-assisted workflow could achieve a higher level of leeway, facilitating understanding of the whole source text, and related to the relevant text information, writing styles, narrativity, and thematic analysis. Arguably, although the time saved in linguistic transfer may be offset to some degree by the extra time spent on comparison and correction in post-editing of the MT, the overall contemplation and deliberation of the literary texts in the latter phase of the translation process make possible the consideration of broader thematic perspectives encompassing ecological, ideological, racist or gender issues.

Human translators must be involved at present given the constraints of machine translation of literary pieces. However, the possibility of AI translation “without human assistance” is not excluded (Yanisky-Ravid and Martens 2019, 122). Wu (2021, 838) recently pointed out that “LNMTL, the most influential website of this kind, has translated more than 200 Chinese web novels by pure MT”. Understandably, the international reading community is eager for Chinese web novels featuring martial arts at the expense of translation quality. Of course, other human agents are involved in the translation. This issue will be further explored later in the article.

5. For further discussion on the human factor in machine translation, please refer to Chan (2018).
Human translators are indispensable for AI-enabled literary translation to guarantee the translation quality. These translators are involved, specifically in decision-making and post-editing. “The software does not force the translator to accept the displayed matches; these are offered only for consideration and can, in principle, be accepted, modified, or rejected by the translator” (Bowker 2021). Thus, human translators are decision-makers when match choices appear on the screen. They select the best word or expression for the given scenario. On the other hand, when NMT output is ready (with the advent of the new technology, it might happen with the click of a button), the human translator will spend an extended time post-editing the output. NMT’s impact on output on post-editing quality has been explored through different case studies (Toral et al. 2018; Castilho and Resende 2022).

These scenarios show that human translators are fully engaged in literary translation when AI-enabled systems are in place. It is notable that the definition of human translation can differ from the traditional one. Let us examine LNMLT as an example. Although the website has translated Chinese web novels using pure MT, “its MT process is inseparable with the aid of readers, for this website relies on the readers to establish and update the glossary to continually improve the quality of translated text” (Wu 2021, 838). Such volunteer practice somewhat blurs the boundary between professional and volunteer translators. Of course, such practice is not ideal, but it is necessary, as the market demands immediate translation of these web novels. English language readers are eager for renditions by professional translators; they even volunteer to participate in the online translation of these web novels. The participatory feature of web-based translation practice changes the roles played by professional translators, and the translator’s professional identity has been challenged. Meanwhile, it is undeniable that the output by this “pure MT” is far from satisfactory. The output might be used as training data for NMT, leading to further errors or poor-quality machine translation.

An interesting aspect of AI translation is that it requires users’ contributions. A machine cannot understand the correct translation; only humans can help correct them. Yanisky-Ravid and Liu (2018, 2215) referred to this as a “multi-player model” consisting of software developers, data suppliers, AI trainers, and even daily users that provide feedback as part of this model. In a word, the AI translation relies on crowd wisdom. For example, Google Translate features over 100 languages. It has massive data and translation algorithms. In addition, Google Translate relies on native speakers to help correct sentences and grammars. AI translation relies on software engineers, data providers, AI trainers, and user feedback to fine-tune for more accurate translations.

Modern hermeneutics has provided a new perspective for the study of translation activities. The dialogues between different subjects, including the author and
the translator, and the translator and the reader are, in essence, the issue of intersubjectivity. This intersubjectivity in translation points to a series of dialogues involving various interrelated subjects, such as patrons, initiators, commissioners, publishers, critics, and researchers, apart from the above-mentioned three major ones (Feng 2012, 50). If conducted on an equal footing, the dialogues between these subjects may produce the best version accepted by all parties, creating a fusion of horizons (Zhang 2014, 89). The notion of “intersubjectivity” concerning different “voices” in literary translation may be insightful to elucidate the hybrid complexity of MT application in literary translation, given the fact that the “voices of MT have been considered to be noise, as something unacceptable both aesthetically and morally” (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019, 697). Notably, Lee observes that the ethical motivation and subjectivity of the human translator become flaws. In contrast, the noise made by MT becomes an aesthetic and translational virtue (Lee 2011; Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019). In this sense, the addition of MT’s non-human voice further complicates the situation of literary translation in the AI era. The translator navigates complex intersubjective relationships among the many interconnected subjects. In the AI era, human translators are expected to become major stakeholders in translations. Thus, the translator’s subjectivity and the intersubjectivity for translation will change accordingly.

4. Ethics of copyright in AI-enabled literary translation

Copyright law was established to encourage authors, artists, and others to create and share their works by granting them specific exclusive rights in their works. Copyright infringement is both a legal and ethical transgression. AI-enabled literary translation involves ethical obligations from agents in the translation process. AI translation starts with data training. The data are large quantities of corpus from source and target language texts. Specifically, these texts are a bilingual corpus of literary pieces in source and target languages. Using these literary texts will involve copyright issues and legal consequences. Moreover, the copyright issue is of greater importance for participatory AI translation with post-editing input by human translators.

In the Era of AI, machine translation is not destined to replace human factors. (Petrilli 2014; Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019; Ragni and Vieira 2022) Little evidence exists that the arrival of NMT has been as disruptive as previously predicted, for example, by Shoshan (2018), who argued that NMT is a “disruptive technology” that will change the way most translations are performed’ and that ‘machine translation can now be used to replace human translators in many cases. Regarding literary translation, humans will not be replaced in the foreseeable future.
According to Petrilli’s estimation (2014, Chapter 12.3), automation in linguistic work and translation will not lead to the passivation and exclusion of humans. Instead, it will increase human-machine interaction and enhance human creativity (Taivalkoski-Shilov 2019, 698).

Taivalkoski-Shilov focuses on “essential issues that should be taken into consideration when adopting or tailoring technological tools for literary translation” (2019, 689), and based on a holistic understanding of translation quality, she (2019, 689) proposes “sustainable development in literary translation.” She also observes that “Literary translators might even benefit from the change, provided that all players in the field, especially the powerful ones, such as major publishing houses, incorporate sustainable development as part of their view on translation quality” (2019, 698).

It is fair and realistic for Lee to call for a less translatophile approach, one “that asserts the contribution of translators and translation as dovetailing with, not militating against, authors and original texts” (Lee 2020, 254). When discussing the relationship between translation and copyright, Yanisky-Ravid and Martens (2019, 138) asked the essential question in the AI era: “Are the products of AI translation derivative works?” In terms of “authorship and ownership,” the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) highlights the dilemma concerning AI-generated literary and artworks:

Whether copyright protection can be accorded to AI-generated works. “Specifically, (1) Should copyright be attributed to original literary and artistic works that are autonomously generated by AI or should a human creator be required? (2) In the event copyright can be attributed to AI-generated works, in whom should the copyright vest? ... (3) Should a separate sui generis system of protection ... be envisaged for original literary and artistic works autonomously generated by AI?”

Technological advancement continues to offer surprising improvements on an almost daily basis. Scholarly investigations of whether MT’s creativity is beneficial despite constraints are widely acknowledged. Meanwhile, human translation or assistance, through post-editing and decision-making during human-and-machine interaction, will certainly be indispensable for the foreseeable future. Therefore, while Lee (2020) is dissatisfied with the translation theorists’ turning translation into a “fetish object” (2020, 254) and the MIPO’s deliberation on the copyright issue for AI-generated literary works is obviously intriguing, the copyright issue for translation product of literary pieces through MT in the AI era becomes a more teething and complicated issue.

Law experts echo WIPO’s concern, for Yanisky-Ravid and Martens also ask “whether the traditional copyright regime can meet the challenges of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning (AI) online translation systems, or whether this regime is outdated and in need of amendment or replacement” (2019, 103–104).

4.1 Training data for NMT

The copyright problems of training data involve the examination of the copyright owners or contributors. With a wide variety of authors and users as data and feedback providers, tracing the origin of some data is almost impossible, thus posing considerable challenges for copyright identification and protection. Meanwhile, the hidden biases of training data, coupled with AI translation systems’ inability to perceive cultural diversity and linguistic nuances, present certain risks that may essentially perpetuate society’s biases and discriminations. Yanisky-Ravid and Hallisey (2019, 429) describe many types of biases in AI systems and emphasize that:

Data are the most important aspect of teaching AI systems to operate. AI algorithms begin with a massive preexisting dataset, which data providers use to train the system. But the data that AI systems ‘swallow’ can be illegal, discriminatory, altered, unreliable, or simply incomplete. Thus, the more data fed to the AI systems, the higher the likelihood that they could produce biased, discriminatory decisions and violate privacy rights.

“Many of the most useful TDM and AI projects involve the use of copyright-protected works” (Flynn et al. 2020, 394). In principle, MT, CAT, SMT, or NMT, are realized through TDM (Text and Data Mining), which involves retrieving, transforming, uploading, analyzing, and presenting data. Many of these steps might bring about the infringement of copyright. For example, for NMT, the training data might come from existing literary translations, some of which were performed by experts. However, TDM reproductions do not compromise the core interests of exclusive rights, which prohibits unauthorized reproductions that substitute for author work, because TDM uses these “non-expressively.” However, whether the translators will be willing to have their translations deconstructed for machine or deep learning is doubtful.

AI translations are vulnerable to societal biases such as the ethical issue of gender, race, and nationality (Yanisky-Ravid and Martens 2019). The issue of gender bias sometimes occurs when performing machine translations. Some examples of gender-neutral languages are Hungarian and Finnish. In 2021, a Finnish internet user discovered that Google Machine Translation automatically
chose pronouns for a gender-neutral language when translating (Aranal 2021). For instance, in traditional family culture, women were stereotyped as homemakers. The Hungarian word “ő” is a gender-neutral language. It can be translated into either “he” or “she.”

However, later, Google Translate appears to overcome the gender ethical issues by offering two gender categories: masculine and feminine. However, this function of offering masculine and feminine translation options is only partially available in some languages and still requires further updates across its entire language repertoire (Yanisky-Ravid and Martens 2019, 131). For example, I tried the same sentence, “O bir doctor,” with DeepL, and the English translation did provide alternatives with different gender collocations; however, when it was translated into Chinese, it used only one gender choice, i.e., masculine.

4.2 NMT products

Another consideration of copyright issues is related to the outcome of MT. As “the original work dressed in a different cloak” (Yanisky-Ravid and Martens 2019, 136), translations are viewed by international intellectual property law as derivative works (p.136). Under U.S. copyright law, when a translator creates a translation work, the copyright ownership belongs to the translator when an existing translation does not yet have a copyright. Only the owner of the material can authorize the translation to be distributed or profited. A derivative work without permission from the author is still subject to infringement. The ethical question regarding AI translation is whether it has authorship. Translation works need to be copyrighted. The translator can claim ownership of the copyrighted work with the original author’s permission. Can AI translation claim authorship of the translation?

Yanisky-Ravid and Martens argue that the authorship of AI translation “lies with the private companies financing and developing the AI software” (2019, 139). The ethical issue is whether AI translations have the authorship of the translated works. Following the logic of the United States Supreme Court landmark case Naruto v. Slater, the answer is No.\(^8\) The AI translator does not have direct ownership of the translation works. AI translation is merely a tool, like a “computerized

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8. A photographer named Naruto who left his camera in the reserve of Indonesia. A monkey took the camera for a selfie, and later it became widely known as the “Monkey Selfie”. The defendant in this case, Slater, published a photograph book with the selfie photo included without the owner’s permission. The central question in the case is whether a non-human individual (a monkey) can sue for damages and injunctive relief arising from claims of copyright infringement? The answer is no. Under US copyright law, a non-human individual does not have standing to sue for copyright legal issues (Naruto 2018).
“dictionary.” Before AI translations were created, translators used native languages and dictionaries to translate. A dictionary is just a tool; it cannot claim ownership of the translation work. So, likewise, the AI translation providers should not claim ownership of the translated works.

4.3 Copyright and retranslation

Allowing AI translation systems to retranslate unauthorized works constitutes an infringement of copyright laws, but retranslating authorized works using AI translation programs also entails considering copyright issues and social responsibility. The training corpora of existing translated texts that feed into the machine can hopefully yield a new translated version that combines all the merits of existing texts. However, this special edition’s authorship is worthy of discussion. As a result of data-feeding and training by humans, previous translations, and even other user contributors, such retranslations prompt us to reconsider the authorship of AI programs, the role of human or non-human translators, and their social responsibility in terms of their contribution to the public.

Here, we argue that while the AI retranslation of literary works is meaningful in the sense of its integration of human translators’ credits in language expressions, AI systems still cannot understand human language and emotion and cannot make choices in situations where cultural delicacies and societal conflicts are involved, thus potentially preserving and perpetuating the existing prejudice and bias of its training data.

In the light of the broader MT ethics (Kenny 2011), its social aspects involve a wide range of subjects covering developers, commissioners, consumers, source text writers, translators, post-editors, and others. In the case of MT retranslations, it is related to balancing all the agents engaged in the process, not least the role of previous influential translators, whose works have been read and applauded frequently by the general reader and the scholarship for the significant function they played in educating and promoting the development of the literary field, especially, in years of social conflicts and transformation, such as in the years after the Cultural Revolution in the Chinese mainland.

5. Literary translator’s professional identity

Bowker provides a panoramic view of ethical issues related to translation technology by outlining the core issues and topics like “ownership of translation resources, privacy and confidentiality of translation data, professional identity of
translators, productivity and payment, translators’ codes of ethics, and the potential contribution of tools to linguistic hegemony or linguistic diversity” (2021, 265).

The ethical issue of online translation is that users can use online translation services without seeking an author’s permission. The United States courts have yet to address the issue of AI translation that infringes copyright directly. Regarding literary translation, the LNMTL case serves as a good example. The general public and readers participate in the online translation process for web novels. They are part of the “multi-players” model, and their participations in the translation and retranslation of the web novels complicate the scenario. Such a multi-player or participatory model challenges the literary translator’s professional identity.

AI translations are efficiently used in typical situations such as ordering food, asking for directions, or reading street signs in a foreign country. In other words, “if one’s goal is merely to broadly comprehend the subject matter of a text, then AI translation works quite well” (Yanisky-Ravid and Martens 2019, 128). As regards the translation of Chinese internet literature, MT has played a significant role in speeding the translation process and meeting the needs of avid foreign readers. Statistics show that the number of readers on the “MT + human postediting” website LNMLT ranked five among the top ten websites featuring promoting and translating international Chinese Internet literature (Zheng 2018, 120). The proliferation of MT in ordinary workplaces and the wider literary world has dramatically transformed how we perceive translation used effectively as a communication and exchange tool.

Similar phenomena constantly raise questions about translators’ professional identity and social responsibility. Another recent public concern over MT concerns different algorithm biases covering issues of gender, race, and age. Faced with accusations of offering skewed translations containing gender bias, Google Translate has been updated now to be able to provide both feminine and masculine choices when translating a single word like “surgeon” and has even been thinking about how to address “non-binary gender in translation.”

The Chinese translation of La Tregua, a novel by Uruguayan author Mario Benedetti, has triggered enormous online debates in the Douban community revolving around machine translation. The translator complained about the online comments about her translation, which she believed directly attacked her professional identity. This case also relates to MT’s applicability in literary translation courses. When the boundaries and usage not well-defined, issues concerning technology ethics arise, and students cannot decide how many liberties they may take when translating.

At the same time, as MT becomes omnipresent, the proliferation of poor-quality translation looms large in the minds of many. Unfortunately, technology-related guidance in professional associations’ codes of ethics still seems essentially absent (Bowker 2021, 269), or at least inadequate, in the case of the Code of Professional Ethics for Translators and Interpreters in China issued by the Translators Association of China. This concern is manifested in the few technology-related lines in the code, which states in primarily general terms such as: “without customers’ permission, translators or interpreters should not deliver MT versions that have not been post-edited or manually modified directly to their customers” (TAC 2019, 4). Time, as commonly known, is a form of money. A shortage of time will downgrade the quality of the translation.

Moreover, as MT becomes pervasive, work providers are more reluctant to pay for translation services, which also adversely affects the translator’s income (Gouadec 2007). The translation profession’s ethics have changed since MT’s development. The question is whether MT can be ethically operated as an individual translation service in literary translation. The translation of literature, especially the complexity of culture-related issues, as in the case of culture-specific items is a daunting task.

6. Ethical codes and education for literary translators in the AI era

Bowker (2021, 269) highlights a “lack of technology-related guidance in professional associations’ codes of ethics,” while Dolmaya (2011, 45) points out that none of the codes of ethics from seventeen professional translators’ associations from around the world “stipulate how translators can make ethical choices with respect to the technology they might need in their practice.” In the Code of Professional Ethics for Translators and Interpreters in China, released on 9 November 2019, the introduction states “the latest technological advancement has sharply increased the translation efficiency on one hand and has brought about new technology ethical issues on the other” (TAC 2019, 1). For the first time, the Code stipulates normative requirements for ethical technology issues in MT and CAT. Article 4, Item 8 stipulates that translators and interpreters should use translation technology properly to increase translation efficiency and to guarantee the quality of the translation. For codes of professional practice, translators and interpreters are encouraged to “follow up the latest technological development and its application” (3); “Translators and interpreters should have a proper understanding of the role and impact of translation technology on translation practice” (4).

The Codes apply to general translation scenarios and to computer-aided literary translation as well. However, given the complicated situations mentioned
above, translation students should receive education about the codes. They should have access to the Codes and be appropriately informed concerning how to observe them, particularly in literary translation courses.

Baker and Maier (2011) reiterate that translator educators have long instructed students to follow professional codes of ethics unquestioningly. However, as Bowker (2021, 273) highlights that “some educators have been slow to provide students with the deep understanding of ethical issues that is now called for in this highly technologized profession.” Drugan and Megone’s survey reveals that in the United Kingdom ethics is typically not taught or is offered only in optional courses on translation programs. They argue for integrating ethics education across a translator training program (Drugan and Megone 2011). Kenny and Doherty (2014) and Kenny (2020) also advocate about the growing need for technology-specific ethical issues to be addressed in translator education. Bowker (2021, 273) highlights that “there is a need for technology-related ethics to be addressed more systematically across the curriculum,” and “this may include discussing whether tool use for coursework is appropriate.”

In the La Tregua translation incident, the student claimed that her university lecturer had suggested the combination of machine translation and post-editing in her advanced course for translation methodology. The complaint letter urged the student’s teachers to launch an investigation to save the university’s reputation. The student finally was required to issue an apology to the translator and the publisher on 27 March 2021. Thus, we see that ethics are an emerging issue across the translation education curriculum. Most, if not all, major translation programs have a literary component. Discussion on whether translation tools should be used for coursework and professional practice is required. Technology-related ethics should be thoroughly addressed to avoid unnecessary accusations either concerning students’ or professional translators’ practice.

Though we are happy to note that the Translators Association of China has released an updated Professional Code of Ethics, in which the proper use of translation technology and technology-related ethics are discussed, no systematic discussion or technology-related ethical coursework exists across the university curriculum or among professional practitioners.

7. Concluding remarks

In his proposed Hieronymic Oath, Chesterman (2001, 153) suggests including a statement that “as a translator, I will do all I can to maintain and improve my competence, including all relevant linguistics, technical and other knowledge
and skills.”\textsuperscript{10} Much remains unstated concerning technology. It is unrealistic to predict what will happen or what should be stipulated in the legislation. However, researchers could outline possible scenarios that are worth academic attention. Maouche (2019, 452) indicates that “without clear legal and ethical frameworks, the benefit and opportunities acquired by the use of AI systems may be compromised.” While we are open to and optimistic about technological advancement and its benefits to the entire translation industry and literary translation in particular, we must be cautious about the ethical and legal issues arising from application of new technologies. This study revealed that technological advancement will facilitate literary translation, and no immediate evidence exists that humans will be replaced by machine translation. Given the new working multi-players or participatory translation models, the associated ethical issues, such as the literary translator’s professional identity and copyright arising from the human and machine interaction merit further investigation.

**Funding**

This work was fully supported by the Research Seed Fund from Lingnan University of Hong Kong [Project No. 102240].

**Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank Prof. Hongtao Wang and Dr. Yuxiang Wei for their careful reading of the manuscript and insightful suggestions for improvement. I am also grateful to my Ph.D. students and my research assistants for their help with manuscript preparation.

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\textsuperscript{10} For further discussion on how to improve the codes of ethics for translators, please refer to Lee and Yun (2020).


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Publication history

Date received: 30 June 2022
Date accepted: 10 February 2023
Published online: 24 July 2023