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Students' Perceptions of AI-Assisted Blended Teaching in A Chinese Translation Class: A Preliminary Study

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Abstract
Tertiary translation education is essential for cultivating talents in cross-cultural communications in the age of language automation. However, the mismatch between current translation pedagogy and the language industry is palpable. While artificial intelligence has emerged as a key impetus of language automation, learners' perceptions of utilizing educational technologies in their translation learning remain underexplored. Particularly, the underlying factors of learner perceptions that significantly affect learners' technology acceptance have yet to be thoroughly examined. This study aims to preliminarily identify the key factors influencing learner perceptions and acceptance of AI-assisted blended teaching in translation classrooms. It addresses two major issues: first, students' perceptions of harnessing AI-assisted blended teaching in their translation learning; second, students' current learning experiences in their compulsory translation courses. Focus group interviews were conducted with English majors enrolled in a compulsory translation course at a Chinese university. The findings provide an in-depth thematic analysis of students' perceptions of AI-assisted blended teaching, offering insights for a customized translation pedagogy aligned with Industrial Revolution 4.0. By elucidating the learners' perceptions of the emergence of translation competence and learner autonomy through the translation learning process, this study proffers preliminary insights on reshaping the translation pedagogy toward an AI-assisted blended teaching integration.
Keywords: Artificial intelligence, blended teaching, Chinese-English translation, perceptions, translation pedagogy

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Introduction

Translation has consistently been a fundamental means of communication, bridging language barriers. It is reaffirmed as a justified and beneficial activity in second language acquisition (Muñoz-Basols et al., 2023; Pintado Gutiérrez, 2021). Notably, due to its sociocultural and complex (Aldawsari, 2024, p. 240) nature, translation teaching has increasingly advocated for authenticity (Muñoz-Basols et al., 2023), particularly through the use of real-world Source Texts (STs) and Target Texts (TTs) in classroom practices. In this regard, preparing learners to navigate the real-world translation industry is essential. Current translation pedagogy probably needs to be revamped to align with the Industrial Revolution 4.0 (IR4), where digitalization and automation (Pym& Torres-Simón, 2021; Zhao et al., 2025) serve as the impetus.

Notwithstanding, the mismatch between tertiary translation education and the industry is prominent (Sánchez-Castany, 2023; Zhao et al., 2025). Current translation pedagogy is still predominantly didactic, theoretical (Qiao & Huang, 2023), dichotomic, and obsolete (Su, 2025). Tertiary translation learners met challenges in conventional translation classes (Ren, 2025). In particular, with the constant emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools, there is a growing consensus that language learners should leverage AI to do translation (Ren, 2025; Wang, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025). Possibly, pure human non-literary translation will no longer be accepted. However, translation education has not been closely integrated with AI in Education (AIED) despite its current prevalence. Meanwhile, the synergy of AI and Blended Teaching (BT) has emerged recently. Initially, it has demonstrated that specific models of AI-assisted Blended Teaching (AABT) can bolster learners' several English language skills (Jiang, 2025; Shi et al., 2023; Zhou et al., 2025), learning performances (He et al., 2023; G. Zhang, 2023) and specifically, translation performance (Y. Zhang, 2023). However, research relating learners' perceptions of AABT to translation education remains scarce. Apart from this, given that translation competence (TC) and learner autonomy (LA) are increasingly recognized as the ultimate goal in translation (Carrasco Flores, 2019) and language education (Mohebbi, 2025; Tsai, 2021), respectively, aligning with translation learners' perceptions in utilizing AABT, may require adopting a TC-based and autonomy-oriented translation pedagogy. The research purpose of the current study is to have a preliminary understanding of the factors underlying learner perceptions that affect the technology acceptance of AABT in their translation learning.

This study aims to address the following research questions:

RQ1 : How do students perceive harnessing AABT in their translation learning?

RQ2 : What are students' current learning experiences in their *Translation Theory and Practice* I and II courses?

The findings of the current study might facilitate endeavors to integrate leading technologies into translation pedagogy and help translation instructors revitalize their teaching practices by better accommodating learners' needs. Moreover, the current study might offer a preliminary understanding of merging AABT with translation pedagogy from the perspective of learner perceptions by including TC and LA as the key components.

Literature Review

Technology Acceptance of AI

Technology acceptance was rooted in and derived from the Theory of Reasoned Action (TRA) (Davis et al.,1989). The tenet of TRA is to explain and predict human behavior across myriad domains (Davis et al., 1989; Sok et al., 2021). Based on TRA, Davis (1989) proposed the

Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) to facilitate user acceptance of technology in learning. Perceived Usefulness (PU) and Perceived Ease of Use (PEOU) both significantly affect BI (Behavioral Intention) and actual usage behavior (Davis, 1989; Davis et al.,1989). Furthermore, Wesely (2012) linked the notion of learner beliefs and learner perceptions to English as a Second Language (ESL)/ English as a Foreign Language (EFL) setting. Learner perceptions refer to how learners experience themselves and their language-learning situations (Wesely, 2012). Overall, it is suggested that learner perception precedes learner belief and should be observable in studies of ESL/EFL scenarios. Past studies have indicated the critical role of perceptions in shaping the pathway from BI to behavioral change. Thereby, underpinned by TAM, it is pivotal to evaluate perception (more specifically, PU and PEOU) to predict user acceptance.

Information and Communication Technology (ICT) tools are in surging demand in ESL/EFL classrooms. Any effective incorporation of information technology into education hinges on user acceptance (Haron et al., 2021). Given the increasingly striking role of AIED, understanding AI acceptance is crucial. Regarding translation education, gaps exist in exploring user perceptions and AI acceptance in classrooms. There is a lack of in-depth studies (e.g., interviews) providing deeper insights into the perceptions of AI adoption in translation education. In short, to fulfill the vision of invigorating translation education, exploring learners' perceptions of their acceptance of technology and AI can be overarching.

AI-Assisted Blended Teaching

A new teaching paradigm is proposed to meet the growing digital learning needs of students across all educational levels. In particular, the interplay of AI and BT has preliminarily shown potential and benefits. Several past studies have maintained that some emerging forms of AABT are beneficial for personalized, customized, or autonomous learning (Alshahrani, 2023; Cabrera et al., 2025; Mahande et al., 2025; Park & Doo, 2024; Shi et al., 2023). Nevertheless, the synergy of AI and BT in educational fields remains latent (Park & Doo, 2024; Taylor, 2024). Providing insights into how learners perceive the adoption of AABT is still at a preliminary stage. By leveraging ChatGPT-integrated blended teaching, Mahande et al. (2025) and Wu et al. (2025) revealed that learners experienced satisfaction and positive psychological factors when studying science subjects at the tertiary level. Regarding ESL/EFL education, He et al. (2023) contended that the integration of Intelligent Cloud Teaching enhances learners' attitudes and self-confidence. Similarly, Taylor (2024) argued that Thai undergraduate learners' perceptions of the challenges in a blended, AI-integrated English course could be partially mitigated through the use of AI tools. However, these discussions have not drawn on the integration of TAM. As aforementioned, TAM is foundational for understanding user acceptance of learning technologies. Notably, by adopting a TAM questionnaire, Zhou et al. (2025) examined learner perceptions of a ChatGPT-incorporated mobile-assisted blended learning. They contended that learners have PU and PEOU regarding utilizing AABT. Nonetheless, the primarily quantitative finding of Zhou et al. (2025) may limit its explanations of the outcome and is irrelevant to translation education. Overall, there is still a scarcity of studies highlighting how learners perceive AABT in their translation learning.

Integrating AI-Assisted Blended Teaching into Translation Teaching

Ren (2025), Zhang et al. (2025) , and Zhao et al. (2025) provided insights into the application of ChatGPT in translation pedagogy. Zhao et al. (2025) stated how translation learners' psychological factors affect their acquisition of translation technology competence in using AI.

Zhang et al. (2025) further argued for the prominence of incorporating learners' perceptions into translation education. Ren (2025) constructed an extended TAM to evaluate translation learners' perceptions of using ChatGPT. It contended that learners' high PU of the AI Chatbot. Together, these studies provide important insights into the potential of utilizing AI Chatbots in translation learning. However, they have not integrated AABT yet, despite its emergence. Y. Zhang (2023) presented a BT environment driven by AI technology and asserted that it could improve college EFL learners' translation performances. However, it focuses on the context of English-speaking. To bridge the gap, the current study aims to proffer a preliminary insight into tertiary learners' perceptions of adopting AABT in a translation classroom.

Translation Competence and Learner Autonomy

As a multifaceted skill set, TC is increasingly pivotal in underpinning current translation pedagogy. The vision is to make it situated, authentic, and aligned with the IR4-driven language industry. Past studies have argued that TC is the ultimate goal (Carrasco Flores, 2019) of translation pedagogy due to its inherent alignment with the professional demands of the industry (Prieto Ramos, 2024). Kiraly (2013, p. 202) proffered a componential model of TC and claimed that this model effectively reflects a myriad of facets of the acquisition process of TC. It is unfolded with knowledge and skills ("TC" in his model), personal competence (PC), and social competence (SC) (Kiraly, 2013, p. 202). Among them, Kiraly (2013) observed that learners exhibited notable weaknesses in PC and SC. Kiraly (2013) argued that strengthening learners' PC and SC is critical for their survival in the industry, where translation is their profession. Following this line of thought, to deepen the understanding of crucial sub-competences in TC, Ureel (2022) and Carrasco Flores (2019) echoed Kiraly's (2013) componential TC model by further elaborating on the "linguistic" competence. However, previous studies have not shed too much light on the PC and SC of TC despite Kiraly (2013) having argued for their prominence. Additionally, bridging a competence-based translation pedagogy with educational technology is gradually emerging. Wang (2023) suggested that AI can bolster key competencies of Chinese translation learners. Furthermore, Zhao et al. (2025) linked translation learners' psychological components in TC with their translation technology competence (TTC) in utilizing AI tools. However, studies exploring the relevance between TC-based translation pedagogy frameworks and educational technologies (e.g., AI chatbots) remain scarce.

LA has been identified as a core tenet of ESL/EFL learning (Mohebbi, 2025; Tsai, 2021). Past studies have demonstrated that LA can be effectively enhanced through BT (Mohebbi, 2025; Pyo & Lee, 2024; Tsai, 2021; Zhou et al., 2025). However, previous findings have not focused on outlining an autonomy-oriented translation pedagogy. Therefore, a TC-based and autonomy-oriented translation pedagogy may need to be re-envisioned to accommodate translation learners' perceptions in the context of IR4.

Methodology

Research Design

The current study employed a qualitative research design using focus group interviews (FGIs), with data analyzed by thematic analysis. The key advantage of FGIs is their synergistic dynamic, where participants collectively stimulate discussion and collaboratively address the research topic (Cohen et al., 2018). Besides, FGIs have proven to be very useful for studies aiming at gathering data on respondents' perceptions (Cohen et al., 2018). Gaining in-depth insights into

learners' perceptions of integrating AABT in a translation class aligns with the defining features of FGIs. The researcher designed an interview protocol based on the research questions. To ensure the validity and trustworthiness of the instrument, four experts (one expert from the field of translation education, one from English education, and two from educational technology) were invited to validate the content. The researcher modified the interview protocol based on the advice from the experts. One question was removed, and several statements were revised. In addition, triangulation was employed in this study, with respondents invited to share additional course materials to support their viewpoints. Triangulating different data sources ensures the themes generated across multiple sources, thereby enhancing the validity of the research (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Meanwhile, the researcher sent back the transcriptions to the respondents for their opinions on the accuracy of the data. Accordingly, transcriptions were rectified according to their feedback.

Data Collection and Participants

Purposive and voluntary sampling were employed in this study. Twelve respondents (senior English majors) who had attended the *Translation Theory and Practice* I and II Courses (over two consecutive semesters) during their junior year were purposively selected from the research site: Aba Teachers College in China. The research site is the researcher's workplace, making it suitable for purposive sampling. The courses were chosen because they are part of the core translation curriculum and are typically accessible to junior English majors at most universities. Besides, since senior English majors already have specific backgrounds in TC and LA, this can lead to more comprehensive and credible data. In addition, voluntary sampling was employed to ensure that participants voluntarily participated in the study. The sample size is appropriate as 6-8 participants per group were recommended for FGIs (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). The FGIs were conducted in January of 2025, and the 12 respondents were randomly and evenly divided into two groups. Each group had a separate FGI session, and the interviews had been digitally recorded and transcribed. Table one shows the demographic information of the respondents.

Table 1. *Demographic information*

Code	Gender	Age	Group No.	Date of Interview
R01	F	23	1	6 January 2025
R02	F	22	1	6 January 2025
R03	F	24	1	6 January 2025
R04	F	23	1	6 January 2025
R05	M	22	1	6 January 2025
R06	F	24	1	6 January 2025
R07	F	24	2	7 January 2025
R08	F	23	2	7 January 2025
R09	M	21	2	7 January 2025
R10	F	23	2	7 January 2025
R11	F	22	2	7 January 2025
R12	M	23	2	7 January 2025

Ethical Considerations

The researcher obtained approval from the Academic Ethics Committee of the research site to conduct the FGIs. Consent was also obtained from the experts to review the instrument and from the students for voluntary participation in the study. Informant anonymity was also ensured (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis in NVivo (version 14.0), as thematic analysis is a flexible method to analyze qualitative data collected in the natural classroom setting (Xu & Zammit, 2020). This research employed a hybrid coding. Initially, codes were developed based on TAM and Kiraly's (2013, p. 202) componential model of TC to address RQ1 and RQ2, respectively. Additional themes from the participants' responses were also identified and developed. It warranted both theoretical alignment and openness to the richness of the data, rather than purely relying on the frequency of codes detached from their context (Xu & Zammit, 2020).

Results

Various perspectives were expressed during the FGIs, and consequently, four broad themes emerged from the analysis to address RQ1 and RQ2.

Students' Perceptions of AABT in a Chinese Translation Class

Two major themes are unveiled in the dataset to address RQ1: positive perceptions amidst uncertainties and the co-emergent learning process, as shown in Figure one.

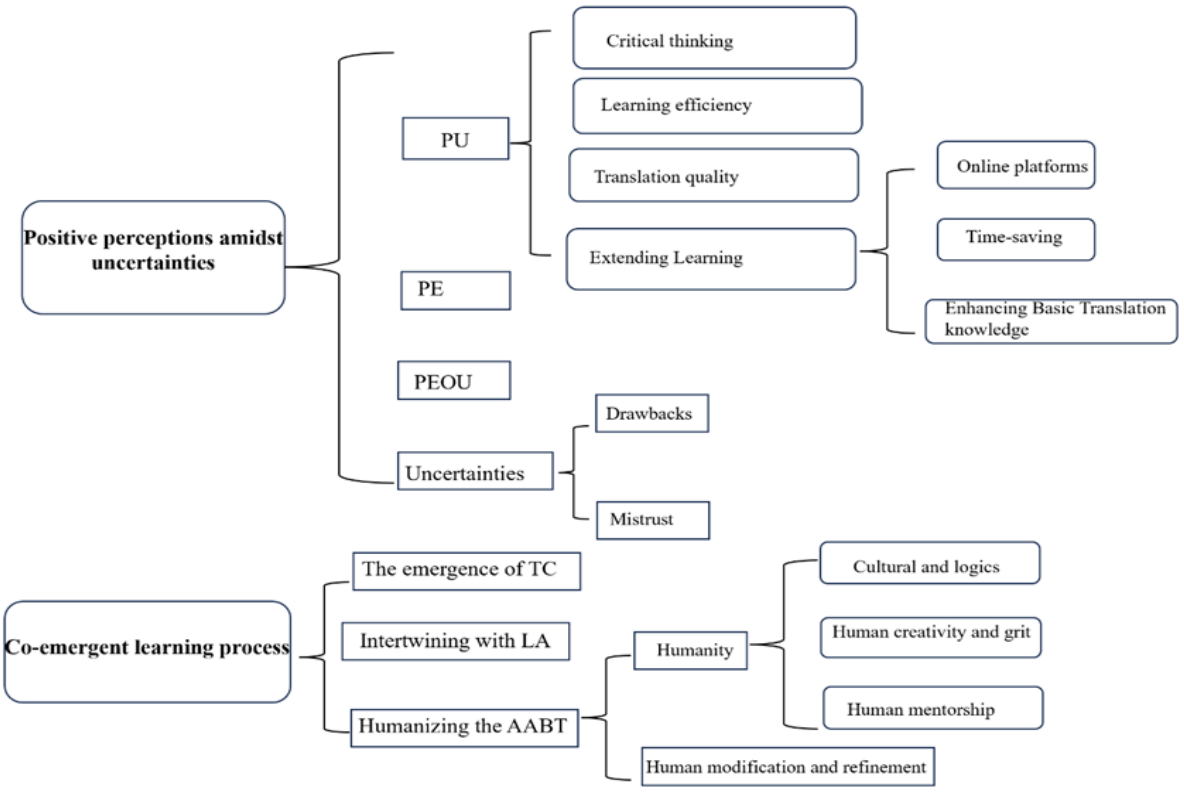


Figure 1. Students' perceptions of AABT in their translation learning

Positive perceptions

Notably, PU is a particularly prominent sub-theme amongst respondents' perceptions. Firstly, most respondents commented that critical (independent) thinking can be fostered through AABT. "This mode (AABT) provides us with more opportunities for independent thinking. Compared to conventional ones, it is more conducive to keeping up with the trends of the times and promotes our overall personal development." One respondent (R10) commented. Another respondent (R06) said, "AABT is innovative. AI can provide timely feedback and innovative thinking immediately." Moreover, a respondent (R02) shared, "AABT helps us explore multiple translation possibilities and expand our thinking on translation." Secondly, respondents agreed that both learning efficiency and translation quality can be enhanced by integrating AABT. A respondent (R04) expressed, "AI assists me in checking the grammar, providing synonyms, improving the quality of translation, shortening the time for searching for materials, and improving the translation efficiency." Finally, the respondents concurred that AABT can extend their translation learning from various aspects. As a respondent (R12) suggested, "I feel terrific about AABT. Because it is very convenient to search for various materials, saves time, and uses vague ideas to let AI provide refined results." Another respondent (R05) agreed, "AABT will increase the transmission of basic knowledge of translation". In addition, the sub-theme of perceived enjoyment (PE) emerged from the FGIs. Preliminarily, AABT makes most respondents feel joyful in their translation learning. A respondent (R05) said, "I felt much better using AABT compared to the conventional mode. I felt more relaxed and less stressed." Notably, PEOU also emerged throughout the interviews. All the respondents agreed that, based on their perceptions, the average degree of PEOU is approximately 70%.

Uncertainties

However, concerns were also revealed throughout the FGIs and can be categorized into two main sub-themes: the possible drawbacks of AABT and perceptions of mistrust toward it. A respondent (R04) pointed out, "AI translation may have errors, omissions, etc., which can result in less effective language output." A respondent (R10) mentioned another drawback, "Sometimes, AI translations sound very 'Chinglish', not idiomatic and inaccurate." The respondents highlighted that overdependence on AI is detrimental. A respondent (R02) suggested, "to wholly rely on AI to translate is not viable since it is not able to analyze the sentence patterns and forms (in Chinese or English)."

> We should not directly copy and submit whatever it has generated without reviewing the content. Although AI is intelligent, some of the content it generates is impractical. Since these contents are generated through a combination of sources from the internet, they are somewhat rigid. We need to refine what AI has generated and make it our own. (R01)

Furthermore, respondents expressed their mistrust of AABT. A respondent (R02) shared, "However, we cannot be trapped in AI and the comfort zone. We need to 'jump out'." Similarly, commented by another respondent (R06), "AI cannot replace the support of real and high-level human learners."

Co-emergent Learning Process

Respondents commented that injecting AABT into translation pedagogy is concurrent with the acquisition of their TC and LA during the learning process. One major view is about humanizing the AABT. "Translation can be transformed from being 'dehumanizing' to

'humanizing' through human modification and refinement of AI-generated content." Highlighted by a respondent (R01). Another respondent (R08) added, "AI is a machine, and its translations are often 'dehumanizing'; therefore, human refinement and modification are necessary." Interestingly, most respondents acknowledged the significance of cultural nuances in the process of learning translation, as one respondent (R07) noted, "AI can provide different versions of TT for an ST, so that we can select among them, we can learn and reflect on why different TT exist and understand how cultural backgrounds influence these differences." Additionally, another respondent underscored the role of the human instructor:

> It requires techniques when giving prompts to AI. If the prompt is well-crafted, specific, or incorporates your thinking, it is more effective in solving questions. Hence, we should not over-sanctify AI……I think it is challenging without guidance from a human teacher. I think human guidance is conducive to our learning efficiency. (R09)

Secondly, regarding the acquisition of TC, a respondent (R01) remarked, "There is a constant learning process for me in acquiring the TC. Since we all have narrow perspectives, translation requires us to learn, to break through, to develop, and to rise." Also, supported by another respondent:

> My understanding is that translation is an ongoing process of refinement. The instructor may not have explained this aspect of the translation process very clearly. Translation is in a continuous process of change and development. Knowing one sentence or one thing involves a constant process of "climbing". Thereby, different translators may have different viewpoints on the same sentence, and as a result, their translations will differ. Translation is a continuous process of change and development, making it impossible for only one TT to exist. (R09)

Furthermore, it is also found that LA is closely related to respondents' perceptions of utilizing AABT. "Since translation is evolving with the changes of society and times, we should constantly enhance our LA to keep up with it." Shared by one respondent (R03). Another respondent (R12) mentioned, "I have a strong willingness to pursue LA and a keen interest in learning Chinese-English translation. I also have a stronger willingness to translate beautiful Chinese or English sentences, apply various translation strategies, and restructure the sentences in ST."

Unilateral Translation Exercise Classes

To address RQ2, the FGIs surfaced several notable issues. The themes of encountering difficulties in acquiring TC and having minimal exposure to AABT recurred throughout the dataset. The identified themes can be presented in Figure two.

Gaps in Acquiring TC

Among the sub-competences under knowledge and skills competence: linguistic, historical and cultural, norms and conventions, strategic, and research competences emerged as the main areas the respondents believed they had developed through the courses. As for other TCs under knowledge and skills competence, PC, and SC, respondents rarely linked their translation learning experiences to these areas. As shown in Figure two, the dashed box highlights the current gaps in students' acquisition of TCs.

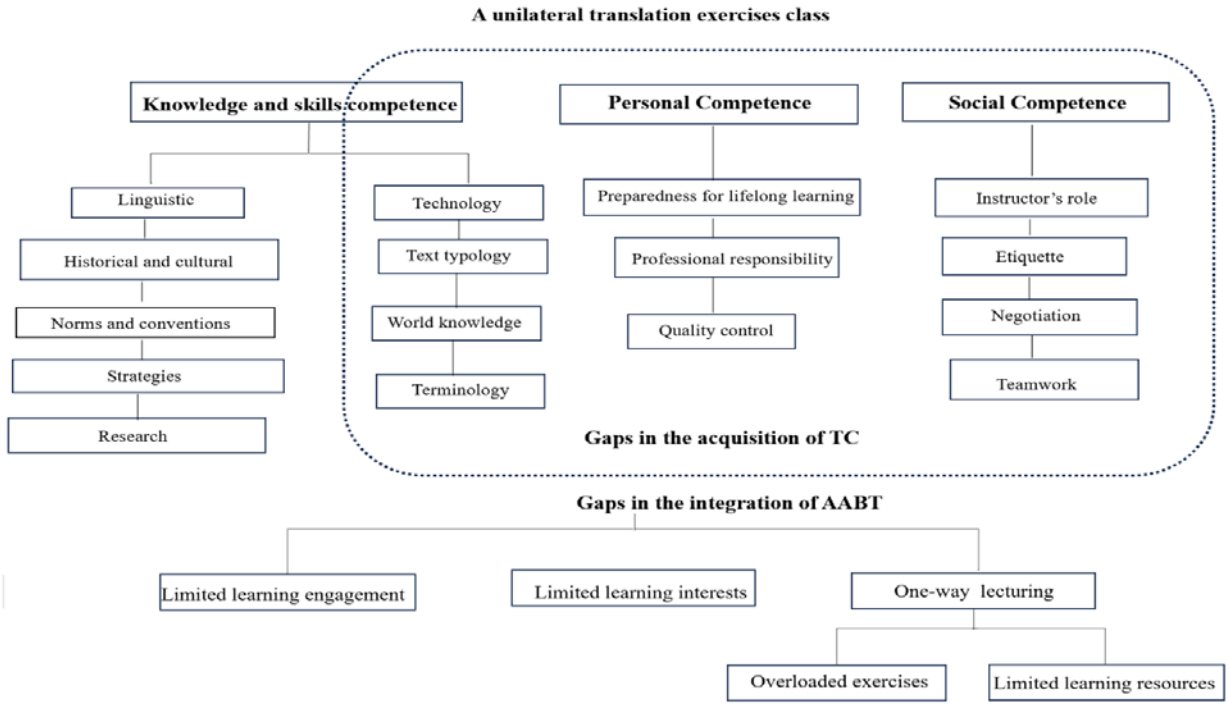


Figure 2. Students' current learning experiences in their *Translation Theory and Practice* I and II courses
Note. Figure created by the author. Key concepts informed by data in Kiraly (2013, p. 202).

Gaps in Integrating AABT

Commonly, respondents stated that the *Translation Theory and Practice* I and II courses had not employed any forms of AI or BT. They construed the role of the instructor, their own identities, and the teaching mode of the courses. One respondent (R11) explained, "I agree to use AABT. Because the lesson format will be diverse and innovative, it will stimulate students' interest in learning. Current conventional one merely involves the teacher unilaterally delivering knowledge and fails to arouse our interest in learning." As one respondent (R10) noted, "Most of the time, our learning achievement is poor, as not every student is engaged in the lesson." Another respondent suggested:

> "Although the instructor has plenty of translation techniques, they are a bit conventional. If we combine online and offline (resources), we may learn more techniques. The instructor cannot possess complete knowledge of translation, so we can learn more by using AI. It will extend our knowledge through the combination of the output by the instructor and what we gain from AI." (R02)

Discussion

Despite being a nascent pedagogical practice, it is notable that Chinese EFL translation learners' positive perceptions of AABT outweigh their doubts or concerns about it. This aligns with previous studies indicating that learners mainly had positive psychological factors in adopting forms of AABT in several ESL/EFL contexts (He et al., 2023; Jiang, 2025; Mahande et al., 2025;

Wu et al., 2025; Zhou et al., 2025). It indicates learners' rising technology acceptance of AABT. Specifically, the current study echoes the significance of PU (Li et al., 2024; Ren, 2025; Zhou et al., 2025), PEOU (Li et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2025), and PE (Fan & Zhang, 2024; Zou et al., 2023) in the ESL/EFL classrooms, and further extends their relevance to translation pedagogy, especially by including PE. In addition, among the underlying constructs of PU, learners perceived that utilizing AI or BT in translation classrooms enhances their critical thinking (He et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2025). This can undoubtedly be attributed to the affordances of personalized or customized language learning (Alshahrani, 2023; Cabrera et al., 2025; Mahande et al., 2025; Park & Doo, 2024; Shi et al., 2023) environment established by AABT. Interestingly, enhanced translation learning efficiency (Zhang et al., 2025) is another benefit that Chinese EFL translation learners associate with adopting AABT under PU. In contrast, improving translation quality and extending translation learning are newly emerging constructs under PU revealed by the current study. As discussed in the Introduction, translation education has an inherent interconnectedness with the language industry despite their mismatch presently (Ren, 2025; Wang, 2023; Zhang et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025). Instead of merely being a language skill believed to improve through rote exercises, translation is a skilled and nuanced profession (Vieira, 2020) in the industry. Hence, the themes of enhancing translation quality and expanding translation learning resonate strongly with industrial demands. Chinese EFL translation learners agree that AABT facilitates better translation quality in terms of time-saving (Cao et al., 2025) and free access to online platforms. Surprisingly, learners believe that, compared to conventional teaching, AABT can better extend their basic translation knowledge and skills. It suggests that future research may focus on deepening the understanding of the multifaceted aspects of PU under extended TAMs in translation (Al-Maroof et al., 2020; Almusharraf & Bailey, 2023; Ren, 2025). Apart from this, PEOU is also identified as a significant determinant, which concurs with previous studies (Li et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2025) but contradicts Ren's (2025) finding. The AI Chatbots referred to are several widely used ones (e.g., Kimi, Yuanbao, etc.), in contrast to ChatGPT (which has limited access in China), as discussed in Ren's (2025) study. This may contribute to learners' PEOU of AABT.

Nevertheless, uncertainties (Al-Zubaidi, 2025, p. 2) in AI are also an unavoidable part of Chinese translation learners' perceptions of adopting AABT. They feel concerned that the AABT may generate impractical translations (Zhang et al., 2025), causing misunderstandings and inaccuracies. It is evident that the authenticity and reliability of AI feedback remain questionable. Thereby, users expressed that human modification and refinement are still vital. Instead of taking the overall command in translation, AABT should be a supplement (Park & Doo, 2024). Notably, over-reliance on AI is a significant uncertainty expressed by students in the current study. This is consistent with the findings of Alshahrani (2023), Taylor (2024), and Mahande et al. (2025). Students perceived that being over-dependent on AI hinders their independent thinking, such as their independent analytical skills and critical awareness (Zakaria et al., 2025, p. 341). Indeed, this uncertainty has been highlighted as a "post-humanist turn in translation" (Lee, 2023, p. 2369). Previous studies (Mahande et al., 2025; Taylor, 2024) have demonstrated that human mentorship and support are irreplaceable and essential for AABT. The current study, while preliminary, further suggests that nurturing students with human nature underlying translation pedagogy is overarching. This also corroborates the earlier finding of Wu et al. (2025), who advocated for nurturing students with a humanistic spirit in a tertiary ChatGPT-based blended medical course. In addition, human content and creativity (Kushmar et al., 2022; Ren, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025; Zhao et al., 2025), gift, cultural factors (Al-Maroof et al., 2020; Ren, 2025), and logic are found to

be inextricably associated with the co-emergent translation learning process. The current study supports the idea of Al-Maroof et al. (2020) that culture has a strong influence on users' perceptions of AI or BT tools and should be included as a significant construct to predict users' BI to AABT.

Furthermore, another rising perception was that the core tenet of translation learning is co-emergent. This significantly aligns with Kiraly's (2013) emergent view of translation pedagogy. Students' perceptions of the emergence of TC in the translation learning process confirm the crucial role of TC acquisition in translation pedagogy (Carrasco Flores, 2019; Muñoz-Basols et al., 2023; Prieto Ramos, 2024; Ureel, 2022). In terms of students' current learning experiences in the *Translation Theory and Practice* I and II courses, however, it is indicated that gaps still exist in the acquisition of TC. Previously, some critical capacities, such as AI-Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge (An et al., 2023), have been found to positively affect students' BI toward AI. Accordingly, in the context of translation pedagogy, one promising approach appears to be cultivating learners' technological TC (Kiraly, 2013; Zhao et al., 2025) to meet the talent needs of the industry. The findings observed in this study mirror those of Wang (2023), highlighting the significance of the sub-competences under SC and PC, despite being downplayed in current translation pedagogical practices. Professionalism in quality control (Prieto Ramos, 2024), etiquette, negotiation, and teamwork (Prieto Ramos, 2024) are indeed paramount competencies for learners. Interestingly, respondents commented that their LA has improved through the use of translation strategies. This implies that LA might be associated with strategic competence in TC. This finding of enhanced LA differs from some past studies (He et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2025). A possible explanation for this inconsistency may be that group project presentations were the dominant form in the respondents' courses. Project-based learning contributes to learners' improved LA (Tirado-Morueta et al., 2024). However, there is abundant room for further progress in empowering translation learners with LA, where a positive perception of educational technology can be cultivated (Zhang et al., 2025).

The strong momentum of language automation (Pym& Torres-Simón, 2021; Zhao et al., 2025) heralds a technological shift in translation pedagogy. Nonetheless, the current study's findings do not support the notion that the mainstay of translation pedagogy has been revamped to align with language automation. Regarding the gap in the integration of AABT, students commented that their learning engagement and interests are low. They found that one-way lecturing is monotonous and confusing. In contrast, various forms of AABT can significantly enhance learners' learning engagement (He et al., 2023; Park & Doo, 2024; Zhou et al., 2025) and arouse their learning interests (He et al., 2023; Wu et al., 2025). In addition, the current study found that the unilateral translation exercises class and limited learning resources restricted students' engagement. However, past studies have demonstrated that AABT effectively facilitates students' learning by delivering versatile materials in diverse formats (Zhou et al., 2025). Apart from this, students preferred AABT because it is time-saving (Shi et al., 2023; Park & Doo, 2024), accessible to online platforms, and consolidates their translation knowledge and skills. Collectively, it further supports the idea of incorporating AABT in translation pedagogy to bridge the gap.

Several significant limitations of the current study need to be considered. Firstly, although in-depth qualitative FGIs were conducted, the sample size is small and limited to students from a single university. This may limit the generalizability of the findings. Secondly, future studies may incorporate quantitative data to provide empirical evidence on students' perceptions of AABT.

Further studies are also recommended to consider the differences in students' gender, educational level, and regional background.

Conclusion

Through qualitative in-depth FGIs, the current study provides preliminary insights on how the perceptions of EFL translation learners shape their technology acceptance of AABT. The findings suggest that EFL learners' perceptions of AABT in China are primarily positive, albeit with particular concerns (Al-Zubaidi, 2025, p. 1). Their positive perceptions are supported by the PU, PE, and PEOU in AABT. This indicates a growing technological acceptance of AABT among EFL learners in China. However, views of uncertainties also emerged in the FGIs. The current study encapsulates that learners perceived learning translation as a co-emergent process in which their TC and LA can be evoked. Humanizing AABT is a proffered pathway to mitigate the uncertainties of its adoption. Meanwhile, findings on learners' learning experiences in the core compulsory translation courses (*Translation Theory and Practice* I and II) reflect a significant gap between their growing technology acceptance of AABT and the practices of outdated translation classrooms. PC and SC were largely absent from learners' perceptions. Nonetheless, learners signified that the ultimate goal in translation learning seems to foster their TC and LA. Accordingly, a TC-based and autonomy-oriented translation pedagogy is proposed for integration with AABT. Promisingly, a tailored, AABT-led translation pedagogy is therefore recommended for future endeavors.

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Appendices

ppendix A: Thematic Analysis of Students' Perceptions of AABT Using NVivo 14 Software

