HiLL PUBLISHING

Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science, 2025, 9(8), 1619-1625
https://www.hillpublisher.com/Journals/jhass/
ISSN Online: 2576-0548
ISSN Print: 2576-0556

Reforms in Translation Education Driven by Large Language Models

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How to cite this paper: Yanfang Li. (2025) Reforms in Translation Education Driven by Large Language Models. *Journal of Humanities, Arts and Social Science*, 9(8), 1619-1625.
DOI: 10.26855/jhass.2025.08.020

Received: July 16, 2025
Accepted: August 13, 2025
Published: September 9, 2025

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Abstract

With the rapid development of artificial intelligence technology, Large Language Models (LLMs) have brought unprecedented opportunities and challenges to translation education. LLMs have significantly enhanced translation quality and efficiency through deep learning and self-attention mechanisms, profoundly impacting traditional translation teaching methods. However, they face difficulties in processing polysemous words and ambiguous sentences, and their training is costly. Additionally, the use of LLMs raises ethical, privacy, and security concerns. The paper proposes reform strategies, including generating and analyzing translation teaching materials, constructing intelligent translation teaching platforms, developing translation studies knowledge models, enhancing teachers' technical literacy and innovative teaching abilities, and strengthening translation ethics education and a sense of responsibility. These strategies aim to effectively integrate LLMs with translation teaching to improve the quality and effectiveness of translation education, ultimately underscoring the importance of ethical education to navigate the complexities of LLM applications in translation, aiming to foster a new era of translation education that is both innovative and responsible.

Keywords

Large Language Models (LLMs); Translation Education; Educational Reform

1. Introduction

LLMs represent a significant innovation in the field of artificial intelligence and have achieved remarkable success in translation practice, with translation quality even surpassing that of professional human translators. In the realm of translation education, the application of LLMs has transformed traditional teaching methods and posed new demands and challenges for the cultivation of translation talent. Therefore, it is of great theoretical and practical significance to delve into the reform of translation education driven by LLMs. The development of LLMs can be traced back to early statistical language models, such as N-gram language models, which predict words based on context but face issues like vocabulary sparsity and limited context understanding when dealing with long texts.

With the advancement of deep learning technology, Bengio et al. proposed neural language models in 2003, transforming language modeling into a neural network learning task. Subsequently, Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs) and Long Short-Term Memory networks (LSTMs) further enhanced the modeling capabilities of language models. In 2013, Google introduced the Word2Vec model, which, through word embedding technology, mapped words into continuous vector spaces, significantly improving the understanding of word semantics. In 2017, Google's Transformer model, which utilized self-attention mechanisms to enable parallel computing (Vaswani et al., 2017), greatly increased training speed and performance, laying the foundation for the subsequent development of LLMs. LLMs undergo unsupervised pretraining on large-scale unlabeled texts to learn universal language representations, followed

by fine-tuning to adapt to specific downstream tasks such as text classification and machine translation. In the translation field, LLMs have shown particular prominence, capturing semantic and contextual information to generate fluent and natural translations. LLMs can also serve as translation aids, offering functions like vocabulary suggestions, grammar checks, and style adjustments. Additionally, LLMs support multilingual translation, sharing parameters across languages through cross-lingual pretraining, reducing the cost and difficulty of multilingual translation. Combined with agent technology, LLMs can achieve interactive translation, dynamically adjusting translation results based on user feedback to enhance translation quality and efficiency (Maimaiti et al., 2022). Despite significant progress in the translation field, LLMs still face challenges. The complexity and diversity of languages make the processing of polysemous words and ambiguous sentences very difficult. Moreover, the acquisition and annotation of large amounts of high-quality language data required for LLM training are costly (Raiaan et al., 2024). Ethical, privacy, and security issues are also important considerations in the application of LLMs in translation. Therefore, further research and development are needed to improve the application effects of LLMs in the translation field (Wang & Liu, 2022).

2. LLMs Translation System

Large language models (LLMs) can be directly applied to translation practice. Unlike traditional machine translation systems that are trained on a sentence-by-sentence basis, LLMs are trained on a word-by-word basis. This allows LLMs to understand and reproduce the coherence between words and contextual information, resulting in more natural and accurate translations. Furthermore, while traditional machine translation systems often make syntactic and semantic errors in more complex linguistic environments, LLMs can handle more intricate language scenarios and produce more accurate and natural translations. Comparatively, LLMs demonstrate superior performance in translation, capable of producing translations that rival those of human translators.

The translation system driven by large language models is capable of comprehensively processing multiple types of information, including text, speech, and images, to provide comprehensive translation services. At its core is a powerful large language model that possesses the ability to process and understand cross-modal data. During the training phase, the model learns to extract key information from different modalities and integrates this information during translation to ensure the accuracy of the translation results. By employing multi-task learning methods, the model can handle other tasks such as speech and image recognition while performing translation, thereby continuously accumulating knowledge from multiple tasks to further improve translation quality.

2.1 Features of the LLMs Translation System

The large language model translation system integrates advanced technologies of deep learning and machine learning, enabling efficient processing of multiple types of data, such as text, images, and sounds, to provide high-quality and accurate translation services. The system is trained based on the Transformer architecture, leveraging self-attention mechanisms and multi-head attention to effectively capture global dependencies within the data. It is capable of cross-modal information fusion, deep semantic analysis, enhanced robustness and generalization ability, and reduces the dependence on labeled data. These characteristics place the large language model at the forefront of translation technology as a cutting-edge solution.

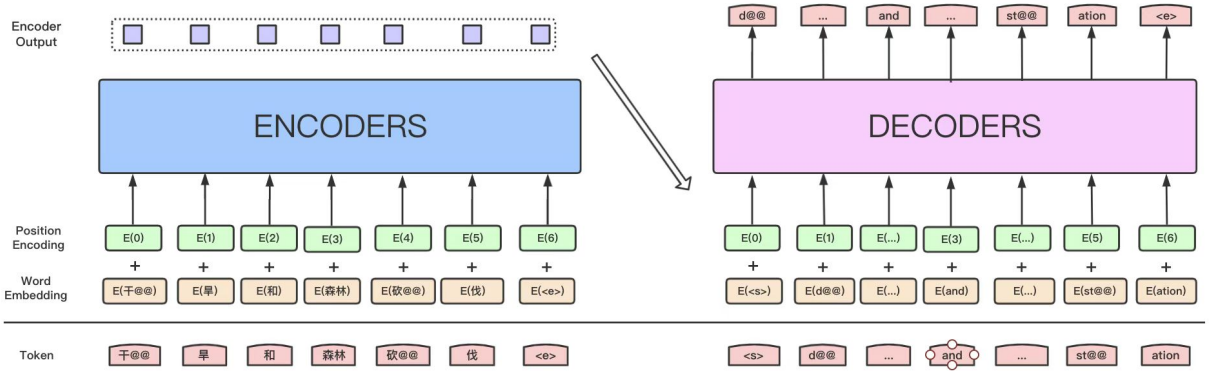

Figure 1. Principle of Machine Translation System Based on Transformer.

2.2 Functions of the LLMs Translation System

The large language model translation system offers the following functions: Firstly, it can translate input text into the target language as required by the user. Secondly, it supports image translation, where users can upload images and the system will recognize and translate the text within them. Thirdly, it has speech translation capabilities, which allow it to receive voice input, convert it into text, and then perform translation. In addition, the system can translate text, images, or speech input in real-time to facilitate instant communication. It also supports translation between multiple languages to meet the needs of different users. The system can output the translation results in voice form for user convenience. Lastly, it can identify and prompt translation errors to assist users in making corrections. This system integrates text, image, and voice processing technologies to accurately and promptly complete translation tasks between various languages and provides functions such as voice output and translation error correction.

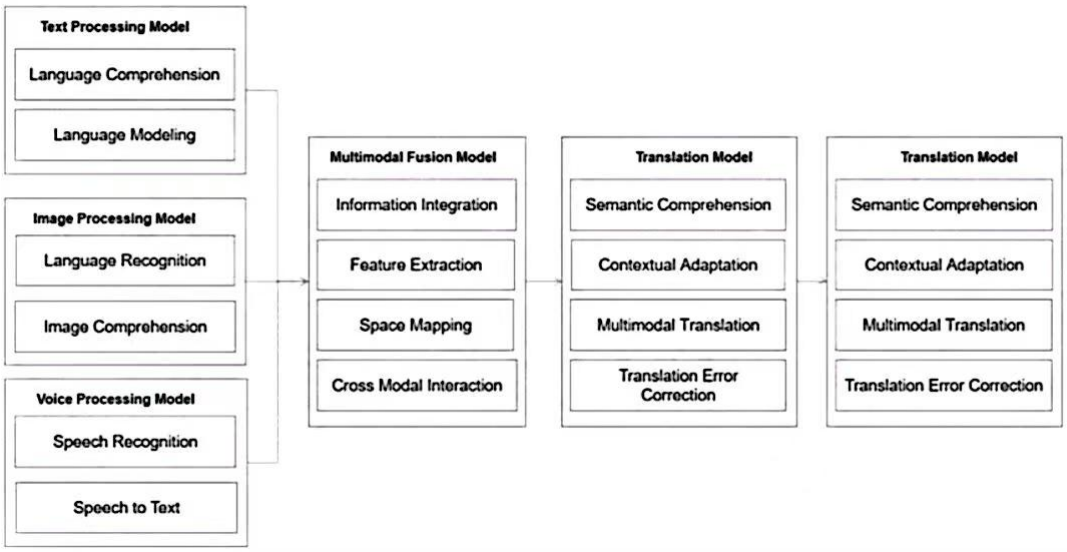

Figure 2. Architecture of Multimodal Translation System.

However, despite LLMs' proficiency in translating various texts and their outstanding performance, they cannot completely replace human translators. After all, translation is a complex and nuanced cross-cultural communication activity. Even the most advanced algorithms and models cannot precisely convey the subtleties of textual expression. Compared to LLMs, human translators are better at understanding context and cultural factors.

3. Current Application of LLMs Technology in Translation Education

In the era of Large Language Models (LLMs), the field of translation education is undergoing significant changes. First, the focus of research has expanded to include the translation capabilities of LLMs, which have become an indispensable part of translation education research. Researchers are now required to delve into the translation strategies and methods employed by these models, their textual characteristics, styles, and their relationship with ideology. Moreover, comparative studies between LLM translations and human translations have become particularly important, helping us to comprehensively understand the strengths and weaknesses of LLM translations. At the same time, the importance of post-editing has been highlighted, as it will remain a crucial part of the translation process until LLMs can independently produce high-quality translations on their own.

What's more, the application of LLMs is transforming the subjects, patterns, and methods of translation education. The role of teachers is shifting; they are no longer just imparters of knowledge but need to become organizers, guides, constructors of learning contexts, learning partners, and life mentors to play their irreplaceable roles. The role of students is also changing; they are no longer passive recipients of knowledge but have become the main subjects of teaching and active constructors of knowledge. LLMs provide more possibilities for students' self-exploration and discovery. To adapt to these changes, translation education needs innovation, including the development of new

teaching methods, such as using LLMs for translation exercises and post-editing training, and exploring new teaching models like flipped classrooms and blended learning. Teaching methods also need to be updated to better leverage the advantages of LLMs, for instance, through real-time translation feedback from the models, simulated translation scenarios, and instruction on translation strategies and skills. LLMs are propelling translation education research in new directions, requiring educators to rethink the objectives, content, and methods of translation teaching to cultivate translators who can meet the demands of the new era.

3.1 Transformation of Online and Offline Hybrid Teaching Model

Large language models provide strong support for the innovation of translation teaching models. In online teaching, teachers can use large language models to offer personalized learning paths and real-time feedback for students, customizing different teaching content and assignments based on students' learning levels and progress (Wei & Li, 2023, P. 38). Offline teaching can utilize large language models to simulate real translation scenarios, allowing students to practice and develop their skills. This online and offline hybrid teaching model greatly enhances the flexibility and interactivity of teaching, improving teaching quality and efficiency (Wang, 2021, p. 85).

3.2 Digitalization of Teaching Resources

As a powerful language knowledge base, large language models inject new vitality into the digital transformation of translation teaching resources. They can quickly search for open resources on the Internet and translation corpora to generate customized teaching materials, syllabuses, and practice questions of different difficulties for teachers. Digital teaching resources break the limitations of time and space, promoting the joint construction and sharing of educational resources, enabling teachers and students to access the latest and most relevant teaching content anytime, anywhere. These resources are also easier to manage and update (Deng, 2023, p. 88).

3.3 Data-driven Monitoring of the Teaching Process

Large language models play an important role in the data-driven analysis of the translation teaching process. By collecting, organizing, and analyzing various data generated during the teaching process, teachers can better understand students' learning behaviors, needs, and progress, and provide more effective guidance. In different stages of translation teaching, data-driven analysis of the teaching process can play a significant role. Before class, teachers can analyze students' knowledge backgrounds and learning records through the large model to develop personalized learning plans and teaching objectives for each student, making the teaching content more in line with students' needs (Shang & Yan, 2023, p. 48). During class, the real-time feedback mechanism of the large language model provides a powerful tool for teachers to immediately identify and correct students' mistakes and offer targeted suggestions (Wu et al., 2023, p. 31). After class, teachers can adjust the allocation of teaching resources and develop more effective teaching plans based on students' learning data.

3.4 Intelligent Assessment of Teaching

Traditional translation education assessment usually relies on teachers' subjective judgment and manual evaluation, which is not only inefficient but also may be affected by personal subjective factors, impacting the accuracy of the assessment. However, with the development of large language models, artificial intelligence is capable of conducting more accurate and fair translation assessments. Large language models can learn from a vast amount of translation data, compare the differences between students' translations and professional translations (Guo, 2023, p. 20), and thereby assess the quality of students' translations. Automated assessment can generate more targeted personalized feedback, offering suggestions based on students' specific translation errors and needs to help them improve their translation skills and enhance their autonomous learning abilities. Teachers can also use the data from automated assessment to identify common translation problems and weak points among students, promptly adjust teaching content and methods, and improve the teaching process (Hu, 2023, p. 12).

4. Reform Strategies for Translation Education Driven by LLMs Technology

The application of large language models in translation education is becoming increasingly widespread. These models can identify common patterns in translations, provide statistical data on the usage of vocabulary and sentence

structures, and assist in analyzing translation errors. These capabilities make large language models a powerful tool in translation education, promoting the development of teaching content towards data-driven and visual approaches, laying the foundation for a data-driven teaching model. We can guide students to use these models to analyze translation texts, master translation skills, and improve their translation abilities through self-exploration, forming a discovery-based learning pattern. With the assistance of large language models, translation education research needs to focus on the technical advantages of the models, characteristics of translated texts, as well as the transformation of teachers' and students' roles, and the features of teaching models. At the same time, research should explore how to effectively integrate large language models with translation teaching to achieve a complementarity between traditional teaching and modern technology.

4.1 Generation and Analysis of Translation Teaching Materials

Large language models provide robust support for the creation of translation teaching materials. Teachers can leverage their translation and text generation capabilities to translate classic works that have not yet been translated or to generate articles on specific topics and in specific genres, which can serve as teaching materials. These materials not only enrich the teaching resources but also spark students' interest in learning. The text analysis function of large language models can analyze the source text in real-time, extracting the usage characteristics of vocabulary and syntactic structures to help students understand the style of the source text. Teachers can guide students to analyze the linguistic features and style of the target text, explore how the target language can reproduce the style of the source text, and compare the stylistic differences among various translations. In addition, large language models can analyze students' translation assignments, identify errors, and provide scores, offering immediate feedback to students.

4.2 Construction of Intelligent Translation Teaching Platforms

By utilizing large language model technology, corpus technology, and other artificial intelligence techniques, it is possible to build intelligent translation teaching platforms. These platforms consist of three main modules: corpora, question banks, and knowledge bases, and are equipped with functions such as text analysis, real-time translation, intelligent Q&A, intelligent assessment, and intelligent recommendation, as well as providing API interfaces for large language models. The corpora module collects classroom teaching materials and parallel corpora of various genres, all of which are annotated with translation strategies and techniques. Teachers can use the platform to search for and analyze teaching materials and parallel corpora to obtain relevant data. The question bank module contains a large number of translation test questions related to the teaching materials. Students can take tests online and submit their answers, and the platform's intelligent assessment function can grade students' translation assignments in real-time and provide feedback. The knowledge base module collects materials related to translation knowledge and skills for teachers and students to search and learn.

4.3 Development of Translation Studies Knowledge Models

Existing large language models perform well in handling general questions, but are not sufficiently accurate in answering questions in specific professional fields. Therefore, it is crucial to develop specialized translation studies knowledge models. By downloading open-source large language model base models and uploading a large amount of translation studies-related language data for training and fine-tuning, accurate and comprehensive translation studies knowledge models can be constructed. These models can impart translation studies knowledge to students through Q&A formats, promoting innovation and development in translation studies research and teaching, and facilitating the construction of an intelligent, visualized, and data-driven smart translation teaching system.

4.4 Enhancing Teachers' Technical Literacy and Innovative Teaching Abilities

Higher education institutions should strengthen teacher training to enhance their understanding and application of large language model technology. The training content should not only include operational skills of the models but also cover the underlying deep learning theories and natural language processing techniques (Hu & Li, 2024). Teachers should be adept at using large language models for teaching design and personalized guidance, adjusting teaching strategies based on students' learning data. Meanwhile, teachers should actively explore teaching models that combine large language models with other emerging technologies such as virtual reality (VR) and augmented reality (AR) to create more immersive and interactive learning environments for students.

4.5 Strengthening Translation Ethics Education and Sense of Responsibility

With the widespread application of large language models, the importance of translation ethics education has become increasingly prominent. Teachers should guide students to understand academic ethical issues in the translation process, such as copyright protection and privacy rights. For example, in teaching, some cases of ethical disputes caused by improper translation can be selected for students to analyze and discuss to enhance their ethical awareness (Hu & Li, 2024). At the same time, teachers should establish clear teaching rules, prohibiting students from plagiarizing translations generated by large language models and imposing corresponding penalties for violations. Teachers themselves should also lead by example, adhere to translation ethics standards, and clearly indicate the sources when using large language models to assist in teaching and research, setting a good example for students.'

5. Conclusion

Large language models have brought new opportunities to translation education, but they have also triggered a series of issues. Their training data, mostly sourced from internet texts, inevitably carries biases and specific ideologies, which may affect the objectivity and correctness of teaching content. Moreover, the content generated by these models may contain factual errors, and if teachers use it for teaching without verification, it can easily mislead students. At the same time, the powerful functions of large language models may lead to over-reliance by teachers and students, weakening teachers' teaching abilities and students' autonomous learning capabilities. During use, there are also risks of data privacy and security, with sensitive data such as personal information of teachers and students, and unpublished works potentially being leaked. To address these issues, teachers need to enhance their political awareness, accurately identify ideological biases, and prioritize the use of domestic large language models to prevent the infiltration of undesirable ideologies. Teachers should continuously strengthen their professional knowledge, carefully verify the authenticity of the content generated by models to avoid misleading students with incorrect information. At the same time, they should adhere to humanism, cultivate critical thinking, clarify the relationship between humans and machines, and prevent over-reliance. In addition, teachers also need to enhance their data security awareness, manage data properly, guide students to use large language models reasonably, and protect the privacy and intellectual property rights of teachers and students.

Acknowledgements

This paper would not have been possible without the support and guidance of numerous individuals and institutions. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all those who have contributed to the research and writing process. First and foremost, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to our academic advisors, whose expertise and encouragement have been invaluable throughout this journey. Their insightful feedback and unwavering support have greatly enhanced the quality of my work. Secondly, I am also deeply grateful to my colleagues and peers who have provided us with constructive criticism and thoughtful discussions. Their diverse perspectives have enriched my understanding of the subject matter and have been instrumental in shaping our arguments. Special thanks go to the developers and researchers in the field of large language models (LLMs), whose pioneering work has laid the foundation for our study. Their dedication to advancing artificial intelligence and its applications in translation education is both inspiring and influential. Lastly, I am thankful to my family for their patience, understanding, and continuous support. Their belief in my work has been a source of strength and motivation.

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