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REFRAMING MILITARY TRANSLATION THROUGH AI: A TRANSLATION STUDIES PERSPECTIVE ON SIMULATION, CONTEXT, AND TECHNOLOGY

The integration of artificial intelligence (AI) into military translation represents a fundamental transformation that extends beyond technological advancement into epistemological reconfiguration. This article examines how machine translation systems and large language models (LLM) reshape the theoretical frameworks of military translation studies through their capacity to simulate contextual understanding, process multilingual military discourse, and mediate cross-cultural communication in operational environments. Drawing upon recent developments in neural machine translation, the article explores how AI-driven translation challenges traditional distinctions between human expertise and automated processing bringing forward new perspectives on maintaining contextual accuracy, operational security, and terminological precision. The research demonstrates that contemporary AI translation systems function not merely as tools but as active participants in meaning construction, requiring translation studies to reassess its core theoretical frameworks, particularly those related to equivalence, and context. Through examination of simulation capabilities inherent in neural architectures, the article argues that AI translation creates new modalities of linguistic mediation that relies on probability models rather than rule-based determination. This transformation necessitates updated theoretical frameworks that account for hybrid human-machine translation ecosystems, distributed cognition in military communication networks, and the recursive relationship between training data and operational deployment. The findings suggest that military translation studies must develop analytical approaches capable of addressing the sociotechnical complexity of AI-mediated communication while maintaining critical attention to issues of accountability, interpretability, and strategic communication integrity within defence contexts.

Keywords: military translation, artificial intelligence, neural machine translation, context simulation, translation studies, large language models, human-machine interaction, multilingual processing.

Statement of the problem. Military translation occupies a distinctive position within translation studies due to its synthesis of linguistic precision, cultural awareness, operational urgency, and strategic consequence. The traditional paradigm of military translation has relied on human translators who possess not only linguistic competence but also domain-specific knowledge encompassing military doctrine, tactical procedures, cultural sensitivities,

and geopolitical awareness. However, the emergence of sophisticated artificial intelligence systems, particularly neural machine translation and large language models, introduces fundamental questions about the nature of translation competence, the boundaries between human and AI-driven semantic analyses, and the theoretical frameworks necessary to comprehend AI-mediated communication in military contexts.



The problem addressed in this article extends beyond the practical question of whether AI can adequately perform military translation tasks. Rather, it concerns the epistemological and theoretical implications of AI systems that simulate contextual understanding through probable models trained on vast corpora of multilingual text. Contemporary translation studies has developed robust frameworks for analysing human translation processes, including Skopos theory, relevance theory, and cognitive approaches to translation. Yet these frameworks were developed in an era when translation was fundamentally conceptualized as a human cognitive activity. The introduction of AI systems that generate translations through mechanisms fundamentally different from human cognition while often achieving comparable or superior performance on specific metrics challenges the foundational assumptions of these theoretical approaches.

Furthermore, military translation presents unique constraints and requirements that distinguish it from civilian translation contexts. The necessity for rapid processing of intelligence materials, the critical importance of terminological precision in operational orders, the potential consequences of mistranslation in tactical situations, and the security implications of translation processes all create a distinctive environment in which the capabilities and limitations of AI translation systems must be evaluated. The problem thus encompasses both theoretical questions about how translation studies should conceptualize AI-mediated translation and practical questions about how military organizations can effectively integrate these technologies while maintaining operational effectiveness and security.

Analyses of recent research and publications. Recent scholarship has begun to address the intersection of artificial intelligence and translation studies from multiple perspectives. The foundational work by S. Castilho et al. in examining neural machine translation quality through post-editing effort established methodological approaches for evaluating AI translation that have subsequently been applied in specialized domains. Their research demonstrated that neural architectures achieve qualitatively different error patterns compared to statistical machine translation, with implications for how translation quality should be conceptualized and measured [4]. This work has been extended by D. Kenny and S. Doherty, who explored statistical machine translation in the translation curriculum, raising fundamental questions about translator education in an era of increasingly capable automated systems [5].

The application of translation technologies to military and defence contexts has received growing attention. J. Moorkens and D. Lewis examined machine translation in crisis situations, providing insights relevant to military operational environments where rapid multilingual communication under stress is required. Their analysis of post-editing workflows and quality assurance processes offers frameworks applicable to military translation systems [7]. M. O'Hagan contributed important theoretical perspectives on machine translation and global communication, arguing that automated translation fundamentally reshapes information flows and power dynamics in international communication, a consideration particularly important for military intelligence and strategic communication [10].

Recent developments in large language models have prompted new theoretical considerations. The work of L. Bowker and J. Ciro on machine translation and global research explored how AI translation affects knowledge dissemination across linguistic boundaries, raising questions about epistemological access and linguistic equity that resonate with military contexts where information asymmetry shapes strategic advantage [2]. Furthermore, S. Läubli et al. provided empirical evidence that neural machine translation can achieve human parity in certain contexts, specifically in Chinese-to-English news translation, challenging assumptions about the irreducibility of human translation competence [6].

The cognitive and computational dimensions of translation have been explored through various lenses. M. Carl, S. Bangalore, and M. Schaeffer investigated neural networks and translation processes, examining how computational models might illuminate human translation cognition. Their work suggests potential theoretical convergences between cognitive translation studies and computational linguistics [3]. Additionally, A. Toral and A. Way analysed what level of quality neural machine translation can achieve, establishing benchmarks against which military translation applications can be evaluated [12].

However, significant gaps remain in the literature regarding military translation specifically. While specialized translation domains such as legal and medical translation have received sustained attention within translation studies, military translation remains insufficiently explored. While research on machine translation in crisis communication offers relevant insights, the distinctive operational, security, and strategic dimensions of military translation require dedicated theoretical attention.

Task statement. The purpose of this article is to develop a theoretical framework for understanding artificial intelligence in military translation that integrates perspectives from translation studies, computational linguistics, and military communication studies. Specifically, the article aims to reconceptualise military translation through three interconnected analytical lenses: simulation, context, and technology. The *simulation perspective* examines how neural architectures create functional approximations of contextual understanding through probable modelling rather than semantic comprehension, challenging traditional distinctions between understanding and processing. The *context perspective* investigates how military operational environments create distinctive communicative situations that shape both the requirements for translation and the evaluation criteria by which translation adequacy is determined. The *technology perspective* analyses the material and infrastructural dimensions of AI translation systems, including their dependence on training data, computational resources, and integration within larger military information systems. Through this tripartite analysis, the article seeks to provide both theoretical insights into the changing nature of translation in the AI era and practical considerations for military organizations deploying these technologies in operational contexts.

Outline of the main material of the study. Contemporary neural machine translation systems operate through mechanisms fundamentally different from human translation cognition, yet they achieve functional approximations of contextual understanding through sophisticated probable modeling. The transformer architecture, which has become dominant in current translation systems, processes input text through self-attention mechanisms that identify statistical relationships between elements across arbitrary distances within the text. This approach enables the system to model long-range dependencies and contextual relationships without explicit programming of grammatical rules or semantic knowledge.

The concept of simulation is crucial for understanding how these systems function. Rather than possessing semantic understanding in any phenomenological sense, neural translation models simulate contextually appropriate translation through learned patterns in massive multilingual datasets. The system does not comprehend military doctrine or tactical concepts but has encountered sufficient examples of military discourse in its training data to generate statistically probable translations that often demonstrate apparent understanding of domain-specific

meaning. This simulation of understanding through pattern recognition represents a qualitatively different phenomenon from human comprehension, yet it produces functionally equivalent outputs in many contexts [4, p. 117–118].

For military translation, this simulative capacity has both advantages and limitations. The advantage lies in the system's ability to maintain consistency with established terminological conventions and standard expressions that appear frequently in military communications. Through exposure to large quantities of military texts during training, the model learns to reproduce standard expressions, maintain appropriate register, and generate translations that conform to expected patterns of military discourse. This capability can be particularly valuable for routine communications, standardized reports, and other text types characterized by high levels of common language.

However, the simulative nature of AI translation also creates significant limitations. When confronted with novel situations, ambiguous contexts, or text types not well-represented in training data, the system cannot fall back on genuine understanding but must extrapolate from statistical patterns that may be inappropriate. This limitation is particularly acute in military contexts where tactical situations often involve unique configurations of circumstances, where deliberate ambiguity may be strategically employed, or where cultural and political nuances critically shape meaning. The system's capacity to simulate understanding breaks down precisely in those situations where human judgment, cultural knowledge, and strategic awareness are most essential.

Furthermore, the probable nature of neural translation introduces a fundamental indeterminacy into the translation process. Unlike rule-based systems that produce deterministic outputs, neural systems generate translations through sampling from probability distributions, meaning that the same input may yield different outputs across multiple translation attempts [4, p. 119]. While this variability can be constrained through parameter settings, it cannot be eliminated entirely. For military applications where consistency and reproducibility may be operationally important, this inherent randomness requires careful consideration and potentially the implementation of quality assurance protocols that verify translation stability across multiple generations.

Military communication occurs within distinctive operational environments that fundamentally shape both the production and interpretation of texts. Context in military translation extends beyond the imme-

diate linguistic co-text to encompass tactical situations, strategic objectives, intelligence backgrounds, and evolving operational circumstances. This multi-dimensional contextuality creates specific challenges for AI translation systems that were trained primarily on static textual data rather than dynamic operational contexts [9, p. 332].

Traditional translation studies has developed sophisticated approaches to context, particularly through relevance theory and functional approaches that emphasize the communicative situation. However, these frameworks typically assume that translators have access to relevant contextual information and can make informed judgments about how context should influence translation decisions. AI translation systems, by contrast, have access only to the immediate textual input and whatever contextual patterns were encoded in their training data. This creates a fundamental asymmetry between human translators who can actively seek contextual information and AI systems that must work with whatever context is explicitly provided in the input.

Military operational contexts are characterized by several distinctive features that complicate AI translation. *Temporal urgency* often requires rapid translation under time constraints that prevent extensive human review or revision. *Security classification* creates barriers to information sharing that may prevent translators, whether human or AI, from accessing background information necessary for accurate interpretation. *Evolving tactical situations* mean that the significance of particular terms or phrases may shift rapidly, requiring translators to maintain awareness of current operational circumstances rather than relying solely on established conventions.

The challenge of providing adequate context to AI translation systems in military applications has prompted development of various technical approaches. *Domain adaptation techniques* allow models to be fine-tuned on military-specific corpora, increasing their familiarity with military discourse patterns and terminology. *Context-aware translation approaches* attempt to incorporate broader textual context or structured contextual information into the translation process. *Retrieval-augmented generation methods* enable systems to access relevant reference materials or previous translations during the translation process, approximating the human translator's ability to consult resources.

Despite these technical advances, fundamental questions remain about whether computerised systems can adequately capture the richness of operational context that experienced military transla-

tors bring to their work. Human translators develop implicit knowledge of military culture, organizational hierarchies, geopolitical dynamics, and strategic considerations that inform their translation decisions in ways that may not be fully articulable or reducible to explicit rules. The extent to which such implicit knowledge can be encoded in AI systems or whether it represents an irreducibly human dimension of translation competence remains an open theoretical question with significant practical implications.

Examining AI translation from a technological perspective reveals how these systems function not merely as tools but as complex sociotechnical infrastructures that reshape the material conditions of military translation practice. The deployment of AI translation in military contexts involves extensive technological dependencies, including hardware for model execution, data storage systems for training corpora and translation memories, network infrastructure for system access, and integration interfaces connecting translation systems with other military information systems [1].

The training data requirements of neural translation systems introduce particular complexities in military applications. High-quality machine translation requires large parallel corpora of translated texts, yet military communications are often classified or otherwise restricted, limiting the availability of training data. This scarcity creates potential trade-offs between translation quality and operational security. Using publicly available multilingual data to train models may improve general linguistic capabilities but fail to capture military-specific discourse patterns. Conversely, training on classified military documents raises security concerns about data handling, storage, and potential information leakage through model outputs.

The infrastructure requirements of AI translation also shape its operational deployment. Cloud-based translation services offer convenience and expandability but introduce dependencies on commercial providers and raise questions about data sovereignty and security. On-premises deployment of translation systems provides greater control but requires substantial analytical resources and technical expertise for maintenance and updating. These infrastructure decisions have strategic implications beyond their immediate technical dimensions, influencing autonomy, resilience, and operational security of military translation capabilities.

Furthermore, AI translation systems mediate military communication in ways that create new forms of dependency and potential vulnerability.

Over-reliance on automated translation may lead to deskilling of human translation capacity, creating strategic vulnerabilities if automated systems become unavailable through technical failure, cyber attack, or other disruptions. The opacity of neural network decision-making processes complicates accountability and error analysis, making it difficult to determine why particular translation errors occurred or to implement corrective measures. These considerations suggest that military organizations must approach AI translation deployment strategically, maintaining human translation capabilities as both quality assurance mechanisms and operational redundancy.

The introduction of AI translation necessitates fundamental reconceptualization of translation competence and quality assessment. Traditional models of translator competence, such as those developed by PACTE [8] and TransComp research groups [13], emphasize cognitive abilities including bilingual proficiency, translation strategies, instrumental competence with tools and resources, and psychophysiological components. These models were developed to describe human translator development and expertise, assuming that translation is fundamentally a cognitive process requiring conscious decision-making and strategic problem-solving.

AI translation challenges this cognitive paradigm by demonstrating that functionally adequate translations can be produced through non-cognitive processes. The competence of an AI translation system resides not in cognitive abilities but in the statistical patterns encoded in its parameters through training. This shift from cognitive to statistical competence requires new analytical frameworks. Rather than asking whether the system possesses particular cognitive abilities, evaluation must focus on the system's performance across diverse text types, its handling of edge cases and ambiguity, its consistency with terminological standards, and its robustness to input variations.

Translation quality assessment similarly requires reconceptualization in the context of AI-generated translations. Traditional quality frameworks often emphasize fidelity to source text meaning, appropriateness for target audience and purpose, and conformity to target language norms. While these criteria remain relevant, their application to AI translation raises new questions. How should accuracy be evaluated when the system has no access to meaning in any conventional sense but generates statistically probable outputs? What constitutes appropriateness when the system cannot consider audience needs except insofar as they were represented in training data? How can conformity to

norms be assessed when the system's notion of norms is entirely empirical, derived from corpus frequency rather than prescriptive standards?

For military translation specifically, quality assessment must incorporate domain-specific criteria beyond general linguistic adequacy. Terminological precision is of great importance, as mistranslation of technical or tactical terms can lead to operational errors. Maintenance of command tone and authority in translated orders affects their effectiveness in hierarchical military organizations. Preservation of classification markings and security-relevant formatting ensures appropriate handling of sensitive information. Cultural appropriateness in communications with allied forces or civilian populations in operational areas influences strategic outcomes. AI translation systems must be evaluated against these military-specific quality dimensions, requiring assessment frameworks that extend beyond generic translation quality metrics.

Rather than framing AI translation as replacement for human translators, military applications increasingly involve hybrid workflows that combine automated and human translation in complementary roles. These workflows recognize both the efficiency advantages of AI translation for routine materials and the continued necessity of human expertise for complex, sensitive, or strategically significant communications. Understanding these hybrid arrangements requires analytical frameworks that move beyond binary distinctions between human and machine translation to examine their dynamic interaction within military organizational contexts.

Post-editing of machine translation represents one common hybrid approach, wherein AI systems generate initial translations that human translators subsequently review and revise. This workflow can increase efficiency compared to human translation from scratch, though the magnitude of efficiency gains depends heavily on machine translation quality and text characteristics. However, post-editing introduces its own challenges, including cognitive load associated with evaluating and correcting machine output, potential automation bias where human editors insufficiently scrutinize apparently fluent machine translations, and questions about how post-editing experience affects translator competence development.

Alternative hybrid approaches involve selective deployment of AI translation based on text classification. Routine communications, standardized reports, and other text types with highly official content may be processed entirely through automated

translation, while complex analysis, strategic communications, and culturally sensitive materials receive full human translation. This selective approach requires reliable text classification mechanisms and clear criteria for routing texts to appropriate translation pathways. It also raises questions about how to handle texts that combine routine and complex elements or how to ensure that important nuances are not missed through automated processing of apparently routine materials [9, p. 332].

The concept of augmented translation represents another hybrid model wherein AI systems support human translators through suggestions, terminology lookup, translation memory matching, and quality checking, rather than generating complete translations [10, p. 225]. This approach preserves human translator agency while leveraging algorithmic capabilities for specific subtasks. For military applications, augmented translation may be particularly appropriate, allowing experienced translators to maintain control over sensitive communications while benefiting from computational assistance for terminology management, consistency checking, and other mechanical aspects of translation work.

Regardless of the specific hybrid arrangement, these workflows raise important questions about authority, accountability, and expertise. When translations result from human-machine collaboration, determining responsibility for errors becomes complex. The changing role of human translators from primary producers of translations to supervisors, editors, or validators of machine output has implications for professional identity, training requirements, and career development. Military organizations deploying hybrid translation systems must address these human resource considerations alongside technical implementation questions.

Conclusions. The integration of artificial intelligence into military translation represents not merely a technological upgrade but a fundamental transformation requiring reconceptualization of core translation studies concepts. Through examination of simulation, context, and technology as analytical lenses, this article has demonstrated that AI translation systems function through mechanisms qualitatively different from human cognition while achieving functionally comparable outputs in many contexts. This divergence between process and product challenges theoretical frameworks developed to explain human translation and necessitates new analytical approaches adequate to the distinctive characteristics of machine translation.

The simulation perspective reveals that neural translation models create functional approximations

of contextual understanding through probabilistic inference rather than semantic comprehension. This simulative capacity enables impressive performance on texts well-represented in training data but shows limitations when confronted with novel situations, cultural nuances, or strategic subtleties requiring genuine understanding. For military translation, these limitations are particularly consequential given the potential operational and strategic implications of translation errors. The findings suggest that while AI translation can effectively handle routine military communications characterized by standardized terminology and standard expressions, complex analysis, culturally sensitive communications, and strategically significant materials continue to require human expertise.

Analysis of context demonstrates that military operational environments create distinctive communicative situations with specific requirements for translation. The temporal urgency, security constraints, tactical dynamism, and strategic significance characteristic of military communication pose particular challenges for AI translation systems that lack access to operational context beyond immediate textual input. While technical approaches including domain adaptation, context-aware translation, and retrieval-augmented generation partially address these challenges, fundamental questions remain about whether computer systems can adequately capture the richness of operational awareness that experienced military translators bring to their work. This suggests the continued importance of human translators who can actively seek contextual information and apply implicit knowledge of military culture and strategic considerations to translation decisions.

The technological perspective illuminates how AI translation functions as complex sociotechnical infrastructure rather than merely a tool. Training data requirements, computational dependencies, infrastructure configurations, and integration with military information systems all shape the operational capabilities and strategic implications of AI translation deployment. The analysis reveals tensions between translation quality and operational security in training data management, trade-offs between convenience and autonomy in infrastructure decisions, and risks of deskilling and technological dependency in organizational adoption patterns. These considerations emphasize that military organizations must approach AI translation deployment strategically, carefully weighing technical capabilities against operational requirements and strategic vulnerabilities.

The emergence of hybrid human-machine translation workflows represents a pragmatic response to the complementary strengths and limitations of human and AI translation. Rather than treating automation as replacement for human expertise, hybrid approaches leverage AI capabilities for efficiency while preserving human judgment for quality, security, and strategic considerations. However, these workflows introduce new complexities regarding authority, accountability, professional identity, and competence development that military organizations must address through appropriate organizational policies, training programs, and operational procedures.

Looking forward, several directions for future research emerge from this analysis. Empirical investigation of AI translation performance on authentic military communications across diverse text types, languages, and operational contexts would provide evidence to ground theoretical claims and practical recommendations. Longitudinal studies examining how hybrid translation workflows evolve in practice and how human translator roles and competencies

change over time would illuminate organizational adaptation to AI translation. Comparative analysis across different military organizations and national contexts would reveal how institutional factors shape technology adoption and use. Development of military-specific evaluation frameworks and quality metrics would support more rigorous assessment of AI translation capabilities and limitations.

Ultimately, this article argues that translation studies must develop theoretical frameworks capable of analysing AI-mediated communication while maintaining critical attention to issues of accountability, interpretability, and strategic communication integrity. Military translation, with its distinctive operational requirements and strategic significance, serves as a productive site for developing such frameworks. The insights generated through examining military translation have broader applicability to understanding how artificial intelligence transforms linguistic mediation across domains while also addressing the specific needs of defence organizations navigating the opportunities and risks of AI translation deployment.

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**Скиба О. М., Лещенко А. В., Бунечко А. М. ПЕРЕОСМИСЛЕННЯ
ВІЙСЬКОВОГО ПЕРЕКЛАДУ ЗА ДОПОМОГОЮ ШТУЧНОГО ІНТЕЛЕКТУ:
ПЕРЕКЛАДОЗНАВЧИЙ ПІДХІД ДО СИМУЛЯЦІЇ, КОНТЕКСТУ ТА ТЕХНОЛОГІЙ**

Інтеграція штучного інтелекту (ШІ) у сферу військового перекладу являє собою не лише технологічний прорив, а й глибоку епістемологічну трансформацію. У статті розглянуто, як системи машинного перекладу та великі мовні моделі (LLM) змінюють теоретичні засади військового перекладознавства завдяки здатності моделювати контекстуальне розуміння, обробляти багатомовний військовий дискурс і здійснювати міжкультурне посередництво в умовах оперативного середовища. Спираючись на останні досягнення у галузі нейронного машинного перекладу, у статті досліджено, як ШІ-орієнтований переклад ставить під сумнів усталені межі між людською експертизою та автоматизованою обробкою, відкриваючи нові перспективи збереження контекстуальної точності, оперативної безпеки та термінологічної точності. Дослідження демонструє, що сучасні ШІ-системи перекладу функціонують не лише як інструменти, а й як активні учасники процесу творення значення, що вимагає від перекладознавства переосмислення основних теоретичних категорій – зокрема еквівалентності та контексту. Аналізуючи моделювальні можливості нейронних інструментів, обґрунтовано тезу про те, що переклад із використанням ШІ формує нові модальності мовного посередництва, які базуються на ймовірнісному моделюванні, а не на жорстких правилах. Ця трансформація зумовлює необхідність оновлення теоретичної бази з урахуванням гібридних екосистем перекладу типу «людина–машина», розподіленого пізнання у військових комунікаційних мережах і рекурсивного зв'язку між навчальними даними та практичним застосуванням у бойових умовах. Результати дослідження засвідчують необхідність розроблення аналітичних підходів у військовому перекладознавстві, здатних враховувати соціотехнічну складність комунікації із залученням ШІ, зберігаючи при цьому критичну увагу до питань відповідальності, інтерпретованості та стратегічної цілісності оборонної комунікації.

Ключові слова: військовий переклад, штучний інтелект (ШІ), нейронний машинний переклад, симуляція контексту, перекладознавство, великі мовні моделі, взаємодія людини й машини, багатомовна обробка.

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