



Artificial Intelligence and Legal Translation: Collaboration or Competition?

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ABSTRACT

Artificial intelligence (AI) has revolutionized many fields, legal translation being no exception, and has raised fundamental questions on whether it is a friend or foe of human translators. Legal translation is context-sensitive and accurate transfer of meaning from one legal system to another where accuracy and consistency matter the most. The current study juxtaposes AI as a colleague or rival of human translators in the context of legal translation. The study aims to compare the accuracy, reliability, and limitations of machine translation software, Google Translate and ChatGPT, and human translation of Arabic judicial texts. There is an eclectic analytical model where the study employs linguistic, legal, and translation studies frameworks in which the efficacy of AI in managing legal terminology, phrases, and contextual nuance is tested. The study presupposes that AI, while improving efficiency in translation, will be unable to manage the higher-level subtleties of legal terminology. The study adopts comparative analysis for verifying or falsifying the assumptions and determines the extent to which AI can replace or complement human ability in legal translation. The findings enlighten the debate on AI use in legal translation and its effects on the practice in the future.

Introduction

The application of artificial intelligence (AI) in the translation industry has sparked intense discussion about its purpose for professional human translators. Legal translation, in particular, whose correctness, context, and sensitivity to legal regimes by definition must be absolute, presents special challenges that AI-based tools must meet. The development of AI-powered

translation software, such as Google Translate and ChatGPT, has revolutionized the translation practice and prompted scholars to examine their reliability, accuracy, and possible weaknesses in dealing with technical legal documents (Pym, 2011; O'Hagan, 2020). While AI will persist in its evolution, the most essential inquiry stays the same: Is AI a complementary aid that enhances legal translating, or a replacement danger to human professionalism?

Legal translation is not the same as general translation because legal language is technically complex, employs strict syntactic structures, and has meaning that is jurisdictionally bound (Cao, 2007). Translation errors within the legal profession can lead to uncertainty, contractual disputes, or legal penalties, and hence fidelity and contextual accuracy are necessary (Šarčević, 1997). Although AI-powered translation software has achieved remarkable advancements in many areas of linguistic studies, their use in the translation of legal documents is plagued with issues regarding their ability to handle legal complexities, ambiguous meanings, and consistency with different legal systems (Castro et al., 2022).

The present study aims to compare the performance of AI-powered translation software and human translation in the domain of Arabic legal documents. With an eclectic analytical framework drawn from linguistic, legal, and translation studies paradigms, this research balances the comparative strengths and weaknesses of AI translation for legal terminology, syntactic complexity, and contextual situationality. Google Translate and ChatGPT, two of the largest-volume AI translation engines, are employed as case studies for examining the boundaries within which AI is able to satisfactorily translate legal texts.

The research anticipates that though AI translation tools can possibly make the translations more effective and reachable, they have not yet filled in the gap of legal language sophistication. Unlike the above research, the current study attempts to validate or nullify these results, adding to the general discussion of AI adoption in legal translation. The findings will provide a glimpse of whether AI is to be regarded as a helpful tool that augments the professionalism of human or a potential competitor that has the ability to threaten the career of legal translators in the coming years.

In addressing these questions, this research adds to the scholarly and practitioner discourse on AI and legal translation interaction. This research provides an informed critique of AI challenges and opportunities, providing a balanced examination of its potential use in legal translation practice. This research's findings will enter the world of legal practitioners, translators, policymakers, and AI developers in attempting to balance the dynamic relationship between artificial intelligence and legal translation.

Literature Review

The field of legal translation and (AI) has been a case study of great academic contributions with special focus on the following idea: to which AI will augment or replace human translators in the legal translation area. The literature review depends on available studies in the fields of AI translation, problems of legal translation, and the effectiveness of AI-powered tools such as Google Translate and ChatGPT in translating legal texts.

Machine Translation and AI for Legal Use

Machine translation (MT) has come across great progress, starting from early rule-based methods to statistical and, more recently, neural machine translation (NMT) models (Koehn,

2020). Neural machine learning models (NMLM), particularly those utilizing transformer models such as OpenAI's ChatGPT and Google Translate, have achieved good level of fluency and contextual comprehension enhancement (Vaswani et al., 2017). Also, Legal translation is featured by some specific characteristics which render it difficult for machine translation to be fully replaced by human professionals. Legal texts are characterized by formal syntactic constraints, specialized lexicons, and jurisdictional particularity, all of which demand a general acquaintance with source and target legal systems (Cao, 2007).

Several researchers have explored the extent to which AI reaches in the translation of legal texts. For instance, Moorkens (2018) also writes that while NMT improves fluency and speed, it performs poorly in terminology consistency and pragmatic adequacy. Castro et al. (2022) have also experimented with AI translation quality for legal contexts and determined that while AI systems create useful first drafts, they typically require enormous amounts of post-editing by law specialists to render them correct and comply with the conventions of the law. This is consistent with previous work that argues legal translation involves more than linguistic ability; it involves legal knowledge and the capacity to recover legal intention (Šarčević, 1997).

Issues of Legal Translation and AI Limitations

Legal translation is different from ordinary translation in that it involves not just the transfer of linguistic meaning, but of legal effect. Legal texts are replete with technical terms that do not have direct equivalents in other languages and need to be translated conceptually instead of literally, Šarčević (1997) elucidates.

The second vital matter is heterogeneity of legal systems. Cao (2007) refers to the fact that legal translation needs to accommodate common law and civil law tradition differences, which are determinative of the legal meaning of words. AI translation programs, while capable of discovering language patterns, are lacking in legal reasoning capacity to be able to differentiate between such differences accordingly.

Biel's (2014) study has also addressed legal translation's uncertainty risk, giving examples where AI made mistakes in translating legal terminology due to contextual complexities.

It is worth mentioning that there are speculations regarding the authenticity of legal translation products generated by AI. Moorkens et al. (2019) contend that AI breaks down at idiomatic language, obsolete technical terms, and jurisdiction-specific concepts, and thus makes mistakes with significant legal consequences. In spite of cutting-edge NMT models, AI is susceptible to biases in the training data and thus loses its performance in delivering accurate translations in complex legal contexts (Kirchhoff et al., 2020).

Comparative Analysis of AI and Human Legal Translation

Comparative studies draw a distinction between human translation work on one hand and the product of AI generated translation software in legal settings on the other hand. For instance, Mirzayev, (2024) carried out a comparative analytical study about the quality of legal translations performed by Google Translate and human professionals. The findings highlighted that while AI-driven translations were structurally correct, they mis-translated key legal terms and did not deliver jurisdictional variations.

Similarly, Arabic legal translation research has come to the stage where AI software is confronted with the greatest challenge in dealing with the linguistic structure of Arabic, its morphologically rich character, syntactic transparency, and context-based meanings (Habash, 2010).

The Future of Legal Translation and the Role of AI

With AI translation software evolving, it begins to be viewed as a tool and not a replacement for human legal translators. AI is a helpful pre-translation and terminology extraction tool, but human translation needs to continue being utilized to complete translations to make them legally binding, argues O'Hagan (2020). "Human-in-the-loop" translation, in which AI drafts are revised and edited by professional translators, has been promoted as one solution for AI shortcomings (Castilho et al., 2018).

Additionally, the literature is unequivocal in describing that AI can enable cooperation between legal experts and their translators by automating workflow processes and conserving time to perform repetitive translation work (Bowker & Ciro, 2019). However, there is always a danger of over-reliance on AI, particularly in domains where the legal translations require contextual judgment alongside suitable legal reasoning.

Concluding Remarks

Literature on legal translation and AI adopts both the strength and the vulnerability of AI tools. In spite of the ease and quickness of AI translation tools such as Google Translate and ChatGPT, they have not yet reached a stage where they can be utilized instead of human experts in legal translation. The landmines of legal technicalities, jurisdictional idiosyncrasies, and legal logic need to be navigated by human judgment in order to be accurately translated and mapped onto legal norms. With the development of AI, the work of legal translation will be more and more one of cooperation rather than competition with human translators. This study is an extension of studies like this one since it deals with the application of AI in Arabic legal translation, based on the argument for the application of AI in legal translation.

Background

Artificial intelligence (AI) application in legal translation is a phenomenon of interest that has revolutionized the art of translation. Machine Translation Software (MTS), specially NMT-based, has developed the multilingual communication on levels of speed and convenience. However, the employment of AI in the process of translating legal texts has big challenges. In other words, legal terms require high levels of precision, consistency, and sensitivity to context (Cao, 2007; Šarčević, 1997). The current part of the study presents an overview of the history of AI in translation, the specific demands of legal translation, and the argument on whether AI is a friend and competitor to human legal translators.

History of AI in Translation

The history of AI and translation studies can be traced back to the first rule-based machine translation (RBMT) systems, which made use of linguistic rules to generate translations (Hutchins, 2005). The following moves to statistical machine translation (SMT) improved the quality of translation by employing large bilingual corpora to predict the most probable translations (Koehn, 2010). The most revolutionary innovation, however, has been the

invention (NMT), which counts on deep learning techniques to generate more naturally sounding as well as contextually wisely-judged translations (Vaswani et al., 2017).

The current AI-driven translation tools like Google Translate and OpenAI's ChatGPT, adopt transformer-based architectures that pave the way for better contextual understanding. Though, legal translation is still a specialized domain, AI faces big limitations, particularly in dealing with legal terminology, syntax, and the legal implications of translated content (Kirchhoff et al., 2020).

The Complexity of Legal Translation

Legal translation is unique compared to other types of translation due to strict syntactic structure, technical jargon, and jurisdictional variances (Biel, 2014). Legal translation is distinct from general translation in that it addresses legal intent and compliance with the source and target jurisdictions' legal frameworks (Cao, 2007). Errors in legal translation can lead to contractual ambiguity, legislative confusion, and even litigation (Šarčević, 1997).

Particularly for Arabic legal translation, there are additional complexities since Arabic morphology is rich, Arabic syntax is non-conformable, and legal terminologists do not readily discover word-for-word correspondences in other languages (Habash, 2010).

AI and Human Translators: Partnership or Competition

The growing application of AI translation has triggered debates on whether AI is a friend that benefits human translation or an enemy that threatens the profession of professional translators (Bowker & Ciro, 2019). On one hand, AI can accelerate the translation process, reduce costs, and facilitate cross-linguistic legal communication.

Comparative studies have ascertained that, while structurally accurate, legally produced AI translations have a strong tendency to need extensive post-editing in order to reduce inaccuracy, inconsistency, and confusion of legal terms of the law (Moorkens et al., 2019; Castro et al., 2022). One of the solutions found is the "human-in-the-loop" translation, where AI provides the initial draft for checking and correction by human legal translators in an attempt to provide assurance of the validity of the law (Castilho et al., 2018).

AI for Legal Translation of Arabic

AI translation of legal Arabic texts remains a cause for concern. The richness in Arabic morphology is especially challenging to AI translation systems. For example, AI translation software is confronted with case markings, syntactic ambiguity, and lexical polysemy in Arabic, all of which produce errors with serious legal implications (Habash, 2010). While these constraints still exist, AI translation software is advancing and enhancing, and this raises the issue of how it might be leveraged for Arabic legal translation in the future.

Final Thoughts

AI application in legal translation is promising but also challenging. Although AI-driven tools like Google Translate and ChatGPT have improved access and efficiency in translations, they are still not advanced enough to fully replace human legal translators. Legal translation requires profound comprehension of legal concepts, technical jargon, and context-to-context translation—areas where AI is still weak. Whether AI is a helper or a rival to human translators

is a subject of controversy, requiring it to be measured through empirical studies on its capability and limitation in legal translation. This research contributes to such a debate by exploring the performance of AI in legal document translation from Arabic and its implications for future legal translation.

An Eclectic Model of Analysis for AI and Legal Translation: Partnership or Competition?

Introduction to the Eclectic Model of Analysis

The domain of artificial intelligence (AI) in legal translation requires a wide framework, given the intersection of linguistic, legal, and technical disciplines. Artificial intelligence tools such as Google Translate and ChatGPT have introduced dynamics of legal translation that have challenged the credibility, accuracy, and their place in the paradigm of human expertise. To assess the performance of AI in Arabic legal document translation, this research follows an eclectic analytical model that draws on three relevant disciplines: linguistics, legal studies, and translation studies.

An eclectic model is a flexible, interdisciplinary one that facilitates the applicability of a vast array of theoretical models in explaining phenomena (Munday, 2016). It integrates knowledge of linguistic analysis (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995; Catford, 1965), legal theories on translation (Šarčević, 1997; Cao, 2007), and machine translation evaluation methodology (Castro et al., 2022; Moorkens, 2018). By synthesizing these approaches, the model provides a comprehensive assessment of AI translation tools, determining their role as either partners or competitors to human translators.

The Three Pillars of the Eclectic Model

Linguistic Analysis: Evaluating AI's Handling of Legal Language

Linguistic factor problems in assessing how AI translation software solve and generate legal documents. Legal language involves syntactic structure, technical terms, and jurisdictional terminologies (Cao, 2007). The study borrows from strong linguistic theories of translation such as:

- Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) Model of Translation Procedures: Vinay and Darbelnet's (1995) model of translation procedures categorizes the translation methods as direct (literal) and oblique (free) translation. The model can be employed to examine whether AI is excessively reliant on word-for-word translation or extensive contextual alteration.
- Catford's (1965) Theory of Translation Shifts: Legal texts often require category shifts (grammatical changes) and level shifts (changes between syntax and semantics). This framework helps analyze AI's ability to manage syntactic transformations in Arabic legal translation.
- Biel's (2014) Textual Fit in Legal Translation: AI-generated translations must align with the legal genre and maintain the specialized discourse of the legal system in the target language.

The linguistic dimension of the eclectic paradigm investigates the proficiency of AI in translating legal terminology, syntax, and coherence of text. Arabic legal jargon with its

complex morphology and syntactic versatility presents additional complications to be assessed (Habash, 2010).

Legal Studies Approach: Assessing Legal Equivalence and Jurisdictional Variability

The second part of the eclectic model is legal studies, in which it is examined if AI translation has legal equivalence and interpretative fidelity in various legal systems. Legal translation is not only linguistic but conceptual and entails a competence to understand jurisdictional difference and legal reasoning (Šarčević, 1997; Cao, 2007). This research uses:

- Šarčević's (1997) Legal Translation Theory: The theory strives for functional equivalence of legal terms and compatibility of the legal system.
- Cao's (2007) Typology of Legal Texts: Legal texts vary from prescriptive (contract, law) to descriptive (case law, legal opinions). AI performance needs to be tested based on such typologies.
- Comparative Legal Analysis (Biel, 2014): Since legal terms are not always a translation in the same word-for-word sense within a language, this research identifies whether AI is able to grasp the concept or if it provides false translations.

Arabic legal documents, themselves influenced by Sharia law, civil law, and common law influences, pose the challenge for AI systems to identify jurisdictional difference and legal intent. The juridical component of the eclectic model questions if AI translation software can bridge such complexity or generate legally confusing or void translations.

Translation Studies and AI Testing: Determining Accuracy and Post-Editing Effort

The third column of eclectic approach consists of the integration of translation studies and artificial intelligence-based models for translation evaluation. AI translation is assessed with:

- Human vs. AI Comparative Translation Evaluation (Mirzayev, 2024): Compares human translations with AI-generated legal translations to gauge fluency, coherence, and fidelity.
- AI-translated text quality (Moorkens et al., 2019; Castro et al., 2022): AI-translated texts usually need human post-editing to check the translation. Proofreading and legal certification tasks are the content constituting the foundation AI performance metrics.
- PEMT Metrics (Castilho et al., 2018): These are metrics used to determine the level of adjustment to enable the AI-translated legal texts to meet professional standards.

Eclectic Model Application: Google Translate and ChatGPT Case Study

The study uses the aforementioned eclectic model in comparing Google Translate and ChatGPT in their application to translate Arabic legal documents. Both AI softwares' performance is put to test according to the three pillars:

Linguistic Analysis:

Is the legal term translated appropriately?

Does AI make appropriate syntactic transformations?

Is textual cohesion guaranteed?

Legal Equivalence Assessment:

Does AI maintain the legal intended meaning?

Are legal terminology in jurisdiction-specific practice adequately calibrated?

Does AI discourage fraudulent legal translation?

Translation Quality and AI Evaluation:

How great is the post-editing effort needed?

Do AI tools achieve greater efficiency or create new risks?

How do AI translations compare to professional human translations?

By answering these questions in a systematic way, the eclectic model gives an in-depth analysis of AI adoption in legal translation.

Implications and Conclusion

By integrating linguistics, legal studies, and translation assessment, it offers a complete and cross-disciplinary assessment. Future research could extend this model by investigating actual legal case studies and The introduction of AI in legal translation is a challenge and an opportunity. While the AI-based tools make translation more efficient and accessible, they fail to apply legal reasoning, terminological coherence, and jurisdictional suitability. The findings of this study will validate or invalidate the current debate regarding whether AI is a collaborator or competitor to human translators.

The eclectic model of analysis is an effective framework for assessing AI translation programs in legal contextsintegrating the latest AI evaluation methods.

Analysis of Car Rental Contract

1. Linguistic Analysis

This involves examining **lexical choices, syntax, and style** to assess accuracy and readability.

Lexical Choices & Terminology

- “الفريق الأول”
 - **HT (Human Translation):** “First Party” ✓ (Legal terminology is correctly applied.)
 - **GT (Google Translate):** “The First Team” ✗ (Incorrect, as “team” does not apply in legal contracts.)
 - **ChatGPT:** “First Party” ✓ (Correct legal term.)
- “بدل الإيجار”
 - **HT:** “Amount of Hire Contract” ✗ (Awkward phrasing, “Rental Fee” is more natural.)
 - **GT:** “Rental period and its allowance” ✗ (Misleading; “allowance” suggests a financial benefit.)
 - **ChatGPT:** “Rental Period and Payment” ✓ (More accurate and legally appropriate.)
- “فسخ عقد الإيجار”
 - **HT:** “Revoking the Contract of Hire” ✗ (“Revoking” is stronger than needed; “Termination” is more neutral.)
 - **GT:** “Termination of the Lease” ✓ (Legally sound.)
 - **ChatGPT:** “Termination of the Rental Agreement” ✓ (Clear and professional.)

Syntax & Readability

- **HT uses complex sentence structures** (e.g., “and whereas the Second Party wishes to hire this car from the First Party”). This mimics legal English but can be overly formal.
- **GT contains unnatural phrasing** (e.g., “This contract was organized from ten articles”), showing literal translation issues.
- **ChatGPT simplifies while maintaining accuracy**, balancing legal clarity and readability.

2. Legal Analysis

Examining how well each translation conveys the **legal intent and enforceability** of the contract.

- **GT often misinterprets legal terms**
 - **Example:**
 - Arabic: “يحق للفريق الأول فسخ عقد الإيجار في حال إهمال المستأجر للسيارة أو سوء استعمالها.”
 - GT: “The first party has the right to terminate the lease contract in the event that the lessee neglects or misuses the car.”
 - ✓ **Legally correct, but lacks nuance in “إهمال” (negligence) which has legal implications.**
- **HT and ChatGPT provide clearer legal terminology**, but HT occasionally uses outdated phrasing (“revoke” vs. “terminate”).
- **ChatGPT ensures jurisdiction clarity**
 - Arabic: “محاكم عمان هي المختصة في حل نشوء أي نزاع.”
 - ChatGPT: “The courts of Amman shall have jurisdiction over any disputes.” ✓
 - HT: “Amman courts shall be the courts of jurisdiction over any dispute.” ✓
 - GT: “Oman courts are competent...” ✗ (Serious error—confuses Amman with Oman!)

3. Translation Studies Analysis

Using **Vinay and Darbelnet's model**, we examine translation strategies:

Direct Translation (Literal, Borrowing, Calque)

- **HT follows a formal legal style**, sometimes at the expense of natural English.
- **GT relies too much on literal translation**, leading to errors.
- **ChatGPT balances fidelity and readability**, using **modulation** (changing structure for clarity).

Oblique Translation (Transposition, Modulation, Adaptation)

- **ChatGPT applies modulation effectively**
 - Arabic: "يعتبر هذا العقد جزءاً لا يتجزأ منه"
 - ChatGPT: "The preamble to this contract shall form an integral part thereof."
 - HT: "The preamble of this contract is considered as an integral part hereof." (Overly formal, passive structure.)
 - GT: "The introduction to this contract is an integral part of it." (Too simplistic, lacks legal weight.)
- **Adaptation for legal clarity**
 - Arabic: "يتم دفع مبلغ عن كل يوم تأخير"
 - ChatGPT: "A fee of (X) JDs shall be charged for each day of delay." ✓
 - GT: "An amount shall be paid for each day of delay from the car delivery date." (Awkward, unclear.)

Final Assessment: Which Translation is Best?

Criteria	Human Translation (HT)	Google Translate (GT)	ChatGPT Translation
Legal Accuracy	✓ Mostly correct, but some outdated phrasing.	✗ Many mistranslations (e.g., "First Team" instead of "First Party").	✓ Strong legal accuracy, precise terms.
Readability	✗ Overly formal, complex structures.	✗ Unnatural phrasing.	✓ Clear and professional.
Terminology	✓ Mostly correct, but some awkward choices.	✗ Literal translation leads to errors.	✓ Uses appropriate legal terminology.
Grammar & Syntax	✓ Correct but rigid.	✗ Poor sentence structure.	✓ Smooth, natural English.

Best Translation: ChatGPT

- It achieves **legal precision, natural readability, and proper translation techniques**.
- **HT is reliable** but could be modernized for better clarity.
- **GT is inaccurate and not legally usable** without revision.

Analysis of Legal Fees Agreement Translation

1. Linguistic Analysis

Examining lexical choices, syntax, and readability.

Lexical Choices & Terminology

Arabic Term	HT	GT	ChatGPT	Evaluation
اتفاقية أتعاب محاماة	Agreement of Legal Practice Retainer ✗	Attorney Fee Agreement ✗	Attorney Fees Agreement ✓	"Legal, Practice Retainer" is unnatural. "Attorney Fees Agreement" is the most idiomatic.
الفريق الأول	First Party ✓	First Team ✗	First Party ✓	GT mistranslates "team" instead of "party."
محامي أستاذ	Attorney ✓	Lawyer, the professor ✗	Attorney ✓	GT incorrectly translates "أستاذ" as "professor."
الرقم النقابي	Union No. ✗	Syndicate number ✗	Bar Association Number ✓	"Bar Association Number" is the proper legal term.
بدل الأتعاب	Retainer ✗	Fees ✓	Fees ✓	"Retainer" is a specific legal fee structure, but "Fees" is a more accurate general term.
فسخ الاتفاقية	Termination ✓	Breach ✗	Termination ✓	GT incorrectly translates "فسخ" as "breach" instead of "termination."

✓ **Best Choice:** ChatGPT, which consistently selects legally precise and natural terms.

Syntax & Readability

- **HT uses rigid legal phrasing** (e.g., "Whereas the Second Party wants to authorize the First Party in executing all legal acts").
- **GT often produces awkward phrasing** (e.g., "the price of the property shall be determined at the current market price" instead of "shall be valued at the current market price").
- **ChatGPT strikes a balance between clarity and legal accuracy** (e.g., "The preamble of this agreement shall form an integral part thereof and shall be read as a unified whole").

Best Readability: ChatGPT

2. Legal Analysis

Assessing legal accuracy, enforceability, and jurisdiction clarity.

Legal Concept	Arabic	HT	GT	ChatGPT	Evaluation
Legal Capacity of Attorney	المحامي الأستاذ، والمسجل في نقابة المحامين	"Attorney registered in the records of practicing attorneys in the Jordanian Bar Association" ✓	"Lawyer, and is registered in the register of practicing lawyers" ✗	"Licensed attorney registered with the Jordanian Bar Association" ✓	GT's phrasing is vague; ChatGPT and HT provide proper legal context.

Jurisdiction	داخل المملكة الأردنية	"Inside Jordan" ✗	"Inside the Kingdom of Jordan" ✓	"Within the Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan" ✓	the GT and ChatGPT provide full official country name.
Exclusive Representation Clause	لا يجوز للفريق الثاني توكيل محام آخر	"The Second Party shall not authorize any other lawyer" ✓	"The Second Party shall not appoint any other lawyer/representative" ✗	"The Second Party shall not retain any other attorney or agent" ✓	"Retain" is the proper legal term; GT's "appoint" is misleading.
Attorney's Right to Fees Post-Termination	يستحق الفريق الأول أتعابه بعد انتهاء العقد	"The First Party shall be entitled to his retainers" ✗	"The first party shall be entitled to its fees" ✓	"The First Party shall be entitled to fees for such cases based on the agreed percentage but not to annual fees" ✓	ChatGPT provides precise legal distinctions between ongoing case fees and annual fees.

Best Legal Accuracy: ChatGPT

3. Translation Studies Analysis

Using Vinay & Darbelnet's model, evaluating direct vs. oblique translation.

Translation Strategy	Example	HT	GT	ChatGPT	Evaluation
Literal Translation	"الفريق الأول" → "First Party"	✓	✗ "First Team"	✓	GT's literal approach fails here.
Calque (Word-for-Word)	"مدة الاتفاقية سنة واحدة" → "The duration of this agreement is one year"	✓	✓	✓	All versions handle this correctly.
Modulation (Perspective Shift)	"حررت من نسختين أصليتين" → "Executed in duplicate"	✗	✗ "Executed in two original copies"	✓ "Made in two original copies"	ChatGPT correctly applies legal phrasing.
Transposition (Structural Shift)	"يستحق الفريق الأول أتعابه بعد انتهاء العقد" → "The First Party shall be entitled to fees"	✗	✗ "The First Party shall be entitled to his retainers"	✓ "The first party shall be entitled to its fees"	HT's "retainership" is misleading; ChatGPT provides clarity.

Best Use of Translation Techniques: ChatGPT

Final Assessment: Which Translation is Best?

Criteria	HT	GT	ChatGPT
Legal Accuracy	✓ Mostly correct, but some outdated terms.	✗ Many mistranslations.	✓ Precise legal language.
Readability	✗ Overly formal, rigid.	✗ Awkward phrasing.	✓ Clear and professional.
Terminology	✓ Mostly accurate, but not modern.	✗ Incorrect and inconsistent.	✓ Correct and legally appropriate.
Grammar & Syntax	✓ Correct but stiff.	✗ Poor sentence structure.	✓ Natural and legally precise.

Best Overall: ChatGPT

- Legal Accuracy: Precise legal syntax and terminology.
- Readability: Formality vs. readability compromises.
- Translation Strategies: Proper application of modulation and transposition.

Discussion

The study applied an eclectic paradigm mix in linguistic, legal, and translation studies to assess the usability of AI aids—Google Translate and ChatGPT—to render Arabic legal texts. The comparative analysis identified that while AI aids have come a long way in issues of fluency and accessibility, they are still short on contextualization of legal jargon.

From a linguistic perspective, ChatGPT surpassed Google Translate and even human translation in some instances regarding legalese, syntactic flow, and readability. However, the HT, although formal in tone, had consistent legal terminology along with contextual appropriateness.

Legally, ChatGPT's machine-generated translations tended to preserve legal intent, exhibit correct jurisdictional knowledge, and use more precise legal terminology than Google Translate. Nevertheless, occasional minute conceptual inaccuracies and jurisdictional flaws occasionally emerged, specifically with Google Translate (e.g., "Oman" instead of "Amman").

From the point of view of translation studies, ChatGPT utilised advanced translation strategies such as modulation and transposition in a balance between fidelity and naturalness. It fared much better than Google Translate, which rattled off literal, mostly inaccurate, translations. HTs were in a conservative tone but sometimes made use of outdated or overly formalised structures.

In both the car rental agreement and legal fees agreement case studies, ChatGPT provided the most accurate, readable, and legally correct translations. Based on the findings, it appears that AI, in the form of sophisticated platforms like ChatGPT, can be an effective support system for legal translation—but not yet a complete replacement for human experience.

Conclusions

1. AI: Team Player, Not a Rival: The study concludes that AI translation technology, with the aid of AI, especially ChatGPT, is more useful as a team player to human translators than a rival. They are effective in producing initial drafts, proposing vocabulary, and maximising efficiency, but legal and contextual accuracy needs to be determined by human judgment.
2. AI Shortcomings in Legal Reasoning: NMT models aside, AI software is still behind in legal reasoning, jurisdictional cases, and context-dependent legal consequences. These shortcomings impede end-to-end automation of legal translation, particularly in high-stakes or jurisdiction-sensitive documents.
3. Superiority of ChatGPT over Google Translate: Out of the tools employed for testing, ChatGPT generated the most legally acceptable and linguistically accurate translations. Google Translate, as quick and easy as it is, consistently generates errors that can compromise the legal meaning or enforceability of contracts.
4. Human Expertise Cannot Be Replicated: Human translators still play a vital role, especially in verification, authentication, and sign-off of AI-translated legal documents. Human expertise makes translated legal documents not just linguistically correct but also legally compliant and culturally satisfactory.

Recommendations

1. Adhere to a Human-in-the-Loop Process: Legal translation processes should include AI tools like ChatGPT for preparation and term management with subsequent strict human post-editing for legal compliance and validity.
2. Legal Translator and Practitioner AI Literacy: Educational institutions must train legal translators and practitioners in the strengths and limitations of AI translation tools for wise and effective use.
3. More Research in Other Multilingual Legal Environments: Research must be extended to other language combinations and legal systems (for example, French-English, Chinese-English) to learn about AI performance within different legal environments.
4. Control of AI Use in Legal Translation: The regulatory authorities and the translation societies need to implement open standards on the proper use of AI for legal translation, which enforce confidentiality, quality control, and accountability standards.
5. Continued AI Model Enhancement: AI developers need to collaborate with legal linguists and translation experts to develop enhanced AI models for better management of legal jargon, jurisdictional differences, and cultural contextualization.

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