



On the Translation Ethics Teaching for University Teachers in the Context of New Artificial Intelligence: Based on the Book *Translation Ethics Research*

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Abstract. With the arrival of the new generation of artificial intelligence technology, Chinese universities are increasingly paying attention to its impact on education and teaching. The application of artificial intelligence is of great significance for translation activities, but it contains the important issue of translation ethics. This article explores the important content of translation ethics teaching and research, analyzes the history and prospects of translation ethics research, explains the important value of translation ethics for MTI students' learning, and proposes measures to improve students' understanding of translation ethics and promote comprehensive development based on teaching practice and the textbook *Translation Ethics Research* in the translation master's curriculum system.

Keywords: Translation Ethics; Artificial Intelligence; Teaching Methods

1 Introduction

Comparing Chinese and Western cultures, views of ethics in Zhou and Qin dynasties can be regarded as the source of Chinese ethical culture, while ancient Greek ethics already involved Western ethical culture. The term ethics has rich connotations and is related to various aspects such as economy, society, culture, etc. It is inevitably related to translation theory and practice. Ethics in Chinese refers to the relationships between people and nature, as well as the rules for handling these relationships. From an academic perspective, people often view ethics as a search for moral standards. The arrival of the new generation of artificial intelligence has brought significant challenges to translation ethics. How to face moral issues in translation and what values to adopt are issues that many translators need to seriously face and consider.

The relationship between translation and ethics has gradually become an important topic in translation theory research, and has undergone ups and downs over time. Ethics is a quite complex concept, and the difference and connection between it and morality are constantly debated topics in the academic community involving ethics. After nearly 40 years of development, diverse perspectives and fruitful results have

been formed ^[1]. With the gradual development and maturity of artificial intelligence, research on translation ethics has become increasingly prominent.

Currently, the course related to translation ethics has also become one of the mandatory ones in the translation master's curriculum system in some universities, and has received attention from the teaching guidance committee. In the course "Translation Ethics", I taught a class of 24 students. This course was held in the second semester of the first year of graduate studies, and learners have already studied professional courses such as "Introduction to Translation". This course can deepen learners' understanding of the relationship between the subject and object of translation activities and the socio-cultural system, and also lay the foundation for future translation theory and practical work, so as to establish a correct perspective on translation ethics in this new AI era.

2 Literature Review

Translation ethics is a relatively new concept in translation studies, and it is dedicated to answering the questions of what should be translated and how should it be translated, different from the research path and focus of descriptive translation studies. In the teaching of translation ethics, it is necessary to carefully sort out relevant important literature and figures. Forty years of academic research in translation ethics can be preliminarily divided into three stages, and learners can also summarize important viewpoints and present them in class. Effective teacher-student evaluation between teachers and students can promote students to search and organize knowledge in advance, unleash students' learning subjectivity, and improve their research enthusiasm.

(1) The early stage: from 1984 to 2000, translation ethics has gradually entered the perspective of translation scholars, and they have begun to pay attention to and explore multiple factors that affect translation behavior, including translators, in addition to the translated text. The term "translation ethics" was first proposed by French scholar Antoine Berman (1942-1991) in his book *The Experience of the Foreign: Culture and Translation in Romantic Germany*, which was firstly published in French in 1984, and later in English in 1992 ^[2]. Berman's book discussed the influence of extratextual factors such as language, ideology, literature, and the translator's psychological state on the translation process. Andrew Chesterman, in his book *Memes of Translation*, proposed the term of translation memes for the spread of cultures and analyzed the different levels of translator's ethical responsibility based on moral logic ^[3]. Lawrence Venuti proposed to preserve linguistic and cultural differences in the original text in translation, and proposed the concept of ethics of differences and constructed a translation ethics theory based on postcolonial thinking. ^[4]

(2) The middle stage: from 2000 to 2010, Chinese and foreign scholars have increased their exploration of translator ethics and translation values, and postmodern and structuralist trends have promoted the study of translation ethics. Some special issues with the theme of "Translation Ethics" have also been launched in international journals, for example, *The Translator* launched a special issue "The Return to Ethics in Translation Studies" in 2001. Anthony Pym (2001) reemphasized the return to

translation ethics research, highlighting the exploration of translation ethics from a professional perspective, and proposing to replace translation ethics with translator ethics. Pym further explored what translation ethics need to reproduce? Who does translation ethics serve and under what name to practice translation ethics, etc. [5] In Chinese academia, there are also some research articles on translation ethics at this stage. Zhu (2010) systematically sorted out various translation ethics models in China and the West, and held that although the expressions of these models are different, from a holistic perspective, they can all be attributed to a moral cultivation and ethical requirement of faithfully reproducing the original text, which is a faithful translation ethics. Furthermore, he argued that translators should aim to faithfully reproduce the original text [6]. Yang and Zeng (2010) pointed out that translation ethics is one of the important subsystems of the translation studies system that has been expanded under the background of cultural turn. The authors believe that it is necessary to expand the corresponding theoretical research subcategories on the basis of macro framework theory, and divide them into multiple research categories such as translation management ethics, translation operational ethics, translation critical ethics, and translation theoretical research [7].

(3) The later stage: from 2011 to 2023, it receives constant and wide attention in academia. As for translation ethics teaching, Chen argues that the course aims to enable learners to maintain a clear awareness of translation ethics throughout their future careers, rather than specifying and teaching correct ethical values in the classroom, and the key is to cultivate students' ability to reflect on themselves. [8] Anthony Pym holds that there is a disconnect between theory and practice in translation ethics research. He points out that translation is a communicative behavior and a professional service provided to clients. Pym summarized the five principles of translator ethics: once translators accept a translation task, they are responsible for it; The translator is responsible for the potential impact of the translated work; Translators should not be influenced by the target language and source language culture; The cost of translation should not exceed the benefits brought by cooperation; Translators have an obligation to ensure long-term and stable cross-cultural communication [9]. Besides, Xu (2016) analyzes the relationship between applied translation ethics and translation professional ethics, and combines case studies to point out that the core of applied translation ethics research will be on how to provide good services. Xu holds that applied translation ethics research can also provide theoretical guidance for applied research fields such as translator training and translation criticism [10]. This further expands the connection between translation ethics and the new era translation industry. Teachers can provide practical translation students with more realistic cases in the classroom, providing theoretical guidance for future work. Moreover, the special issue of "Translation, Ethics and Social Responsibility" was launched in 2017 by *The Translator*. The special column of "Translation Technology Ethics", launched by *Shanghai Journal of Translators* in the 5th issue of 2019 in China, collected several articles and focused on the relationship between translation and new development of technology. After comparing and discussing the definitions of translation ethics, Yang Rongguang (2022) redefined the term: translation ethics refers to the ethical norms followed by translators in order to achieve a certain value orientation of goodness; it is specifically

manifested as the translation behavior norms that the translator chooses to follow in translation and the translation norms presented in the final translation. Its function is to coordinate the relationships between stakeholders and relevant elements in translation activities ^[1]. The publication of *The Routledge Handbook of Translation and Ethics* (2021) has gathered the new achievements of many well-known scholars, which has greatly promoted research on translation ethics and provided a good summary ^[11]. In 2023, Joseph Lambert published the book *Translation Ethics*, which is based on teaching practice and provides researchers and students with rich materials related to translation ethics, including audio and video, courseware, and a large number of link resources. The book includes 9 chapters, including important topics such as philosophical foundations, translation ethics, responsibility, justice, commitment, standards, etc. The text of the book is easy to understand and the ideas are critical ^[12].

According to the above literature review, it can be seen that translation ethics research has received long-term attention from scholars both domestically and internationally, and has formed research categories such as translators' ethics, definition of translation ethics, and applied translation ethics. However, there are few studies that combine translation teaching, and there are also few studies that combine the background of artificial intelligence in the new era.

3 The Teaching Materials and Process

In my teaching, I used the book *Translation Ethics Research* (2013) published in China ^[13]. Combining the units in the book, MTI students were asked to search for relevant theoretical articles. Through explanations and classroom presentations, I deepened learners' theoretical understanding of translation ethics and promoted them to form their own critical translation ethics views through internalization of knowledge, establishing a good translation ethics perspective.

3.1 The book: Translation Ethics Research

Generally, this book systematically sorts out ethical issues in translation from three levels: macro (community with a shared future for mankind), meso (industry and community), and micro (translators). The book can be divided into three parts, totaling ten chapters ^[13].

The first part includes chapters 1 and 2, mainly introducing the relevant background knowledge of translation ethics.

The second part includes chapters 3 to 6, which mainly explores translation ethics from four dimensions: loyalty, translator's responsibility, ethical education in the translation profession, and the construction of equal cultural relationships.

The third part includes Chapters 7 and 10, which revolve around cultural translation and the global community of a shared future, the ethics of machine translation, the ethical norms of the translation industry, and the ethics of translation theory research from a macro perspective. It combines industry and translation practice, and explores translation ethics in the era of artificial intelligence.

Among those key chapters, chapter 2 “Practice and Theoretical Basis of Translation Ethics” summarizes the ethical theoretical sources of translation ethics, including normative theory, virtue theory, *skopos* theory, and deontology, providing theoretical retrospection and analysis for the proposal of a new framework of translation ethics.

On the basis of reviewing and criticizing the traditional concept of faithfulness in Chapter 3, the author points out that relying solely on faithfulness to the source text cannot handle complex translation ethical issues, and thus introduces the concept of sincerity. Sincerity implies a friendly attitude, pursuit of consensus, and equal communication methods, which are of great significance for achieving good translation effect.

Chapter 4 discusses the translator’s responsibility from four aspects: the subject of responsibility, the relationship of responsibility, the object of responsibility, and the content of responsibility. The translator is the main body of translation activities with other parties, and there is a mutual responsibility relationship. It should be clear that any responsible behavior of the translator is the translator’s value choice.

Chapter 5 points out the need to combine ethical theory with translation practice and incorporate ethical education into the teaching of translation skills courses. The primary issue faced by translation ethics education is the ethical theory education of translation professional teachers, which should be continuously strengthened. The importance of classroom teaching examples in cultivating translation talents was pointed out.

Chapter 6 and 7 point out the importance of cultural equality and cultural translation. From the perspective of cultural diversity, this book explores the relationship between cultural differences, cultural competition, and cultural equality, and on this basis provides methods for vulnerable cultures to self-rescue and self-development. Appropriate translation strategies can enable different languages and cultures to cooperate and complement each other during the translation process, and enable different cultures to compromise with each other after conflicts of interest arise. The author believes that translation should be positioned as a way to construct a community with a shared future for mankind.

Chapter 8 points out that machine translation has raised new ethical issues in the new era. With the advent of the artificial intelligence era, machine translation has greatly improved translation efficiency, but it has also triggered a series of ethical issues: the creative value of translation is denied, the translation lacks individuality and is detached from the translation context, the social value of translators decreases, and the lack of responsible subjects. Therefore, under the premise of the organic unity of technology and humanities, the social value of machine translation can be more highlighted. Machine translation ethics can be achieved through top-down, bottom-up, and hybrid paths. Finally, it is important to take a dialectical view of machine translation and use it with precision.

Chapter 9 provides a detailed introduction to the definition, source, formulation, and implementation of ethical norms in the translation industry. Comparing the ethical norms of the translation industry with industry norms and laws, it is pointed out that it is a conscious commitment and not mandatory. The non-professional tendency of translation also poses a challenge to this ethical norm. In this context, the formula-

tion and implementation of ethical norms in the translation industry is particularly important, as they need to be internalized as voluntary requirements for practitioners. The ethical norms in the translation industry are to some extent the embodiment of industry-leading values and are one of the most important norms in the translation industry.

Chapter 10 discusses the ethics of translation theory research and believes that ethical reflection is needed on translation theory research. Topics in this chapter include descriptive translation studies, criticism of the instrumentalist tendencies in translation studies, the purpose and ethical principles of translation theory research, metacriticism of translation theory, and the unity of truth and goodness in the process of knowledge construction.

3.2 Sharing of research articles: students' presentation

In the classroom, the teacher usually invites four students each time to summarize and share academic paper readings based on the theme of each unit. Specifically, for example, in Chapter 4 of the textbook, the theme is translator ethics. The teacher assigns classroom sharing tasks in advance, and four MTI graduate students independently search for Chinese and foreign literature before class. They select a published academic paper of other scholars that is highly relevant to the theme to report and share, and create a presentation PPT or mind map.

Due to the fact that this course only has one credit in the course system, there is a weekly class with two sections each. The course needs to be completed in 8 weeks, and the entire student classroom presentation is arranged 6 times, ensuring that each student has a classroom presentation, which lasts for about 8 minutes. The teacher rates and comments on students' academic reports.

Through classroom discussions, it can be found that students mainly choose core journal papers for sharing based on the teacher's suggestions in material selection. In addition, in the form of reporting, they can achieve a combination of graphics and text, and can systematically reorganize and analyze the content of the paper. However, in terms of the presentation format of PPTs, only a few students are able to meet the requirements of simplicity, clarity, standardization, and completeness. Some display fonts are too small, the color contrast is not coordinated, and there are also issues with reports being too complex and not concise. In terms of oral reporting, many students have insufficient communication with the audience and do not achieve good eye contact. There is room for further improvement in the effectiveness of reporting.

According to the academic reporting requirements, the teacher finally proposed a set of CLEAR oral reporting methods. Among them, C represents Clarity, requiring students to achieve a moderate font size, clear and neat graphics; L represents Label, reminding students to pay attention to hierarchy and organization when reporting. Each key point of the report can be marked with a brief title or terminology; E represents Easiness, hoping that the reporter can use simple language to clearly introduce the relatively professional fields and achieve an audience friendly speech; A represents Accuracy. When reporting, it is important to ensure accurate literature, standardized language, and effective academic communication, including the correct use of

punctuation marks; Finally, R represents Readiness and requires students to conduct drills in advance to complete the established reporting tasks within the effective time, try not to occupy the time of other speakers, and be able to be punctual and follow the rules in future academic activities.

3.3 The reading report: students' written task

This course also requires students to perform two written writing tasks. The first time was to write a reading report on the monograph *Translation Ethics* (2013) ^[14], especially to sort out and summarize the important academic viewpoints in the book, and to further enhance the cognitive level of the entire field of translation ethics by combining personal oral reports. The second time is the final course paper, which requires students to write a book review related to translation ethics. They are required to refer to the book review paper format of professional journals and, under the guidance and advice of the teacher, write a paper of no less than 4000 words. The relevant reading reports and book review articles are graded using the following course paper reference scoring standards (see Table 1), promoting students to apply what they have learned and organically integrating theoretical learning with academic writing.

Table 1. Course paper grading reference

Index	Evaluation content	Evaluation score			
		A	B	C	D
Topic choosing	Whether the topic selection is novel; Is it meaningful; Is it related to this course.	20-16	15-11	10-6	5-0
Arguments	Is the idea clear; Whether the logic is rigorous; Whether the structure is rigorous; Whether the research method is appropriate; Is the argument sufficient.	20-16	15-11	10-6	5-0
Literature	Whether the literature is detailed and accurate; Is it representative	20-16	15-11	10-6	5-0
Textual Standards	Whether the written expression is accurate and fluent; Whether the style is standardized; Compliance with academic ethical standards.	20-16	15-11	10-6	5-0
Ability	Has the writer applied the relevant theoretical knowledge of this course; Does it reflect scientific research capabilities.	20-16	15-11	10-6	5-0

4 Further Discussion

The book *Translation Ethics Research* systematically explores translation ethics, with a dedicated chapter discussing machine translation and translation ethics, providing a comprehensive framework for translation ethics research. However, as for the limita-

tions, some concepts in this book are repeatedly discussed, and the text appears to be not concise. In terms of research framework, both Chapters 6 and 7 emphasize the importance of translation for cultural exchange, cultural production, etc., which can actually be combined into one chapter.

In this book, the author believes that machine translation has always been a coding and transcoding activity, and cannot make corresponding adjustments according to the situation as translators can, assuming the ethical responsibility of translators. The application of machine assisted translation and machine translation inevitably affects the translator's judgment ability, which may inhibit the translator's personalized creation, and even the translator's independent translation identity will become a tinkering post editor. Once problems arise, it will be difficult or impossible to hold them accountable. Therefore, translators should jointly handle the post translation editing of machine translation results, while improving efficiency while maximizing consideration for cultural context and various external factors, to ensure that the translation meets ethical requirements.

Moreover, the author holds that translators should highlight humanistic care, respect the existence of various cultures, expand the discourse power of vulnerable cultures by the visibility of translators^[15], and achieve cultural equality in the translation process, which is in line with the common interests of the entire human race. It has both theoretical and practical implications.

5 Conclusion

Starting from the author's teaching practice, this article provides an academic review of translation ethics topics, evaluates the textbooks used, summarizes the CLEAR speech method applicable to MTI students' classroom presentations, summarizes students' oral and written tasks, identifies existing problems, and proposes solutions. This article believes that in the context of artificial intelligence in the new era, research on translation ethics should continue, and learners need to be aware that they should establish a high sense of responsibility and have the ability and awareness to act for their translation behavior.

This has sounded an alarm for translation ethics research in the context of the new generation of artificial intelligence, and also calls for more research to be combined with artificial intelligence, providing more practical guidance for teachers and students, and forming certain industry or field norms globally, so as to constrain behaviors that violate translation ethics.

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