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Trends & Traditions in Translation & Interpreting Studies

Students' perceptions and experience regarding the use of artificial intelligence in interpreter training

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Abstract

The paper presents findings from a study investigating students' attitudes toward and experience with AI tools in interpreter training. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with 32 Master's degree students. The results indicate widespread use of AI tools, such as ChatGPT, Gemini, Perplexity, and Consensus, for glossary creation, topic familiarization, and efficient preparation. Students generally perceived AI positively, recognizing its potential to streamline their work, though concerns were raised about possible misuse and a decline in critical thinking. Despite varying experience levels, AI use remained consistent, primarily influenced by the availability of relevant training materials. Students at different stages of training used AI in similar ways, differing mainly in the amount of time devoted to preparation. Students acknowledged AI's increasing integration into interpreting practice, viewing it as a helpful aid rather than a replacement for human interpreters. The study advocates for the integration of AI into interpreter training, emphasizing contextual preparation and the development of technological competence. It also highlights the role of teachers in guiding students toward the effective use of artificial intelligence, fostering an innovative learning environment. Future research with larger and more diverse samples is recommended to further explore AI's impact on interpreter training.

1. Introduction

Technological advances are affecting many areas of human life, and the interpreting profession needs to respond adequately to them. While some innovations, such as computer-assisted interpreting tools, enhance interpreting practice, others, such as machine interpreting, are often perceived as a threat to the profession's future (Prandi 2023).

These developments also affect education, the labour market, and the evolving relationship between interpreters and technology. As a result, both academic and professional communities are increasingly interested in the potential modes of interaction between humans and machines, particularly between interpreters and technological tools (Russello and Carbutto 2023).

Within this broader context, artificial intelligence (AI) plays a significant role and is gradually being integrated into various domains. As AI becomes more advanced, it offers new applications that can support interpreters. A range of emerging technologies (discussed in the following section) has the potential to enhance interpreter performance by making training more efficient and faster.

This study explores students' attitudes toward and experience with AI tools in interpreter training at a Slovak university, where translation and interpreting are taught within philology programmes. Specifically, it examines how students engage with AI tools during preparation for interpreting and/or translation courses, offering insights into a specialized educational context. While existing research has focused primarily on professional interpreters, students' perspectives can also make a meaningful contribution to the field of interpreter training. In addition to mapping students' awareness and knowledge of AI, this study seeks to uncover their expectations and practical needs concerning AI integration.

2. Technologies and tools in interpreting

In relation to technological developments, Fantinuoli (2018, 3) refers to a "technological turn" in interpreting, which "has the potential to radically change the profession". This shift may transform the so-called interpreting ecosystem and significantly affect many socio-economic aspects of the profession, including public perception, status, and working conditions of interpreters (Fantinuoli 2018, 3).

Within this context, Fantinuoli (2019) identifies three core areas central to the technological turn in interpreting: remote interpreting, computer-assisted interpreting, and artificial intelligence. This classification was later refined to include four distinct categories: computer-assisted interpreting training, computer-assisted interpreting, remote interpreting, and machine interpreting (Fantinuoli 2022). While this paper does not aim

to provide an exhaustive overview, it briefly introduces key tools in each area relevant to the present study.

Computer-assisted interpreting training tools (CAIT) are designed to facilitate access to instructional materials. These include speech repositories; authoring tools, immersive digital learning environments; and distance learning platforms (Sandrelli and Jerez 2007). The most commonly used are audiovisual databases simulating real-life interpreting conditions, such as the Speech Repository (Fantinuoli 2022). The transition to online learning during the Covid-19 pandemic in 2020 further accelerated the adoption of distance learning platforms. Frequently used tools include general video conferencing software (Zoom, Microsoft Teams), language learning applications (Sanako Connect), remote interpreting platforms (Voiceboxer, Interprefy, KUDO), and applications specifically developed for conference interpreting, such as InTrain (Fantinuoli 2022).

Computer-assisted interpreting (CAI) tools encompass a wide range of computer programmes and mobile applications designed to support interpreters in various stages of the interpreting process. These include knowledge acquisition, lexicographic memorization, and terminology management (Fantinuoli 2022, 512). CAI tools may automatically transcribe or translate source texts in real time and identify challenging elements such as numbers or technical terms (Russello and Carbutto 2023). They also allow for automated searches within terminology databases (e.g., IATE, Wikimedia) during glossary creation. Examples of CAI tools include Interpretbank, Interpreter's Help, Interplex, Cymo Note, KUDO, and SmartTerp (Fantinuoli 2022; Russello and Carbutto 2023).

Remote interpreting (RI) is defined by ISO (2020, 2) as "interpreting of a speaker in a different location from that of the interpreter, enabled by information and communications technology (ICT)" (Seeber and Fox 2022). It has become a standard component of interpreting practice, often using the aforementioned platforms such as Interprefy and KUDO (Russello and Carbutto 2021; Corpas Pastor 2021).

Machine interpreting (MI) combines several technologies, including automatic speech recognition, machine translation, and speech synthesis (Prandi 2023). In contrast to CAI and RI, MI is intended to replace the human interpreter (Fantinuoli 2022). Although the quality of machine interpreting is improving, it still cannot match professional human interpreters in key areas of verbal communication, such as inferencing, prosody, and pragmatics (Fantinuoli 2022). Fantinuoli (2018) emphasizes the need for a balanced and responsible adoption of technology, promoting its use as a supportive tool rather than a disruptive force in the interpreting profession.

2.1. The use of artificial intelligence tools in interpreting and interpreter training

Peng and Zhou (2024) emphasize that the emergence of large language models is transforming interpreting, particularly through AI-based interpreting technologies. These models enable more accurate and natural interpretations due to their advanced language generation capabilities. Their ability to learn from large datasets allows for continuous performance optimization, and their rapid response times make them well-suited for real-time applications. While these developments open new possibilities for cross-language communication, it is essential to recognize their limitations and promote collaboration between AI and human interpreters.

Although automatic translation tools such as Google Translate and DeepL were not originally developed for professional interpreting, their integration with speech recognition can provide provisional translations during live sessions (Karaban and Karaban 2021). Integrated CAI systems, such as InterpretBank and CASSIS, already incorporate speech recognition and terminology extraction, demonstrating significant technological progress, though language coverage remains limited.

The most well-known and widely used AI chatbot, ChatGPT, is commonly employed by both professional and trainee interpreters, particularly during the preparatory phase prior to assignments. Cáceres-Würsig, Mantrana Gallego and Lázaro Gutiérrez (2023) investigated its use in developing multilingual and multimodal glossaries for business interpreting students. They found that ChatGPT facilitates technical problem-solving and accelerates the creation of training materials. However, limitations persist, particularly in formatting Excel documents and integrating audio or image files.

Alcaide-Martínez (2023) examined ChatGPT's effectiveness for interpreters' documentation during preparation. The findings confirmed that while the tool can rapidly provide relevant and reliable information, support domain-specific vocabulary development, retrieve precise content, and extract bilingual terminology, it should be viewed as a complement, not a replacement, for human interpreters, given its potential for generating errors. Alcaide-Martínez (2023) strongly recommends its use by both professionals and students to streamline documentation processes and enhance performance during real-time interpreting.

Beyond chatbots, Goldsmith (2023) identifies Readwise Reader as another valuable AI tool for interpreter preparation, particularly for term searching and text summarization. The effectiveness of these tools, however, relies on the precision of user input, a point also highlighted by Cáceres-Würsig, Mantrana Gallego and Lázaro Gutiérrez (2023). López, Rodríguez and Montes (2023) suggest that effective prompts should follow a structured format: context + specific information + proposal + response

format. Goldsmith (2023) further cautions against the use of AI tools when handling sensitive documents.

2.2. The use of technology in teaching interpreting

Technology has assumed an increasingly important role in interpreter training in recent years. Frittella (2021, 126) describes technological resources as mere tools, asserting that "their effectiveness is not to be found in the tool itself, but, rather, is determined by the use that trainers make of the tool".

The growing trend toward human-machine collaboration is expected to shape the future of the language services industry. As Hidayat, Nurhidayat and Ilyas (2024) emphasize, successful integration of technology into interpreter training requires a careful balance between traditional and innovative approaches. A hybrid model ensures that technology serves as a support mechanism rather than a substitute for human expertise. Training programmes must evolve to incorporate technological tools as complementary elements, while also addressing their limitations and ethical implications. Teachers should explicitly highlight these aspects, including risks such as over-reliance on technology and the potential decline in students' critical thinking skills.

Noriega-Santiáñez (2023) underscores the importance of recognizing the potential of AI tools in interpreter training, for example, in summarizing texts or generating glossaries useful across different stages of interpreting tasks. Even if students do not actively use all available tools, they should understand both their capabilities and their limitations.

Sun and Han (2023) examined student interpreters' familiarity with AI-powered interpreting tools. Their findings revealed that many students had limited experience with such technologies and lacked a comprehensive understanding of their use. This highlights the urgent need for universities to enhance interpreter training curricula and equip students with the necessary technological competencies.

Finally, as Djovčoš, Klabal and Šveda (2024) point out, the challenges posed by AI have not yet been fully addressed within interpreter training. However, these emerging trends should be seen as opportunities rather than threats. While AI tools may reduce the demand for human interpreters in some contexts, they offer a wide range of resources that can complement human expertise and ultimately improve both the quality and efficiency of interpreting (Yang, Chen and Zou 2025).

3. Methodology

This study aims to examine the attitudes of philology students at a selected university toward AI tools in general and their use in interpreting,

focusing particularly on students' experience and opinions regarding the application of these tools during preparation for interpreting courses.

3.1. Research questions

Based on the literature and previous research findings, the following research questions were formulated:

1. To what extent do students use AI tools in preparation for interpreting?
2. How does the use of AI tools in preparation for interpreting differ between students with and without practical, real-world interpreting experience?
3. How does the use of AI tools differ between students at different stages of interpreter training (first-year vs. second-year students)?
4. How do students perceive the future of interpreting in relation to artificial intelligence?

3.2. Research sample

The research sample consisted of 32 Master's degree students from the Department of English and American Studies, Faculty of Arts, Matej Bel University in Banská Bystrica, Slovakia. The sample included 28 first-year students who had completed a compulsory interpreting course, and 4 second-year students who had taken additional interpreting courses from a required elective module. The uneven representation of students at different stages of training is acknowledged as a limitation of the study, potentially introducing bias into the findings. Despite repeated recruitment efforts, it was not possible to secure higher participation from final-year students.

In terms of gender, the sample was predominantly female (N = 25; 78.13%), with male participants accounting for 18.75% (N = 6), and one respondent (3.12%) choosing not to disclose their gender. The mean age of the participants was 23.03 years. Their study programmes focused on English language and culture (translation-oriented studies), combined either with another foreign language (French, German, or Russian), with Slovak, or with another discipline (e.g., philosophy or history).

Regarding professional orientation, the majority of students preferred translation (N = 15; 46.88%), followed by interpreting (N = 9; 28.12%), while a quarter of the sample (N = 8; 25%) expressed equal interest in both. All first-year students interested in interpreting intended to enrol in additional elective interpreting courses such as Interpreting in the EU, Consecutive and Simultaneous Interpreting in Practice, Simultaneous Interpreting in Practice, or Conference Interpreting Exercises. All second-year students had already completed these courses in English, with two students also having taken interpreting courses in German.

3.3. Research methods and procedure

This study employed individual semi-structured interviews as the primary research method. Prior to conducting the interviews, we developed a set of 25 questions (Q) focusing on the use of AI tools and students' preparation for interpreting tasks. These questions were grouped into four thematic areas:

1. the use of AI tools in everyday life and in preparation for classes,
2. the use of technology and AI tools in interpreting or translation,
3. students' perceptions of AI tools after completing interpreting courses, and
4. the use of AI tools in interpreter training.

The complete set of questions (see Appendix) was emailed in advance to participants who had agreed to take part, allowing them time to prepare. Respondents were informed that the interviews would be conducted via Microsoft Teams, recorded, and subsequently anonymized after conversion to audio format.

Most questions were open-ended, which allowed for more in-depth responses than would typically be possible with conventional survey instruments. We believe that the oral format, combined with the informal interview setting (facilitated by a graduating student), helped create a comfortable atmosphere conducive to honest and reflective responses.

The interviews were conducted at the end of the winter semester of the 2024/2025 academic year and lasted an average of 10 minutes and 41 seconds. Interview length varied according to the participant's professional focus, with longer interviews generally given by students who preferred interpreting over translation.

Interview recordings were transcribed using AI tools (Word Dictate), although the transcripts were subsequently reviewed and manually corrected where necessary. Full transcripts were retained as a detailed form of evidence to support the subsequent thematic analysis. In addition to thematic analysis, comparative and synthetic methods were employed to interpret and evaluate the collected data.

4. Analysis of the interviews

This section presents an evaluation of the data collected through semi-structured interviews, organized around four thematic areas mentioned in the previous section.

4.1. Use of AI tools in everyday life and in preparation for classes

Given the increasing ubiquity of AI tools, we sought to examine the extent to which students engage with AI in their daily lives and in their

academic preparation. A majority of respondents (84.4%) reported encountering AI in everyday contexts (Q7). They used AI to search for information, interacted with AI-driven customer support (e.g., chatbots), relied on virtual assistants on their phones, and encountered AI in various domains such as social media, automobiles, photo editing, video games, and the workplace.

Most students (81.3%) held a generally positive view of AI tools (Q8), highlighting their potential to simplify tasks and save time due to the speed and efficiency with which they operate. However, several concerns were raised. Students noted that AI-generated content often requires verification, as it may include inaccuracies or irrelevant information. As respondent 20 remarked, "It's a good servant but a poor master. It can be a useful tool, but one must know how to formulate effective prompts and, most importantly, verify the information, as the tool sometimes hallucinates". Another concern involved the potential for job displacement, with AI replacing human roles in certain sectors. For instance, respondent 21 commented, "I believe that if these tools continue to develop at their current pace, they may be able to partially replace humans in more industries, and possibly even across more professions". Additionally, students expressed worries about a decline in critical thinking, particularly among their peers. This underscores the importance of creating educational environments that emphasize the responsible and supplementary use of AI, supporting skill development rather than replacing it, as emphasized by Hidayat, Nurhidayat and Ilyas (2024).

In terms of academic preparation (Q15), more than half of the students (56.2%) reported using AI tools to support their studies. These tools were employed for a range of tasks: completing homework, converting scanned study materials into editable text, drafting outlines or visual elements (e.g., tables and graphs) for seminar papers, and searching for sources. Philosophy students, in particular, noted using AI to simplify and clarify complex theoretical concepts during assignment writing. For long texts, AI was used to extract key points or summarize content. The most frequently mentioned tools included Gemini, ChatGPT, Perplexity, Consensus, and DeepL.

4.2. Use of AI technologies and tools in interpreting or translating

4.2.1. Use of AI technologies and tools in interpreting

In preparation for interpreting (Q16), 96.9% of respondents reported using AI tools. These were primarily employed to develop glossaries, understand the context of an event, broaden background knowledge, and clarify unfamiliar terminology. The significance of contextual preparation is emphasized by Djovčoš, Melicherčíková and Vilímek (2021), who note that when interpreters are well-informed about the topic, it facilitates

comprehension and delivery through mental visualization. Glossaries that merge thematic context with linguistic content are also considered beneficial (Álvarez Pérez and Pérez-Luzardo Díaz 2022).

Students reported using AI tools in mock conferences during interpreting courses, for selecting topics, generating speech content, or creating PowerPoint presentations. AI tools were particularly useful when the topic of interpretation was introduced at the last minute. As respondent 15 noted, "When we were given the topic just before class, I quickly searched for clues about what it might involve".

Additionally, 40.1% of respondents indicated that teachers encouraged them to use AI tools during interpreting preparation, which led to increased usage. Respondent 18 remarked, "At the beginning of the semester, they demonstrated how to use artificial intelligence in interpreting, so I began practicing it more during the seminars". The most frequently mentioned tools were Gemini, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Consensus.

Among students who preferred interpreting or had equal interest in interpreting and translation, all confirmed (Q16) the use of AI tools in preparation. These were used for generating glossaries, familiarizing themselves with context, or creating sample texts on a given topic. Some students conducted background research on the speaker prior to the assignment. Several respondents highlighted that AI-assisted preparation improved their ability to anticipate during interpreting tasks.

Beyond chatbots, some students also used other tools. For instance, respondent 5 reported using speech-to-text tools for preparation. While AI tools were mainly employed in advance, respondents 6 and 32 mentioned using DeepL during interpreting in the booth (to translate PowerPoint presentations) or used other tools to search for information (Q12).

During data analysis, practical interpreting experience acquired outside the academic setting was also taken into account (Q13). Over a third of the sample (37.5%) had such experience, with 75% of these students using AI tools for preparation. These tools were primarily used to develop glossaries or gather information about the event or subject matter. When the provided materials contained complex expressions or sentence structures, students turned to AI to simplify the content. This aligns with Cáceres-Würsig, Mantrana Gallego and Lázaro Gutiérrez's (2023) findings on the effectiveness of ChatGPT for streamlining glossary creation.

Respondent 16 shared an example where ChatGPT played a crucial role in managing a challenging situation: "I was told it would be a meeting about finances and marketing, but we visited a metallurgical plant instead. Unprepared and unfamiliar with the terminology, I quickly turned to ChatGPT for help, which saved me". As Alcaide-Martínez (2023) observes, chatbots can quickly generate content on a given topic, which is especially useful when interpreters lack prior familiarity.

As previously outlined, interpreting involves a range of technologies aimed at enhancing training, performance, remote delivery, and automation (Fantinuoli 2022). However, only 31.3% of respondents could name specific AI technologies or tools used in interpreting (Q17). While some mentioned using DeepL for interpreting documents, others referred to platforms like Microsoft Teams, Zoom, or KUDO. Respondent 30 cited Lingmo, a tool capable of generating real-time subtitles during online interpreting sessions.

Students most frequently mentioned speech-to-text tools, which are particularly valuable in simultaneous interpreting and are integral to the development of machine interpreting (Prandi 2023). A majority of respondents (74.2%) had used such tools to transcribe and interpret recordings (Q18), and 82.6% of these users found them helpful. Reported shortcomings included poor transcription quality, missing punctuation, inadequate sentence segmentation, and occasional word omissions. Despite these issues, all users emphasized the need to proofread and correct the output but still rated the tools positively overall.

Students who had not used speech-to-text tools cited several reasons: the tools did not work for them, were not freely available, or they preferred to transcribe manually to ensure accuracy. However, several indicated that they would consider using such tools in the future.

Regarding device usage during interpreting courses (Q20 and Q21), 81.3% of students acknowledged having access to laptops, tablets, or mobile devices; however, only 53.1% reported actually using them during interpreting tasks. Mobile phones were the most frequently used devices, either individually or in collaboration with a booth partner. Students typically accessed glossaries or handouts prepared with the help of AI tools and used their phones to quickly look up unfamiliar terms during interpretation. One respondent mentioned using a tablet to take notes during consecutive interpreting. Second-year students reported more frequent laptop use during interpreting classes, primarily to view previously translated presentations or conduct real-time searches. Among those who did not use any devices, 46.9% felt they were either unnecessary or distracting.

4.2.2. Use of AI technologies and tools in translation

Given that philology students often exhibit varying preferences between translation and interpreting (with 46.9% of our respondents preferring translation, 28.1% interpreting, and 25% indicating equal interest in both), we examined the use of AI technologies not only in interpreting but also in translation.

All respondents who preferred translation reported using AI tools (Q10), applying them at various stages of the translation process. These tools were used extensively during pre-translation analysis, particularly for

understanding and interpreting source texts. When students encountered difficult passages or unfamiliar expressions, AI helped clarify meaning or explain specific phrases. While 13% of students reported using AI tools to assist directly in drafting the translation, the majority (78.3%) used them to search for synonyms, identify appropriate equivalents or technical terminology, enhance creative expression, or translate idioms.

Among students who indicated equal interest in both interpreting and translation, 75% reported using AI tools during translation tasks. The remaining 25% refrained from using AI tools due to concerns about the reliability of the generated outputs.

In analysing responses related to practical translation experience outside the academic setting (Q14), just under one-third of the sample (31.3%) reported such experience. Of these students, 80% used AI tools to aid comprehension of unfamiliar content, clarify abbreviations or technical terms, or search for synonyms. Some also used tools like DeepL and subsequently engaged in post-editing or drew inspiration from the machine-generated text.

Many CAI tools rely on large terminology databases, such as the IATE (Fantinuoli 2022), for glossary creation. A majority of respondents (81.3%) were familiar with IATE, and several reported using it regularly for professional translation or terminology searches (Q19). Some students, however, indicated that while they were aware of the database, they lacked practical experience with it. Others admitted not knowing how to use it effectively. Those who did use IATE valued its credibility, as it is a verified resource maintained by the European Union. Regarding the e-translation tool, only 6.3% of respondents reported using it, primarily for legal translation. The remaining respondents either had no knowledge of the tool or had not used it in practice.

4.3. Perceptions of AI tools after completing interpreting courses

An analysis of responses (Q22) revealed that students' overall perceptions of AI tools did not change significantly after completing interpreting courses, but their usage patterns did. Some students admitted they initially viewed the use of AI tools as a form of cheating. However, after completing a compulsory interpreting course, they began using such tools more frequently, particularly for creating glossaries and preparing contextual information for interpreting assignments.

Students appreciated the more open and practical approach to AI tools in interpreting courses. Rather than being discouraged from using them, they were shown how these tools could enhance the efficiency and quality of their preparation. They also valued short in-class introductions to AI tools, including those used for preparation or for transcribing recordings. Respondent 20 reflected on this shift in practice: "Now I use AI differently

because they taught us how to craft better prompts and work more effectively with it than before".

Greater use of AI tools was also driven by encouragement from teachers, which many students cited as a key factor in improving their effectiveness. This pattern was observed even among second-year students, despite most participants being in their first year of study. As respondent 6 explained: "I used to view AI negatively and was hesitant to use it, fearing it might be considered cheating. However, these elective courses have changed my perspective, showing me that AI can be used productively and ethically as a helpful resource. Now, I use AI much more extensively".

Only a small portion of students (6.3%) reported using AI tools less than before, citing the unreliability of the information provided.

When asked about the future of interpreting in light of AI's development (Q23), the majority of students (87.5%) believed that AI would not be able to fully replace human interpreters. The most frequently cited reason was the irreplaceable "human factor" in interpreting, particularly the ability to convey cultural references, metaphors, idioms, humour, and emotional nuance. Students emphasized that these elements are central to interpretation and remain beyond the current capabilities of AI.

Nonetheless, students recognized that AI would continue to play a vital role in interpreter preparation, helping to streamline and accelerate the process. They stressed, however, that successful adoption would depend on interpreters' willingness and ability to work with AI tools. Based on their training experience, students viewed AI as a helpful support tool, not a replacement.

Many respondents also noted that speakers often use emotionally charged language, rhetorical devices (such as metaphors and puns), or non-linear speech patterns – all of which challenge AI's capacity. Respondent 22 pointed out: "It is possible that AI could eventually replace interpreters entirely, but it would need to improve significantly. For instance, it would have to excel in language skills, detect implied meanings, and understand humour and gestures".

Similarly, respondent 29 commented on the nuance and presence expected from professional interpreters: "Important meetings, especially with influential people, are interpreted by professionals who bring a diplomatic presence. So, I don't think AI can really understand the emotions in a person's voice".

Students also identified the diversity of interpreting modes as a limitation for AI. For instance, respondent 15 stated: "It would probably serve more as an aid. Maybe it could replace interpreters in simultaneous interpreting or partly in consecutive interpreting, but in community interpreting or situations involving children and families, it would be much harder".

Another recurring concern was the need to regulate AI use to prevent misuse and protect human employment. However, a minority of students (12.5%) expressed a more pessimistic view, particularly with regard to service accessibility and economic pressures. They feared that AI-driven interpreting services, being significantly cheaper, might become the preferred choice for clients, potentially diminishing demand for human interpreters.

Respondent 19 expressed this concern clearly: "I think AI will replace interpreters to some extent because some people or companies will likely choose it over paying for human services. As for the status of interpreters in society, I believe we might be seen as even less important than we are now".

4.4. The use of AI tools in teaching interpreting

All respondents agreed that interpreting teachers should introduce AI tools to students, help them become familiar with these tools, and most importantly, demonstrate how to use them effectively in interpreting (Q24). Students expressed strong appreciation for teachers who actively engage with AI and show students how to use such tools to enhance efficiency and ease their workload. They also valued teachers' efforts to stay current with technological trends, acknowledging that AI tools are likely to become an integral part of the interpreting profession.

Fantinuoli (2018) similarly highlights the evolving nature of the interpreting profession, noting that changes are occurring not only in interpreters' working conditions but also in the interpreting process itself.

Students further emphasized that the integration of AI into interpreter training should be balanced to ensure equal opportunities and avoid disadvantaging students compared to their peers at other institutions. Some participants proposed the development of a dedicated course focused specifically on the use of AI in interpreting. Several respondents suggested that students should begin working with AI only at the Master's level, to ensure they first develop core interpreting skills independently and avoid becoming overly reliant on technological support.

There was a strong consensus that AI literacy will be essential for future interpreters. Students expressed concern that those unfamiliar with AI tools could find themselves at a disadvantage compared to peers who are well-versed in emerging technologies. Without appropriate training during their studies, graduates may struggle to enter the professional interpreting market. Given the rapid advancement and integration of AI into professional practice, students stressed that this reality can no longer be ignored.

They viewed the initiative of teachers in introducing and guiding students through the use of AI as especially valuable in helping them prepare for future careers. At the same time, students repeatedly

emphasized the importance of critical evaluation. They stressed that it is essential to consider the reliability and accuracy of AI-generated content and to maintain control over the information produced by these tools.

The following table summarizes students' responses across key thematic areas.

Aspect	Percentage	Comment
AI in everyday life	84.4%	search engines, chatbots, virtual assistants, social media, photo-editing, video-games
Positive perception of AI	81.3%	time-saving potential
Negative perception of AI	18.7%	decline in critical thinking, misuse
AI for academic preparation	56.2%	summarizing texts, creating outlines, information search
AI in interpreting preparation	96.9%	glossaries, background research, mock conference preparation
Teachers encourage AI use	40.1%	Gemini, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Consensus
AI and real-world interpreting experience	75%	last-minute or low-information scenarios
Awareness of AI technologies/tools in interpreting	31.3%	DeepL, Microsoft Teams, Zoom, KUDO, Lingmo
Experience with speech-to-text tools	74.2%	mostly positive perception despite technical issues
Use of mobile/tablet/laptop in interpreting courses	53.1%	access to glossaries, handouts, real-time search
AI will not fully replace interpreters	87.5%	irreplaceable "human factor" in interpreting
Interpreting teachers should introduce AI tools	100%	integral part of the interpreting profession

Table 1. Summary of student responses on AI in interpreter training

4.5. Research limitations

There are several limitations to this research that could not be fully mitigated, despite careful preparation. First, the research sample was uneven in terms of students' stage in interpreter training. Although repeated efforts were made to recruit more second-year (graduating) students, participation remained voluntary, resulting in an imbalance: the

majority of respondents were first-year students (28), while only four were in their second year. This disproportion may introduce bias into the findings.

A second limitation concerns the varying translation preferences within the sample. Participants included not only students who preferred interpreting or both interpreting and translation equally, but also a significant proportion who expressed a clear preference for translation – nearly half of the respondents – which may have influenced the perspectives captured in the study.

Finally, the duration and timing of the study also posed a limitation. Since most participants were first-year Master's students who had only recently completed their first interpreting course, their views and experience with interpreting and related AI tools were still in the early stages of development.

5. Discussion

Our findings indicate that students encounter AI tools frequently and use them in diverse ways. Overall, respondents evaluated these tools positively, recognizing their potential to make academic and professional tasks more efficient. However, they also acknowledged certain drawbacks, particularly the risk of misuse in academic contexts, which could negatively impact critical thinking skills. Students reported using AI tools primarily to streamline their study processes and preparation for various classes.

In addressing the first research question, we found that students employ AI tools extensively during preparation for interpreting. Specifically, they use them to generate glossaries, explore background information, and contextualize interpreting topics. These tools have enabled faster and more efficient preparation. Compared to first-year students, second-year students more frequently used AI tools immediately before interpreting assignments, especially when topics were only disclosed shortly before class. In such situations, AI tools helped them quickly gain general understanding of the topic and anticipate possible directions the speech might take. The most frequently used tools included Gemini, ChatGPT, Perplexity, and Consensus. Students not only used AI tools to prepare for interpreting tasks but also employed them when acting as speakers in mock conferences – to draft speeches or create PowerPoint presentations. Consistent with findings by Sun and Han (2023), our research also suggests that students lacked deeper knowledge of specific AI-based technologies designed for interpreting.

Regarding the second research question, we compared students with and without practical interpreting experience. The results showed no clear differences in their overall use of AI tools. Instead, the variation seemed to be related more to the availability of preparatory materials. When such materials were provided, students typically used them in combination with

AI tools to develop glossaries. Those with practical interpreting experience often encountered last-minute preparation scenarios, requiring rapid topic familiarisation due to limited information. While students generally had sufficient time to prepare for interpreting courses, in real-world settings they often faced situations where AI tools proved especially helpful in their preparation.

The third research question focused on differences in AI tool use between students at different stages of interpreter training. While first-year students had only completed a compulsory interpreting course, second-year students had also taken elective courses, giving them more experience with interpreting tasks. However, the purpose for which AI tools were used did not differ much between the two groups; the main difference was the amount of preparation time. Second-year students often received topics immediately before class and used AI tools to generate relevant cues.

The final research question examined students' perceptions of the future of interpreting in relation to AI. Responses indicated that students are aware of AI's growing integration into interpreting practice. Despite its expanding capabilities, students generally do not see AI as a threat to the interpreting profession. Rather, they view it as a tool that can support and enhance their work. Their experience suggests that AI tools can serve as effective aids during preparation, helping interpreters work more efficiently throughout the interpreting process.

6. Conclusion

Preparation is a crucial part of the interpreting process, and various tools are now available to facilitate interpreters' work. AI tools are continually evolving and present new opportunities for enhancing preparation practices.

The aim of this paper was to investigate the attitudes of philology students at a selected university towards AI tools, both in general and specifically in the context of interpreting. The study focused on their experience and perceptions regarding the use of these tools in preparation for interpreting courses.

AI tools have become integral to interpreting practice, making it essential for students to learn how to use them effectively. Interpreter training should reflect current technological trends (Wang and Li 2022; Sun and Han 2023; Yang, Chen, and Zou 2025). These tools should be incorporated not only in preparatory phases but also as part of interpreting practice. Teachers or invited professional interpreters should introduce students to tools commonly used in the field, ensuring they understand and can use them. Without sufficient training, students may find themselves at a disadvantage in the job market, particularly when competing with peers proficient in AI technologies.

Students' experience in this study confirmed that AI-enhanced preparation was both faster and more effective. There are multiple ways to integrate AI into interpreter training (Sun and Han 2023), and doing so can help students develop essential technological competencies (Wang and Li 2022), which have become vital complements to other interpreting skills.

We believe interpreting teachers should guide students in the appropriate and effective use of AI tools, both during preparation and actual interpreting. This includes not only terminological preparation (e.g., glossary creation) but also broader contextual familiarisation. Working with AI can enhance students' technological competence, and its targeted integration into traditional teaching practices can foster an innovative learning environment that empowers students to use all available resources to improve their performance.

Despite the limitations of this research, we hope it inspires further, more extensive investigations with practical implications for interpreter training. Future research should consider larger, more balanced participant samples, with an emphasis on students pursuing interpreting careers, and should extend over a longer time frame to yield more comprehensive insights.

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