

ASSESSING THE LIMITS OF AI-BASED TRANSLATION: A COSERIAN PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT. *Assessing the Limits of AI-Based Translation: A Coserian Perspective.* The purpose of this paper is to analyse the way in which AI-based conversational assistants such as ChatGPT, designed to be suitable for use in the field of translation, deal with a translation problem described and analyzed by Eugenio Coseriu in his study *Alcances y límites de la traducción* (1997). Based on the theoretical framework established by Eugenio Coseriu, who defines translation as: “...a particular type of speech: it is speech with a given content, through another language” (Coseriu 1997, 168), the main objective of our research is to review the “limits” of translation from Eugenio Coseriu’s perspective in order to analyse the degree to which generative artificial intelligence deals with translation difficulties, compared to human translators. To this end, we aim to investigate which translation strategies are used for the linguistic transfer of comics by generative AI. We are particularly interested in observing whether the limits of translation stated by Coseriu correlate with the limits of AI-based translation.

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REZUMAT. *Evaluarea limitelor traducerii bazate pe IA. O perspectivă coșeriană.* Scopul prezentului articol este acela de a analiza modul în care asistenții conversaționali bazați pe IA generativă precum ChatGPT gestionează aspectele problematice ale traducerii descrise și analizate de către Eugenio Coseriu în studiul său *Alcances y límites de la traducción* (1997). Având ca punct de plecare cadrul teoretic stabilit de către Eugeniu Coșeriu, care definește traducerea ca: «...un tipo particular de hablar: es hablar con un contenido dado de antemano, por medio de otra lengua» (Coseriu 1997, 168), principalul obiectiv al cercetării noastre este acela de a trece în revistă „limitele” traducerii din perspectiva coșeriană pentru a pune în evidență modul în care IA generativă rezolvă problemele de traducere față de traducătorul uman. Pentru aceasta, dorim să punem în evidență strategiile de traducere utilizare în traducerea benzilor desenate de către IA generativă. Ne vom concentra mai ales asupra observării limitelor traducerii cu care se confruntă IA generativă.

Cuvinte-cheie: *Eugeniu Coșeriu, limitele traducerii, traducerea bazată pe IA, IA generativă, ChatGPT, benzi desenate*

1. Introduction

Generalised use of LLM and GenAI has a major impact in many fields. Within these, one of the areas most affected by the impact of rapid technological development is translation and its various related fields. Highly appreciated by both the general public and specialists for their ability to summarize, generate, and translate texts, LLMs such as Gemini, ChatGPT, and Pilot are often used for their ability to generate text into different languages. Therefore, various research perspectives have focused on studying GenAI-based translation such as: Deilen *et al.* (2023), Gao *et al.* (2023); Jiao *et al.* (2023), Sahari *et al.* (2023). These authors scrutinise ChatGPT's translation capabilities in comparison with other MT tools available online, such as Google Translate, DeepL, and Tencent. In the same line of research, Hendy *et al.* (2023) quantitatively and qualitatively analyse the translation performed by GPT and Neural Machine Translation (NMT) tools in different fields, in/from 18 language pairs, concluding that: “...GPT systems can produce highly fluent and competitive translation outputs...”.

A different line of research, which we will focus on in this article, compares human translation with GenAI-based translation. Thus, studies such as Fu & Liu (2024), Lee (2024), Altakhaineh *et al.* (2025), and Tengler &

Brandhofer (2025) focus on the ability of LLM to generate human-like texts and translations. The authors distinguish between different aspects of human translation and GenAI-based translation in order to highlight the benefits and limitations of using LLM in the field of translation.

There are also studies that claim that LLMs can generate texts, summaries, responses, conversations, and translations that are virtually human-like. Thus, in the conclusions of their study, Rahman & Watanobe (2023, 18) state that "ChatGPT is a revolutionary LLM that can maintain human-like conversations and generate human-like texts for any natural language query that is nearly indistinguishable." Similarly, He *et al.* (2024), starting from the idea that LLMs based on deep learning can imitate human translators, propose that instead of using the specific MT working methodology, GPT models should follow the working method of human translators. With the aim of improving the quality of GenAI-based translation.

The studies comparing human translation with GenAI-based translation are all within the field of NLP, and even though research on translation (Baker 2018, Hatim and Munday 2004) is mentioned in some of them (He *et al.* 2024), the focus of the investigation is technological rather than linguistic. In this paper, we want to test the extent to which a GenAI-based platform such as ChatGPT 5.0 translates in a human-like manner. To this end, we consider Eugenio Coseriu's study *Alcances y límites de la traducción* (1997) to be a suitable theoretical framework for evaluating human translation. Based on the parallel drawn between human translation and GenAI translation, we believe that Eugenio Coseriu provides a suitable framework for the optimal evaluation of conversational assistants such as ChatGPT. One argument in this regard is the author's perspective on translation: «...un tipo particular de hablar: es hablar con un contenido dado de antemano, por medio de otra lengua» (a specific form of speech: it is speaking with a predetermined content, by means of another language – our translation) (Coseriu 1997, 168).

The main objective of this research is to test GenAI-based translation using the translation limitations mentioned in Coserian studies. This test will allow us to observe the extent to which Gen AI translation can be compared to human translation. Considering that comics are the most suitable texts for evaluating translation limits, we will test ChatGPT 5.0 using a corpus consisting of the French Asterix albums and their translation into Romanian. Having identified situations in which translation becomes problematic and the translator is pushed to their limits, we want to observe the behavior of ChatGPT 5.0 in similar situations. We believe that this evaluation can highlight situations that are problematic for LLM.

This article is intended for professional translators, researchers, teachers, and students interested in the Coserian perspective on translation and GenAI translation.

2. Theoretical framework

2.1. *Eugenio Coseriu and the limits of translation*

In his study *Alcances y límites de la traducción* (1997), the author defines translation as: “... un tipo particular de hablar: es hablar con un contenido dado de antemano, por medio de otra lengua.” (Coseriu 1997, 168), and underlines several limits of translation, concerning problematic situations that human translators face. We believe that this study provides the theoretical framework necessary to confirm/refute the claim that GPT-type systems such as ChatGPT can generate human-like translations.

To demonstrate this, we will observe how ChatGPT 5.0 performs in translation, evaluating aspects of translation described in Coseriu (1997), which we organize according to two different levels of difficulty. Thus, for the simplest level, we will refer to what Coseriu calls transposition and version. Transposition is a technique that establishes interidiomatic equivalences for the content of a text, while version creates strictly textual, non-interidiomatic correspondences (Coseriu 1997, 173).

For a more complex level of ChatGPT evaluation, we will use “*non-canonical uses of languages*” (Coseriu 1997, 180), which refers to six cases where the use of linguistic signs in communication becomes problematic in translation and, therefore, also problematic for GenAI-based translation. These are as follows:

- a). the use of linguistic signs with reduced semantics (advertising discourse);
- b). the metalinguistic use of linguistic signs.
- c). the use of linguistic signs with a direct iconic function (imitation, evocation);
- d). the use of linguistic signs with an iconic and metalinguistic function, e.g., imitation of foreign languages. (San Antonio, Asterix – proper names and imitative phraseology);
- e). the non-canonical use of linguistic signs (wordplay);
- f). the use of linguistic signs with diatopic, diastratic, or diaphasic features. (Coseriu 1997, 181)

The author debates the limits of translation and proposes solutions for human translators to overcome them. Starting from the working hypothesis

that conversational assistants such as ChatGPT treat translation as a type of text that must be generated in another language, using a conversational model based on LLM, a parallel can be drawn with Coseriu's definition of translation.

2.2. Asterix in translation research

Asterix albums are not only enjoyable reading for the general public, but their textual complexity has also been the focus of attention for researchers. As a result, these albums have been studied from different theoretical perspectives, and a substantial number of studies addressing the issue of their translation have been published, such as: d'Oria & Conenna (1979), Touillier-Feyrabend (1998), Richet (2004), Manolache (2007), Richet (2009), Varga (2010), Cros (2011), Grammenidis (2011), Lipani-Vaissade (2011), Richet (2011), Sinagra (2011), Keromnes (2013), Silva (2017), Rendón & Dueñas (2019), Varga (2022), Cazalbou (2023), and Mateiu (2024).

Thus, Asterix albums are studied from a semiotic perspective in terms of their translation into Italian and Spanish (d'Oria & Conenna 1979, 19-38; (Silva 2017, 71-81), also raising the issue of their translatability (Touillier-Feyrabend 1998, 375-377). Issues surrounding the difficulties of translating the songs featured in Asterix comics are addressed in Richet (2004, 151-179) and Varga (2022, 247-262), studies that examine their humorous mechanisms and the culturemes they contain.

There is a whole volume dedicated to the Asterix series (Delesse & Richet 2009) that explores the English translation of the Asterix albums in detail. More diverse translation studies on these albums can be found in the monograph (Richet 2011). These range from the analysis of Latin quotations (Gallego 2011, 111-129) to national stereotypes (Meyer 2011, 169-180), the study of female characters in Asterix (Lipani-Vaissade 2011, 131-148), the translation of culturemes into Greek (Grammenidis 2011, 219-233), and the analysis of the translation of visual and graphic codes used in the Asterix volumes (Sinagra 2011, 181-191).

More recently, translation studies have been published that analyze idiomatic expressions in Asterix (Keromnes 2013, 147-163) and strategies for rendering character names in Mexican Spanish (Carrillo Rendón & Mendoza Dueñas 2019).

Romanian research also includes studies that prove interest in studying the Romanian translation of Asterix comic books. Among these, we mention the interest in translating humor in the volume *Le combat de chefs/Bătălia dintre șefi* (Manolache 2007, 265-276), studies dealing with the limits of translation from a Coserian perspective (Varga 2010, 2022), and a study on the translation of proper names in the Asterix albums (Mateiu 2024, 275-304).

3. Methodology and Corpus

In order to assess ChatGPT 5.0's translation capabilities, a translation quality analysis protocol was employed, comprising two levels of difficulty. It should be noted that this analysis assesses the capabilities of the platform without prior training, using only the LLM model, which already entails access to vast volumes of linguistic data.

The first step, which was considered the basic level of difficulty for a translation, involved evaluating the transposition and version (Coseriu 1997, 180). Thus, ChatGPT 5.0 was asked to translate a series of texts ranging from 1 to 5 words in length, representing the titles of the Asterix comic books. The results were analysed in terms of spelling, punctuation, morphology, syntax, equivalence, adaptation, accuracy, and fidelity.

A more complex stage of analysis consists of evaluating the limits of translation according to Coseriu's theoretical framework using ChatCPT 5.0. (see 2.1). For this purpose, a corpus was selected that could provide the desired levels of difficulty, namely the Asterix comic books. Coseriu (1997) mentions these albums as an example in his article, without going into detail.

The results of translation were analysed in terms of spelling, punctuation, morphology, syntax, equivalence, adaptation, accuracy, and fidelity. On a punctual basis, in order to explain the errors encountered, a comparison was made with the Romanian translations of the Asterix albums, considered in our analysis as samples of human translation, carried out by professionals and representing the benchmark for what LLM aims to achieve.

Translation analysis was performed using human analysis, and translation was performed both quantitatively and qualitatively. We believe that this protocol will allow us to draw relevant conclusions about how GenAI copes with the limitations of translation.

4. Translation analysis

4.1. Version and transposition

To analyse the most basic level of translation performed by ChatGPT, transposition and versioning were taken into account (see 2.1). Thus, in order to test ChatGPT's performance in simple translations at the content level (transposition) and at the textual level (version), the titles of all the Asterix albums (1961-2025) were selected, as they do not raise any translation issues for human translators. ChatGPT 5.0 was asked to translate the titles of the 41 albums and identify the type of text.

In terms of interlingual transfer, the translation generated by ChatGPT 5.0 presents multiple issues, only 10 of the 41 translated titles being considered correct, thus only 24.39% of the total. The types of errors identified consist of *spelling errors* and *translation errors*.

Source Text	ChatGPT Translation	Corrections
Astérix gladiateur - 1964	Asterix gladiatorul	Gladiator
Le Tour de Gaule d'Astérix - 1965	Călătoria lui Asterix prin Gaulă	Galia
Astérix aux Jeux olympiques - 1968	Asterix la jocurile olimpice	Jocurile olimpice
Le Combat des chefs - 1966	Lupta șefilor	Bătălia
Astérix légionnaire - 1967	Asterix legionarul	Legionar
Astérix et le chaudron - 1969	Asterix și butoiul	Ceaunul
La Zizanie - 1970	Cearța	
Les Lauriers de César - 1972	Laurelurile lui Cezar	Laurii
Le Devin - 1972	Vrajitorul	Ghicitorul
Astérix chez les Belges - 1979	Asterix în Belgia	la belgi
Astérix chez Rahâzade - 1987	Asterix la Rahâzade	Șeherezada
Astérix et Latraviata - 2001	Asterix și Latraviata	Traviata
Le ciel lui tombe sur la tête - 2005	Cerul îi cade pe cap	le cade/vine în cap
Astérix chez les Pictes - 2013	Asterix la picti	picti
Astérix et le Griffon - 2021	Asterix și griffonul	grifonul

With regard to the spelling errors detected in the translation of the titles of the Asterix albums, we note ChatGPT 5.0's incapacity to adapt the names of the main characters to Romanian spelling. Even though the program was asked three times to generate a translation, the spelling of the proper names remained consistently French: *Astérix* (24) and *Obélix* (2). Their Romanian names are *Asterix* and *Obelix*.

Other spelling mistakes in Romanian can be found in the translation of the following titles: *Astérix le Gaulois* (*Astérix, galiul*), *Astérix et la rentrée gauloise* (*Astérix și reîntoarcerea la școala galiilor*), *Le Papyrus de César* (*Papirosul lui Cezar*), and *Astérix et la Transitalique* (*Astérix și transitalica*). The errors consist of misspelled words: *galiul* instead of *galul*, *galiilor* instead of *galilor*, *papirosul* instead of *papyrusul*, *transitalica* instead of *Transitalica*, and *școala* instead of *școală*.

As for translation issues, it can be noticed that ChatGPT 5.0 generates a literal translation in the case of the titles: *Le Tour de Gaule d'Astérix* (*Turul Galiei al lui Astérix*), *Astérix chez les Bretons* (*Astérix la bretoni*), *Astérix chez les Helvètes* (*Astérix la helveți*), *Le Ciel lui tombe sur la tête* (*Cerul îi cade în cap*), *Astérix chez les Pictes* (*Astérix la picti*). These translations are rather *gauche* in terms of both expression and content. Thus, in the case of the first title, *Turul Galiei al lui Astérix*, a translation could be *Asterix și / la Turul Galiei* in order to designate participation in a sporting event. With regard to the use of the

preposition 'la' in the titles mentioned above, we consider that it does not fully convey the semantic content of the source text. Thus, to convey the idea that the character travels through different countries, goes on a series of adventures, and comes into contact with local cultures, we would suggest translating the title as *Asterix și bretonii / helveții / picții*, a structure already used in the titles of these comic books, or *Asterix printre bretoni / helveți / picți*.

Literal translation is also used in the case of the title *Le Ciel lui tombe sur la tête (Cerul îi cade în cap)*. This title, which is rather unclear to Romanian readers, could be translated using adaptation as a strategy and referring to the content of the album. A possible translation in this sense would be *Asterix și extratereștrii*, which is much more explicit for the readers and, at the same time, reminiscent of the title of a film well known to the Romanian public, *Jandarmul și extratereștrii* (FR 1979).

It can be noticed in the translation of the Asterix album titles that ChatGPT 5.0 has difficulty choosing the appropriate equivalent. This is the case for the following titles: *La Serpe d'or (Secera de aur)*, *Le Combat des chefs (Lupta căpeteniilor)*, *Astérix et le chaudron (Astérix și cazanul)*, *Obélix et Compagnie (Obélix și Compania)*, *Astérix chez les Belges (Astérix la belgieni)*, and *Le Grand Fossé (Marea prăpastie)*. For the first two titles, it would be expected that, based on LLM and the online sources it can consult, ChatGPT 5.0 would identify the official Romanian translation of the titles, something the application fails to do. The titles of these albums in Romanian are: *Cosorul de aur*, not *secera*, and *Bătălia dintre șefi*, not *Lupta căpeteniilor*. We consider the title *Astérix et le chaudron (Astérix și cazanul)* to be a mistranslation because, in the comic books, *le chaudron* refers to a graphically represented object which, in Romanian, is equivalent to the noun *ceaun*, not *cazan*. The noun *cazan* can be associated with the world of technology, while *ceaun* (DEX 2016) is a noun associated, in Romanian culture, with the domestic world of the kitchen, which is much more appropriate for the context of the albums.

The translation of the title *Obélix et Compagnie (Obélix și Compania)* is ambiguous and does not clearly convey the meaning of the source text (ST). According to DEX (2016), *companie* can have the following meanings in Romanian: "military subunit, group of people who spend time together, association of individuals and legal entities". The last meaning is the one intended by the authors of the album, so a correct translation would be: *Firma lui Obelix, Obelix și firma*, or *Obelix S.R.L.*

In *Asterix chez les Belges (Astérix la belgieni)*, the translation mistake consists of using the modern name of the inhabitants, *Belgians*, for the noun *Belgae*. According to the narrative topos, the story is set in Antiquity, so the translation should use the ancient name of the inhabitants, namely the *Belgae*.

According to DEX 2016, the Belgae are "a union of Celtic tribes populating, in ancient times, the territory between the Seine and the Rhine, subjugated by the Romans in the 1st century BC."

In the last spot on the list of mistranslated titles is *Le Grand Fossé* (*Marea prăpastie*), which is a redundant translation since *prăpastie* is, by definition, vast. Moreover, ChatGPT 5.0 does not contextualize the translation, even though, via LLM, it has access to information from the source language and other language translations of this title. Thus, the choice of the equivalent *prăpastie* is incorrect because the concept designated by the noun *fossé* is represented graphically in the album, and for the Romanian reader, the element designated graphically is *șanț*. Therefore, given that the noun *șanț* (DEX 2016) can also refer to a type of fortification, a possible translation of the title would be *Marele Șanț*, a humorous translation with a double meaning in Romanian, as it does in French. Other possible translation strategies include adaptation, in which case the title could be translated as *Marea Dezbinare*, a title that is correctly adapted to the context of the album.

At the simplest level of translation, therefore, ChatGPT 5.0 renders translations with spelling and translation errors. We believe that an accuracy rate of 24.39% is insufficient to claim that GenAI translates as well as humans.

4.2. Non-canonical use of linguistic signs

Among the linguistic signs that can be recognized in the Asterix albums and whose translation has been studied previously (Varga 2010, 2022), mainly those used with icastic (imitative) function have been identified. Hence, it has been noticed that the humour in these comics is based on a game of imitation carried out on several levels: *lexical, phraseological and imitative syntax, diatopic elements, wordplays, imitative onomastics, and imitative songs*. All these levels were translated with ChatGPT 5.0 and constitute the most difficult level in translation, namely, in Coserian terms, the limits of translation.

4.2.1. Imitative syntax

Concerning the testing of ChatGPT 5.0 in translating fragments that imitate characteristics of a language such as English in French, it can be noticed that, even if the application is instructed to keep the inversion in translation, it produces incorrect translations. The examples were taken from the album *Asterix chez les Bretons*:

- (1) – Quelle force! Elle vous vient de la magique potion?
– Justement cousin Astérix, il nous faut de la magique potion pour combattre les romaines armées. (Jolitorax p 9)

- RO:** – Ce forță. Vă vine ea din *magica poțiune*?
– Tocmai, verișorule Astérix, nouă ne trebuie *magica poțiune* ca să luptăm cu *romane armate*.
- (2) – Allons-y dans la romaine galère ! (Obélix p. 12)
RO: – Hai! Să urcăm în *romană galera*!
- (3) Votre magique potion est formidable ! Voyez ce que je fais de ce romain légionnaire ! (Jolitorax p 13)
RO: – *Magica voastră poțiune* e formidabilă! Vedeți ce fac eu din acest *roman legionar*! (*Jolitorax*)
- (4) – [...] où vous prendrez votre premier breton repas:.. – Enfin ! Je commençais à avoir un appétit gros. (*Jolitorax* 15)
RO: – [...] unde veți lua întâia voastră *bretonă masă*.
– În sfârșit! Începeam să am o *poftă mare*.
- (5) – Une romaine patrouille ! – Allez ! On fonce à travers la romaine patrouille ! – Je dis ! Une autre romaine patrouille ! (Jolitorax et Obélix p. 17)
RO: – O *romană patrulă*!
– Hai! Dăm năvală prin *romană patrula*!
– *Eu zic!* Încă o *romană patrulă*!

These examples show that ChatGPT 5.0 translates while preserving the inversion of the source text in the target text. However, in two situations, (3) and (4), the inversion fails to create humor because in Romanian, "*Magica voastră poțiune...*" and "*...să am o poftă mare*" sound natural. In other examples such as: *romane armate* (1), *romană galera* (2), and *romană patrula* (5), the application fails to correctly inflect the inverted words. Also, in example (3), translation faults are noticed: "*Vedeți ce fac eu din acest roman legionar!*" (See what I do with this Legionary novel!). Thus, the translation is literal ("Vedeți") and hypercorrect, as the presence of the personal pronoun "eu" (I) is unusual in a familiar register in this context. Furthermore, the use of the preposition "from" changes the meaning of the sentence; here it would be correct to use the preposition "with." Therefore, the correct translation of example (3) is: "Uite ce fac cu acest roman legionar!"

4.2.2. Imitative lexis and phraseology

Throughout Asterix's albums, imitative vocabulary and phrasing are used in order to suggest that the characters speak other languages. Thus, the barbarian characters in the album *La serpe d'or* are distinguished by a specifically

Germanic pronunciation of words: “*Fous trouvez za gorrekt fous?*” (*Vous trouvez ça correct vous?*) or “*Apzolutent bas*” (*Absolument pas*), while the Breton and Belgae characters use calqued phraseology: “*Je dis: ceci est choquant, n’est-il pas?*” (“*I say, this is shocking, isn’t it?*”), “*Dis*”, “*une fois*”, “*Mangez ces herbes s il te plaît*”, and “*Dites ... à ton légionnaire...*”.

Lexical diatopic variations can be observed in the album *Le bouclier arverne* (1968), which reproduces a regional pronunciation in which the structure “c+vowel” is pronounced “ch” in French such as: “*Cha ch’est chûr cha che perd. (Ça c’est sur ça se perd.)*” or “*Dans quelques chiècles, il n’y aura plus perchonne en pays Arverne pour prononcher les eches à notre fachon, hélache!*” (Dans quelques siècles, il n’y aura plus personne en pays Arverne pour prononcer les es à notre façon, hélas!). ChatGPT 5.0 correctly identifies the Arvern dialect, then proposes the following translation into Romanian: „*Șa-i șigur, șa șe piarde.*” and „*Peste câteva șecole, n-o șă mai fie nime în țara Arvernelor șă pronunșe ș-urile ca noi, vai, șilăș!*”. Regrettably, translation completely fails to convey the meaning in Romanian or the humor of the source text.

These examples pose difficulties for human translators (Varga 2022) and are important benchmarks in evaluating the translation capabilities of ChatGPT 5.0. Thus, the translations generated are of varying quality. For phonetically altered phrases with a Germanic pronunciation, the phonetic alteration is reproduced exactly in Romanian: *Foi gășiți ța corect foi?* (*Fous trouvez za gorrekt fous? / Voi gășiți asta corect voi?*), *Apzolut nimic* (*Apzolutent bas / Absolut deloc*). This phonetic distortion makes the text unintelligible, does not produce the expected humorous effect, and the word *nimic* does not accurately translate the source text. A broken speech or a regional accent in Romanian would have been an appropriate translation solution that would have preserved both the formal aspect and the humor of the text. An appropriate solution for a translation that preserves both the formal aspect and the humor of the source text would have been to use broken speech or a regional pronunciation regarded as being funny by Romanian speakers.

In terms of phraseology, it can be noticed that the phrase calqued from English: *Eu zic: aceasta e șocantă, nu-i așa ea?* (*Je dis: ceci est choquant, n’est-il pas? / I say, this is shocking, isn’t it?*) is translated both literally and inaccurately. The error consists of the change of gender, when the phrase is impersonal, and in the use of the pronominal adjective *aceasta* instead of the neutral *asta*. Other feminine forms such as the adjective “*șocantă*” and the personal pronoun *ea* further emphasize the error. Furthermore, the translation of *n’est-il pas?* is erroneous in Romanian: *nu-i așa ea?* instead of *nu-i așa?*.

Errors also exist in the translation of specific linguistic features of the Belgae characters: “*dis*” and “*une fois*” are translated literally without being

contextualized, and therefore both the meaning and the humor they produce in the source text are lost. The translation into Romanian as "Eu zic" and "o dată" is flat and meaningless in the text.

At the phraseological level, Belgae speech is distinguished by the use of verbs in the second person singular and plural in the same sentence or by the lack of agreement between the indirect object and the predicate in sentences such as: Eat these herbs, please (*Mangez ces herbes s'il te plaît / Mănâncă aceste ierburi, te rog*) or (*Dites ... à ton légionnaire... / Spuneți ... la legionarul tău...*). While the first example is translated correctly without preserving the humor of the source text, the second example is a more successful translation, with the humor conveyed through the use of the polite form of the verb "say," the familiar use of the possessive adjective "your," and the use of the preposition "to."

In this aspect of the translation evaluation, it can be noticed that, of all the lexical and phraseological elements analyzed, ChatGPT 5.0 managed to translate correctly only one.

4.2.3. Puns and wordplay

Also at the phraseological level, the following examples show the use of double-meaning phrases as a humorous approach:

- (6) Ta vie ne tient qu'à un fil, Téléféric ! (Astérix et les Goths)
- (7) Je vais être général ! Le général Électric ! (Astérix et les Goths)
- (8) Il ne faut pas parler sèchement à un Numide! (Le Domaine des Dieux)
- (9) -Je suis, mon cher ami, très heureux de te voir.
-C'est un alexandrin. (Astérix et Cléopâtre)

ChatGPT 5.0 translates wordplay quite easily in examples (6) and (7). Although example (7) is a little forced, both examples are translated correctly, preserving the fidelity and humor of the source text. Indeed, the fact that Romanian is a Romance language greatly facilitated the process in the case of these expressions, as the message was relatively easy to render: *Viața ta atârână de un fir, Teleferic!* and *O să ajung general! General Electric!* Example (8) proved more difficult to translate, requiring a series of queries and even a suggestion from the user for the first part of the translation, resulting in an inappropriate response from ChatGPT 5.0. After persistent efforts on the part of the human user, the following version was achieved: *Nu vorbi sec cu un Numid, că dă în clocot.*

Example (9) is also a challenge for ChatGPT 5.0. It correctly identifies the double meaning of the word "alexandrin", meaning both a resident of Alexandria and a 12-syllable verse. However, the first translation was erroneous as it did not translate using the required number of syllables.

In order to achieve an alexandrine in Romanian, numerous prompts were required, many of which were semantically and grammatically incorrect translations. The final form considered correct is: *Sunt foarte fericit, prietene, să te văd*. Even though this translation is natural, it lacks the poetic thrill conveyed by poetry.

Also in this case, it can be noticed that ChatGPT 5.0 copes only with the simplest translation situations, translating correctly and without human intervention only 2 of the 4 examples.

4.2.4. Imitative onomastics

The most noticeable non-canonical linguistic features used in the Asterix albums are those with an icastic and metalinguistic function, namely the names of the characters. Imitating the names of various ancient peoples and having a humorous semantic content, they become a real problem for the professional translator who has to adapt them to the target culture. When faced with the task of translating, ChatGPT faces major issues when it has to translate the characters' names into Romanian while also preserving the form of the name. Thus, in a previous study (Varga 2022), four categories were identified that illustrate how names were transposed into the target culture: a) names are retained without modification, b) word agglutination, c) adaptation, d) recreation in the target culture. This illustrates how adaptable a professional translator must be in translating and how difficult language transfer can be.

This was required of ChatGPT 5.0, using a set of 50 names belonging to characters of so-called Gallic, Roman, Gothic, Belgic, and Cushitic origin. However, ChatGPT 5.0 was unable to achieve a satisfactory transfer in terms of quality, as it simply translated each name without applying any linguistic strategy. For instance, despite multiple attempts, the application provided unsatisfactory equivalents for the Roman names:

- (10) Caligula Minus → Caligulus Minimus
- (11) Tullius Octopus → Tullius Octopus
- (12) Plexus → Plexus
- (13) Radius → Radius
- (14) Motus → Motulus
- (15) Marcus Sacapus → Marcus Saccapus
- (16) Caius Marchéopus → Caius Mercatus
- (17) Tikedbus → Tucidabus
- (18) Milexcus → Milexus
- (19) Petilarus → Petilarus

Some of the names, (11), (12), and (13), keep their original form and are not translated, but inexplicably there are some examples (10), (14) where ChatGPT 5.0 translates even though the same strategy could be applied. In the case of examples (15)-(19), in which names are formed by agglutination and have semantic content, ChatGPT 5.0 does not seem able to provide a valid linguistic transfer of them. Thus, in the Romanian translation of ChatGPT 5.0, the semantic content of the names Marcus Sacapus (Marcus Saccapus), Tikedbus (Ticidabus), and Milexcus (Milexus) is completely lost.

A similar translation challenge arises when adapting linguistic signs with iconic and metalinguistic functions to another language, as seen in the translation of proper names specific to other peoples, such as the *Goths: Théoric (Teoretic), Pasdefric (Fărăfric), Coudetric (Bățutric), and Casseurdebric (Spartdebric)*. Only the first example, Teoretic, can be considered a correct translation solution. The other names are semi-translated, as ChatGPT 5.0 only translates the first lexical element, with the following ones preserving their original form. Thus, the names lose their semantic content in the target language, and therefore also their humorous meaning.

The names of the *Belgae* and the *Kushites* are minimally adapted. In the case of the name *Nonantesix*, the translation provided by ChatGPT 5.0 “*Nouăzecișisix*” presents a solution in which half of the name is translated, while the second part remains as in the original, which makes the name opaque and results in the loss of its humorous content. For the Kushite names *Toutuneafer* and *Nifphéniafer*, the adaptation of the name is done phonetically and orthographically as *Totunafer* and *Nificinafer*, with the names losing their semantic content of the expressions ‘*toute une affaire*’ and ‘*ni fait ni à faire*’ respectively.

As far as can be noticed, ChatGPT 5.0 cannot correctly handle and make appropriate translation decisions in the case of translating linguistic signs used with an icastic and metalinguistic function.

4.2.5. *Imitative songs*

In addition to the narrative, intertextuality and visual dimension specific to comic books, Asterix albums also feature a musical dimension represented by songs occasionally sung by the characters. Most of these are used with an icastic function, being songs from French cultural heritage adapted to the narrative topos. The translation of these songs stands out as a further limit of translation (Varga 2022) and, therefore, a benchmark in the assessment of the translation performed by ChatGPT 5.0.

This assessment is limited to six songs, the first attempts already showing that ChatGPT 5.0 generates a very high level of hallucinations. A first problem consists of the fact that, even if there is only one verse of a song to translate, ChatGPT 5.0 invents at least one additional verse:

- (20) *Menhir montant, mais oui Madame... (Menhir urcând, dar vai, madam, / E greu ca-un bou, dar eu îl car!)*
 (21) *Nuits latines, nuits calines, nuits d'... (Nopti latine, nopti divine, / Și barbarii sunt vecine!)*

In order to avoid hallucinations, ChatGPT 5.0 must be asked to remain faithful to the translated text. Even so, the linguistic transfer is not performed correctly, with problems arising in spelling (25), morphology (23), and lexical equivalence (22), (26), (27), which affects the quality of the text. Among the spelling mistakes, we note that proper names were left with their original spelling in French (24), (26) *Lutèce* instead of *Luteția* (DEX 2016). Also, in one case (25), an accent that does not exist in Romanian was added to a Romanian word, namely *plăcuuît*.

A morphological error can be noticed in example (23), where “*Dulce Galia...*” should appear in vocative form, not nominative/accusative form. Therefore, the correct variant should be *Dulce Galie*.

The issues noticed in lexical equivalence refer to the translation of *barbichette* as *bărbișoară* (22), this noun referring in Romanian to a plant, *Alyssum minimum* (DEX2016). In the case of the lyric “*Revoir Lutèce...*” translated as “*Să văd Lutèce...*” the translation is incorrect because “*revoir*” in French does not have the same referent as “*a vedea*” in Romanian, the correct equivalent being “*a revedea*”. In example (27), the word *Madame* is not translated into Romanian, and not even the French loanword *madam* (DEX 2016) is used. In fact, the entire lyric is calqued, and the cultural reference and humor of the text are lost.

- (22) Je te tiens par la barbichette. (Te țin bine de bărbișoară)
 (23) Douce Gaule... (Dulce Galia...)
 (24) Lutèèèèèce c'est une bloooooonde (Lutèèèèèce e-o blondăăă fruumoasă)
 (25) Boire une petite cervoise c'est agréaaaaaable (Să bei o bere mică e plăcuuît)
 (26) Revoir Lutèce... (Să văd Lutèce...)
 (27) Menhir montant, mais oui Madame... (Menhir urcaat, dar da, Madame...)

Based on these observations, it can be argued that ChatGPT 5.0 and GenAI-based applications do not have the required expressive capacity to translate literary texts into prose and verse.

5. Conclusions

Based on this research, we conclude that as long as GenAI-based translation compares with human translation, the Cosserian theoretical framework related to

the limits of translation can be applied in assessing the ‘human-like’ abilities of ChatGPT-type applications to translate.

Even though the attitude towards GenAI is mostly positive, currently, in research, LLM-based conversational assistants cannot yet generate translations that approach human translation. Generated translations display issues both at the basic level of translation and at a complex level, related to how to manage the limitations of translation.

As a result of translation analysis, it can be strongly stated that applications such as ChatGPT 5.0 generate mistranslations, which can be noticed at all levels of language: spelling, vocabulary, morphology, syntax, and even at the textual level. In the case of Romanian, the analysis shows that ChatGPT 5.0 generates in particular a large number of spelling and morphological errors. Many common nouns are spelled incorrectly, and the use of prepositions in translation is highly problematic. In terms of semantic equivalence in the linguistic transfer from French to Romanian, numerous inaccuracies and changes in meaning can be noticed, making translation qualitatively poor.

The most difficult translation issues raised in the present analysis consist of the limits of translation, cases in which the human translator must make decisions regarding how to translate. ChatGPT 5.0 is not capable of handling such situations and, most notably, cannot translate humorous texts. Recreating humor, intertextuality, and transferring cultural elements into a target culture are virtually insurmountable challenges for GenAI-based translation.

All of these factors lead us to conclude that, despite claims to the contrary, LLM-based conversational assistants are not yet able to translate as effectively as human translators, particularly in the case of low-resource languages like Romanian.

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