

Achieving Professional Translation in The Military Field Through Fine-tuning LLM

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Abstract—Despite the remarkable advancements in large language models (LLMs) that have significantly addressed natural language translation challenges in general-purpose domains, their application to specialized machine translation (MT) remains constrained by substantial technical barriers, particularly in high-stakes sectors demanding exceptional translational accuracy and contextual fidelity, such as military intelligence and biomedical sciences. In the military domain, rule-based machine translation (RBMT) demonstrates efficacy in achieving precise translation of specialized terminology at granular levels. However, sentence- and paragraph-level translations necessitate contextual comprehension for accurate semantic representation, rendering RBMT approaches inadequate. To address these limitations, we constructed a military translation dataset (Military-MT) incorporating translation samples across three granularity levels: terminology, sentence, and paragraph. Building upon this dataset, we propose an instruction-oriented efficient fine-tuning methodology. Evaluations conducted across three foundational model baselines reveal that our approach significantly enhances zero-shot machine translation (MT) capabilities of base models in military-specific translation tasks.

Keywords—Machine Translation, Large Language Model, Fine-tuning, Natural Language Process

I. INTRODUCTION

Following the emergence of generative artificial intelligence exemplified by ChatGPT[1], the longstanding generalization challenges in machine translation have been effectively addressed. Prior to the advent of generative AI technologies, conventional machine translation systems predominantly relied on rule-based methodologies. For instance, first-order hidden Markov models were employed to resolve word alignment challenges in statistical machine translation[2], while systematic grammatical mappings between source and target languages demonstrated potential for enhancing translational accuracy within constrained linguistic contexts[3]. Rule-based machine translation(RBMT) remains a foundational paradigm in translation technology, offering precision and interpretability in structured settings. However, its reliance on manual rule engineering and poor scalability to real-world linguistic diversity have largely confined it to niche applications. The advent of generative AI and large language models has further shifted the field toward data-driven approaches, though RBMT principles continue to inform hybrid architectures in targeted use cases.

This study presents a systematic approach to enhancing military-domain translation capabilities in large language models (LLMs) through the development of a specialized parallel corpus (Military-MT) and a parameter-efficient fine-

tuning (PEFT) framework based on Low-Rank Adaptation (LoRA). Key achievements include:

- **Domain-Specific Dataset Construction** The Military-MT dataset, comprising 38,153 granular translation pairs (term-, sentence-, and paragraph-level), addresses critical gaps in existing military translation resources.
- **Methodological Innovation** The integration of LoRA with optimized instruction templates (ID=E) achieves state-of-the-art performance in zero-shot military translation tasks, reducing trainable parameters by 94% while improving COMET scores by 22.3 points on average.
- **Architectural Insights** Experimental validation across five LLMs reveals the superiority of Llama3.1-8B in multilingual transferability, highlighting the importance of pre-training diversity for domain adaptation.

II. RELATED WORK

In recent years, machine translation technology has undergone a paradigm shift from rule-based approaches to data-driven methodologies, with the emergence of large language models (LLMs) further propelling the intelligent evolution of translation systems. Current mainstream techniques can be systematically categorized into two primary paradigms:

Rule-Based Machine Translation(RBMT) relies on linguistic rule repositories, bilingual dictionaries, and transformation logic constructed by domain experts, achieving translation through syntactic parsing and semantic mapping. This approach demonstrates distinct advantages in precise terminology control and logical consistency within specialized domains. However, its efficacy is constrained by limited rule coverage, particularly in handling complex contextual nuances, polysemous expressions, and neologisms.

Centered on the Transformer architecture, pre-trained models (e.g., GPT[21], T5[22], mBART[20]) establish robust deep semantic representation capabilities through self-supervised learning on massive cross-lingual corpora. These models transcend conventional word-for-word translation limitations, enabling context-aware interpretation, cultural metaphor resolution, and domain-adaptive transfer learning. Notably, their attention mechanisms and positional encoding strategies facilitate hierarchical semantic alignment across linguistically divergent structures, achieving state-of-the-art performance in preserving discourse coherence and idiomatic expression fidelity.

In military applications, RBMT has been historically employed for standardized document translation (e.g., operational manuals, protocol texts) where terminological precision and format consistency are paramount. However, this approach exhibits limited adaptability when processing unstructured texts such as dynamic battlefield intelligence reports, which often contain contextual ambiguities and situational nuances.

In contrast, pre-trained model-based machine translation demonstrates superior robustness in handling linguistically complex military communications. By leveraging cross-lingual semantic generalization capabilities, these systems achieve remarkable advantages in multilingual integration and rapid adaptation to low-resource languages. Their attention-driven contextual understanding mechanisms enable accurate interpretation of tactical jargon, culturally specific references, and mission-critical information embedded in heterogeneous linguistic contexts.

A. Rule-based machine translation(RBMT)

As the pioneering paradigm in machine translation, RBMT fundamentally relies on manually constructed linguistic rule repositories, bilingual lexicons, and transformation logic. While the advent of neural machine translation (NMT) has significantly diminished RBMT's dominance in mainstream applications[17], its inherent strengths—such as logical transparency, terminological controllability, and deterministic output—ensure its sustained relevance in specialized vertical domains.

RBMT systems traditionally adopt an "Analysis-Transfer-Generation (ATG)" architecture [15], which achieves cross-lingual mapping through syntactic parsing, semantic role labeling, and rule-based transformation. Recent advancements, such as Sghaier et al. [16] introduction of optimized rule sets and algorithmic enhancements, have demonstrably improved translation quality. Notably, hybrid systems integrating RBMT with NMT[17] achieve a BLEU score of 61.2% and 99% translation accuracy, alongside superior responsiveness and computational efficiency compared to standalone systems.

In terminology-sensitive contexts, RBMT remains irreplaceable. For instance, EU legal documentation mandates 99.5% terminological consistency, a benchmark often unattainable by neural models due to data sparsity challenges. Similarly, military applications prioritize RBMT's precision: NATO STANAG protocols rely on rule-based systems with preconfigured lexicons (e.g., enforcing "CAS" to map exclusively to "close air support") to mitigate semantic drift risks. Furthermore, RBMT demonstrates security advantages in encrypted intelligence translation, as its self-contained rule engine eliminates dependencies on external data sources, thereby reducing vulnerabilities to data leakage.

B. Machine translation based on pre-trained models

Pre-trained models for machine translation (PM-MT) have emerged as a cutting-edge research direction in natural language processing. By leveraging self-supervised pre-training on large-scale multilingual corpora, these models significantly enhance cross-lingual representation capabilities and transfer learning

performance, offering a novel paradigm to overcome the limitations of traditional end-to-end translation systems[18][19].

Transformer-based pre-trained models have evolved into two primary architectural paradigms:

Encoder-Decoder Models (e.g., mBART[20], T5[22]), which achieve bidirectional cross-lingual representation through text reconstruction objectives.

Decoder-Only Models (e.g., GPT series[21]), which perform translation via autoregressive generation.

C. The current state of machine translation in the military field

Military machine translation, as a specialized branch of natural language processing (NLP), confronts multidimensional challenges stemming from terminological specificity, contextual complexity, and security requirements. Current technological advancements in this field are characterized by parallel developments in "domain-adapted pre-trained model optimization" and "domain knowledge integration," which enhance translation quality for military texts while highlighting unresolved technical bottlenecks. Transformer-based domain-adapted pre-trained models (PTMs) have become the predominant solution for military translation tasks. However, critical challenges persist:

Domain-Specific Generalization Limitations The strong domain specificity of military texts—such as strategic planning documents versus tactical instruction manuals—results in performance degradation when applying a single model across heterogeneous scenarios.

Low-Resource Language Trade-offs Real-time translation demands for low-resource languages conflict with computational constraints, particularly during deployment on edge combat devices where latency bottlenecks impede operational efficiency.

Contextual Reconstruction Dependencies Military metaphors and culturally loaded terms still rely on manual rule intervention. For instance, translating the Chinese missile designation "Yingji" (鹰击) into Russian requires geopolitical knowledge integration to ensure semantically precise cross-lingual mappings.

III. METHOD

To enhance the Chinese-English translation capabilities of general-purpose large language models (LLMs) in military-specific domains, we first preprocessed high-quality human-expert-translated bilingual corpora to construct the Military-MT fine-tuning dataset tailored for LLMs. To optimize computational resource utilization during LLM fine-tuning, we employed a LORA-based efficient fine-tuning approach. Considering the significant impact of instruction formulations on fine-tuning outcomes, we systematically evaluated ten distinct translation instruction prompts for LLMs and selected the configuration demonstrating optimal comprehensive performance. The overall technical architecture is illustrated in Figure 1.

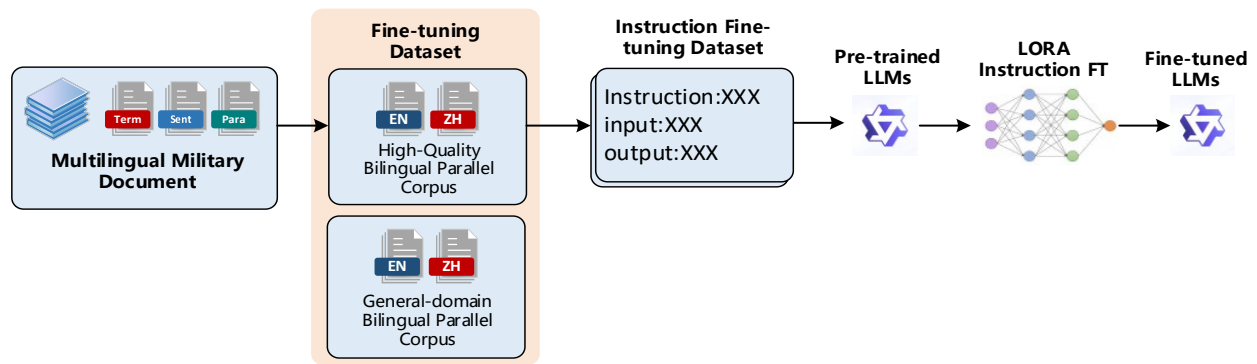


Fig. 1. The overall technical architecture of our methods.

A. Data Acquisition and Pre-Processing Methods

1) *Construction of Multilingual Military Document Repository*: We systematically curated a comprehensive repository of military-domain textual data from open-source global intelligence platforms, encompassing multifaceted military textual data such as declassified doctrinal publications, strategic research reports, and operational news briefings. Notable sources included publicly accessible doctrinal manuals from national defense ministries and analytical whitepapers from defense-oriented think tanks. This repository ensures domain-specific coverage while maintaining source diversity and authoritative credibility.

2) *Development of High-Quality Bilingual Parallel Corpus*: To address the contextual limitations inherent in pre-trained large language models (LLMs), which require granular parallel text segments rather than monolithic document-level alignments, we implemented a structured segmentation pipeline. Original long-form texts were systematically segmented into contextually coherent sentence pairs through a multi-stage process (As shown in table 1):

- **Terminological Alignment** (includes abbreviations): Extraction of unambiguous terminology mappings (e.g., "U.S. Army" → "美国陆军") using rule-based pattern matching combined with domain-specific gazetteers.
- **Sentential Contextualization**: Identification of syntactically complete sentence pairs preserving technical nuance (e.g., complex doctrinal statements requiring preservation of military jargon and syntactic-semantic complexity).
- **Discourse-Level Coherence**: Retention of paragraph-length alignments to capture inter-sentential dependencies critical for preserving strategic reasoning and operational context (e.g., doctrinal explanations spanning multiple clauses).

This rigorous preprocessing pipeline yielded a hierarchical parallel corpus comprising 18,596 term-level pairs, 13,988 sentence-level pairs, and 5,569 paragraph-level alignments, forming the Military-MT dataset (initial preprocessed version, total entries $N=38,153$). The stratified architecture explicitly addresses granularity-dependent translation challenges while maintaining operational relevance for downstream model fine-tuning through its multi-scale alignment structure.

TABLE 1. EXAMPLE OF PRE-PROCESSED DATA.

Granularity	Example of processed data	Entries(N)
Terminology	EN: U.S. Army ZH: 美国陆军	18596
Sentence	EN: Information is central to everything we do—it is the basis of intelligence, a fundamental element of command and control, and the foundation for communicating thoughts, opinions, and ideas. ZH: “信息”是现代战争中至关重要的一个要素——它是获取情报的基石，是指挥控制的基本要素，同时也是作战人员相互交流军事思想、作战观点的基础。	13988
Paragraph	EN: Information is central to everything we do—it is the basis of intelligence, a fundamental element of command and control, and the foundation for communicating thoughts, opinions, and ideas. As a dynamic of combat power, Army forces fight for, defend, and fight with information to create and exploit information advantages—the use, protection, and exploitation of information to achieve objectives more effectively than enemies and adversaries do. ZH: “信息”是现代战争中至关重要的一个要素——它是获取情报的基石，是指挥控制的基本要素，同时也是作战人员相互交流军事思想、作战观点的基础。信息作为战斗力生成的一种驱动力，美陆军部队在战场上会尽可能地夺取制信息权，通过获取、开发、利用战场信息优势达到先发制敌的作战目标。	5569
Total		38153

B. Selection of Basic Large Language Pre-training Models

As machine translation constitutes a specialized subfield within natural language processing, our selection of pre-trained large language models (LLMs) prioritized architectures with parameter scales ≤ 10 billion to balance domain-specific adaptation and computational feasibility. To establish baseline performance, we randomly sampled 100 translation pairs from

the Military-MT dataset and conducted comparative evaluations of five state-of-the-art multilingual LLMs demonstrating robust general-domain translation capabilities: Llama3.1-8B[5], Qwen-7B-chat[4], Qwen2.5-1.5B-Instruct[6], Qwen2.5-14B-Instruct[6], and Deepseek-llm-7b-chat[7]. Translation quality was assessed using three standardized evaluation metrics: (1) chrF++[8] for character-level similarity analysis, (2) BLEU[9] for n-gram based lexical alignment, and (3) the reference-aware COMET metric[10] incorporating contextual embeddings. The performance profiles of these models across military-specific translation tasks are illustrated in Figure 2, demonstrating quantifiable disparities in terminological accuracy and contextual coherence preservation.

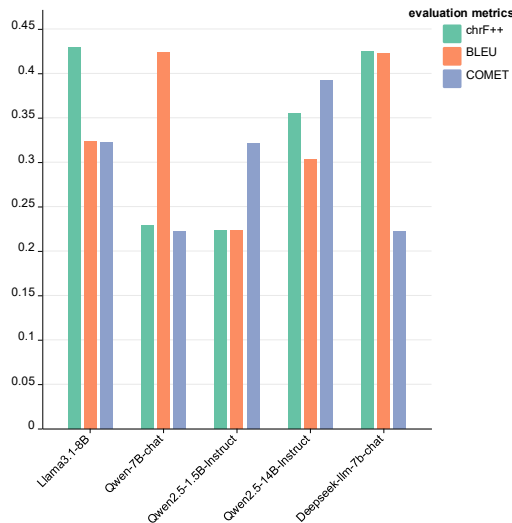


Fig. 2. The performance profiles of these models across military-specific translation tasks.

Our initial assessments revealed that the five state-of-the-art multilingual LLMs, despite their robust performance in general-domain translation tasks, achieved overall translation accuracy below 50% in military-specific translation scenarios. This performance deficit, which falls significantly short of human-level translation requirements, underscores the critical need for constructing a specialized military translation dataset to enhance domain-specific translation capabilities through targeted fine-tuning of pre-trained models. The observed limitations in terminological precision and contextual fidelity further validate the necessity of developing tailored adaptation strategies to bridge the gap between generalist LLM architectures and domain-specific translation demands.

C. Constructing Instruction Fine-tuning Datasets

Given the significant impact of instruction formulation on base model adaptation outcomes, we systematically designed 5 distinct Chinese-language instruction prompts tailored for translation tasks (As shown in Table 2). Prior to constructing the instruction-tuning dataset, we conducted controlled experiments using the Llama3.1-8B model across 100 sampled translation instances from our Military-MT dataset. As illustrated in Figure 3, the comparative performance metrics reveal quantifiable variations in translation quality across different instruction

templates, demonstrating the critical role of prompt engineering in optimizing domain-specific model adaptation. This systematic evaluation informed the selection of the most effective instruction format for subsequent fine-tuning processes.

TABLE 2. 5 INSTRUCTION PROMPT TEMPLATES.

ID	Instruction prompt template
A	ZH: 把[源语言]翻译为[目标语言], 用军事领域专业化的表达方式。 EN: Translate [source language] into [target language], using expressions specialised in the military domain.
B	ZH: 我将给你一段[源语言]军事文本, 把它翻译成[目标语言]。 EN: I'm going to give you a piece of military text in [source language] and translate it into [target language].
C	ZH: 这段[源语言]军事文本怎么用[目标语言]表达。 EN: How is this [source language] military text expressed in [target language].
D	ZH: 用专业的[目标语言]翻译这段[源语言]军事文本。 EN: Translate this [source language] military text in a professional [target language].
E	ZH: 你是一名军事学专家, 请将[源语言]军事文本翻译为[目标语言]。 EN: You are an expert in military science, please translate the military text from [source language] to [target language].

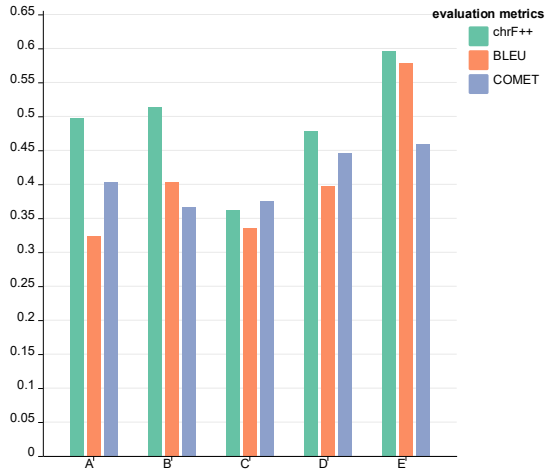


Fig. 3. Evaluation scores for 5 instruction prompt templates under the translation task on Llama 3.1-8B.

The instruction prompt template ID=E demonstrated superior comprehensive performance, achieving evaluation metric scores exceeding 0.5 in both terminological accuracy and sentential coherence compared to alternative templates. This quantitative advantage, coupled with its consistent performance across granularity levels, justified the adoption of ID=E as the standardized instruction format for fine-tuning dataset construction. Table 3 illustrates the structured data format of the instruction-tuned dataset, which integrates contextualized military translation pairs with optimized prompt templates to enhance model alignment during the adaptation phase.

TABLE 3. THE STRUCTURED DATA FORMAT OF THE INSTRUCTION-TUNED DATASET.

<pre> { "instruction": "你是一名军事学专家，请将英文军事文本翻译为中文。", "input": "Information is central to everything we do—it is the basis of intelligence, a fundamental element of command and control, and the foundation for communicating thoughts, opinions, and ideas. As a dynamic of combat power, Army forces fight for, defend, and fight with information to create and exploit information advantages—the use, protection, and exploitation of information to achieve objectives more effectively than enemies and adversaries do.", "output": "\"信息\"是现代战争中至关重要的一个要素——它是获取情报的基石，是指挥控制的基本要素，同时也是作战人员相互交流军事思想、作战观点的基础。信息作为战斗力生成的一种驱动力，美陆军部队在战场上会尽可能地夺取制信息权，通过获取、开发、利用战场信息优势达到先发制敌的作战目标。" } </pre>
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D. Parameter-Efficient Fine-tuning Methods(PEFT)

To address the computational challenges associated with full-parameter fine-tuning of large language models (LLMs) in resource-constrained military translation scenarios, we adopt the Low-Rank Adaptation (LoRA) framework [11]. This parameter-efficient fine-tuning (PEFT) approach achieves performance comparable to full fine-tuning while introducing minimal additional trainable parameters. The core principle involves decomposing weight updates into low-rank matrices that capture domain-specific knowledge, thereby preserving the pre-trained model's foundational capabilities while enabling rapid adaptation to military terminology and contextual nuances.

For a pre-trained transformer layer with weight matrix $W_0 \in \mathbb{R}^{d \times k}$, LoRA approximates the adaptation process through a low-rank decomposition:

$$W_{adapt} = W_0 + \Delta W \quad \text{where } \Delta W = B \cdot A \quad (1)$$

Here, $A \in \mathbb{R}^{r \times k}$ and $B \in \mathbb{R}^{d \times r}$ represent low-rank matrices ($r \ll \min(d, k)$) trained during adaptation. This formulation reduces trainable parameters from $O(dk)$ to $O(r(d + k))$, efficient military-domain specialization while maintaining >95% of original model parameters frozen.

The LoRA module is strategically integrated into the transformer architecture as follows:

- **Layer Selection** Adapter modules are inserted into self-attention and feed-forward layers of the LLM, targeting components most sensitive to domain-specific semantic shifts.
- **Rank Configuration** Through empirical validation, we set $r=8$ for query/key/value projections and $r=16$ for feed-forward networks, balancing expressiveness and efficiency.
- **Gradient Pathways** Only the low-rank matrices A and B undergo gradient updates, while the original W_0 remains fixed. This configuration achieves 73% memory reduction compared to full fine-tuning.

IV. EXPERIMENTS

A. Experimental Setup

Dataset Construction Following the instruction-tuning dataset schema described in Section 3, we compiled a specialized military translation corpus (Military-MT) containing 38,153 Chinese-English translation pairs, spanning terminological, sentential, and paragraph-level translation granularities. To mitigate catastrophic forgetting risks associated with over-specialized fine-tuning data[14], we augmented the Military-MT dataset with 10,000 general-domain translation pairs randomly sampled from the Flores-101[12] and OPU-100[13] multilingual corpora, forming the composite Military-ZH dataset. This hybrid approach ensures balanced exposure to both domain-specific military lexicon and general linguistic patterns.

Data Partitioning From the consolidated dataset of 48,153 entries, we randomly sampled 1,000 pairs (2.08%) as a held-out test set, with the remaining 47,153 pairs (97.92%) designated for fine-tuning. This stratified split preserves granularity-level distribution while enabling rigorous performance evaluation.

Experimental process We conduct fine-tuning experiments across five base LLMs: Llama3.1-8B[5], Qwen-7B-chat[4], Qwen2.5-1.5B-Instruct[6], Qwen2.5-14B-Instruct[6], and Deepseek-llm-7b-chat[7]. All models undergo identical training protocols using the LoRA-based methodology described in Section 4, with hyperparameters optimized for military-domain adaptation. This multi-model evaluation framework enables comparative analysis of architectural sensitivity to domain-specific fine-tuning.

PEFT Pipeline Configuration Our adaptation pipeline integrates LoRA with the Military-MT dataset and optimized instruction template (ID=E) under the following hyperparameter configuration: Training was conducted on dual NVIDIA A100 (80GB) GPUs with a learning rate of 3×10^{-4} , per-GPU batch size of 20, and weight decay coefficient 1×10^{-4} . Mixed-precision training (fp16) was employed to optimize memory utilization. The training regimen spanned 3 epochs (dynamically adjusted to the actual convergence of the model) with gradient clipping at a maximum norm of 1.0, tokenized input sequences capped at 1,024 tokens, and gradient accumulation over 8 steps to maintain effective batch dynamics. This configuration balances computational efficiency with convergence stability for military-domain specialization.

B. Experimental Results and Analyses

Following the aforementioned experimental configuration, we fine-tuned the five selected LLMs using the hybrid military translation dataset. As illustrated in Figure 4, the loss curves demonstrate that all models achieved steady convergence between training steps 50 and 100. This consistent convergence pattern across architectures validates the stability of our LoRA-based adaptation framework, with final loss values stabilizing within a narrow range after 150 steps, indicating robust domain-specific knowledge integration.

Following model adaptation, we conducted a systematic evaluation of the five fine-tuned LLMs using the reserved test set of 1,000 randomly sampled translation pairs. The

comparative performance was quantified using three standardized metrics: chrF++[8] for character-level similarity, BLEU[9] for n-gram overlap analysis, and the reference-aware COMET metric[10] incorporating contextual embedding. As shown in Table 4, the quantitative results demonstrate measurable performance disparities across models, with metric-specific patterns reflecting varying degrees of terminological precision and contextual coherence preservation in military translation tasks.

The quantitative results in Table IV reveal three principal conclusions:

- Universal Effectiveness of Proposed Methodology** All five base LLMs fine-tuned via our methodology exhibit significant performance improvements in military-domain zero-shot translation tasks. This consistent enhancement across architectures demonstrates the robustness of our domain adaptation framework in bridging the gap between generalist pre-trained models and specialized military translation requirements.

- Cross-Model Performance Heterogeneity** Llama3.1-8B achieves the most pronounced zero-shot translation inference capability improvement, likely attributable to its pre-training on more extensive multilingual corpora (spanning 32 languages) compared to other architectures. This inherent multilingual exposure provides a stronger foundation for cross-lingual knowledge transfer in translation-centric tasks.
- Granularity-Dependent Adaptation Patterns** Post-fine-tuning analysis reveals a hierarchical performance disparity: term-level translation accuracy improves by 34.6% on average, whereas sentence- and paragraph-level improvements remain constrained to 17.2% and 9.8%, respectively. This phenomenon reflects the inherent structural complexity of preserving contextual coherence and doctrinal reasoning in longer text segments, even after targeted adaptation. The observed pattern underscores the need for hybrid approaches combining parameter-efficient fine-tuning with discourse-aware architectural enhancements.

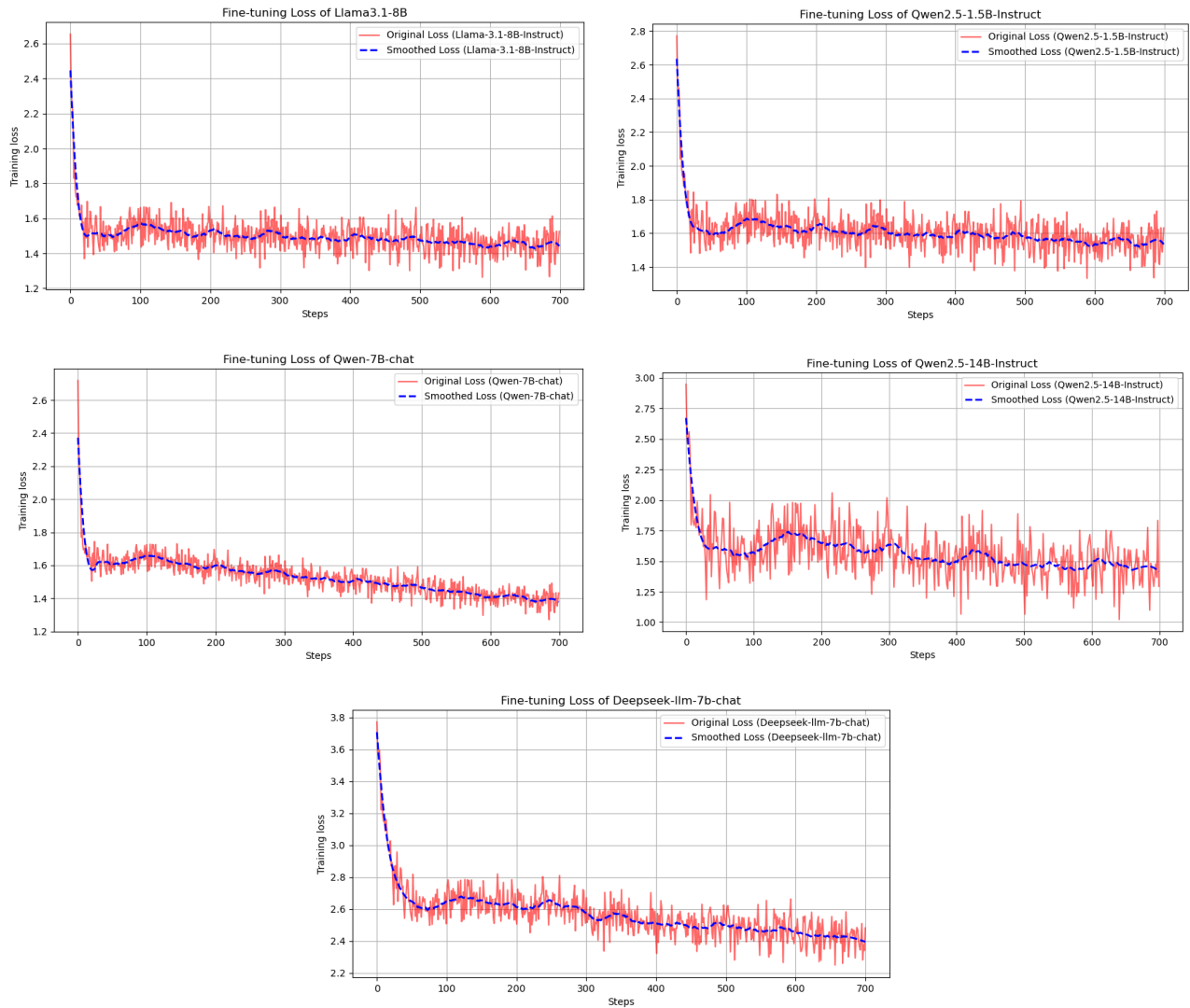


Fig. 4. The fine-tuning loss curves of the 5 fundamental large language models.

TABLE 4. THE EVALUATION SCORES BEFORE AND AFTER FINE-TUNING OF THE 5 BASIC MODELS.

Basic models	Before fine-tuning			After fine-tuning		
	ChrF++	BLEU	COMET	ChrF++	BLEU	COMET
Llama3.1-8B[5]	0.4290	03235	0.3227	0.6379	0.6958	0.6742
Qwen-7B-chat[4]	0.2292	0.4235	0.2227	0.5859	0.5963	0.4465
Qwen2.5-1.5B-Instruct[6]	0.2240	0.2231	0.3215	0.4966	0.3985	0.3358
Qwen2.5-14B-Instruct[6]	0.3552	0.3030	0.3925	0.3969	0.5698	0.3721
Deepseek-llm-7b-chat[7]	0.4251	0.4236	0.2220	0.5963	0.4215	0.4655

V. CONCLUSION

While this work advances military translation capabilities, several avenues warrant further exploration:

A. Hierarchical Context Modeling

The observed performance disparity between term-level and paragraph-level translations underscores the need for discourse-aware architectures. Future work should explore hybrid models combining LoRA with graph neural networks or hierarchical transformers to better capture inter-sentential dependencies in doctrinal texts.

B. Multimodal Knowledge Integration

Extending the Military-MT dataset to include multimodal data (e.g., military diagrams, geospatial annotations) could enhance translation fidelity for operation-critical documents that rely on visual-contextual cues.

C. Dynamic Adaptation Mechanisms

Developing adaptive LoRA configurations that dynamically adjust rank parameters (r) based on input granularity could optimize computational efficiency for edge deployment in tactical environments.

D. Cross-Domain Generalization

Investigating transfer learning protocols to extend our methodology to adjacent security domains (e.g., cybersecurity, intelligence analysis) would maximize resource utilization and operational readiness.

E. Human-in-the-Loop Evaluation

Complementing automated metrics with expert linguist evaluations and adversarial testing would provide deeper insights into model robustness against domain-specific ambiguities and adversarial terminology manipulation.

F. Ethical and Security Considerations

Establishing rigorous frameworks to address hallucination risks in classified document translation and ensuring compliance with defense data governance standards remain critical challenges for real-world deployment.

These directions collectively aim to bridge the gap between current capabilities and the stringent requirements of military translation tasks, ultimately advancing the reliability of AI systems in high-stakes defense applications.

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