

Post-Editing Skills in a Tech-Savvy World: A Case in an Undergraduate Translation Classroom

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Abstract

This article reports on a small-scale qualitative study of how undergraduate translation students work with machine translation (MT) output in a post-editing task. The project grew out of concern that translation classes often still rely on traditional, teacher-centered methods and do not always integrate current AI- and MT-based tools. The study is framed by models of translation and post-editing competence, with a particular focus on how students spot, classify, and correct errors. Data were collected from five students using a short survey, a post-editing task based on an MT version of a general English text used in class, and a structured written interview consisting of 18 questions. The analysis adopts a content-analytic approach and is organized around five types of translation problems, or rich points: lexical problems (including specialized and culture-bound items), morphosyntactic issues (such as sentence complexity and voice), textual problems (coherence and tone), extralinguistic knowledge (cultural and domain references), and intentionality/reader adaptation. Sixteen rich points were pre-identified in the source text and examined through the students' post-edited Indonesian outputs and their own explanations of the choices they made. The findings shed light on how students actually use MT in classroom tasks, which problems they notice and which they tend to overlook, as well as how they view MT and AI tools, and the future of translation work. Based on these findings, the study argues for a curriculum design that uses MT as a starting point for training in error handling, critical judgment, and other core competencies in human translation, rather than treating MT as a shortcut for translation.

Keywords: Machine Translation; post-editing; rich points; translation competence; technology

INTRODUCTION

In light of the growing reliance on machine translation (MT), post-editing tools such as Google Translate, Gemini, ChatGPT, Bard, and Copilot have gained popularity for translation tasks (Alqahtani & Al-Ahdal, 2025; Zhang et al., 2025). Despite this trend, human post-editing (PE) remains essential (Li & Li, 2025). PE is distinct from traditional translation tasks because it comprises three (rather than two) texts to be processed: the source text, the MT output, and the final target text (Nitzke & Hansen-Schirra, 2021, p. 34). Translation Automation User Society (TAUS) distinguishes light PE as minimal correction for comprehensibility, full PE as revision to publishable quality, and monolingual PE as target-text editing without reference to the source text (Bowker, 2020; Massardo et al., 2016; Mitchell et al., 2013; Nitzke, 2016; Nitzke & Hansen-Schirra, 2021, pp. 30–33).

The growing use of artificial intelligence and machine translation has changed how many people approach translation. For some users, translation has become a quick copy-and-paste operation, with limited attention to issues such as reliability, meaning negotiation, or pragmatic equivalence (Akram, 2023 ;Yang, 2022). In this context, translation pedagogy needs to be revisited so that undergraduate students are prepared not only to use MT/AI tools but also to evaluate and

revise their outputs critically. As He (2021) notes, translation teaching in the era of technology and artificial intelligence faces at least two persistent obstacles.

The first is the use of outdated teaching materials and classroom technologies that do not reflect current practices. Today, with increasing internet access and digital media, schools and universities still struggle to update their teaching technology. It is often caused by financial challenges (Aditya et al., 2021) and a lack of teaching staff with the appropriate skills (Singun, 2025). Consequently, these institutions generally adopt digital tools only after they have been widely proven and widely used (Shehata et al., 2025), creating a gap between education and practice in the translation industry (Abu-Ghararah, 2015).

The second obstacle concerns traditional teaching concepts, which largely rely on teachers or instructors to explain, provide, and correct errors (Al-Hadithy, 2015; Romney, 1997). The skills needed to identify errors are often not taught as part of the translation process. Apart from that, there is a lack of awareness of implicit and explicit meanings in source and target texts, because traditional methods tend to limit student participation. Traditional teaching also heavily focuses on word-for-word/literal translation production, resulting in lower motivation for students to be involved in text investigation, since the translation process becomes repetitive and technical. For teachers or instructors, providing detailed feedback on students' translation work can be unpleasant and draining; it is labor-intensive, and there are limits to how much time and effort teachers/instructors can realistically devote to all their students (Engliana, 2015; Pan, 2016; Sikora, 2015). It may affect students' readiness to take high-stakes exams and to undergo professional translation work.

He (2021) suggests several ways to address the obstacles described above: updating translation teaching materials; adopting translation technologies that are practical for classroom use; using automatic evaluation tools; and systematically strengthening students' (post-)editing skills. Teachers need to focus more on helping students develop effective online research strategies and critical evaluation skills (Engliana, 2015, 2016a, 2016b). As classrooms shift from teacher-led to student-led, translation activities should include peer review and individual and collaborative PE, integrating MT/AI tools to better engage students in classroom dynamics, improve learning quality, and enhance students' understanding of translation practices (He, 2021; Ramos, 2024). Explicit, hands-on training in editing can form a comprehensible strategy for teaching translation in the digital era and for supporting these students in becoming more autonomous, competent translators/editors.

Translation competence and error handling skills

Translation competence (TC) is considered a systematic, fundamental body of knowledge needed to perform translation tasks (PACTE, 2003). The holistic TC model comprises five sub-competences: "the bilingual sub-competence, the extralinguistic sub-competence, knowledge about translation, the instrumental sub-competence, and the strategic sub-competence, which is the most important of all sub-competences as it interrelates to all others" (PACTE, 2003). These sub-competences are then summarized into a Rich Points-based (RPs) assessment (PACTE, 2011).

The RPs in this study are short source-text segments selected for their typical translation problems. They are used as units of analysis to evaluate how students handle local difficulties in the text. Five broad categories of RPs are as follows (Castillo, 2015; PACTE, 2003): a) linguistic problems (non-terminology lexical items/morphosyntactic); b) textual problems (cohesion-coherence); c) extra linguistic problems (culture and other knowledge); d) intentionality, and e) problems related to translation brief and/or target readers (writer's communicative intentions and implicit meanings). These categories provide a practical framework for researchers, teachers, and students to identify where translation problems tend to be clustered and to reflect on the range of possible solutions when working towards an acceptable target text.

Error handling is one of the three main pillars of the general post-editing model. Error handling includes the skills to spot, classify, and correct errors (Nitzke & Hansen-Schirra, 2021, p. 75). Although this general PE model presents all three competences as equal pillars, translators' and post-editors' skills are heavily emphasized in the first pillar: error-handling competence (see Figure 1).

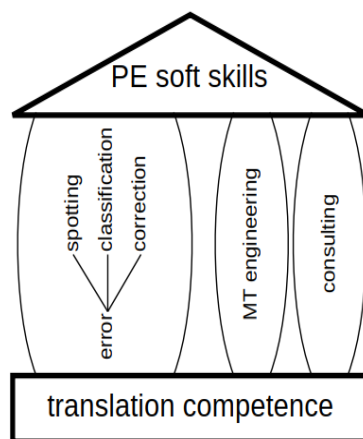


Figure 1. Three pillars of PE competence (Nitzke & Hansen-Schirra, 2021, p. 75)

Figure 1 highlights that practical and effective PE requires a solid understanding of MT and AI behaviors, as well as careful decision-making, because changes made during post-editing may carry risks, including unintended shifts in meaning. Collectively, these practices foreground a calibrated balance between adequacy, fluency, and effort, contingent on project goals and evidence-based risk management, as shown in Table 1.

BS ISO 18587: 2017	Nitzke and Hansen-Schirra
Translation competence	Error handling: spotting, classifying, and correcting errors
Linguistic competence	
Textual competence	MT engineering: MT training and evaluation
Cultural competence	Consulting competence: risk management and service skills
Technical competence	
Subject domain knowledge	

Source: ISO (2017); Nitzke et al. (2019); Tardel et al. (2021)

Hence, integrating, introducing, and using technology in the translation classroom supports instrumental competence (PACTE, 2003). It activates students' knowledge as they move from a source text to a target text, with awareness of the readership of the final translation outputs. There is a growing need in the current AI-rich environment to clarify and realign our understanding of what it means to be a translator and what translation competencies really are. These questions are essential for teachers or instructors in translation classrooms when designing a curriculum that aligns as closely as possible with professional realities (Fan & Chunlei, 2023).

In addressing the need to examine further the significance of integrating MT/AI tools and emphasizing PE skills/competence, the present study investigates how undergraduate translation students tackle translation problems in an assigned PE task within a classroom context that uses MT/AI tools. Therefore, the following questions guide this study:

1. How do students deal with premediated translation challenges in the source text and MT/AI-generated outputs, and process them to achieve the final target text?
2. How do the students perceive the use of the MT/AI tools in the classroom?

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research method, utilizing content analysis and a comparative approach.

Participants

Participants of this study were five students from the English language teaching major, who were selected through convenience sampling based on several criteria: (1) they have English language skills which are categorized as intermediate to upper-intermediate levels, (2) Indonesian

language is their L1, (3) they have beginner-level skills on MT/AI guided translation tasks, and (4) all of these students have informal familiarity with Google Translate, ChatGPT, and Gemini, but none have received professional translation or PE training. Thus, the findings of this study can be interpreted as evidence of emerging classroom-based PE competence rather than professional PE competence.

Data and Instruments

The study used five data sources: the English source text (ST), the Google Translate output (GT), the student's post-edited Indonesian target text (TT), a 17-question survey, and written interview responses. The ST was a 324-word English text entitled 'Tourists can do their bit' (European Commission, 2007), taken from one of the texts used in the European Union's *annual Juvenes Translatores* competition. The 17-question survey was adopted, modified, and translated from Başer and Aral (2024), with one additional question on the use of AI for translation and post-editing, as well as its benefits in the translation classroom. The written interview contained 18 questions based on the five main categories of rich points (RPs) identified in the ST (see Appendix 1). Table 2 below summarizes the instruments.

Table 2. Summary of instruments and codes

Type	Description
Source Text (EN-ID)	324 words; 14 sentences; 16 pre-identified RPs
Final Target text (ID)	PE product
Survey	17 questions (5 on demography, 6 on AI-use, 3 on profession, 2 on curriculum, 1 on AI use in the classroom)
Interview	18 questions

Data Collection

The data used for this study were collected from the results of the classroom PE task, surveys, and asynchronous written interviews. The task was completed collaboratively in the fourth of 14 meetings in the course, and student participants were not informed during the task to maintain objectivity and authenticity in handling errors during task completion and interviews. The interview was conducted through a shared Google Drive folder, and students had up to 2 weeks to respond. This asynchronous format allowed time for reflection and yielded written responses ready for analysis without transcription, although it limited the researchers' control over response completeness and authorship reliability (Dahlin, 2021; Meixner & Spitzner, 2023; Opara et al., 2023).

Table 3. Identified Rich Points of ST

Rich Point	Category	Sample
Linguistic problems	Lexical	"irreversible physical and social damage" [RP-1]
	Morphosyntactic	"trips which allow tourists to make a positive contribution" [RP-2]
Textual problems	Coherence	"This is known as 'responsible tourism'..." [RP-3]
	Cohesion	"By doing so, they have the chance..." [RP-4]
	Style/Genre	Informative-persuasive public text [RP-5]
	Style/Register	"not everything in the garden is rosy" [RP-6]
Extralinguistic problems	Cultural knowledge	"fish-and-chip wrapping" [RP-7], "caravan site" [RP-8]
	Encyclopedic knowledge	"From only 10 million tourists... by 2010... one billion" [RP-9]
	Subject knowledge	"responsible tourism/eco-tourism" [RP-10], "mass tourism" [RP-11]
Intentionality	Intertextuality	"not everything in the garden is rosy" [RP-12]

	Speech acts	“tour operators can be encouraged to put revenue back...” [RP-13]
	Presuppositions	“This interest ... is important for the economy” [RP-14]
	Implicatures	“they can really make a difference” [RP-15]
Translation brief and/or the target-text reader	Reformulation constraints	General public, cross-cultural readership [RP-16]

Source: Researchers’ raw data

Data Analysis

The analysis was structured into three phases that combine the sixteen translation challenges, translation outputs, and self-reflections. First, in the *product analysis* phase, the STs, MT outputs, and students’ PE texts were compared to determine how students actually handled the 16 RP categories, as well as whether GT errors were corrected or transformed. Second, the *process analysis* phase aimed to map strategies and intentionality by comparing students’ PE outputs with their written interview explanations, especially with regard to cultural, pragmatic, and reader-oriented considerations. In the last phase, *perception analysis*, survey results on the integration of AI in the classroom were integrated with data from the first and second phases.

ANALYSIS

Phase 1: Product analysis

The output analysis focuses on the products generated by AI/MT, specifically GT, based on the six theoretically-identified RPs. Comparing the outputs for the identified RPs allows the researcher to confirm whether these RPs correspond to the actual translation challenges students encounter. Table 4 presents selected samples from the students’ work to represent the main RP categories analyzed in this present study.

Table 4. Selected ST, GT, and student PE outputs/strategy

RP	ST Segment	GT Output	GT Issue	PE Output	PE Strategy
RP-1 Lexical	“Irreversible physical and social damage”	“Kerusakan fisik dan sosial yang tidak dapat diperbaiki”	GT is comprehensible, but literal.	“ <i>dampak negatif... kerusakan fisik dan sosial, yang tidak dapat diperbaiki</i> ”	Elsa splits and simplifies the concept; this improves readability but final outputs show some Indonesian structure issues that may hinder meaning.
RP-2 Morphosyntactic	“trips which allow tourists to make positive contribution...”	“Perjalanan yang memungkinkan wisatawan memberikan kontribusi positif”	Similar to ST sentence structure.	“ <i>perjalanan yang memungkinkan wisatawan berkontribusi positif...</i> ”	Mei tries to improve naturalness but keeps the sentence structure similar to ST.
RP-6/RP-12 Style/intertextuality	“not everything in the garden is rosy”	“Tidak semua yang ada di taman itu cerah”	Literal idiom translation.	“ <i>Tidak semua yang dilihat ternyata seindah itu...</i> ”	Elsa decides to neutralize the idiom; meaning is clearer, but the metaphorical nuance is reduced.
RP-7/RP-8 Cultural knowledge	“fish-and-chip wrapping”; “caravan site”	“Bungkus ikan dan keripik”; “lokasi karavan”	Culture-bound references translated literally.	“ <i>sampah plastik</i> ”; “ <i>situs parkir liar</i> ”	Rio generalizes the cultural references; improves readability, but there is a risk of semantic shift.
RP-10/RP-11 Subject knowledge	“responsible tourism/eco-tourism”; “mass tourism”	“Pariwisata yang bertanggung jawab”; “ekowisata”; “pariwisata massal”	GT provides acceptable output in target language.	Retained	Students keep the GT output showing trust in the MT translation decisions.

RP-13 Speech act	“tour operators <u>can be encouraged to put revenue back...</u> ”	“Operator tur <u>dapat didorong untuk mengembalikannya pendapatannya...</u> ”	GT output is comprehensible.	“ <u>penyelenggara tur didorong untuk menginvestasikan kembali...</u> ”	Mei clarifies the meaning by adding “ <i>menginvestasikan kembali</i> ” (to invest back).
RP-15 Implicature	“they <u>can really make a difference</u> ”	“ <u>Dapat membuat perbedaan</u> ”	Similar to ST wording.	“ <u>betul-betul menciptakan terobosan baru...</u> ”	Jon adds emphasis on the effect with ‘ <i>terobosan baru</i> ’ (new breakthrough)
RP-16 Reader adaptation	Whole text/general readership	N.A.	Some outputs are translated literally.	-	Students simplify, split sentences, and sometimes adapt cultural references for Indonesian readers.

Source: Researchers’ raw data

Note: Karel (K), Mei (M), Jon (J), Rio (R), and Elsa (E). The RP identifications were not part of the signals or cues for these students; they were given the plain source text to begin the task. RPs in Table 4 are provided for this manuscript.

Lexical RP

Splitting information from the source text into several sentences in RP-1 was considered a mitigation strategy to keep meaning intact and support naturalness and readers’ comprehension. Elsa adds and splits information about *irreversible physical and social damage* into several new sentences; “...*pariwisata dapat menyebabkan dampak negatif. Dampak tersebut dilihat dari kerusakan fisik dan sosial, yang tidak dapat diperbaiki* (...tourism may cause negative impacts. These impacts can be seen from physical and social damages that cannot be fixed).” Another sentence she created is “*Hal ini menyebabkan orang lokal yang tinggal di sana...* (This makes the local people living there...).” This mixture of improvement and new errors is typical of novice post-editing: students can detect apparent lexical oddities but may struggle to maintain morphosyntactic accuracy while rephrasing. The lexical choice “...*kerusakan fisik dan sosial, yang tidak dapat diperbaiki...* (...physical and social damages that cannot be fixed...),” however, shows that Elsa aimed for accuracy in meaning from the source text; the decision to reformulate the original sentence into several sentences in Indonesian. The PE output is easier to understand for quick reading for Indonesian readers, as the message is clearly conveyed, though the syntactic structures do not mirror the original sentence.

Morphosyntactic RP

A similar pattern emerges: GT already closely replicates English sentence structure in RP-2, and, in terms of meaning, the sentence is relatively acceptable. Mei’s PE output changes ‘*wisatawan memberikan kontribusi* (tourists give contribution)’ to “...*wisatawan berkontribusi...* (...tourists contribute...).” Here, Mei made some refinements to achieve a more natural tone while still maintaining the original sentence pattern. Mei’s decision on PE outputs supports the observation that when GT output is already grammatically acceptable, Mei tends to focus on improving naturalness and domain-appropriate lexis rather than restructuring the sentence.

Overall, the RP-1 and RP-2 data indicate that Elsa and Mei are most active where GT’s lexical choices sound odd or too literal. They successfully identify RPs involving technical negative evaluative lexicon (“*irreversible ... damage*”) and complex nominal phrases, replacing them with more natural Indonesian. Morphosyntactic operations in RP-2 are mostly limited to light resegmentation (splitting one long sentence into two sentences) rather than full reorganization of embedded clauses. It suggests that the students rely strongly on bilingual lexical competence, with morphosyntactic editing emerging as a secondary, more cautious operation.

Style/intertextuality

The expression “*But not everything in the garden is rosy*” [RP-6/RP-12] illustrates how students deal with complex lexical items and embedded metaphor. GT renders this as “*Namun tidak semua*

yang ada di taman itu cerah (But not everything that exists in that garden is bright),” which is literal and sounds unnatural in Indonesian. Elsa changes this to “*Namun tidak semua yang dilihat ternyata indah itu* (But not everything that is seen is actually that beautiful),” replacing the *rose garden* metaphor with a more general phrase that is more natural in Indonesian. The pragmatic intention is preserved, but the intertextual coloring ‘rose is red’ is removed.

Mei, Jon, and Elsa are capable of maintaining and enhancing local coherence and cohesion in the PE task. They are intuitive and can adjust their style and register to produce smooth Indonesian text output. However, this strategy often results in the loss of idiomatic nuance of the original text. Their textual competence is, therefore, stronger in organizing information and connecting sentences than in finding idiomatic equivalents and recreating the similar stylistic nuances of the original genre.

Cultural knowledge

The PE from Rio generalizes and localizes the reference from GT: “*Tekanan ini dapat berkisar dari sampah plastik yang berserakan di jalan hingga situs parkir liar yang ada di dekat penangkaran binatang yang terlindungi* (These pressures may regard plastic waste that scatter on the road to illegal parking sites that exist around the protected animal sanctuary).” Here, “*sampah plastik* (plastic waste)” is more familiar than “*bungkus ikan dan keripik* (fish-and-chip wrapping)”, and “*situs parkir liar*” (Eng. illegal parking site), evoking a recognizable local issue. However, it distorts meaning for Indonesian readers, as they may associate illegal parking with a different mental image than the author intended. Illegal parking sites are a common sight in Jakarta, the capital city of Indonesia. This solution shows active reader-oriented adaptation, but at the cost of a partial semantic shift away from the original cultural scenario. It may also evoke different images in other cities or areas of Indonesia, which differ in geography and culture from Jakarta.

Subject knowledge

Subject-specific terms such as “*mass tourism*” [RP-11], “*responsible tourism*”, and “*eco-tourism*” [RP-10] are treated with relative confidence. GT already provides plausible equivalents (“*pariwisata massal*”, “*pariwisata yang bertanggung jawab*”, “*ekowisata*”), and Karel and Mei keep these terms unchanged. In some cases, other people may make minor orthographic or collocational adjustments, for instance, there is an option of adding or removing a hyphen, and also choosing between “*ekowisata*” and “*ekoturisme*,” but most people rarely re-analyze the underlying concepts because the terms have been around for some time, making people familiar with them. This pattern is consistent with the interview data, in which at least one student reports that “*responsible tourism*” and “*eco-tourism*” are “not too difficult” because the tools already provide them with a clear Indonesian phrase.

Speech act

In the RP-13, where “*tour operators can be encouraged to put revenue back into local development*” appears, GT translates this fairly directly as a mild recommendation (“*dapat didorong*”). Mei maintains the basic speech act while slightly strengthening agency and directionality by choosing expressions such as “*dapat terlibat langsung* (may be directly involved)” and “*menginvestasikan kembali pendapatannya ke dalam pembangunan lokal* (reinvest their income into local development)”. The illocutionary force thus shifts from a general possibility towards a more explicit call for action, which fits the persuasive direction of the overall text, but goes beyond the strictly propositional content of the ST.

Implicature

The closing RP-15 “*they can really make a difference to preserving the countryside!*” encodes a strong positive implicature about individual impact. GT generates this as “*...dapat membuat perbedaan dalam melestarikan pedesaan!* (...may make a difference in preserving villages!)”, which is close to the English wording. Jon strengthens it into “*betul-betul menciptakan terobosan baru dalam pelestarian pedesaan* (truly creates a new breakthrough in preserving villages!)”, introducing the phrase “*terobosan baru*” (a “breakthrough”) and “*betul-betul*” (‘truly’). Jon’s decision amplifies the

motivational tone and transforms a modest claim about making a difference into a more heroic narrative of innovation. The implicature is preserved but over-amplified.

The PE outputs show that students are generally successful at preserving the author's intended direction (warning, recommendation, and encouragement). However, they often adjust the degree of force, either softening metaphorical warnings or intensifying calls to action. Pragmatic nuances are understood in general terms, but they are not always measured accurately.

Reader adaptation

The last category is not tied to a single phrase, but to how the previous 15 RPs are handled for the imagined reader. RP-16 cuts across all previous clusters by focusing on how the 15 RPs are reformulated with a particular reader in mind. Across PE, students frequently use re-segmentation or restructuring (splitting long sentences), simplification (replacing idioms with plain language), and explicitation (adding causal connectives and clarifying phrases). Several RPs, for instance, originally contained one long English sentence that GT reproduced in full; the students' PEs often turn these into two or three shorter Indonesian sentences with additional linking expressions. Cultural RPs are domesticated to familiar images ("*fish-and-chip wrapping*" into "*sampah plastik*"), and evaluative vocabulary is sometimes strengthened to ensure that the intended stance is obvious. These patterns suggest that the students implicitly assume a non-expert, general Indonesian readership, and they adapt their post-editing decisions accordingly.

Phase 2: Process analysis

Phase 2 relates the product-oriented findings to students' self-reported strategies, based on the semi-structured interviews organized around the RP categories. During the interviews, each student was shown selected RPs from Table 4 (e.g., "*mass tourism*", "*fish-and-chip wrapping*", "*responsible tourism/ecotourism...*", "*not everything in the garden is rosy*", "*they can really make a difference*"). Students were invited to explain how they had handled them in their PE. The responses reveal four major types of strategy:

(1) Reliance on MT outputs

For RPs involving lexical items and subject labels, students consistently describe MT as a 'first draft.' One student explains that terms like "*responsible tourism*" and "*eco-tourism*" are "not too difficult" because GT already provides "*pariwisata yang bertanggung jawab*" and "*ekowisata*". So, she only adjusts minor details, such as hyphenation. Another student notes that for technical phrases like "*developments in transport technology*", he tends not to change the GT output at all, regarding it as a fixed term. The comments align with the RPs: subject labels and more neutral technical expressions received minimal intervention in the PE, while lexical problems received more attention and triggered major reformulation of sentence structure and lexical choices, e.g., 'caravan' and 'fish-and-chips wrapping.'

(2) Local sentence-based problem-solving

When discussing morphosyntactic RPs and textual RPs, students describe their work mainly in local, sentence-focused terms. They mention splitting long sentences, "putting commas in the right place", and choosing conjunctions, such as "*sedangkan (meanwhile)*", "*namun (but)*", or "*sehingga (therefore)*", to clarify relations between clauses. In the case of the long clause, "*trips which allow tourists to make a positive contribution [RP-2] ...*", one student reports focusing on making the sentence "not too long and confusing" in Indonesian, leading to its refinement by omitting several words in the PE. It mirrors RP-2 findings, which show that students are sensitive to processing difficulty when dealing with specific morphosyntactic-rich points at the sentence level and deploy minor structural adjustments rather than adopting a full-paragraph strategy.

(3) Selective research and cultural adaptation

For cultural RPs, such as "*fish-and-chip wrapping*" or "*caravan site*", the interviews show a more reflective stance. One student explicitly mentions searching Google Images or Wikipedia to understand what a "*bird sanctuary*" looks like and to confirm that "*caravan site*" refers to a camping area rather than a building. Another describes deliberately replacing "*fish-and-chip wrapping*" with "*sampah plastik*" because she believes Indonesian readers would not recognize the original cultural reference, rather than accepting the GT output "*bungkus ikan dan keripik*" or choosing an alternative

that replaces the food items. However, the lexical choice diverges from the original cultural items represented in the original. These strategies explain why the corresponding PE segments show both creative adaptation and some semantic sense: students are trying to “translate the effect” for Indonesian readers but are not fully confident about how much they may modify the ST content.

(4) Managing intentionality and reader adaptation

When asked about RPs in the categories of readerships and intentionality, such as “*not everything in the garden is rosy*” or “*they can really make a difference to preserving the countryside*”, students say they aim to capture the intended message rather than the literal wording. One participant states that the idiom is translated into something “easier to understand,” like “*tidak semua indah yang terlihat*”, because she worries that a literal garden metaphor would confuse readers. For the closing sentence about “making a difference,” another student reports that she chose stronger expressions, like “*menciptakan terobosan baru*”, to leave a more motivating final impression.

These comments show that students are aware of the need for reader adaptation. They imagine a general Indonesian reader, possibly with limited exposure to British culture or environmental jargon, and they adjust idioms, intensity, and sentence length accordingly. However, they do not always articulate a clear order among competing standards, i.e., faithfulness vs. clarity vs. persuasion in translation/PE, which helps explain why some pragmatic nuances are either compressed or clarified/expanded in the PE outputs. The evidence here then confirms that the students’ strategies are reactive and RP-driven. They intervene strongly where a specific RP “feels wrong/odd” or too difficult (especially in lexical and cultural RPs), while allowing many other parts of the GT output to pass with light editing. Their reflections demonstrate emerging instrumental and research competence and an intuitive sense of audience, but also a lack of systematic strategic planning across the text.

Phase 3: Perception analysis

Students’ views on translation accuracy are conditional, signaling that AI tools are considered useful as a starting point but are not always reliable for producing final translation products. Despite using MT/AI tools in the second half of the semester, they are doubtful [*Saya ragu-ragu*] (5 out of 5) in using such tools. The report is consistent with the analysis, showing that the students’ PE efforts focus on RPs considered ‘odd’ and ‘culturally mismatched’ with the target culture.

Table 5. Students’ opinions on the use of AI in a Translation class

Theme	Main pattern
Purpose of AI use	drafting, increasing speed, paraphrasing
Accuracy	useful but uncertain
Curriculum	generally positive, but needs guidance

Source: Researchers’ data

Based on the survey, the main purpose of using AI during translation is translation (4 responses), followed closely by paraphrasing, revising, and conducting research or information searching, with 3 responses for each category, as shown in Figure 2.

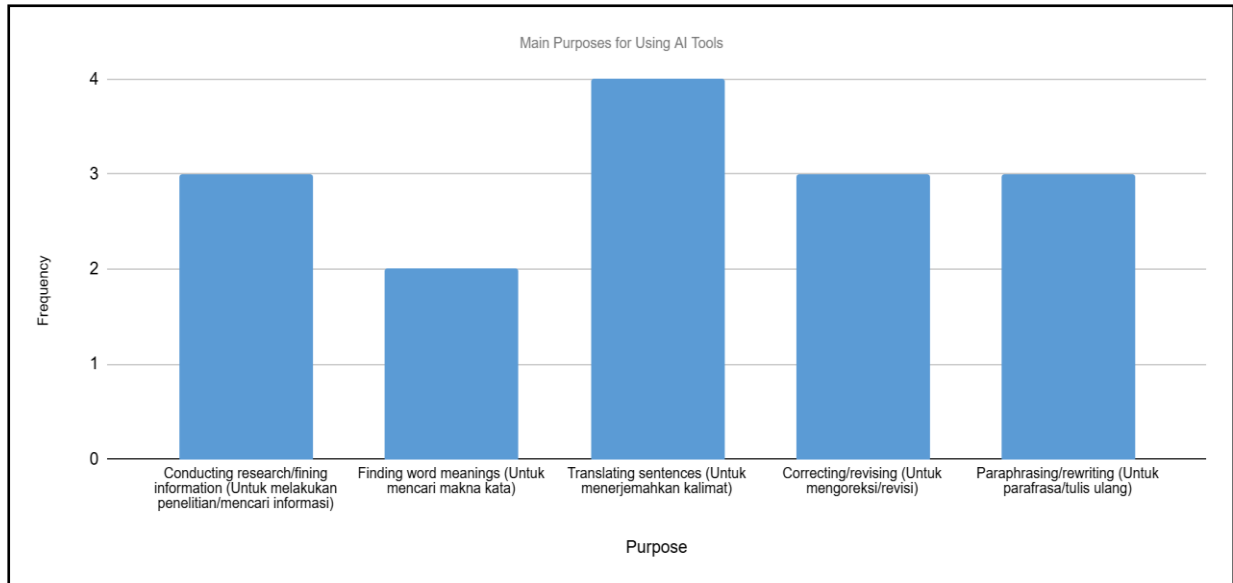


Figure 2. Students' responses to the main purposes of using AI tools based on the survey results

Students reported using AI tools moderately, and that their use was appropriately integrated into classroom activities according to a planned schedule. However, there is also a clarification on the limit of using AI: using it for translation makes the process faster, but with inaccuracies found in the outputs and outputs that are sometimes unnatural in the target culture/language, signaling that the use of AI is a good starting point for translation, but not for a final output, as they need to post-edit the results. Other than that, some students emphasize the effects that AI has on translation competence. They are aware that translation competence is not an automatic skill to master and needs considerable training and/or official certification, along with specialized teaching-learning strategies, to develop high-quality human resources.

Discussion

Initially, from the perspective of the RPs or the pre-identified translation problems, handling Linguistic Problems, some parts of Textual Problems, and Extralinguistic Problems, students show clear evidence that their strongest sub-competencies lie in their bilingual and instrumental skills compared to other post-editing sub-competencies. In holistic TCs, correcting idioms and culture-bound references demonstrates understanding (PACTE, 2003).

In addition to this evaluation, PE soft skills, like the ability to handle errors, including spotting, classifying, and correcting them, are immensely important to be tailored to the task instruction. Thus, the students become more aware of the elements in the source text and align them with the target language's linguistic structure and cultural context.

Another important PE skill is consulting competence, which requires the students to perform risk management in their outputs (Nitzke & Hansen-Schirra, 2021). This skill requires students to make effective use of available online resources to verify extralinguistic components in both the source text and the GT output. The purpose of performing such an activity is to literally check cultural alignment between two different cultures, if they feel that the MT/AI outputs are inappropriate, suggesting misinterpretation of the meanings of originals, but also to check if the target culture has the same meaning association with the meanings that the author intends to deliver. Other studies have confirmed that MT translation requires more referencing and searching for external resources than PE activities (Daems et al., 2016; Latorraca, 2023). These strengths show that students with PE skills are capable of using MT/AI tools to increase their productivity and deliverability for initial drafts, and of applying their linguistic and global knowledge to increase translation quality. PE is a proof of concept that editing in translation is not merely about correcting grammatical errors, as it also involves risk management (Nitzke et al., 2019; Pym, 2025), readership awareness (Devika, 2024;

Whyatt et al., 2023; Xiaohan & Moindjie, 2022), and ethical accountability (Shi et al., 2024; Zhou et al., 2024).

This critical MT and AI-generated literacy leads to an acknowledgment that students carry out domestication as a solution to alter the original text when it comes to something unfamiliar or non-existent items in the target culture. Reader-oriented PE significantly improves accessibility to the message; however, it undermines stylistic and intertextual elements of the original. Thus, these decisions are not always based on explicit reasoning but rather on the subjectivity of translators/post-editors.

From a pedagogy perspective, the RPs show a dominant classroom, teaching-learning perception. They help students operate as 'detectives' to investigate potential problems. Meanwhile, for teachers/instructors, these RPs help them diagnose the suitable texts for classroom use and, at the same time, detect their students' ability to cope with translation problems arising from the chosen texts (Yang, 2022). However, the lack of shared metalanguage for error spotting, in-depth analysis of error types, and post-editing strategies has led students to miss some important elements. Pre-determined translation challenges also train students to learn skills to be 'light' post-editors in their everyday work with MT/AI tools. Making RP categories explicit in class can help students, especially those with no experience in real translation activities. It can help them move from merely fixing the spotted errors (lexical and syntactical items) to systematic error spotting and prioritization. Assigning each RP to a small group in class and asking them to analyze GT and PE outputs can help them identify mismatches between the two texts. They can move forward by justifying why the specific errors are more critical than others.

The analysis of the RPs shows a clear pattern: students are most confident and active at the level of lexical and local textual problems. They consistently identify literal or awkward MT renderings of evaluative expressions, idioms, and collocations and rework them into more idiomatic Indonesian. Students also often choose to break down long sentences and add linking words to clarify ideas in the source text and achieve natural, clear translation outputs that are easier to follow. This attention to revisions of sentence-level flow results in a greater effect in logical relations between adjacent clauses in texts. In doing so, students appeared to use MT/AI-generated translation outputs as raw or initial drafts, then focused their efforts on refining word choices and adjusting style rather than retranslating the entire text from scratch.

In several cases, some of the more complex revision points proved harder for students to address. Problems were especially noticeable when outputs from MT/AI generated cultural imagery, specialized concepts, or indirect meanings, in which solutions varied across cases. The solutions for handling culture-specific items were adapted to circumstances considered more familiar to local readers. Such a decision often improves the readability of translation outputs (Xiaohan & Moindjie, 2022; Whyatt et al., 2023), although there may be an occasional need to sacrifice the original meaning. Regarding communicative intention, students generally chose to preserve the text's broad purpose, such as alerting or advising target readers. However, differences could be observed in how strongly intentions are expressed through lexical and/or stylistic choices, since revision or editing can reduce the impact of the original message in the target text, thereby creating a gap in meaning from the original message or intention. Students' post-editing choices or decisions focus on particular problems rather than on the text as a whole. This pattern shows an emerging competence in managing language and text-level issues, while sensitivity to contextual, pragmatic, and strategic aspects of translation remains less stable.

Students perceive MT as a generally positive aid, yet signaling a tentative viewpoint. All respondents reported regularly using Google Translate and noted that they had begun experimenting with new AI-based tools. They also expressed the expectation that these tools might continue to be part of their future work, especially when dealing with translations. In describing their experiences during the course, students emphasized the practical benefits of MT and AI tools, especially their roles in speeding up the production of raw or initial translation outputs, suggesting that the tools provide them with alternative lexical choices and help them to begin the translating/post-editing process when they are unsure about what to do with the outputs. When checking the translation outputs, students reported focusing mainly on segments that felt "odd" or unnatural in Indonesian, rather than applying a systematic revision procedure. Such an attitude

reveals that their approach to post-editing is considered intuitive. In other words, MT and AI tools are perceived as convenient, familiar support for students' translation work, especially when they encounter difficulties or uncertainty in both the original and target texts.

This study also suggests a need for more targeted translation training for teachers/instructors in operating MT/AI, as well as in Translation Studies, critical thinking, and digital literacy in general (DQ Institute, 2022; Engliana & Silva, 2025; Rahman et al., 2021). In terms of language elements, there is a need for training in pragmatic and extralinguistic competencies. In other words, increasing exposure to texts that develop these two skills may help teachers/instructors and students sharpen their intuitive and systematic error-spotting and PE strategies. Asking students to propose multiple strategies and reflect on the consequences of such decisions for meaning and readership are the most effective ways to expose them to and prepare them to become competent post-editors.

CONCLUSION

There are three takeaways from this study's findings: *first*, applying RP-based analysis to source texts effectively makes PE competence visible to both instructors and students. By identifying the different RP-types up front, instructors can more easily anticipate potential difficulties, design clearer instructions, and help students move away from intuitive error corrections toward more reflective error spotting, prioritization, and justification. *Second*, classroom attention needs to be rebalanced to distribute students' attention across different RP categories, as this study reveals an overinvestment in lexical and textual adjustments, to the detriment of cultural references, implicit meanings, and the negotiation of tone and illocutionary force in PE. *Third*, MT/AI should be explicitly discussed within the translation curriculum, including its strengths, weaknesses, and typical error patterns. It is needed so that instructors can foster critical MT and AI-generated literacy, and students can be positioned as active MT users who are responsible for meanings, risks, and ethics.

This small case study presents post-editing events in a single classroom with a small number of participants, a specific and limited language pair, and a short ST. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized and applied wholesale to other contexts of the translation classroom. However, it shows that when students are guided to skills of error spotting and error correcting in a structured manner, they will learn to see and use MT/AI tools as triggers, beyond a shortcut for task completion, for developing a nuanced, strategically aware translation.

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