BRIDGING CULTURES IN THE DIGITAL AGE, HUMAN-AI COLLABORATION IN LITERARY TRANSLATION PAPER

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ABSTRACT

This article explores the roles, strengths, and limitations of human translators and AI-based tools when handling literary texts and culturally rich content. Human translators tend to excel at preserving meaning accuracy, natural flow, and cultural sensitivity, especially with idioms, metaphors, and subtle implications. On the flip side, AI tools like Google Translate or Neural Machine Translation deliver impressive speed, efficiency, and consistency—particularly for straightforward or formal texts—but they often stumble over intricate cultural nuances. Using a qualitative descriptive and comparative approach, this study evaluates translation outputs from humans and AI based on accuracy, acceptability, and readability. The findings highlight that top-quality results come from using AI as a support tool followed by thorough human post-editing. Ultimately, the paper argues for human-machine collaborative models and tech-focused translator training to boost translation quality in our digital world.

Keywords: *human translation, machine translation, artificial intelligence, literary translation, post-editing*

INTRODUCTION
Translating literature and culturally nuanced texts plays a key role in sharing works across borders with readers from diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds. In today's globalized era, cross-cultural exchanges are more frequent than ever, so translation goes beyond mere linguistic conversion—it's about navigating and transferring complex cultural meanings. The biggest hurdles arise when translators must retain cultural values, idioms, writing styles, and aesthetic tones while making them relatable and clear for the target audience.

METHOD

This study adopts a qualitative descriptive-comparative method, allowing detailed analysis of translation quality in terms of meaning accuracy, language smoothness, and cultural fit without relying on quantitative stats. Data sources include literary or culturally loaded texts translated into Indonesian either by human translators or AI tools like Google Translate. Additional insights come from scholarly articles and journals on human translation, machine methods, and AI integration in professional and educational practices.

Data analysis follows a descriptive-comparative model:
1. spotting errors or differences in translations,
2. categorizing lexical, syntactic, and cultural issues,
3. assessing quality against accuracy, acceptability, and readability criteria, and
4. drawing conclusions on each method's pros and cons.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As noted by Anwar (2020), translation often hits snags like non-equivalent meanings, cultural gaps, sentence structure differences, and tricky idioms that can't be directly carried over. To tackle these, the study draws on common professional strategies:
1. Naturalization: Tweaking foreign terms to sound natural in the target language.
2. Description: Briefly explaining cultural terms when no direct equivalent exists.
3. Generalization: Opting for broader terms if specifics don't match.
4. Borrowing: Keeping source terms if they're already familiar to readers.
5. Omission (limited): Dropping truly irrelevant elements that don't aid understanding.
6. Addition: Adding clarifications for key implicit meanings in the target text.

For AI translations, solutions involve post-editing—where humans refine machine outputs for lexical errors, structure, and cultural shades. This hybrid AI-human teamwork promises fast yet high-quality results.

CONCLUSION

From the theory review and discussions, it's clear that human translation still leads in safeguarding meaning accuracy, natural language, and cultural awareness, especially for literary and culture-heavy texts, compared to AI-driven approaches. Tools like Google Translate and NMT shine in speed, efficiency, and accessibility but need human tweaks through post-editing to truly resonate with readers.

The qualitative descriptive method and comparative analysis pinpoint issues like mismatched meanings, structural mismatches, and hard-to-translate cultural bits. Strategies such as naturalization, description, generalization, borrowing, limited

omission, addition, and AI post-editing show that the best outcomes happen when humans use AI thoughtfully as a partner, not a replacement.

This underscores the need for human-machine collaboration in translation, particularly in education and training for future translators. Curricula should blend classic and modern translation theory with tech skills, enabling graduates to leverage AI for better productivity without sacrificing accuracy, fluency, or respect for source and target cultural values.

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