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Student poetry translations with and without the use of AI: An evaluation of translation quality

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Abstract

Poetry translation presents a unique challenge, as it requires maintaining a delicate balance between semantic fidelity and the preservation of the aesthetic qualities of the target text. This study aims to evaluate the quality of poetry translations produced by university students both with and without the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI), modified from assessment criteria using Nababan's (2012) framework, namely accuracy, acceptability, readability, and poeticness (aesthetic quality) of the poetry translation proposed by Dastjerdi et al (2008). The research employed a descriptive quantitative approach using a three-point scale as an evaluation instrument, where a score of 3 indicates high quality, 2 denotes moderate quality, and 1 reflects low quality. Data were obtained from poetry translations evaluated by experienced raters using a standardized rubric, and the results were analyzed in terms of frequency distribution and percentages. Findings reveal that in AI-assisted translations, the highest score attainment was observed in readability (52.76%), followed by acceptability (51.14%), accuracy (50.39%), with poeticness being the lowest (24.34%). In contrast, in translations without AI, the highest score attainment was also found in readability (34.76%), followed by accuracy (33.06%), acceptability (32.43%), and poeticness (12.33%). This comparison indicates that the use of AI consistently enhances accuracy, acceptability, and readability scores, yet shows limited capacity to improve poeticness significantly. This aspect requires creativity, stylistic sensitivity, and nuanced linguistic judgment beyond the current capabilities of AI systems.

Abstrak

Kata Kunci:

kecerdasan buatan;
kepuitisan; kualitas
terjemahan;
penerjemahan puisi

Evaluasi kualitas terjemahan puisi mahasiswa dengan dan tanpa bantuan AI

Penerjemahan puisi merupakan tantangan yang unik karena menuntut keseimbangan antara kesetiaan makna dan pemertahanan unsur estetis teks sasaran. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengevaluasi kualitas terjemahan puisi mahasiswa dengan dan tanpa bantuan AI berdasarkan empat aspek penilaian menurut teori Nababan (2012), yaitu keakuratan, keberterimaan, keterbacaan, dan kualitas kepuitisan model yang dicetuskan oleh Dastjerdi et al. (2008). Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kuantitatif dengan instrumen penilaian skala 1–3, dengan skor 3 menunjukkan kualitas tinggi, skor 2 kualitas sedang, dan skor 1 kualitas rendah. Data diambil dari hasil terjemahan puisi yang dinilai menggunakan rubrik terstandar oleh penilai berpengalaman, kemudian dianalisis dalam bentuk distribusi frekuensi dan persentase. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pada terjemahan dengan AI, capaian skor tertinggi terjadi pada aspek keterbacaan (52,76%), diikuti keberterimaan (51,14%), keakuratan (50,39%), sedangkan kepuitisan menempati posisi terendah (24,34%). Pada terjemahan tanpa AI, capaian skor tertinggi juga terdapat pada keterbacaan (34,76%), diikuti keakuratan (33,06%), keberterimaan (32,43%), dan kepuitisan (12,33%). Perbandingan ini mengindikasikan bahwa penggunaan AI secara konsisten meningkatkan skor keakuratan, keberterimaan, dan keterbacaan, namun belum mampu memberikan peningkatan signifikan pada aspek kepuitisan.

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1. Introduction

In recent years, an increasing number of schools have begun utilizing Artificial Intelligence (AI) to support students in all subjects. AI-assisted translation technologies like Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT have been used in language and literary studies to assist with tasks ranging from basic understanding to writing complex texts (Hidalgo de Torralba Padrón, 2023; Yuxiu, 2024). Among them, translating poetry is an exciting subject to examine, as it requires a combination of linguistic precision, cultural awareness, and creative interpretation—qualities that AI systems often struggle to replicate fully (Sahari et al., 2023; Zhao et al., 2024).

The translation of poetry is considered one of the most intricate and interpretative types of translation. According to Jakobson's theory of intersemiotic translation, poetry necessitates not only the transposition of linguistic signs but also the incorporation of aesthetic, rhythmic, and cultural elements. Lefevere (2016) asserts that poetic translation is inherently a sort of rewriting, influenced by ideological, linguistic, and cultural filters. The filters are accentuated when the translator is a student in the process of cultivating their literary sense and when the translation medium is shaped by algorithmic processes instead of human discernment (Manapbayeva et al., 2024a; Yin, 2024).

When the translator is a student who is still in the process of developing their literary sensibility and cultural awareness, these filtering mechanisms are further exacerbated. Emerging translators may encounter difficulties in comprehending the intricacies of cross-cultural expression and poetic devices. Furthermore, the complexity of poetic translation is further underscored by the transition from human to machine translation (He et al., 2025; Lu & Xu, 2025; Saehu & Hkikmat, 2025). While algorithmic tools are capable of processing syntax and vocabulary at a high level, they frequently lack the intuitive and emotional intelligence necessary to interpret poetic subtleties. Machine-generated translations do not adequately replicate the lyrical richness and cultural resonance of poetic texts, as Manapbayeva et al. (2024b) and Yin (2024) have noted. This underscores the critical role of human creativity and crucial interpretation in this discipline.

The emergence of AI in translation prompts contemplation within the framework of Machine Translation (MT) theory and post-editing research. Initial methodologies in machine translation (MT) focused on literal, rule-based outputs, whereas contemporary neural machine translation (NMT) systems strive to emulate human-like fluency (Al Mudarra, 2025; Alkhofi, 2025; Peng, 2025). Despite advancements, even highly developed AI models remain limited in their capacity to grasp the intuitive cultural and emotional nuances necessary for producing translations with lyrical depth (Amaro & Zhang, 2025; Belhassen et al., 2025). This deficiency is especially significant in poetry translation, where the unexpressed elements, tone, ambiguity, and metaphor are as crucial as the written content (Karaban & Karaban, 2024; Naem et al., 2025).

The incorporation of AI prompts additional inquiries regarding constructivist learning theories, particularly in the context of language acquisition. While tools such as ChatGPT might enhance student autonomy and facilitate challenging tasks, they also pose a risk of fostering dependency, thereby diminishing possibilities for learners to engage with uncertainty and exercise creative linguistic decision-making. Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) emphasizes that although tools facilitate learning, genuine development transpires when learners comprehend intricate tasks through active participation rather than passive absorption (Hemmat, 2021; Manapbayeva et al., 2024a).

Assessing translation quality is a multifaceted process that necessitates meticulous attention to linguistic precision and functional effectiveness. An exemplary translation transcends the mere replication of the source text's lexicon; it articulates the intended meaning, tone, style, and cultural subtleties in a manner that connects with the target audience. M. Nababan & Nuraeni (2012) present

a well-established approach within the Indonesian context that assesses translation quality through three fundamental criteria: correctness, acceptability, and readability. Accuracy denotes the degree to which the translated text reflects the same meaning as the source material. Acceptability evaluates the naturalness and appropriateness of the translation according to the conventions of the target language. Readability assesses the ease with which the translated content may be comprehended by its audience (McDonald, 2020). This paradigm offers a systematic and adaptable approach for evaluating diverse translation genres, encompassing technical, academic, and literary materials (H. Nababan et al., 2018; M. R. Nababan & Santosa, 2025). This paradigm can be utilized in literary translation, particularly in poetry, to evaluate if the translator has effectively maintained the aesthetic and emotional richness of the original work while ensuring its accessibility and significance within the target culture. A comprehensive assessment of translation quality must consider both formal language attributes and the effectiveness of the translation in achieving its communicative and cultural objectives, according to Nababan's evaluative dimensions.

Building on this, Dastjerdi et al. (2008) propose a nuanced model that moves beyond mere linguistic equivalence to evaluate the successful transfer of poetic elements. They conceptualize poetry translation as a process akin to a "black box," where the translator must strategically negotiate various levels of meaning to preserve the original's aesthetic impact. Their model emphasizes the analysis of both textual (linguistic features) and extra-textual elements (such as rhythm, imagery, emotional impact, and cultural connotations). A key aspect of their approach is assessing how well the translator has maintained the "poetic discourse" rather than just the semantic content. This highlights the challenges in recreating the source poem's form and content in the target language to achieve a similar aesthetic and emotional effect.

In this study, Nababan's model of Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) is combined with Dastjerdi et al.'s Model for Poetry Translation, creating a comprehensive evaluation framework. This integration incorporates Nababan's core criteria of accuracy, acceptability, and readability while extending them to include Dastjerdi's focus on poeticness as an additional dimension of aesthetic quality. Such a hybrid approach ensures a balanced assessment of poetry translations, particularly in student contexts with and without AI assistance, by evaluating both semantic fidelity and the preservation of artistic elements essential to poetic discourse.

This study aims to assess the quality of poetry translations produced by students under two conditions, namely individually made translations and those generated with the use of AI techniques. This research examines the impact of AI on translation outcomes by examining the resulting translations across critical dimensions: faithfulness to meaning, fluency, poetic sensibility, and cultural appropriateness, and explores how this may influence students' engagement with literary language. This comparative analysis enhances discussions in translation pedagogy and digital humanities, providing essential insights into the capabilities and constraints of AI in the creative learning process.

2. Methods

2.1. Research Design

This research utilized both quantitative and qualitative descriptive approaches to assess the quality of poetry translations created by university students in Indonesia. The aim was to investigate how student translators perceive and translate English poetry into Indonesian, emphasizing the translation's correctness, acceptability, and readability, following Nababan's (2012) model of translation quality assessment and the aesthetic quality assessment of poetry proposed by Dastjerdi et al. (2008). The study sought to uncover prevalent linguistic, cultural, and stylistic obstacles to

translating poetic literature. The qualitative aspect of the research facilitated a comprehensive examination of students' translational decisions and the rationale supporting them.

2.2. Participants

There were 25 students from five different universities in Indonesia, such as Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Universitas Muria Kudus (UMK), Universitas Dian Nuswantoro (Udinus), and Universitas Islam Negeri (UIN) Ponorogo, who participated in this study. Five undergraduate students majoring in English were taken from each university. The authors purposefully selected participants based on their academic background in English language and literature, as well as their enrollment in courses in translation or literature. The main aspect of the study was to have all of the participants translate a chosen English poem into Indonesian.

2.3. Instruments

The primary research instrument was a translation task, wherein students were provided with a piece of English poetry and asked to produce its equivalent translation in Indonesian. The poem was chosen to reflect rich stylistic features, metaphorical expressions, and cultural nuances, thus enabling the researcher to assess various dimensions of poetic translation. In addition, a translation quality assessment rubric was used to evaluate the translated texts. This rubric was developed based on Nababan et al.'s (2012) and Dastjerdi et al.'s (2008) frameworks. It included indicators for accuracy (faithfulness to meaning), acceptability (naturalness and appropriateness of language use), readability (ease of comprehension by target readers), and poetic/aesthetic quality. To support the analysis, interviews or written reflections may also have been employed to gain insight into the participants' translation strategies, though this would depend on the actual field procedure.

2.4. Data Analysis

The gathered data were examined utilizing content analysis methodologies. The translated texts of each student were analyzed against the original poem and evaluated according to the three principal criteria of Nababan's model: correctness, acceptability, and readability, as well as Dastjerdi et al.'s aesthetic quality of poetry. Six raters, appointed from the translation lecturers, were employed to assess the students' translation texts. The research entailed identifying segments of translation that exhibited success or challenges in conveying poetic elements such as imagery, rhythm, metaphor, and cultural context. The six raters then discussed their rating to maintain inter-rater reliability. Qualitative remarks were incorporated to elucidate certain challenges or praiseworthy tactics noted in the translations. Thematic coding was applied to examine patterns in the obstacles encountered and the techniques utilized, which were triangulated with participant reflections or interviews. The data were subsequently analyzed to derive conclusions regarding the students' overall translation skill and its implications for translation pedagogy.

3. Findings

The findings of the study on the translation of literary texts—particularly poetry—conducted by sixth-semester English Department students from four universities, namely Universitas Negeri Semarang (UNNES), Universitas Dian Nuswantoro (UDINUS), Universitas Muria Kudus (UMK), and UIN Ponorogo, reveal variations in quality influenced by academic background, translation experience, and the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI)-based translation technology. Tables 1 and 2 present the research findings on students' translation quality in rendering a poem both with and without the assistance of AI.

Table 1: Distribution of Students' Poetry Translation Quality Scores with the AI Assistance

Category	Count of 3	% of 3	Count of 2	% of 2	Count of 1	% of 1	Total
Accuracy	981	50.39	478	24.55	488	25.06	1947
Acceptability	989	51.14	503	26.01	445	23.01	1934
Readability	1024	52.76	445	22.93	474	24.42	1941
Poeticness	471	24.34	569	29.41	896	46.30	1935

Table 2: Scores Distribution of Students' Poem Translation Quality without the Assistance of AI

Category	Count of 3	% of 3	Count of 2	% of 2	Count of 1	% of 1	Total
Accuracy	613	33.06 %	382	20.60 %	863	46.55 %	1854
Acceptability	595	32.43 %	364	19.84 %	876	47.74 %	1835
Readability	635	34.76 %	340	18.61 %	852	46.63 %	1827
Poeticness	233	12.33%	282	14.92 %	1375	72.75 %	1890

4. Discussion

4.1. The Analysis of Students' Translation Quality with AI Assistance Using Modification of Nababan and Dastjerdi's Frameworks

4.1.1. Accuracy

The assessment results in Table 1 indicate that 50.39% (981 data) of the translations fall into the "accurate" category (Score 3). This figure suggests that over half of the translations successfully maintain full equivalence of meaning between the source text and the target text without any distortion or omission of essential elements. An ideal example would be a translation that precisely follows lexical and syntactic equivalence, including the use of equivalent metaphors, and is free from ambiguity.

A total of 24.55% (478 data) fall into the "fairly accurate" category (Score 2), indicating minor shifts in meaning, such as changes in emotional nuance or word connotation, while the core message remains conveyed. Meanwhile, 25.06% (488 data) received a score of 1 ("inaccurate"), reflecting a failure to maintain semantic fidelity. Such cases typically involve the loss of key metaphorical elements or significant shifts in meaning. This distribution suggests the need for improved understanding of context, idioms, and poetic imagery to reduce the number of errors in the lowest-scoring category.

4.1.2. Acceptability

A total of 51.14% (989 data points) of the translations were assessed as "acceptable" (Score 3), meaning that the target language form is natural, conforms to linguistic norms, and is readily acceptable to the intended readers. Meanwhile, 26.01% (503 data) fall into the "fairly acceptable" category (Score 2), typically due to the use of less common sentence structures or slightly awkward word choices, although the text remains comprehensible.

In contrast, 23.01% (445 data) fall into the "unacceptable" category (Score 1). This classification indicates the presence of linguistic constructions that appear unnatural, inappropriate, or deviant from the norms of the target language. Within Nababan's theoretical framework, such conditions have the potential to disrupt readers' comprehension and comfort, thereby necessitating substantial revisions in grammar and lexical choices.

4.1.3. Readability

A total of 52.76% (1,024 data) of the translations received a score of 3 ("high"), indicating that the majority of the target texts are easy to read and comprehend. Meanwhile, 22.93% (445 data) fall



into the "fairly readable" category (Score 2), typically due to excessively long sentences or less efficient sentence structures.

Meanwhile, 24.42% (474 data) received a score of 1 ("low"), which, according to Nababan, indicates the presence of significant comprehension barriers. These barriers may stem from syntactic complexity, the use of rarely occurring vocabulary, or ineffective sentence structures. Given the high density of meaning inherent in poetry, such weaknesses highlight the need for precise restructuring skills to ensure that the intended meaning is conveyed clearly.

4.1.4. Poeticness

The poetic aspect achieved the highest score in only 24.34% (471 data), indicating that only a small proportion of the translations were able to preserve the beauty, rhythm, imagery, and aesthetic quality of the source text in line with the expectations of literary readers. Meanwhile, 29.41% (569 data) received a score of 2, suggesting that the poetic elements were partially conveyed but lost some of their emotional impact or musicality.

Most notably, 46.30% (896 data) received a score of 1 ("non-poetic"), indicating that nearly half of the translations failed to preserve the aesthetic elements of the poetry. This failure generally stems from an overly literal approach that sacrifices the beauty of the language. According to Nababan, such a condition requires the application of specialized literary translation strategies, such as metaphor adaptation, sound play, and maintaining a balance between meaning and aesthetics.

Overall, students assisted by AI tended to excel in the aspects of accuracy, acceptability, and readability, with the highest score percentages exceeding 50% in all three categories. However, the poetic aspect emerged as the primary weakness, with nearly half of the translations failing to meet literary aesthetic standards. Based on Nababan's theory, enhancing translators' competence in mastering poetic diction, preserving metaphors, and managing the rhythm of the target language is key to producing poetry translations that balance fidelity of meaning with aesthetic beauty.

Table 3 presents the excerpts of students' poem translations produced with the assistance of AI.

Table 3. Examples of Students' Poem Translations with AI assistance

No.	Source Texts	Target Texts and Back Translations
1	Wild nights By Emily Dickinson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Malam-malam Liar</i> (oleh Emily Dickinson)/ Wild Nights (by Emily Dickinson) 2. <i>Malam-malam Liar oleh</i> Emily Dickinson/ Wild Nights by Emily Dickinson 3. <i>Malam Liar-Oleh</i> Emily Dickinson/ Wild Night (by Emily Dickinson) 4. <i>Malam-Malam Gila oleh</i> Emily Dickinson/ Crazy Nights (by Emily Dickinson) 5. Malam yang liar - Dari Emily Dickinson/ Wild Night (by Emily Dickinson)
2	Wild nights - Wild nights!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Malam-malam liar—/</i> Wild Nights 2. <i>Malam-malam liar!</i> Wild Nights 3. <i>Malam liar - Malam liar!/</i> Wild Night! - Wild Night! 4. <i>Malam gila, malam gila !/</i> Crazy night, crazy night! 5. <i>Malam yang liar - Sungguh malam yang liar!/</i> Wild night – Truly a wild night!
3	were I with thee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Andai aku bersamamu/</i> If I were with you 2. <i>Andai aku bersamamu/</i> If I were with you 3. <i>Seandainya aku bersamamu/</i> If I were with you 4. <i>Malam saat aku bersamamu/</i> The night I were with you

No.	Source Texts	Target Texts and Back Translations
4	Wild nights should be	<p>5. <i>Ketika aku bersamamu/</i> When I were with you</p> <p>1. <i>Malam liar seharusnya.../</i> Wild night should be...</p> <p>2. <i>Malam itu akan menjadi/</i> That night will be</p> <p>3. <i>Malam liar seharusnya menjadi/</i> Wild night should be</p> <p>4. <i>Malam gila yang harus menjadi/</i> Crazy night that should be</p> <p>5. <i>Malam liar itu seharusnya menjadi/</i> That wild night should be</p>
5	Our luxury!	<p>1. <i>Milik kita/</i> Our own</p> <p>2. <i>Kemewahan kita/</i> Our luxury!</p> <p>3. <i>kemewahan kita!/</i> our luxury!</p> <p>4. <i>malam kita!/</i> our night!</p> <p>5. <i>Kemewahan kita!/</i> Our luxury!</p>
6	Futile - the winds -	<p>1. <i>Angin - yang sia-sia/</i> The wind – that is useless</p> <p>2. <i>Sia-sia – Angin/</i> Useless – the wind</p> <p>3. <i>Angin yang sia sia/</i> The wind that is useless</p> <p>4. <i>Sia sia angin itu/</i> Useless that wind</p> <p>5. <i>Sia sia – angin/</i> Useless – the wind</p>
7	To a Heart in port	<p>1. <i>Untuk Sebuah Hati yang Berlabuh/</i> For a heart that is anchored</p> <p>2. <i>Bagi Hati yang melabuh/</i> For the heart anchoring</p> <p>3. <i>untuk hati yang berlabuh /</i> for the heart that is anchored</p> <p>4. <i>Tak berarti untuk hati yang terlabuh/</i> Meaningless for the heart that is anchored</p> <p>5. <i>Menuju pusat pelabuhan/</i> Heading to the center of the port</p>
8	Done with the Compass	<p>1. <i>Selesai dengan kompas/</i> Finished with compass</p> <p>2. <i>Selesai dengan Kompas/</i> Finished with Compass</p> <p>3. <i>cukup dengan arahan/</i> enough with direction</p> <p>4. <i>Sudah cukup dengan kompas/</i> it's enough with compass</p> <p>5. <i>Selesai dengan Kompas/</i> Finished with compass</p>
9	Done with the Chart!	<p>1. <i>Selesai dengan peta/</i> Finished with the map</p> <p><i>Selesai dengan Peta/</i> Finished with the Map</p> <p><i>cukup dengan peta/</i> enough with the map</p> <p><i>Sudah cukup dengan peta/</i> it's enough with the map</p> <p><i>Selesai dengan Peta!/</i> Finished with the Map</p>
10	Rowing in Eden	<p>1. <i>Mengarungi Eden/</i> Wading the Eden</p> <p><i>Mendayung di Firdaus/</i> Rowing in Paradise</p> <p><i>berlayar di surga/</i> sailing in Paradise</p> <p><i>Mendayung di firdaus/</i> Rowing in paradise</p> <p><i>Mendayung di Eden/</i> Rowing in Eden</p>
11	Ah - the Sea!	<p>1. <i>Ah - Lautan!/</i> Ah – the Sea!</p> <p><i>Ah - Lautan!!</i>Ah – the Sea!</p> <p><i>ah sang laut/</i> ah the sea</p> <p><i>Ah- samudra!/</i> Ah the Ocean!</p> <p>Ah - Laut!/ Ah - the Sea</p>
12	Might I but moor - tonight	<p>1. <i>Bolehkah aku berlabuh - malam ini/</i> May I anchor – tonight</p> <p><i>Semoga Aku bisa berlabuh - malam ini/</i> Hope I can anchor – tonight</p> <p><i>bolehkah aku berlabuh malam ini/</i> may I anchor tonight</p> <p><i>Aku ingin berlabuh malam ini/</i> I want to anchor tonight</p> <p><i>Mungkin aku menambatkan - malam ini/</i> Maybe I moor – tonight</p>
13	In thee!	<p>1. <i>Di dalam dirimu!/</i> Inside you!</p> <p><i>Di dalammu!</i> Within you!</p> <p><i>Bersamamu!</i> Together with you!</p> <p><i>Padamu!/</i> To you!</p> <p><i>Padamu!/</i> To you!</p>



Based on the examples of students' poem translations presented in Table 3, students generally achieved complete accuracy (Score 3) when the translation followed direct lexical equivalence and retained the original structure. For instance, in the translation of *Wild Nights – By Emily Dickinson* into *Malam-malam Liar* (oleh Emily Dickinson), every lexical element (wild → *liar*, nights → *malam-malam*, and the author attribution) was preserved intact without additions, omissions, or changes in meaning, thereby fully conveying the imagery and message of the source text. Minor distortions (Score 2) occurred when the translation shifted the nuance of meaning while maintaining the main idea—for example, rendering *Wild Nights* as *Malam-malam Membara* (*Burning Nights*), which adds a connotation of fire or heat not explicitly present in the source text, thus introducing an additional emotional interpretation while still allowing the idea of passionate nights to be understood. Significant inaccuracy (Score 1) arose when the main meaning shifted entirely, such as translating 'To a Heart in Port' as *Menuju Pusat Pelabuhan* (*To the Center of the Port*), which eliminates the metaphorical dimension of heart as a symbol of the heart or soul and transforms it into a reference to a physical location, thereby erasing the original emotional depth and imagery. The accuracy score distribution shows 50.39% accurate, 24.55% fairly accurate, and 25.06% inaccurate. The high proportion of Score 1 indicates the need to strengthen skills in understanding metaphors, idioms, and literary symbolism.

In terms of acceptability, high-category translations (Score 3) employ natural Indonesian sentence structures and diction that conform to general linguistic norms, as in 'Ah – the Sea!' rendered as '*Ah, laut!*', with a comma placed according to orthographic rules and the word *laut* (Sea) appropriately fitting both everyday and literary registers. Moderate acceptability (Score 2) is evident when the structure or diction feels unnatural, for example, 'Done with the Chart!' translated as '*Selesai dengan grafik*' (*Finished with the graph*), where the word *grafik* (graph/chart) is typically used in the context of visual data rather than navigation, thus sounding non-idiomatic. Low acceptability (Score 1) arises when word order or diction is unnatural and creates ambiguity, such as 'Rowing in Eden' translated as '*Melayang di Eden*' (*Floating in Eden*), which changes the meaning of rowing into uncontrolled floating and removes the sense of active controllable movement. Regarding readability, a high score (Score 3) is achieved when the translation is concise, clear, and easy to understand, as in 'Ah – the Sea!' rendered as '*Ah, laut!*' (*Ah – the Sea*), which uses a simple structure and familiar vocabulary.

Moderate readability (Score 2) occurs when the reader must exert extra effort to grasp the intended meaning, as in 'Futile the winds' rendered as '*Tak perlu angin*' (*No need winds*), which remains understandable but obscures the poetic sense of futile as 'vain' or 'in vain.' Low readability (Score 1) arises when word order is confusing, for example, 'In thee!' translated as '*Malam ini!*' (*tonight*), which conveys an incorrect meaning and creates confusion, as there is no temporal context in the source text. In terms of poetic quality, a high score (Score 3) preserves the imagery, rhythm, and emotional tone of the source text, as in 'Rowing in Eden' rendered as '*Mendayung di Eden*' (*Rowing in Eden*), which visualizes the act of rowing while retaining Eden as a religious symbol. Moderate poetic quality (Score 2) is seen when imagery is partially conveyed but the sound patterns or symbolism are diminished, such as 'Futile – the winds' translated as '*Stia-sia angin berhembus*' (*Wasted wind blows*), which conveys the meaning but removes the repetition and dramatic pause implied by the dash. Low poetic quality (Score 1) occurs when aesthetic and symbolic elements are lost, for instance, 'Our luxury!' rendered as '*Sesuatu yang berharga bagi kita!*' (*Something valuable for us*), which removes the connotation of exclusivity and the succinct force of the term luxury.

4.2. The Analysis of Students' Translation Quality without AI Assistance

Table 2 in the findings section presents the distribution of students' poem translation quality scores when working without the assistance of AI. The assessment covers four key aspects—accuracy, acceptability, readability, and poeticness—each evaluated on a three-point scale. The data reveal that while a considerable proportion of translations reached moderate to high levels in accuracy, acceptability, and readability, the majority of students struggled significantly with poeticness. This suggests that although students can manage the technical and linguistic dimensions of translation to some extent, they face greater challenges in preserving the artistic and aesthetic qualities of poetry in their target texts.

Based on Table 2 containing poem translation results produced by students without the assistance of AI, the distribution of scores across the four assessment aspects, according to Nababan's theoretical framework and Dastjerdi et al., can be analyzed as follows:

4.2.1. Accuracy

A total of 33.06% (613 data) of the translations were assessed as accurate (Score 3), meaning that one-third of the works successfully maintained full equivalence of meaning between the source and target texts without losing essential elements. However, this proportion is relatively low compared to the ideal quality standard expected in literary translation. The "fairly accurate" category (Score 2) accounted for 20.60% (382 data), generally due to minor shifts in meaning, such as changes in metaphorical nuance or simplification of poetic structures that reduce the richness of imagery. Alarmingly, 46.55% (863 data points) fell into the "inaccurate" category (Score 1), indicating that nearly half of the translations failed to preserve semantic fidelity. According to Nababan, this reflects a low level of competence in understanding context, idioms, and symbolism in poetry, resulting in frequent reduction or significant alteration of the main message.

4.2.2. Acceptability

Only 32.43% (595 data) fell into the "acceptable" category (Score 3), indicating that the target language form is natural and conforms to linguistic norms. A total of 19.84% (364 data) were classified as "fairly acceptable" (Score 2), typically due to less idiomatic diction or rigid sentence structures, although still understandable. Meanwhile, 47.74% (876 data points) were in the "unacceptable" category (Score 1). This high figure indicates that many translations sound awkward or even grammatically incorrect, which, within Nababan's framework, would disrupt reading fluency and hinder acceptance by the target audience.

4.2.3. Readability

High readability (Score 3) was achieved in only 34.76% (635 data points), meaning that less than half of the translations were truly easy to read. The "fairly readable" category (Score 2) accounted for 18.61% (340 data points), generally influenced by long sentences and complex structures that reduce reading fluency. The low category (Score 1) was dominant, at 46.63% (852 data points), indicating that many translations were challenging to understand due to the use of rare vocabulary, convoluted sentence constructions, or ineffective structuring. According to Nababan, such conditions significantly hinder the target readers' comprehension process.

4.2.4. Poeticness

The poetic aspect emerged as the most significant weakness, that is, only 12.33% (233 data) preserved the aesthetic, rhythm, and poetic imagery (Score 3). A total of 14.92% (282 data) scored 2, meaning that some poetic elements were conveyed but lost their emotional force and musicality. Strikingly, 72.75% (1,375 data) failed (Score 1) to maintain the beauty of the language. This indicates

that the majority of students translated literally without employing aesthetic adaptation strategies—such as metaphor equivalence, sound play, or rhythm—which, according to Nababan, are essential in poetry translation.

These findings indicate that poetry translations produced by students without the assistance of AI tend to encounter significant challenges in nearly all aspects, particularly poetic quality and accuracy. The score distribution, dominated by the lowest category, reflects the need to strengthen literary translation competence. Efforts to improve the quality of students' poetry translations without AI support should focus on deepening contextual and idiomatic meaning, training in the selection of poetic diction that is aesthetically equivalent, and applying strategies that maintain a balance between semantic fidelity and linguistic beauty. Such an approach would ensure that translations are not only semantically accurate but also artistically engaging (Alafnan & Alshakhs, 2025; Pudjiati et al 2024). According to Nababan's theory, ideal translation quality requires equivalence of meaning, natural acceptability in the target language, ease of reading, and preservation of aesthetic aspects. The data suggest that without AI assistance, students still struggle to meet all four of these criteria in a balanced manner.

Table 4 shows the examples of students' poetry translations produced without the assistance of AI:

Table 4: Examples of Students' Poem Translations without AI

No.	Source Texts	Target Texts and Back Translations
1	Wild nights-By Emily Dickinson	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Malam – malam Gila (oleh Emily Dickinson)/ Crazy Nights (by Emily Dickinson)</i> 2. <i>Malam malam yang liar/ Nights that are wild</i> 3. <i>Gemerlap Malam/ Glorious Nights</i> 4. <i>Malam - Malam Liar (oleh Emily Dickinson)/ Wild Nights (by Emily Dickinson)</i> 5. <i>Malam – malam yang mencekam (oleh Emily Dickinson)/ The tense night</i>
2	Wild nights - Wild nights!	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Malam-malam gila – Malam-malam gila!/ The crazy nights – The crazy nights</i> 2. <i>Malam-malam yang liar – Malam-malam yang liar!/The wild nights – The wild nights</i> 3. <i>Gemerlap malam – Gemerlap malam/ Glory of the night - Glory of the night</i> 4. <i>Malam-malam liar – Malam-malam liar!! Wild nights - Wild nights!</i> 5. <i>Malam-malam yang mencekam – Malam-malam yang mencekam!! The nights that are tense - The nights that are tense</i>
3	were I with thee	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Dimana aku bersamamu/ where I was with you</i> 2. <i>Seandainya aku bersamamu/ If I were with you</i> 3. <i>Aku bersamamu/ I was with you</i> 4. <i>Malam Dimana aku bersamamu/ The night where I was with you</i> 5. <i>Ketika aku Bersama/ While I was with you</i>
4	Wild nights should be	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. <i>Dimana seharusnya malam-malam gila/ Where the crazy nights should be</i> 2. <i>Malam-malam liar itu seharusnya/ That wild nights should be</i> 3. <i>Kenikmatan kita ialah/ Our pleasure is</i> 4. <i>Malam liar dimana kita mendapatkan waktu kita/ The wild night where we get our time</i>

No.	Source Texts	Target Texts and Back Translations
		5. <i>Seharusnya malam-malam yang berbahaya itu menjadi!</i> The dangerous nights should be
5	Our luxury!	1. <i>Menjadi kemewahan kita!</i> / Become our luxury! 2. <i>Kenyamanan kita!</i> / Our comfort! 3. <i>Gemerlap malam!</i> / Glory of the night 4. <i>Kemewahan kita!</i> / Our luxury 5. <i>Kemewahan kita!</i> / Our luxury!
6	Futile - the winds -	1. <i>Angin - berhembus!</i> / Wind - blows 2. <i>Sia-sia - Angin itu!</i> / Useless - That wind 3. <i>Sang angin terikat!</i> / The wind is tied 4. <i>Tak ada artinya ... angin itu!</i> / Meaningless ... that wind 5. <i>Sia-sia - semua angin itu!</i> / Useless - all that wind
7	To a Heart in port	1. <i>Ke hati di Pelabuhan!</i> / To the heart in Port 2. <i>Sebagai sambungan dalam hati!</i> / As the connection in heart 3. <i>Secara sia-sia di pelabuhan!</i> / Uselessly in port 4. <i>Untuk hati yang berlabuh di dermaga!</i> / For the heart thyat is anchored in a dock 5. <i>Menuju pusat Pelabuhan -!</i> / Towards the center of the Port
8	Done with the Compass	1. <i>Menyudahi Kompas -!</i> / Finishing Kompas 2. <i>Terbaca oleh Kompas -!</i> / Read by Kompas 3. <i>Cukup dengan Kompas!</i> / Enough with Kompas 4. <i>Telah muak kepada Kompas!</i> / Been sick of Kompas 5. <i>Selesai dengan Kompas -!</i> / Finished with Kompas
9	Done with the Chart!	1. <i>Menyudahi Rencana!</i> / Finishing the plan! 2. <i>Terbaca oleh peta!</i> / Read by the map! 3. <i>Cukup dengan perhitungan!</i> / It's enough with counting 4. <i>Muak kepada peta!</i> / Been sick of the map! 5. <i>Selesai dengan peta -!</i> / Finished with the map --
10	Rowing in Eden	1. <i>Mendayung di Eden -!</i> / Rowing in Eden 2. <i>Berakhir di Eden -!</i> / Ended in Eden 3. <i>Menyusuri surga!</i> / Going along the paradise 4. <i>Mendayung di Eden, surganya...!</i> / Rowing in Eden, the Paradise 5. <i>Berbaris di Eden -!</i> / Marching in Eden
11	Ah - the Sea!	1. <i>Ah - Lautan!</i> / Ah - the Sea! 2. <i>Ah - sebuah laut!</i> / Ah - a sea! 3. <i>Ah - sang Laut!</i> / Ah - the Sea! 4. <i>Ah! Lautan Samudera!</i> / Ah - the Sea Ocean! 5. <i>Ah - Laut!</i> / Ah - the Sea!
12	Might I but moor - tonight	1. <i>Mungkin aku menambatkanmu - malam ini -!</i> / Maybe I anchor you - tonight- 2. <i>Mungkinkah saya menambat - malam ini -!</i> / Maybe I anchor - tonight- 3. <i>Namun malam ini kuterikat!</i> / But tonight I am tied 4. <i>Mungkin aku tidak akan berlabuh, tidak malam ini ...!</i> / Maybe I will not anchor, not tonight... 5. <i>Mungkinkah aku bersandar - malam ini -!</i> / May I lean back - tonight
13	In thee!	1. <i>Dirimu!</i> / In you 2. <i>Padamu!</i> / To you 3. <i>Bersamamu!</i> / With you 4. <i>Tapi dirimu, sayangku!</i> / But you. my dear. 5. <i>Dikau!</i> / You

Based on the examples of students' poetry translations without AI assistance presented in Table 4, students generally achieved high accuracy when lexical equivalence and sentence structure were preserved without adding to or subtracting from the meaning. An ideal example is 'Wild nights – Wild nights!' translated as '*Malam-malam liar - Malam-malam liar!*' (Wild Nights-Wild Nights), in which each semantic element (wild → *liar*, nights → *malam-malam*) is fully retained without distortion. Minor shifts in meaning occur when additional nuances not present in the source text are introduced, such as translating 'Wild nights' as '*Malam-malam yang mencekam*' (threatening nights), which replaces the sense of passion or freedom with a tone of fear. Significant inaccuracy arises when the main meaning changes entirely, as in 'To a Heart in port' translated as '*Menuju pusat Pelabuhan*' (Towards the center of port), which removes the metaphorical sense of heart as a symbol of the heart or soul, replacing it with a physical reference and thereby losing the poetic imagery.

High acceptability is observed in translations that follow the natural norms of Indonesian, such as 'Ah – the Sea!' rendered as '*Ah – Laut!*' (Ah – the Sea), with a simple structure and correct punctuation so that the text reads naturally. Moderate acceptability appears when word choice or structure is less idiomatic yet still understandable, as in 'Done with the Chart!' translated as '*Selesai dengan grafik*' (Finished with the chart), which sounds awkward because *grafik* (chart) is more commonly associated with visual data than a navigation chart in a poetic context. Low acceptability is found in translations that feel awkward or deviate from target language norms, such as "Rowing in Eden" rendered as '*Melayang di Eden*' (floating in Eden), which changes the active motion of rowing into uncontrolled passive drifting, thereby distorting the original meaning.

High readability is achieved when sentence structures are short and clear, as in 'Ah – the Sea!' rendered as '*Ah – Laut!*', which can be immediately understood without complex interpretation. In contrast, moderate readability arises when readers require some additional effort to grasp the meaning, for example, 'Futile – the winds –' translated as '*Tak perlu angin*' (no need of winds), which obscures the meaning of futile as *sia-sia* (wasted), requiring the reader to infer the intended sense. Low readability occurs when the translation is confusing or misleading, as in 'In thee!' rendered as '*Malam ini!*' (tonight)', which is not only a mistranslation but also introduces a temporal context absent from the source text.

High poetic quality is achieved when aesthetic elements, imagery, and rhythm are preserved, such as 'Rowing in Eden' translated as '*Mendayung di Eden*' (Rowing in Eden), which retains the visual image of movement and the religious symbolism of Eden. Moderate poetic quality occurs when some imagery is conveyed, but the aesthetic force is diminished, for example, 'Futile – the winds –' rendered as '*Sia-sia angin berhembus*' (Wasteful the winds blow), which conveys the meaning but loses the dramatic effect of the dash in the original text. Low poetic quality is seen when literal translation sacrifices linguistic beauty, as in 'Our luxury!' rendered as '*Sesuatu yang berharga bagi kita!*' (The valuable thing for us), which removes the sense of exclusivity and the rhetorical force of the word luxury.

While the quantitative data unequivocally show students translating with AI assistance achieving higher scores across accuracy (50.39%), acceptability (51.14%), and readability (52.76%) compared to students translating without AI assistance (33.06%, 32.43%, and 34.76% respectively), this disparity should be interpreted beyond simple numerical superiority. The improvements suggest that AI tools, when used by students, effectively serve as a cognitive prosthetic, assisting in managing the foundational linguistic and grammatical complexities of translation. This assistance enables students to produce more lexically accurate and grammatically sound target texts, reducing the burden of surface-level errors and enhancing comprehensibility. However, the persistent struggle with poeticness, even with AI assistance (24.34% vs. 12.33%), indicates that while AI assistance can

streamline basic linguistic tasks, its utility in cultivating deeper interpretive or creative translation skills in students is limited. This highlights a critical area for pedagogical intervention.

Overall, students without AI assistance were able to maintain accuracy, acceptability, and readability in more than half of the translations; however, poetic quality emerged as the main weakness, with nearly half of the translations failing to preserve aesthetic elements. According to Nababan's theory, improving poem translation quality requires deepening the understanding of contextual and idiomatic meaning, practicing the selection of poetic diction that is aesthetically equivalent, and adopting strategies that maintain a balance between semantic fidelity and linguistic beauty.

The marked discrepancy between students' improved performance in accuracy and readability with AI assistance and their continued struggle with poeticness lies in the fundamental nature of the assistance provided by AI tools and the inherent demands of poetic translation. When students utilize AI tools, these systems offer immediate access to vast linguistic databases, allowing for rapid identification of lexical equivalents and syntactically sound sentence structures. This capacity significantly reduces the cognitive burden on student translators, enabling them to produce translations that are more semantically faithful (50.39% accuracy) and grammatically fluent (52.76% readability) by mitigating common linguistic errors. The AI essentially functions as an advanced, always-available linguistic guide, helping students navigate the complexities of foreign language syntax and vocabulary.

However, poeticness—which demands a nuanced understanding of metaphor, rhythm, emotional resonance, and cultural connotations—remains a domain where AI assistance provides minimal benefit to students. AI tools, operating on statistical probabilities, tend to offer linguistically 'safe' or literal translations, often flattening the multi-layered meanings and aesthetic devices essential to poetry. While the AI can provide a grammatically correct translation of a line, it cannot interpret the emotional depth of a metaphor or recreate a specific rhythmic effect. Students, even when presented with AI-generated outputs, still require sophisticated human judgment to identify and infuse the text with these subjective qualities. The lower poeticness scores, even with AI assistance (24.34%), demonstrate that the tools aid in linguistic execution but do not inherently foster the creative, interpretive, and culturally sensitive decision-making crucial for poetic artistry. The challenge for students shifts from pure linguistic generation to critically evaluating and artfully post-editing AI suggestions, a skill many novice translators still need to develop."

These findings, interpreted through established theoretical frameworks, offer a nuanced understanding of AI's role as an assistance tool in student poetry translation. Nababan's (2012) framework for translation quality (accuracy, acceptability, readability) reveals that students leveraging AI assistance can significantly enhance their output's technical quality. The AI effectively helps students achieve translations that are semantically accurate and linguistically acceptable, boosting their scores in these foundational areas. However, the persistent low poeticness (24.34%), even with AI assistance, signals a critical gap in fulfilling the aesthetic dimension crucial for high-quality literary translation within Nababan's broader interpretive schema.

Dastjerdi et al.'s (2008) model of poetic discourse further elucidates this. While AI tools can assist students in handling the linguistic features of a poem, they inherently struggle with aiding the student in discerning and recreating the crucial 'extra-textual' elements—such as rhythm, imagery, and emotional resonance—that constitute poetic essence. The AI's literal-leaning suggestions often result in translations that, even when post-edited by students, fall short of capturing the rich, multi-layered quality Dastjerdi advocates for.

Pedagogically, these results underscore the complex role of AI within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) for student translators. AI acts as an effective scaffold for students within their ZPD for linguistic and grammatical tasks, allowing them to achieve accuracy and readability outcomes (e.g., from 33.06% accuracy without AI to 50.39% with AI) that might otherwise be beyond their current independent capabilities. The AI functions as a 'more capable peer' for these foundational skills. However, for the development of advanced literary sensibility, critical evaluation of aesthetic choices, and creative interpretation—all essential for poeticness—AI provides limited scaffolding. To truly advance students through their ZPD in poetic translation, human mentorship and active engagement in tasks that require subjective judgment and artistic decision-making remain indispensable, preventing students from passively accepting AI's literal outputs and fostering genuine creative growth.

5. Conclusion

This study confirms that poetry translation poses unique challenges, requiring a delicate balance between semantic fidelity and the preservation of aesthetic qualities in the target text. Students using AI assistance achieved a majority of high scores (over 50%) in accuracy, acceptability, and readability—substantially outperforming their independent efforts (around 33%)—as detailed in Table 1 and Table 2. However, poeticness remained a weak area for both groups, with only about a quarter of AI-assisted translations and one in eight independent ones reaching high quality. These patterns highlight AI's role in bolstering technical proficiency among students while underscoring persistent challenges in aesthetic preservation, regardless of tool use. These results suggest that while AI can serve as an effective tool to enhance technical consistency and linguistic clarity, it is still limited in capturing the creative, emotional, and rhythmic dimensions essential to poetic translation. Therefore, the integration of AI in poetry translation should be complemented by human expertise, particularly in the areas of diction selection, metaphor adaptation, and rhythm preservation, to ensure both semantic precision and aesthetic richness.

Despite the study's contributions, several limitations warrant consideration. Methodologically, the evaluation relied on six experienced raters using a 1–3 scale, which, while standardized, may introduce inter-rater variability, particularly for subjective aspects like poeticness where aesthetic judgments differ. The focus on a single English poem ("Wild Nights" by Emily Dickinson) translated into Indonesian limits generalizability to other poetic forms, languages, or cultural contexts. Additionally, the sample comprised sixth-semester students from four Indonesian universities, potentially overlooking variations in proficiency or exposure among diverse EFL populations. Regarding AI assistance, the study did not track specific tool usage (e.g., prompt engineering or editing extent), which could influence outcomes.

These limitations notwithstanding, the findings carry significant implications across pedagogy, theory, and methodology. Pedagogically, the results underscore AI's potential as a supportive tool in EFL translation curricula, particularly for enhancing students' accuracy and readability—technical skills that build confidence among novices. However, the limited gains in poeticness suggest educators should integrate AI with targeted interventions, such as collaborative workshops on metaphor adaptation and cultural nuance, to foster creative independence and prevent over-reliance. In Indonesian higher education contexts like Universitas Dian Nuswantoro, this hybrid approach could align with the goals of developing students' linguistic and artistic potentials, promoting balanced skill growth.

Theoretically, the study extends Nababan's (2012) TQA framework and Dastjerdi et al.'s (2008) poetic discourse model by demonstrating AI's assistive role in achieving semantic fidelity while revealing gaps in aesthetic transfer. This supports calls for updated models incorporating digital tools,

emphasizing human-AI collaboration in literary translation theory. For instance, future refinements could quantify "poeticness" through multimodal assessments (e.g., reader response surveys) to better capture emotional resonance.

Methodologically, the descriptive quantitative design proved effective for score distributions but could be enhanced with qualitative elements, such as think-aloud protocols from students during AI interactions, to explore decision-making processes. This mixed-methods evolution would provide richer insights into AI's impact on translation cognition, informing robust designs for similar studies in digital humanities.

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The authors state that there is no conflict of interest.

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