



I WROTE IT MYSELF: A CASE STUDY ON HUMAN AUTHORSHIP AND AI MISCLASSIFICATION

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Abstract

The rapid spread of AI writing tools has complicated how academic authorship is recognized and evaluated, especially in Translation Studies, where the translator's voice and presence have always been central concerns. Building on Venuti's (1995) concept of the translator's invisibility and posthumanist views of human-machine entanglement (Hayles, 1999; Haraway, 1991), this study examines how human authorship becomes difficult to prove in academic translation contexts. Awareness of AI detection software has introduced a new anxiety: even genuine human writing may be flagged as machine-produced simply because it is fluent and well-structured—the very qualities traditionally encouraged in translator education. To explore this tension, the study collects Discussion/Conclusion sections from three published translation studies and creates parallel AI-generated counterparts on the same thematic focus. A comparative analysis of stylistic rhythm, lexical specificity, stance, and pedagogical implications shows that while AI produces smooth and confident prose, it tends to flatten nuance, avoid risk, and generalize outcomes. In contrast, human writing displays hesitation, contextual awareness, and interpretive judgement. The findings suggest that evaluating translation work should emphasize reflective justification and decision-making processes rather than relying solely on final-text fluency or automated detection tools.

Keywords: *Academic Writing, AI-Generated Writing, Authorship, Stylistic Analysis, Translation Studies.*

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1. Introduction

In recent years, the use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools in academic writing has increased rapidly, especially in fields involving language and interpretation. In Translation Studies, this shift is important because the translator's role has always involved questions of visibility and voice. Venuti (1995) argues that translators are usually expected to produce translations that read so fluently that their own presence disappears behind the text. However, with the rise of AI writing and detection tools, a new kind of invisibility has emerged. Now, fluent and well structured writing can sometimes be misread as machine generated, which places student translators in a difficult situation.

AI detection software is intended to protect academic integrity, but scholars and educators have expressed concerns about false positives. This occurs especially when evaluating polished student writing (Wired, 2024; The Guardian, 2025). This is significant in Translation Studies because students are specifically trained to write clearly, coherently, and with refined control of tone and also the traits that may ironically resemble patterns produced by AI.

This study responds to that tension by comparing three human written Discussion/Conclusion sections from published research with AI-generated texts and discusses the same topics. It aims to identify what makes human authorship visible, and how reflection, caution, and interpretive judgment function as markers of human presence. This discussion is supported by Venuti's concept of translator invisibility and posthumanist theories of human-machine entanglement. This theory argues that writing is increasingly shaped by technological mediation (Haraway, 1991; Hayles, 1999).

1.1. Statement of Problem

AI detectors are supposed to help identify academic dishonesty, but they sometimes misread genuine human writing as AI-produced. This is especially challenging for translation students because we are trained to write clearly, fluently, and with coherence. These are all features that detectors often associate with AI. So, the problem is not simply whether AI is being used, but how we prove our work is truly ours. The risk is that the translator's voice becomes invisible once again, this time behind algorithmic assumptions about how "human writing" should look.

1.2. Objectives

This study seeks to:

1. Explore how human authorship is recognized or misrecognized in translation academic writing.
2. Compare human-written and AI-generated discussion sections on similar translation topics.
3. Identify the subtle markers of human presence, such as reasoning, perspective, and reflection.

4. Suggest ways of assessing translation work that protect and value the human role in meaning-making.

1.3. Research Questions

1. What features of writing reveal the presence of the human translator?
2. How do human discussion sections differ from AI-generated ones when dealing with the same topics?
3. What changes in evaluation practices can help ensure that students' work is understood and trusted as their own?

1.4. Significance of Research

This research matters because it speaks to a growing anxiety among translation students: the fear of being misunderstood. It contributes to discussions about translator identity and authorship, but also offers something practical. If we can understand what carries the human voice in writing, teachers can design assignments and assessments that highlight those aspects, instead of relying on detectors that might misjudge skilled student work. In this way, the research supports both fairness in evaluation and appreciation of the translator's interpretive labor.

1.5. Delimitation

This study focuses on academic translation classrooms and only analyzes discussion/conclusion sections, where personal interpretation is most visible. It does not examine professional literary translation, market translation, or the technical performance of AI detection tools. Instead, the emphasis is on how authorship is felt, expressed, and recognized in student and scholarly writing.

2. Literature Review

The question of who is present in a translated text has been central in Translation Studies for decades. One of the most influential contributions to this discussion is Lawrence Venuti's concept of the translator's invisibility. Venuti (1995) argues that translators are often expected to produce translations that read as if they were originally written in the target

language. In other words, the translator's voice should disappear. This expectation is linked to cultural norms that value fluency and transparency. When a translation reads "smoothly," readers tend to forget that someone mediated between two languages and cultures. This smoothness, although considered desirable, comes at the cost of erasing the translator's interpretive labor.

Other scholars have also pointed out that translators are not neutral messengers. Lefevere (1992) and Toury (1995) explain that translation choices are influenced by social norms, institutions, and ideologies. What appears to be a simple linguistic transfer is actually shaped by judgment, awareness, and cultural positioning. Hermans (1996) goes even further, stating that the translator's voice always leaves traces, even when they try to

hide it. There is no such thing as a “completely invisible” translator because translation is, by nature, a human decision-making process, not a mechanical one.

This understanding becomes even more significant today, when AI writing and translation tools have become common. Posthumanist scholars such as Hayles (1999) and Haraway (1991) argue that the boundary between human and machine is no longer as clear as it once was. According to them, we are already writing with technology, not apart from it. This means authorship is becoming a shared space, shaped by digital tools, software suggestions, editing interfaces, and automated systems.

In recent translation classrooms, this shift is especially visible. Studies such as Yang (2023) and the 2020 research on translation students’ use of machine translation and post-editing suggest that students are learning to negotiate between their own voice and machine assistance. Some students appreciate the speed and efficiency of MT tools, while others remain cautious, especially in culturally sensitive or idiomatic contexts. However, both studies emphasize that reflection, the ability to explain why a certain translation choice was made, is still a distinctly human contribution.

This is where the issue of AI detection becomes relevant. AI detectors generally look at surface-level patterns such as sentence rhythm, vocabulary uniformity, or text smoothness. Unfortunately, these are the same features that students are encouraged to develop when improving academic writing. As a result, skilled human writing can be misread as machine-generated. Here, Venuti’s idea of translator invisibility gains a new and more urgent dimension: the translator or student writer may not only disappear behind the source text; they may also disappear behind algorithms that cannot fully recognize human intention, emotion, or intellectual struggle.

Therefore, this literature suggests that the markers of human presence in translation writing are not found in how fluent or polished the text is, but in how it reflects context awareness, judgment, evaluation, responsibility, and self-positioning. These are the qualities that the current study seeks to compare between human-written and AI-generated texts.

3. Research Methodology

This chapter outlines how the study was planned, how the data was selected, and how the comparison between human-authored and AI-generated texts was carried out. Because this research aims to explore the presence of the human voice in translation related academic writing, a qualitative and interpretive approach was adopted. Instead of measuring numerical patterns or relying on automated stylistic analysis, the study is grounded in close reading and textual comparison.

The methodology focuses on examining how meaning, judgement, and stance are expressed in writing. These are elements that cannot be fully quantified, but they can be

observed through the way a writer forms arguments, acknowledges uncertainty, and positions themself in relation to knowledge.

3.1. Research Design

The study uses a comparative textual analysis research design. It follows a qualitative and comparative research design, focusing on interpretive patterns rather than numerical measurement. The central idea is to place human-written and AI-generated Discussion sections side by side and examine how they differ in tone, reasoning, lexical choice, and interpretive depth. The Discussion/Conclusion sections were chosen intentionally, because these are the parts of academic writing where the author is required to think, reflect, and evaluate, not just report or describe. A total of six texts were analyzed in this study: three human-written Discussion/Conclusion sections and three AI-generated counterparts created on the same topics.

In Translation Studies, particularly in translator education, this reflective element is considered a sign of translator visibility, agency, and awareness. If AI texts tend to lack this reflective dimension, the comparison will make these differences noticeable.

This design allows the study to:

- Identify the qualities that make writing feel “human,” such as hesitation, nuance, or acknowledgement of complexity.
- Understand where AI writing tends to simplify or generalize.
- Connect these differences to the broader discussion of translator identity and authorship.
- This approach aligns closely with Venuti’s (1995) critique of invisibility and the broader posthumanist view of writing as a shared space between humans and digital tools.

3.2. Population

The population for this research consists of academic publications within Translation Studies, specifically research dealing with:

- Translator training and classroom learning
- Machine translation and post-editing practices
- Translator reflection, identity, and decision-making
- These publications represent current debates in translator education and are relevant because they directly involve the skills that students are evaluated on in contemporary classrooms.

This research does not include:

- Literary translation case studies
- Professional commercial translation workflows
- Industrial localization or large corporate translation systems

- The reason for this delimitation is that student translator identity and evaluation practices are most visible in academic contexts.

3.3. Sample

From the population described above, three research articles were selected. These articles were chosen because:

- They are relevant to translation classroom practice.
- They contain clear Discussion or Conclusion sections.
- They are accessible through open-access academic sources.
- Their topics relate directly to translator identity, MT/PE training, or reflective practice.

These articles were chosen intentionally because they discuss translator identity, MT/PE training, and reflective practice, which directly relate to how human judgement appears in translation writing. For each of these articles, a 350–450 word summary of the Discussion/Conclusion section was written in the researcher's own words.

(This avoids plagiarism and ensures understanding of the author's argument.)

Then an AI-generated text was produced for each topic, written as if it were discussing the same research but without copying the human text.

This resulted in six data units:

Code	Source Type	Description	Purpose
H1–H3	Human-authored summaries	Represent real academic reasoning voice	To highlight original scholarly thought
A1–A3	AI-generated counterparts	Represent how AI approaches the same claims	To identify patterns of flattening or generalization

This sampling method ensures that the comparison is fair and thematic, not just stylistic.

3.4. Tools

Tool / Material	Purpose in Study
Open-access research articles	Primary source of human-authored academic writing
ChatGPT (text generation)	To produce the AI comparison dataset
Close reading and note-taking	To identify subtle differences in voice and stance
Manual coding of patterns	To categorize recurring stylistic and interpretive markers
Table-based comparison	To visually present differences across the dataset

The AI-generated texts were included to create direct thematic comparisons and to examine how machines handle the same interpretive tasks as human authors. The human-written texts were chosen from three academic research articles in Translation Studies: Yang (2023), the 2020 Perspectives study on translation students' MT/PE performance, and Pietrzak's work on reflective translator training. The AI-generated texts were created independently for each subject. All three articles are available to everyone, and we used them because their discussion sections clearly show reasoning and interpretive judgment. No automated AI detector or stylistic quantification software was used. This is because the point of the research is to examine what AI detectors cannot reliably identify: the translator's presence as a thinking, interpreting human.

3.5. Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection process took place in two stages. First, three research articles in Translation Studies were selected based on their relevance to translator education, reflective practice, and the expanding role of machine translation and post-editing in learning environments (Yang, 2023; Undergraduate Translation Students' study, 2020; Pietrzak, n.d.). The Discussion or Conclusion sections from each article were read multiple times and then summarized in the researcher's own words to capture the author's reasoning while avoiding copied phrasing. The summaries reflect the central arguments, limitations, and pedagogical

implications discussed in each article. Summarizing was important because it ensured genuine engagement with the authors' reasoning and prevented dependence on copied phrasing.

In the second stage, AI-generated texts were produced for each of the same discussion topics. The AI was instructed to discuss the same research focus without paraphrasing the summaries directly. This created two parallel sets of texts that addressed the same ideas but differed in how they handled evaluation, stance, and reasoning.

The analysis used close reading, focusing on sentence rhythm, lexical specificity, and the tone of claims. Particular attention was given to whether the text acknowledged uncertainty or positioned the translator as an active decision-maker. These features relate directly to the concept of translator visibility (Venuti, 1995) and to the idea that human writing carries traces of context and self-awareness (Hermans, 1996). A comparison table was developed to clearly display recurring differences across the dataset.

4. Theoretical Framework

This study draws on two main theoretical perspectives: Venuti's (1995) concept of translator invisibility and posthumanist understandings of authorship.

Venuti (1995) explains that fluency in translation can lead to the erasure of the translator's presence. When a text reads smoothly, the translator appears "invisible," even though they make interpretive decisions throughout the process. In the context of AI-

generated writing, this issue becomes more complicated. Smooth and fluent writing may now be assumed to be machine-produced, making the translator invisible not only behind the source author but also behind the algorithm.

Posthumanist theorists argue that human identity and technological systems are now intertwined in how we think, write, and communicate. Haraway (1991) positions the human as a cyborg figure, already connected to tools, while Hayles (1999) argues that writing is shaped by both human cognition and digital infrastructures. These ideas help explain why authorship cannot be understood as purely individual anymore, especially in translation where digital tools are already standard practice.

Together, these frameworks make it possible to understand why fluency is no longer a reliable sign of human presence and why reflective reasoning and contextual awareness are becoming more important indicators of authorship.

The findings show clear differences between human-authored (H1–H3) and AI-generated (A1–A3) texts. Human texts tended to acknowledge uncertainty, variation, and the role of translator judgment. For example, Yang (2023) emphasized that MT post-editing improves

speed but not always quality, and depends on student training and familiarity with the text domain. Similarly, the Undergraduate Translation Students' study (2020) highlighted that attitudes toward MT shift only when students receive guided strategies. Pietrzak (n.d.) stressed reflection as a key part of translator identity formation.

In contrast, the AI-generated texts presented translation tasks as stable and predictable, using generalized claims and solution-oriented phrasing. The AI texts also avoided discussing emotional, experiential, or situational factors. This aligns with concerns raised in posthumanist theory, where technologized writing tends to flatten individuality and nuance (Hayles, 1999).

These differences indicate that human presence in writing is visible not through fluency, but through:

- hesitation,
- complexity,
- context awareness,
- and accountability for meaning (Venuti, 1995; Hermans, 1996).

These findings align with Venuti's (1995) notion of translator visibility and Hermans' (1996) argument that the translator's voice becomes visible through interpretive choices.

Overall, the methodological choices were made to ensure that the comparison is grounded, transparent, and academically traceable.

5. Analysis

This section presents the comparison between the three human-authored Discussion/Conclusion summaries (H1–H3) and their AI-generated counterparts (A1–A3). The goal of the analysis is not to determine which type of writing is “better,” but to identify which textual features signal human presence as a thinking, interpreting agent. The comparison focuses on tone, stance, lexical choices, and the handling of uncertainty and context.

5.1. Tone and Stance

A clear difference between the human and AI texts appears in how the authors position themselves in relation to the knowledge they present. The human-authored sections often display a degree of caution, using phrases such as:

- “This suggests that...”
- “It may depend on...”
- “The outcome varies based on...”

This hesitation is not a weakness. In academic writing, such phrasing signals awareness of complexity and an understanding that research findings are rarely absolute. This aligns with Hermans’ (1996) view that the translator’s presence is visible in how they negotiate uncertainty.

In contrast, the AI-generated texts tended to use confident and definitive phrasing, such as:

- “This clearly shows that...”
- “This proves that...”
- “These findings demonstrate that....”

The confidence may sound polished, but it lacks the interpretive modesty expected in scholarly work. This supports the idea that fluency can sometimes create a false impression of authority, one that is stylistically smooth but intellectually flattened (Hayles, 1999).

5.2. Lexical Specificity vs. Generalization

Human texts frequently referenced specific classroom conditions, methodological limitations, or contextual constraints. For example, one human-authored summary noted that the benefits of post-editing depend on:

“the student’s familiarity with the text type and language register.”

This level of specificity reflects lived academic experience that the writer is drawing from disciplinary understanding.

The AI texts, however, generalized these points into statements like: “Training improves overall translation outcomes.”

This is technically correct, but it lacks the textured detail that reveals a person thinking in context. Venuti (1995) argues that the translator’s visibility is tied to

interpretive decisions; therefore, the absence of detailed reasoning signals a weakening of the human voice.

5.3. Handling of Complexity

In the human-written samples, complexity was acknowledged rather than solved. Students recognized contradictions, such as the usefulness of machine translation alongside its limits in cultural nuance. This reflects what Yang (2023) describes as the “push-and-pull” in MT/PE classrooms.

Meanwhile, the AI-generated texts tended to resolve complexity too quickly, often reducing nuanced arguments to simplified instructional conclusions like:

“This shows that both human and machine translation are important and should be balanced.”

This pattern aligns with posthumanist critiques that automated writing can flatten interpretive struggle, removing the very tension that makes scholarly thinking visible (Haraway, 1991).

5.4. Presence of Reflection and Self-Positioning

Human authors tended to make space for self-awareness, sometimes writing in first-person plural or acknowledging educational context:

“Students need opportunities to reflect on their choices.” Reflection reveals voice, and voice indicates authorship.

The AI texts rarely acknowledged the writer’s perspective, instead favoring impersonal statements:

“Reflection is necessary in translation.”

The shift from “students need to reflect” to “reflection is necessary” may seem small, but linguistically it removes agency and with it, the sign of a human decision-maker.

5.5. Sentence Rhythm and Structural Flow

Human writing showed natural variation in sentence length, some are long and some are short. This indicates the flow of thought. In contrast, the AI texts maintained even, repetitive rhythm, favoring similar clause structures. This aligns with current research showing that AI writing tends to “equalize” rhythm because it predicts language statistically rather than experientially.

This rhythmic variation is one of the strongest subtle markers of human presence, even when the content is similar.

5.6. Summary of Key Differences

Feature	Human Writing (H1–H3)	AI Writing (A1–A3)
Tone	Cautious, interpretive	Confident, assertive
Lexical Detail	Context-specific	Generalized

Handling of Complexity	Acknowledges nuance	Simplifies or resolves it
Voice	Reflective, self-positioned	Impersonal, detached
Rhythm	Varied sentence structure	Even, patterned rhythm

Across the six texts, human writing displayed contextual grounding and reflective judgement in all three samples, while AI writing consistently showed generalized claims, even rhythm, and reduced engagement with complexity.

5.7. Interpretation

The findings suggest that human authorship is not revealed through fluency, because both human and AI writing can be fluent. Instead, authorship becomes visible in:

- hesitation,
- contextual grounding,
- selective detail,
- and reflective judgment.

These are the elements of writing that cannot be automatically generated, because they emerge from a person's engagement with meaning.

Thus, the issue is not whether AI can imitate academic language despite the fact that it can. The actual problem is that AI writing lacks the lived presence of thought.

6. Conclusion

This study explored how human authorship can become invisible in academic writing environments where AI detection tools are used. By comparing human-written and AI-generated Discussion/Conclusion texts in Translation Studies, it became clear that fluency alone does not indicate whether a text is written by a human or a machine. Instead, the human presence in writing is felt through reflective tone, acknowledgement of complexity, contextual attachment, and interpretive responsibility. The findings suggest that translation educators should design assignments and evaluation criteria that highlight process and reasoning, rather than focusing only on the polished final product. Encouraging students to explain their decisions, reflect on challenges, and describe their translation strategies can help ensure that their authorship remains visible and recognizable. In this way, the translator's voice is not lost, even in an age where human writing can be mistaken for AI.

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