

VARIATIONAL TRANSLATION THEORY-BASED PEDAGOGY FOR MACHINE TRANSLATION POST-EDITING: A CASE STUDY

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ABSTRACT

In the AI era, Machine Translation Post-editing has become the dominant workflow paradigm, yet there is still a lack of a systematic framework for cultivating post-editing competence in college English translation teaching. Based on Variational Translation Theory, the study proposes an innovative pedagogical model for machine translation post-editing in college English translation teaching. Addressing the current absence of systematic pedagogical frameworks, the model shifts from “error-correction-focused” to “variational translation-oriented,” prioritizing competence at syntactic and discourse levels. Through two controlled experiments with the 2023 cohort (N=117) utilizing neural machine translation and the 2024 cohort (N=181) employing large language models, the findings reveal: (1) altered translation (改译, *gaiyi*), edited translation (编译, *bianyi*), and annotated translation (阐释, *chanyi*) were the most frequently utilized; (2) AI-assisted instruction should shift its focus from lexical correction to syntactic restructuring and discourse optimization. The research has established Variational Translation Theory as a foundational framework for MTPE pedagogy, potentially transforming conventional practices in college English translation teaching through the theoretical perspectives and practical methodology.

Keywords: *Variational Translation Theory, Machine Translation Post-Editing, Pedagogical Model, College English Translation Teaching.*

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This chapter is a part of the book, '*Variational Translation: Practical and Theoretical Explorations*' edited by Dr. Chuanmao Tian, Dr. Juntao Deng and Dr. Zhonglian Huang.

ISBN: 978-93-49926-76-9 (ebk); ISBN: 978-93-49926-38-7 (hbk); ISBN: 978-93-49926-07-3 (pbk)

The ebook and print version of this book are available at:
<https://dx.doi.org/10.46679/9789349926769>

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