

**Translating Culture-Specific Items (CSIs) as a Conundrum for Iranian
M.A. Translation Students: Considering the Level of Study**

Hamidreza Abdi

hooman_78h@yahoo.com

Received: 2019-01-13

Accepted: 2019-03-18

Abstract

This study empirically investigated translation procedures employed by M.A. translation students for translating culture-specific items (CSIs) from English into Persian. To do so, 50 M.A. translation students were randomly selected and equally divided into the freshmen and senior students. They were asked to translate 20 statements collected from *the Gypsy and the Virgin* (Lawrence, 1992). The statements contained CSIs and classified based on Newmark's (1988) categorization of cultural items. Moreover, his taxonomy of translation procedures was adopted as a valuable criterion for data analysis. The findings showed that from translation procedures presented by Newmark, the senior M.A. translation students employed literal translation, transference, descriptive equivalent, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent, and compensation strategies which literal translation was used more and cultural equivalent was employed less than others. By contrast, the freshmen M.A. translation students applied only 5 translation procedures out of 17, including literal translation, transference, descriptive equivalent, functional equivalent, and cultural equivalent. Literal translation and cultural equivalent were the most/least used translation procedures by the freshmen students. In addition, the freshmen and senior students adopted source text (ST) oriented strategy on macro level. Furthermore, the independent sample *t* test was performed to find out which group was more successful in transferring the same meaning of cultural items to the target text (TT). The findings indicated that the senior students produced higher quality translations. In conclusion, the results showed the influence of the level of study of the M.A. translation students on the translation qualities they produced, whereas it had no effect on the types of translation strategies they employed.

Keywords: Translation, Culture-Specific Items (CSIs), Translation procedures

1. Introduction

Translation plays the main role in introducing the history and in transferring the culture of a country. It is also regarded as one important method to communicate between countries.

Khammyseh (2015) argued that translation is one of the traditional communicating methods between countries all around the world. Jothiraj (2004) stated that, “translation plays an important role in the inter-lingual process of communication” (p. 1). In the same context, Schäffner (2003) discussed that within Translation Studies (TS), there is an indication of communication in most definitions given to the translation. It alludes to the close relationship between translation and communication. She further stated:

Even if translation is not explicitly defined as communication, aspects of communication can be inferred from the definitions, especially in references to functions of texts, text receivers, and their use of texts for communicative acts. (p. 87)

Among different types of texts, literary texts have an important function in representing the culture of a country as well as in creating better communication between societies. Literary texts contain many linguistic, social, and cultural aspects of human lives and, thus, it can be said that literary translation is one of the best methods of communication across cultures (Guerra, 2012). Translating a literary text poses serious problems for a translator because it includes different types of cultural issues. This is due to the fact that each society has its own cultural items specific to its language, referring to a concept, which is different from one language to another (Maasoum & Davtalab, 2011). Moreover, those intended cultural items may contain the history, beliefs, and thoughts of a society. In this way, the translator needs to be completely familiar with two cultural contexts, and that "he requires a thorough knowledge not only of the two languages involved but also of the cultures behind them" (Cenac, 2009, p. 6). That is to say, one of those problems is the context in which the cultural item is used. Baker (1992) maintained that identifying cultural references is important for “drawing inferences and for maintaining the coherence of the text” (p. 230). Unfortunately, most translators, especially the translation students, are not able to recognize the context of the utterance. This alludes to the lack of pragmatic competence which defined by Thomas (1983) as “the ability to use language effectively in order to achieve a specific purpose and to understand language in context” (p. 92).

Besides, the strategy the translator employs to maintain the meaning and style of cultural items can be taken into account as a matter of importance. In other words, it is important that the translator applies the best and most effective translation strategy in translating CSIs to

make the source text (ST) more understandable to the readers of the target text (TT). Furthermore, choosing the most appropriate translation strategy not only can help the translator to translate CSIs in the best possible way but also may confirm the success of the translator. It needs the translator's mastery over translation strategies which points to strategic competence. Strategic competence, according to PACTE Group (2000), refers to "all the individual procedures, conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal, used to solve the problems found during the translation process" (p. 102). The reason for this deficiency is that either translation students do not take the importance of translation theories seriously or they have not been taught well on how to employ these strategies.

The aim of this study was to probe Newmark's (1988) translation procedures applied to translate cultural items from English into Persian. Moreover, it was intended to investigate the most/least frequent translation procedures employed by Iranian M.A. translation students to deal with CSIs. Furthermore, a comparison was made between two groups of M.A. translators to determine which group was more successful in transferring the same meaning of cultural items to the TT. Finally, the effect the level of study produced on the types of translation strategies both freshmen and senior students used and on the translation qualities they produced was examined.

In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, the following questions were posed to be answered:

1. Which translation procedures presented by Newmark (1988) were used by the freshmen M.A. translation students in the translation of CSIs from English into Persian?
2. Which translation procedures presented by Newmark (1988) were used by the senior M.A. translation students in the translation of CSIs from English into Persian?
3. What are the most/least translation procedures, based on Newmark (1988)'s taxonomy, employed by the freshmen M.A. translation students in the translation of CSIs from English into Persian?
4. What are the most/least translation procedures, based on Newmark (1988)'s taxonomy, employed by the senior M.A. translation students in the translation of CSIs from English into Persian?

5. Which group of M.A. translation students was more successful in transferring the same meaning of CSIs to the TT?
6. What influence did the level of study of M.A. translation students have on the translation strategies they employed and on the translation quality they produced?

2. Review of the related literature

2.1 Concept of translation

During the history of TS, translation has been defined in different ways based on the theoretical and practical aspects it covers. For instance, Catford (1965) defined it as "the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language" (p. 20). From Venuti's (1995) view, translation is "the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target language reader" (p. 18). Schjoldager (2008) stated that "a translation is a text that expresses what another text has expressed in another language" (p. 19).

Along with these definitions, many discussions have been raised by theorists and linguists about the concept of translation. Toury (1977), for example, discussed that translation first and foremost should have a social role and "fulfil a function allotted by a community in a way which is deemed appropriate in its own terms of reference" (p. 198). He believed that cultural significance is a major factor in each translation. For Brisset (1996), translation is "a dual act of communication" in which both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL) are regarded as "two distinct codes" (p. 343). Thus, serious problems arise for the act of translation due to the distinction between two codes as she noted.

Bassnett and Lefevere (1998) argued that "translation never takes place in a vacuum; it always happens in a continuum" (p. 93). In a sense, translation is affected by different elements, such as cultural and social elements, and also by the norms and values of the target culture. In this regard, they explained that just as the norms and limitations of the source culture are effective in producing the source text, the norms and values of the target culture are unavoidably effective in producing the translation. Along with the norms and values of the target culture, the context in which the translation happens needs to be taken into consideration.

2.2 Culture-Specific items (CSIs)

CSIs refer to some certain elements which are deeply rooted in the SL culture and absent in the TL culture. *Traditional cultural expressions*, the term used by Wong and Fernandini (2011) instead of CSIs, are "any forms, whether tangible and intangible, in which traditional culture and knowledge are expressed, appear or are manifested" (p. 1). Archer (as cited in Leppihalme, 1997) used *culture bump* for CSIs and believed that a culture bump takes place for an individual in a different, unusual, and unpleasant situation when communicating with the individuals of another culture. Leppihalme (1997) extended Archer's term and applied it in translation. From her point of view, a culture bump is "a situation where the reader of a TT has a problem understanding a source-cultural allusion" (p. 4).

Aixela (1996) defined CSIs as "elements of the text that are connected to certain concepts in the foreign culture (history, art, literature) which might be unknown to the readers of the TT" (p. 14). It means rather that there is a gap between the SL and the TL which causes CSIs to appear. In another word, the equivalent for the SL cultural item in the TL culture is absent and the CSI becomes untranslatable. This creates a serious problem for the translator in the translation of such an item. In cases where there are cultural similarities between two languages, there will be no problem (Newmark, 1988). He continued that these situations are almost rare because "you can have several cultures (and sub-cultures) within one language" (p. 94).

To overcome CSIs and fill lexical gaps in the translation of cultural items, many classifications of CSIs alongside translation strategies have been proposed (see for example, Tomalin & Stempleski, 1993; Leppihalme, 1997; Espindola & Vasconcellos, 2006). Based on Nida's (1964) model of cultural items, Newmark (1988) created a classification of CSIs which was adapted as the theoretical framework in this study. He divided CSIs into five classes which are:

- 1- Ecology (flora, fauna, winds, plains, and hills)
- 2- Material culture (food, clothes, houses and towns, and transport)
- 3- Social culture (work and leisure)
- 4- Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts (political, administrative, religious, and artistic)
- 5- Gesture and habits.

2.3 Translation strategies used to overcome CSIs

According to *Oxford Online Dictionary*, the term *strategy* is "a detailed plan for achieving success in situations such as war, politics, business, industry, or the skill of planning for such situations" (2019). In other words, strategy is a kind of tactic or a planned way used by an individual, organization, or country to achieve a particular purpose. It can be exclusive, being used only by one who deigned it, or inclusive, being used by others or the public. It can be claimed that almost everyone uses strategy in his life or career because he has a specific purpose. Translators are those who employ various types of strategies presented by different scholars to produce high quality translations, to satisfy their clients, and to compete with each other in today's market.

Translation strategy, as Krings (1986) stated, is "the translator's potentially conscious plans for solving concrete translation problems in the framework of a concrete translation task" (p. 18). In the same context, Loescher (1991) defined translation strategy as "a potentially conscious procedure for solving a problem faced in translating a text, or any segment of it" (p. 8). In both definitions, the notable point is the word *conscious*. It refers to the translator's consciousness of how to adopt the translation strategies. The unwise decision in using translation strategies may lead him to failure. In this way, he may not be able to communicate with the target reader due to the awkward translation he has produced.

Translation strategies "involve the basic tasks of choosing the foreign text to be translated and developing a method to translate it" (Venuti, 1998, p. 240). He introduced two opponent translation strategies, including domestication and foreignization strategies with special attention to the latter. He believed that foreignization helps retain something of the foreignness of the original. He defined it as "an ethnodeviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (p. 20). Both strategies, as he stated, are "deeply rooted in specific social and cultural circumstances" (p. 175). It means that choosing domestication and foreignization strategies is not heavily dependent on the translator, but on the specific social situations (Wang, 2013).

These two extremes have been specified by other scholars in earlier times. Nida (1964), for instance, differentiated between formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence and indicated that the orientation of formal equivalence is towards the ST structure, whereas the

aim of dynamic equivalence is to seek "the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message" (p. 166). Newmark's (1988) semantic translation and communicative translation are two other opposite poles of translation strategies.

2.4 Newmark's taxonomy of translation procedures

Newmark (1988) used *procedure* instead of strategy and mentioned that "while translation methods relate to whole texts, translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language" (p. 81). He proposed taxonomy of translation procedures to render CSIs. His taxonomy contains:

- 1- Transference: The process of transferring a SL word to a TL text as a translation procedure.
- 2- Naturalization: This procedure succeeds transference and adapts the SL word first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology (word-forms) of the TL.
- 3- Cultural Equivalent: This is an approximate translation where a SL cultural word is translated by a TL cultural word.
- 4- Functional Equivalent: It neutralizes or generalizes the SL word; and sometimes adds a particular.
- 5- Descriptive Equivalent: In using this procedure, sometimes should carefully consider description against function in order to produce an appropriate equivalent for the intended cultural word.
- 6- Synonymy: A near TL equivalent to an SL word in a context, where a precise equivalent may or may not exist.
- 7- Through-Translation: The literal translation of common collocations, names of organizations, the components of compounds and perhaps phrases.
- 8- Shifts or Transpositions: A translation procedure involving a change in the grammar from SL to TL.
- 9- Modulation: variation through a change of viewpoint, of perspective and very often of category of thought.
- 10- Recognized Translation: Using the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term. If appropriate.
- 11- Translation Label: This is a provisional translation, usually of a new institutional term, which should be made in inverted commas, which can later be discreetly withdrawn.

- 12- Compensation: It occurs when loss of meaning, sound-effect, metaphor or pragmatic effect in one part of a sentence is compensated in another part, or in a contiguous sentence.
- 13- Componential Analysis: This is the splitting up of a lexical unit into its sense components, often one-to-two, -three or -four translations.
- 14- Reduction and Expansion: Expressing the meaning of a phrase with fewer words or vice versa
- 15- Paraphrase: This is an amplification or explanation of the meaning of a segment of the text.
- 16- Couplet: Is the combination of two or more of the above-mentioned procedure when dealing with a single problem.
- 17- Notes, Additions, and Glosses: These are additional information used by the translator in a translation to overcome CSIs.

Newmark's (1988) taxonomy of translation procedures equips the translator with a set of reliable tools that gives him the opportunity to move towards creating a comprehensive translation for all types of readers. Moreover, this allows the translator to easily determine the overall strategy for the translation on macro level based on the purpose it follows. Newmark's taxonomy can also be effective for the translation students and trainee translators, not only in theory but also in practice. This is because of the fact that various types of translation strategies are included in his taxonomy, from ST-oriented strategies to TT- oriented ones. In addition, they are well defined and easy to work. Thus, Newmark's taxonomy of translation procedures was in line with the objectives of the present study. As a result, his model was adopted as a valid criterion for investigating translation strategies employed by the translation students in this study.

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants consisted of 50 Iranian M.A. translation students of both genders, whose ages ranged between 25 and 30. A complete list of the freshmen and senior M.A. translation students of Islamic Azad University, Science, and Research, was available to the researcher. The score and contact number of each student were also provided and included in the list. Thus, the participants were selected randomly from those who had successfully passed all

translation courses with acceptable scores (15 out of 20 and above). This criterion was applied to ensure that the participants were familiar with some of the theories of translation and able to employ translation strategies. The students were encouraged to participate in the study after informing them about the objectives and of how helpful they can be in this research. They were then divided into two groups, 25 Iranian M.A. translation students of both genders in each group. The difference was that the first group included the participants who were in the first year of study, whereas the second group covered the participants who were in the final year of study.

3.2 Instrumentation

A translation test was designed to meet the requirements of the present study. It composed of 20 statements extracted from *the Virgin and the Gypsy* (Lawrence, 1992). The statements contained CSIs and classified based on Newmark's (1988) categorization of CSIs. They were validated by four university professors who had teaching experience in translation. They were asked to determine the content validity of the statements and provide their comments and recommendations on the appropriateness of the content. This led to some corrections in the content of the test. The test-retest method was used to measure the reliability of the test. Thus, the test was given to 20 M.A. translation students who shared the same characteristics of the sample of the study. After two weeks, it was applied to the same students. The results of the two trials were correlated and the coefficient of correlation represented the reliability of the test ($r = .793$). Then, the test was administrated to the participants of the study for data collection. They were given 40 min to translate the 20 statements, considering 2 min for each statement.

3.3 Procedure

In order to achieve the objectives of the present study, the following steps were adopted: First, the chosen English book *the Virgin and the Gypsy* (Lawrence, 1992) was read to extract the 20 statements. The rationale behind selecting this novel was that it was a well-known English story and the author was one of the best authors of his era. Moreover, it covered different types of CSIs which could accomplish the requirements of this study and offered valuable sources of the data. The statements contained CSIs which were classified based on Newmark's (1988) categorization of CSIs (i.e., ecology, material culture, social culture, organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts, and gesture, and habits). Then, the

CSIs and their corresponding equivalents provided by the participants in each group were compared to find out the strategies applied by them for translating such items according to the taxonomy of translation strategies proposed by Newmark (1988). This led to determine the overall strategy of each group on macro level. Moreover, the researcher was curious to know whether the level of study of the M.A. translation students has an effect on the types of strategies they employ and on the translation qualities they produce. Finally, four raters were asked to assess translations based on the model of translation quality assessment proposed by Roostami and Khoshsima (2009). To clarify what happened in the above steps, the translation strategies employed by the freshmen and senior students to overcome CSIs alongside the examples of each strategy are illustrated in Tables 1- 6.

Table 1

Frequencies and Examples of Transference Used by the Freshmen and Senior M.A. Translation Students for Translating the Names of Places, Plants, Food, Transport, and Social Culture

Strategy	Freshmen Students				Senior Students			
	TT	ST	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Transference	Tansy Moor	تنسی مور			Tansy Moor	تنسی مور		
	Bonsall Head	بنسال هد	25	100.0	Bonsall Head	بنسال هد	25	100.0
	Amberdale	آمبردل			Amberdale	آمبردل		
	Dover	دور			Dover	دور		
	wisteria	ویستریا	25	100.0	wisteria	ویستریا	25	100.0
	Vibrofata	وایبروفت	25	100.0	Vibrofata	وایبروفت	9	36.0
	Horlikcs	هورلیک			Horlikcs	هورلیک		
	caravan	کاروان	25	100.0	caravan	کاروان	25	100.0
Tommies	تامی ها	19	76.0	Tommies	تامی ها	4	16.0	

Table 2

Frequencies and Examples of Cultural Equivalent Used by the Freshmen and Senior M.A. Translation Students for Translating the Names of Plants

Strategy	Freshmen Students				Senior Students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Cultural Equivalent	crocus	زعفران	25	100.0	crocus	زعفران	25	100.0

Table 3

Frequencies and Examples of Functional Equivalent Used by the Freshmen and Senior M.A. Translation Students for the Names of Houses, Transport, and Social Culture

Strategy	Freshmen Students				Senior Students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Functional Equivalent	dining-room	اتاق غذاخوری	5	20.0	dining-room	اتاق غذاخوری	25	100.0
	channel boat	قایق	12	48.0	channel boat	قایق	18	72.0
	cross-word puzzles	بازی لغات	25	100.0	cross-word puzzles	بازی لغات	25	100.0

Table 4

Frequencies and Examples of Descriptive Equivalent Used by the Freshmen and Senior M.A. Translation Students for the Names of Cloths, and Social Culture

Strategy	Freshmen Students				Senior Students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Descriptive Equivalent	gewgaws	لوازم کم ارزش زینتی	25	100.0	Vibrofat	نوشیدنی نوعی	16	64.0
	Tommies	سرباز های انگلیسی	21	84.0	Horlikcs	نوشیدنی نوعی		
	vicarage	محل اقامت خلیفه	25	100.0	gewgaws	لوازم کم ارزش زینتی	17	68.0
	rectory	اقامتگاه کشیش ها			Tommies	سرباز های انگلیسی	6	24.0
					Vicarage	محل اقامت خلیفه	25	100.0
				rectory	اقامتگاه کشیش ها			

Table 5

Frequencies and Examples of Through-Translation Used by the Freshmen and Senior M.A. Translation Students for the Names of Plants, Clothes, Houses, Transports, Religious, and Gestures

Strategy	Freshmen Students				Senior Students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Through-Translation	Larch	صنوبر	25	100.0	Larch	صنوبر	25	100.0
	boots	پوتین	25	100.0	boots	پوتین	25	100.0
	trousers	شلوار			trousers	شلوار		
	jersey	زیرپیراهن	25	100.0	jersey	زیرپیراهن	25	100.0
	cottage	کلبه			cottage	کلبه		
	dining-room	اتاق ناهار خوری	20	80.0	channel boat	قایق کانالی	7	28.0
	channel boat	قایق کانالی	13	52.0	in a Jewess's	کنجکاوی یک یهودی	25	100.0
	in a Jewess's curious	کنجکاوی یک یهودی	25	100.0	her sensitive nose turned up	حس بویایی حساسش برانگیخته شد	11	44.0
	her sensitive nose turned up	حس بویایی حساسش برانگیخته شد	25	100.0	he offered his arm	او بازوی خود را به او پیشنهاد داد	19	76.0
	he offered his arm	او بازوی خود را به او پیشنهاد داد	25	100.0				

Table 6

Frequencies and Examples of Compensation Used by the Senior M.A. Translation Students for the Names of Clothes, and Gestures

Strategy	ST	TT	f	%
Compensation	gewgaws	لباسها	8	32.0
	her sensitive nose turned up	او با غرور سر خود را چرخاند	14	56.0
	he offered his arm	او بازوی خود را به نشانه همراهی کردن	6	24.0

3.4 Data analysis

Based on Newmark's (1988) taxonomy of translation procedures, the collected data were analyzed to investigate the strategies applied by the participants to overcome the CSIs included in the translation test. The frequencies, percentages, and examples of the translation strategies used by each group were measured and illustrated in Tables 1-6. To justify the hypothesis, a series of descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Furthermore, according to the findings reported by the raters, the independent sample *t* test was employed to find the difference in translation quality of two groups. This test provides the opportunity to demonstrate not only the difference between the translation quality of the freshmen and senior students but also the skill and knowledge of each group in using translation strategies.

4. Results

According to Table 7, the total number of strategies employed by the senior M.A. translation students ($N = 425$) was equal to the total number of them used by the freshmen M.A. students ($N = 425$). The difference was that the senior students used one procedure more than the freshmen students in the translation of CSIs.

Table 7

Frequency and Percentage of Strategies Used by Both Groups of M.A. Translation Students for Translating CSIs

Strategies Used by Group I	<i>f</i>	%	Strategies Used by Group II	<i>f</i>	%
Through-Translation	183	43.0	Through-Translation	137	32.0
Transference	119	28.0	Transference	88	21.0
Descriptive equivalent	56	13.0	Descriptive equivalent	79	19.0
Functional equivalent	42	10.0	Functional equivalent	68	16.0
Cultural equivalent	25	6.0	Compensation	28	7.0
Compensation	0	0.0	Cultural equivalent	25	6.0
Total	425	100.0	Total	425	100.0

As it is clear from Table 7, the most/least used translation strategies by the senior students were through-translation ($n = 137$) and cultural equivalent ($n = 25$) respectively. The same translation strategies were employed by the freshmen students as the most/least used strategies, through-translation ($n = 183$) and cultural equivalent ($n = 25$). From the strategies employed by the freshmen and senior students, the first two, including transference and through-translation, were ST-oriented strategies and the rest TT-oriented ones, namely descriptive equivalent, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent, and compensation.

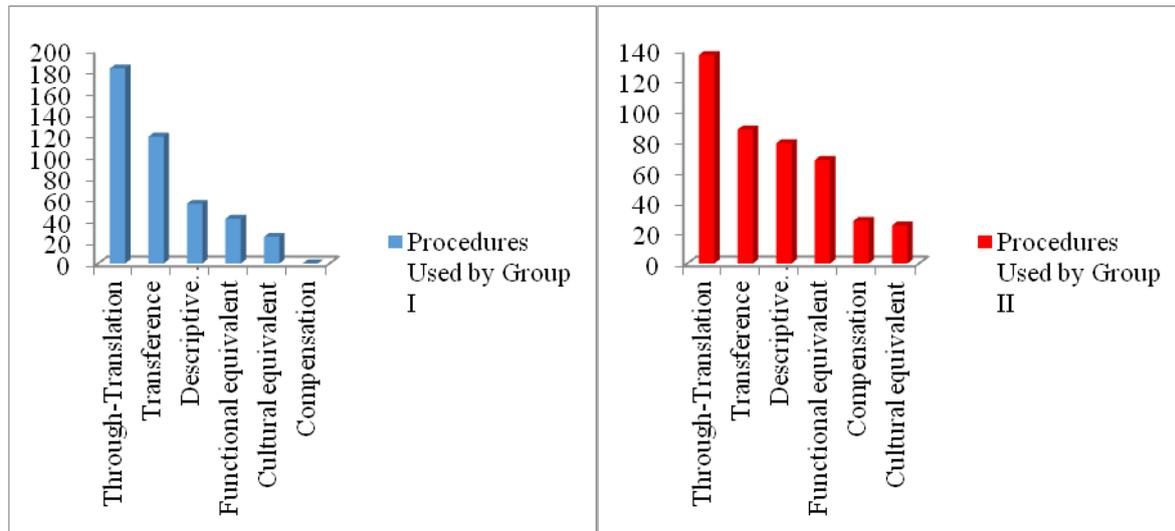


Figure 1. Translation Procedures Used by Both Groups of M.A. Translation Students for Translating CSIs

According to Table 8 and Table 9, the sum of ST-oriented strategies ($N = 302, 225$) used by the freshmen and senior students was higher than the sum of TT-oriented strategies ($N = 123, 200$).

Table 8

Frequency and Percentage of ST- and TT-Oriented Strategies Used by the Freshmen M.A. Translation Students

ST-Oriented Strategies	<i>f</i>	%	TT-Oriented Strategies	<i>f</i>	%
Through-Translation	183	61.0	Descriptive equivalent	56	46.0
Transference	119	39.0	Functional equivalent	42	34.0
			Cultural equivalent	25	20.0
Sum	302	100.0	Sum	123	100.0

Table 9

Frequency and Percentage of ST- and TT-Oriented Strategies Used by the Senior M.A. Translation Students

ST-Oriented Strategies	<i>f</i>	%	TT-Oriented Strategies	<i>f</i>	%
Through-Translation	137	61.0	Descriptive equivalent	79	40.0
Transference	88	39.0	Functional equivalent	68	34.0
			Compensation	28	14.0
			Cultural equivalent	25	12.0
Sum	225	100.0	Sum	200	100.0

4.1 Reliability test

The researcher checked the reliability of all scores given by the four raters before testing the hypothesis. Thus, the Interrater reliability test was calculated. Correlation coefficient among the raters is indicated in Table 10.

Table 10
Summary of Intercorrelations of the Four Raters

Raters		1	2	3	4
1. Rater 1	<i>r</i>	1	.864	.798	.727
2. Rater 2	<i>r</i>	.864	1	.701	.662
3. Rater 3	<i>r</i>	.798	.701	1	.630
4. Rater 4	<i>r</i>	.727	.662	.630	1

Note. *r* = estimate of the Pearson product—moment correlation coefficient. Correlation is significant at **p* < .05, two-tailed.

As Table 10 illustrated, the correlation among the raters was acceptable and there was a strong relationship among them. That is to say, the agreement among all four raters was perfectly accurate. Moreover, the highest amount of correlation was between first and second raters (*r* = .864), and the lowest was between third and fourth (*r* = .630).

4.2 Testing the Hypothesis

The descriptive statistic was used to provide a summary of variables, followed by the inferential statistics to test the hypothesis. Table 11 shows descriptive statistics of the given scores to the performance of each group of M.A. translation students.

Table 11
Descriptive Statistics of the Scores of the Freshmen and Senior M.A. Translation Students

	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Skewness		Kurtosis	
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error	Statistic	Std. Error
Freshmen Students	25	13.92	1.44106	0.06014	0.24	-0.27053	0.96
Senior Students	25	17.04	1.24096	0.20293	0.24	0.08893	0.96

Table 11 showed that the mean score of the freshmen students is 13.92 and the mean score of the senior students is 17.04. It seems that the mean score of the senior students is higher than the mean score of the freshmen students.

Table 12

Summary of the Performance of the Freshmen and Senior Translation Students

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		<i>t</i> test for Equality of Means						
		<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>*p</i>	<i>M D</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% CI	
								<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>	
Translation Score	Equal variances assumed	.7658	.383	2.01	48	.000	3.1	.2001	2.355	3.88
	Equal variances not assumed			2.01	45.368	.000	3.1	.2001	2.355	3.88

Note. CI= confidence interval; LL = lower limit; UL = upper limit. The sig value of Levene's test is significant at $p < .05$. Correlation is significant at $*p < .05$, two-tailed.

The independent sample *t* test was conducted to test the hypothesis. The result obtained from this test provides the opportunity for the researcher to find the difference of two groups. Doing this, first, the sig value of Levene's test should be checked for the equality of variance. As table 12 denotes, the sig value of Levene's test was .383 which was higher than .05 ($p > .05$). This refers to the assumption of homogeneity. In order to find the difference between two groups of M.A. translation students, the $*p$ value of the first line was checked. According to the results, the $*p$ value of this test was 0. which was lower than .05 ($*p < .05$). Thus, the hypothesis was rejected and the mean difference between the senior students and freshmen students was significant ($MD = 3.1$, 95% CI [2.35, 3.88]). That is to say, the performance of the senior M.A. students ($M = 17.04$, $SD = 1.24$) was better than the freshmen M.A. students ($M = 13.92$, $SD = 1.44$, $t(48) = 2.01$, $*p = .000$, two-tailed).

5. Discussion and conclusion

The present study followed two main purposes: The first purpose was to investigate which translation strategies proposed by Newmark (1988) were employed by the freshmen and senior M.A. translation students to overcome CSIs. This led to examine the translation strategy employed by each group on macro level. Moreover, the most/least translation strategies used by each group were probed. The second purpose was to find out which group of students was more successful in transferring the same meaning of CSIs to the TT, and whether the level of study of the participants had an effect on the translation qualities and the types of translation strategies. Based on the findings of the study, each of these purposes is discussed in this section.

The names of places alongside two names of plants "larch" and "wisteria" were transferred to both TTs without adding any additional description to make the location of each town clear. This alludes to the use of foreignizing strategy in translations produced by both groups of M.A. translation students. "Crocus" was the third plant's name which was localized through cultural equivalent to explain the type of plant in Persian culture.

In the case of food's names, transference strategy was used for the translation of Vibrofat. It seemed that transference was not appropriate for this cultural item due to the correct meaning of the original was not expressed through this strategy. Descriptive equivalent preferred by more than half of the senior students for Horlicks which was somehow acceptable but not sufficient. It implies that they tried to domesticate this cultural item. The only problematic name among the names of clothes was gewgaws which was correctly translated by only a small number of senior students through compensation strategy. That is to say, they translated gewgaws based on the context in which it appeared. The names of the houses and towns were almost translated correctly via through-translation and functional equivalent. Using these procedures made cultural items easy to understand.

In the case of transport, the challengeable item was "channel boat." Almost half of the freshmen students and the minority of senior students who applied through-translation were more successful in conveying the meaning of this cultural item than those who employed functional equivalent. The reason was that channel boat is generalized via functional equivalent, whereas it is localized through through-translation. The two controversial cultural items were gestures: The first gesture refers to her pride as she feels she is better and more important than other people. This item was correctly translated by only a minority of the senior students. It shows their familiarity with the source culture which caused them to succeed in getting the meaning of the original. The second gesture represents a kind of behavior that is not usual and familiar in Persian culture. Thus, most participants were not able to communicate with the target reader via through-translation.

Having classified the cultural items as described in section 2.2, Newmark (1988) suggested different translation procedures to deal with CSIs among which the freshmen translation students employed five producers, including through-translation, transference, descriptive equivalent, functional equivalent, and cultural equivalent; whereas the senior

students applied six. They were: through-translation, transference, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, cultural equivalent, and compensation. According to the results, both groups preferred to employ ST-oriented procedures which pointed to their ST orientation on macro level. The same results obtained from the study done by Jensen (2009). In her study, the majority of the participants employed ST-oriented procedures. This gave an indication of their faithfulness to the ST structure. In Qassem's (2014) study on the problems of undergraduate translation students in translating political terms and expressions from English into Arabic, literal translation, or through-translation, was the most used translation strategies by the participants. The given reason was the limited knowledge of the participants about such political concepts. Furthermore, the participants, as he explained, did not know how to translate the political concepts.

The survey carried out by Jalali (2015) on the way Iranian translators translate metaphorical expressions through Newmark's seven proposed translation procedures. She reported that transference and deletion were the most/least used translation procedures by Iranian translators respectively. By using transference procedures, the participants make an attempt to create the same image of the SL in the TL. The disadvantage of the frequent use of ST-oriented strategies is that it makes the translation understandable to the target reader. In such a situation, the translator will be unable to communicate with the readership.

The second purpose of the study was to find out which group of M.A. translation students produced high quality translations. According to the results derived from the descriptive statistics and *t* test, the senior students were more successful than the freshmen students in conveying the meaning of the cultural items to the target readers. It highlights the considerable effect of the level of study of the participants on the translation qualities made by them. The reason behind this may be the less familiarity of the first group of the participants with translation theories because the freshmen students have passed less related courses in translation than the senior students. Besides, the freshmen students were less successful in recognizing the context in which the cultural item was used, in finding the suitable equivalent for the cultural item, and in using the appropriate translation procedure to overcome the cultural item.

The findings of an interview conducted by Karimi, Tabrizi, and Chalak (2016) with three professors in translation, one professional translator, and five English translation students support the above reasons which end in failure of the freshmen translation students in producing high quality translations. Add to these, the lack of experience in the translation of CSIs and the cultural gap between both languages (Khammyseh, 2015).

It is important to note that there are many other factors that can exert an effect on the translation quality, such as the experience of the translator. Supporting this is the results of the study carried out by Dehbandi and Pourgharib (2013) in which the better performance of the experienced translators than under graduate translation students was reported.

With regard to translation strategies applied by the freshmen and senior translation students to cope with CSIs, the researcher reached a conclusion that the incorrect use of ST-oriented strategies, in some cases, resulted in mistranslations. This is due to the fact that the accurate sense and meaning of the intended CSI is not met in the TL. This not only remains the meaning of the CSI obscure for the reader but also makes him confused. Do not buy into the idea that ST-oriented strategies are ineffective and should never be used by the translator. On the contrary, both ST- and TT-oriented strategies are of equal importance. In a sense, in cases where it is needed to offer "local color and atmosphere," such as literary text, and where the reference of the CSI in the TT must be clear for the readership, such as specialist texts, ST-oriented strategies are the best (Newmark, 1988, p. 96).

As a rule of thumb, it is suggested that the translation students and trainee translators, first of all, determine the overall strategy for the translation based on the purpose that has already been set, followed by considering the audiences of the translation. Then, you need to improve your skills over both ST- and TT-oriented strategies and learn the correct use of them to make acceptable and high quality translations. Finally, it is important to bear in mind that you need to have great respect for the foreign language culture, and, as Newmark (1988) suggested, be able to recognize the cultural achievements mentioned in the foreign language.

Translation teachers play a vital role in educating students. It is sincerely recommended that they should focus on translation not only in theory but also in practice. By giving translation tasks to the translation students, this opportunity is provided for them to learn how

to appropriately use translation strategies, alongside ordinary and specialist dictionaries, to overcome CSIs. The translation teachers can also design new and effective methods and offer them to the translation students to improve their knowledge about the foreign language culture.

The above mentioned pedagogical implications derived from the results of the study that can be beneficial to the translation students, trainee translators, and teachers of translation in that the results will help them to easily deal with CSIs and to be aware of the significance of the translation methods/strategies.

References

- Aixela, J. F. (1996). Culture-specific items in translation. In R. Alvarez, & M. C. Vidal (Eds.), *Translation, power, and subversion* (52-78). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Baker, M. (1992). *In other words: A course book on translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Bassnett, S., & Lefevere, A. (1998). *Constructing cultures: Essays on literary translation*. Multilingual Matters.
- Brisset, A. (1996). The search for a native language: Translation and cultural identity. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *Translation studies reader* (pp. 343-376). London and New York: Routledge.
- Catford, J. C. (1965). *A linguistic theory of translation*. Oxford University Press.
- Cenac, O. M. (2009). On some difficulties in translating from English into Romanian. In E. Croitoru, & F. Popescu (Eds.), *Translation Studies: Retrospective and Prospective Views: Vol. 5. Proceedings of the 5th Conference* (pp. 6-11). Romania: Galati University Press.
- Dehbandi, Z., & Pourgharib, B. (2013). The difference in translation quality of undergraduate translation students and experienced translators in narrative text. *International Journal of Basic Sciences & Applied Research*, 2(7), 13-716.
- Espindola, E., & Vasconcellos, M. L. (2006). Two facets in the subtitling process: Foreignization and/or domestication procedures in unequal cultural encounters. *Fragmentos*, 30, 43-66.
- Guerra, A. F. (2012). Translating culture: problems, strategies and practical realities. *Art and Subversion*, 3(1), 1-27.

- Jalali, M. (2015). *Frequent translation strategies used by Iranian translators in subtitles to translate metaphors* (Master's thesis). Available from Language-Linguistics/Langues-Linguistique database. (UMI No. 0290)
- Jensen, M. N. (2009). *Professional translators' establishment of skopos: A 'brief' study* (Unpublished master's thesis). Aarhus School of Business, Aarhus University, Denmark.
- Jothiraj, M. (2004). *Translation as transcreation: Problems and prospects* (Unpublished master's thesis). Department of English, University of Calicut, India.
- Karimi, M., Tabrizi, H. H., & Chalak, A. (2016). Challenges in English to Persian translation of contracts and agreements: The case of Iranian English translation students. *Journal of Applied Linguistics and Language Research*, 3(6), 188-198.
- Khammyseh, D. (2015). The problems in translating Islamic expressions in religious occasions. *Journal of Education and Practice*, 6(35), 103-109.
- Krings, H. P. (1986). Translation problems and translation strategies of advanced German learners of French. In J. House & S. Blum-Kulka (Eds.), *Interlingual and intercultural communication* (pp. 263-75). Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Lawrence, D. H. (1992). *The virgin and the gipsy*. New York: Vintage International.
- Leppihalme, R. (1997). *Culture bumps: An empirical approach to the translation of allusions*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Loescher, W. (1991). *Translation performance, translation process and translation strategies*. Tübingen: Gunter Narr.
- Maasoum, M. H., & Davtalab, H. (2011). An analysis of culture-specific items in the Persian translation of "Dubliners" based on Newmark's model. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 1(12), 1767-1779.
- Newmark, P. (1988). *A textbook of translation*. New York: Prentice Hall
- Nida, E. A. (1964). *Toward a science of translation*. Leiden, Netherlands: E. J. Brill.
- PACTE Group (2000). Acquiring translation competence: Hypotheses and methodological problems in a research project. In A. Beeby, D. Emsinger, & M. Presas (Eds.), *Investigating translation* (pp. 99-107). Amsterdam: John Benjamins.
- Qassem, M. A. (2014). The Arab translation students' hindrances in translating political culture from English into Arabic. *AWEJ*, 5(4), 240-253.
- Roostami A. A., & Khoshsima, H. (2009). A comparative study of the translation model in the east and west language. *Comparative Literature*, 3(9), 31-41.

- Schäffner, C. (2003). Translation and intercultural communication: Similarities and differences. *Studies in Communication Sciences*, 3(2), 79-107.
- Schjoldager, A. (2008). *Understanding translation*. Academica: Århus.
- Strategy. (2019). In *Oxford online dictionary*. Retrieved from [http://www.en.Oxforddictionaries.com/ definition/strategy](http://www.en.Oxforddictionaries.com/definition/strategy).
- Thomas, J. (1983). Cross cultural pragmatic failure. *Applied Linguistics*, 4(2), 91-112.
- Tomalin, B., & Stempleski, S. (1993). *Cultural awareness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Toury, G. (1977). Translation norms and literary translations into Hebrew. In L. Venuti (Ed.), *Translation studies reader* (pp. 198-213). London and New York: Routledge.
- Venuti, L. (1998). *The scandals of translation: Towards an ethics of difference*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Venuti, L. (1995). *The translator's invisibility: A history of translation*. London and New York: Routledge.
- Wang, L. (2013). A survey on domestication and foreignization theories in translation. *Theory and Practice in Language Studies*, 3(1), 175- 179.
- Wong, T., & Fernandini, C. (2011). Traditional cultural expressions: Preservation and innovation. In T. Wong, & G. Dutfield (Eds.), *Intellectual property and human development* (pp. 1-40). New York: Cambridge University Press.

About the Author



Hamidreza Abdi has MA in Translation Studies from Azad University, Science and Research, Tehran, Iran in 2016. He received his BA in the same major from Azad University, Roodehen, Iran in 2009. He is a freelance researcher in the field of Translation Studies. His main interest is research in translation and technology.

Appendix A: Questionnaire

Please translate the following English statements into Persian.

All statements were extracted from D. H. Lawrence's (1930) "The Virgin and the Gipsy", and classified based on Newmark's (1988) categorization of cultural specific items, including Ecology (flora, fauna, winds, plains, hills), Material culture (food, clothes, houses and towns, transport), Social culture (work and leisure), Organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts (political and administrative, religious, artistic), and Gesture and habits.

Note: you are allowed to use dictionaries and other sources.

Statements

- 1- I suppose we shall have to drag the old bikes out. Wouldn't you like to get up to **Tansy Moor**?(p.10)

- 2- "We want to go to a picnic tomorrow, to **Bonsall Head**, in Leo's car. We can all squeeze in," said Ella in a low voice". (p. 15)
- 3- "Do we want to get down to **Amberdale** for tea? Or shall we try somewhere nearer?"(p.20)
- 4- The gipsy stood at the back door, under the steep dark bank where the **larches** grew. (p. 42)
- 5- It was sunny, and the last yellow **crocus** down the drive were in full blaze, wide open, the first bees rolling in them. (p.77)
- 6- He was up, streaming forth water, clinging to the stem of the great **wisteria** that grew against the wall, crushed against the wall by the water. (p. 80)
- 7- Then she lifted her head, and saw it was time to fetch Granny's cup of **Horlicks**. (p. 13)
- 8- I don't know what they'll come to, if they have nerves like that, at their age! She must take **Vibrof**. (p. 39)
- 9- A dandy, in his polished black **boots**, tight black **trousers** and tight dark-green **jersey**. (p. 25)
- 10- "We're dining with the family," said Yvette naïvely, "and we've put on our best **gewgaws** in honour of the occasion." (p. 44)
- 11- In the **dining-room** there was a gas fire. (p. 12)
- 12- At last the **caravan** door opened, and Yvette emerged. (p. 27)
- 13- The **vicarage** family received decided modification, upon its transference into the **rectory**. (p. 4)
- 14- The rector was amazingly clever at **cross-word puzzles**. But Fred had a certain technical vocabulary. (p. 12)
- 15- For her, too, the gipsy was one of the common men, the **Tommies**. (p. 56)
- 16- Apparently she was in love, in a **Jewess's** curious way, with the big, blond man. (p. 55)
- 17- **Her sensitive nose turned up**, her soft brown hair fell like a soft sheath round her tender, flowerlike face, as she sat musing. (p. 48)
- 18- He **offered his arm** to Lucille, while Uncle Fred escorted Yvette. (138)

Thank you for your cooperation