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Culture-Specific Translation Errors in Persian–English Literary Translation: An Analysis of Iranian Translation Students' Strategies

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Abstract

Translation competence develops through systematic training and practice in formal educational contexts. However, many translation learners still produce translations that exhibit incoherence, distort meaning, or fail to convey the source text's intended meaning. Similar challenges have been observed among Iranian English translation students translating from Persian into English. To address these challenges, the present study investigated translation errors from a cultural perspective, focusing on culture-specific translation strategies. The study employed a qualitative research design supported by descriptive statistical analysis, and 70 senior English translation students were selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected through translation tasks and semistructured interviews. The results showed that cultural translation errors accounted for a notable proportion of all errors, highlighting limitations in students' strategic competence when applying translation techniques to culture-specific items. In addition, insufficient exposure to advanced translation theories and limited practical training were identified as significant contributors to these challenges. The findings emphasize the need to integrate cultural competence more systematically into translation pedagogy and to evaluate translation strategies and instructional practices in Iranian universities more objectively by considering the linguistic, cultural, and strategic dimensions of translation.

Keywords: translation errors, error analysis, cultural strategies, culture-specific items

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1. Introduction

The examination and analysis of translation errors have been a major area of research in recent years. The inherent complexity of many texts is undeniable, and this complexity can make translators more prone to errors during the translation process. In translation studies, experts use systematic methods to identify, examine, and analyze different types of errors and propose ways to avoid them (Ansari & Seifi, 2025; Sasani et al., 2023; Venuti, 2018).

In the Iranian education system, English is the main foreign language, and BA programs have recently introduced English translation courses. English translation students must complete four years of study in language proficiency, linguistics, and translation theories and strategies. However, some graduates may still struggle to apply their translation knowledge effectively despite completing formal instruction. To address this gap, the study adopted error analysis, which enables researchers to investigate learners' interlanguage development and underlying learning processes, offering insights beyond simple comparisons with target-language norms (Mitchell et al., 2019). The study used error analysis to determine why students' translation difficulties persisted despite years of instruction. Conde (2011) noted that error detection has traditionally served as a basis for analysis. Moreover, identifying errors helps teachers analyze learners' errors and determine whether students struggle to develop a method for comparing them.

According to Nida (1964), successful translation requires both linguistic competence and a thorough understanding of the cultural contexts of the source and target languages because translation operates between different cultural systems and worldviews.

Since cultural differences are among the most significant factors influencing translation, this study employed Che Suh's (2005) model of culture-specific item translation as its theoretical framework. This model includes seven translation strategies: adaptation, omission, addition, borrowing, communicative translation, globalization, and localization.

1.1. The Objective and Significance of the Study

The main objective of this study is to identify, examine, and analyze translation errors arising from insufficient mastery of cultural components among Iranian students majoring in English translation. The study is expected to identify the most common culture-related errors made by the participating students and reveal weaknesses in their use of culture-oriented strategies during the translation process. The following research questions reflect these objectives:

1. What categories of culture-specific translation errors are most frequently observed in the translations produced by Iranian students majoring in English Translation?
2. How do Iranian students majoring in English Translation apply culture-oriented translation strategies when translating culture-specific items?

2. Literature Review

Culture is generally defined as a set of values, beliefs, and social norms that shape human behavior and experience. Consequently, cultural aspects of language play a crucial role in transferring meaning from one language to another. Venuti (2018) emphasizes that translation bridges language and culture and requires both linguistic competence and cultural knowledge and sensitivity. He highlights the relevance of various translation theories and stresses that translators must be familiar with both source and target cultures to achieve appropriate cultural transfer.

Scholars have consistently argued that cultural differences may present greater challenges in translation than linguistic differences. Qassem (2021) notes that cultural disparities often make it difficult to select appropriate equivalents, while Larson (1984) regards preserving meaning across culturally distant languages as a demanding task. Similarly, Hatim and Mason (1997) argue that translators' cultural orientations inevitably influence translation outcomes. Recent studies have further emphasized the role of cultural identity in the selection of translation strategies (Darweesh, 2026; Qassem, 2021).

Given the complexity of cultural transfer, translators often benefit from grouping cultural elements into categories that they can identify during the translation process. Such categorization helps translators select strategies for conveying culture-specific elements and supports the broader objective of cultural transfer.

Research on translation errors has also highlighted the importance of cultural competence. Afrouz (2022) attributes many translation errors to inappropriate equivalents, incorrect collocations, and difficulties in translating idiomatic and culture-related expressions. However, the study did not propose a comprehensive framework for error classification.

Several models have been developed to assess translation quality and classify translation errors. The Multidimensional Quality Metrics (MQM) framework provides a systematic approach to evaluating translation quality by classifying translation problems into explicit error categories (Freitag et al., 2021). MQM supports the assessment of translation quality across semantic, lexical, stylistic, syntactic, and textual dimensions and enables the systematic classification and annotation of translation errors (Freitag et al., 2021).

Waddington (2001) examined different translation assessment methods and found that both error analysis and holistic approaches effectively measured translation competence. Mannahali et al. (2020) demonstrated that communicative translation methods can significantly improve students' translation performance. Ramey (2023) likewise notes renewed interest in translation as a pedagogical tool after decades of emphasis on communicative language teaching.

The American Translators Association (2017) proposed a model containing 22 categories of translation errors, including mistranslation, omission, addition, literal translation, grammar, and style. However, this framework focuses primarily on sentence-level problems. Koby and Baer (2004) also observed that the model evaluates translation mainly as a product and pays limited attention

to broader textual issues. In contrast, Quynh Na's (2019) framework incorporates sentence-level, textual, pragmatic, and cultural errors within a unified model, making it particularly relevant for analyzing culture-related translation problems.

Overall, contemporary translation studies have increasingly emphasized the cultural dimensions of translation. Aixelá (1996) and Mu (2025) argue that the cultural turn remains a major paradigm in the field, highlighting the importance of culture, ideology, and social identity in translation analysis and practice.

2.1. Theoretical Framework of the Study

This study employed Che Suh's (2005) model to analyze cultural translation errors. The framework includes adaptation, omission, addition, borrowing, communicative translation, globalization, and localization. The study examined students' awareness and use of these strategies through error analysis. The following section briefly outlines each strategy.

2.1.1. Adaptation

According to Munday et al. (2022), adaptation is a strategy used when cultural or contextual differences prevent the direct transfer of source-text elements. It involves replacing these elements with functionally equivalent elements from the target culture to preserve meaning and communicative effect while ensuring that the translation reads naturally for the target audience, particularly when dealing with culture-specific items.

2.1.2. Borrowing

Borrowing refers to the transfer of words or lexical items from one language to another with little or no semantic change. In this strategy, the source-language element is transferred directly into the target language (Che Suh, 2005; Munday, 2016). Munday et al. (2022) note that translators now often use borrowing even when equivalents are available, deliberately preserving the source text's foreignness and authenticity. However, excessive use of borrowing may lead to linguistic homogenization.

2.1.3. Communicative Translation

Communicative translation aims to produce the same effect on target readers as the source text produces on its readers, especially when natural equivalents exist. It avoids literal translation and is useful for translating proverbs and fixed expressions (Munday, 2016; Newmark, 1988). When no equivalent exists, a literal or free rendering may be used.

2.1.4. Omission

Omission is a strategy in which a culture-specific element is removed from the target text, leaving no explicit trace of it. It is often used when an element is considered difficult, irrelevant, or problematic for the target audience (Davies, 2003), and may also reflect ideological or cultural considerations (Baker, 2018; Munday et al., 2022).

2.1.5. Addition

Addition refers to a strategy in which the translator provides extra information to clarify a culture-specific element that might otherwise be ambiguous or inaccessible to the target audience. The translator may incorporate this additional information into the body of the text or present it in a paratextual form, such as a footnote (Baker, 2018; Davies, 2003; Munday et al., 2022).

2.1.6. Localization

Localization is a cultural and linguistic process that adapts texts to target-user expectations by reshaping references, language, and communicative norms. Pym (2014) notes that it can increase accessibility but may also standardize and reduce diversity. O'Hagan and Mangiron (2013) emphasize its role in linking language, technology, and culture.

2.1.7. Globalization

Globalization refers to the circulation of texts and cultures across borders through translation, digital media, and international communication. It is linked to global markets and transnational exchange. Cronin (2003) highlights translation as a mediator between global and local cultures, while Munday et al. (2022) note its influence from global forces and power relations.

3. Method

3.1. Design

This study used a qualitative design, supplemented by descriptive statistics, to systematically examine and analyze different types of individual translation errors. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative inquiry can be used to investigate participants' experiences and interpretations in depth; in the present study, qualitative analysis was complemented by frequency counts to describe the distribution of error types.

3.2. Participants

This study included male and female senior students majoring in English Translation at the Islamic Azad University of Shiraz in the academic year 1403. All participants had completed four years of university education and had taken all required translation courses; therefore, they shared a relatively similar academic background.

The students' academic proficiency was considered intermediate. According to translation instructors, the students' translation performance remains at a moderate level, even after completing their translation courses. This university was selected due to its accessibility and the researcher's familiarity with its faculty members.

Since the aim of this study was to examine individual translation errors and required participants who were aware of this phenomenon, purposive sampling was employed to select participants for the qualitative components of the study.

3.3. Instruments

3.3.1. Translation Elicitation Text

The participants were asked to translate three texts from Persian into English. A translation instructor with more than 25 years of experience teaching English translation at Iranian universities selected the texts and rated their cultural difficulty as moderate. The same texts were then given to another instructor in the translation department for evaluation. The two instructors' evaluations were nearly identical. Therefore, the texts were considered appropriate for the purposes of this study.

The translation elicitation materials comprised Text 1 (93 words), Text 2 (129 words), and Text 3 (244 words). Text 2 was taken from Al-e Ahmad (1384), and Text 3 was taken from Jamalzadeh (1376). The source books were written by well-known authors and are commonly taught at Iranian universities.

3.3.2. Students' Interview

In the present study, the interviewer did not ask students directly about the causes of their errors because the interviewer assumed that students who were aware of these causes would have avoided the errors in the first place. Instead, the interviewer framed the questions to uncover the students' perceptions, assumptions, or misconceptions that led to errors in their translations. The interviewer then used the students' accounts of their perceptions, assumptions, or misunderstandings to identify, describe, and interpret the possible causes of each error.

The interview protocol included a heading with the study title, its objectives, and the problem statement. It also recorded each student's first and last names, age, gender, years of study, and

academic major. Finally, the date, time, and location of each interview were documented in the protocol.

A descriptive question was designed to allow each student to explain freely the perception, assumption, or interpretation that led to the incorrect translation of a word or sentence. For each identified error, the interviewer posed the following question:

1. What was your perception, assumption, or interpretation of the word or sentence that led to the incorrect translation?

After collecting and analyzing the students' responses, the interviewer identified and explained the causes of the errors. In addition to the main question, the researcher designed further questions aligned with the study's objectives to guide students toward clear, focused responses during the interview. These supplementary questions were asked as needed to facilitate clarification and deeper elaboration.

3.4. Data Collection Procedure

The researcher explained the text's genre and cultural elements so that students could approach the translation task with an awareness of these aspects.

All 70 students completed the translation task as part of a classroom activity. Including the task in their final course grade encouraged them to take it seriously. Students were allowed to use any dictionaries and were given 120 minutes to complete the task to minimize time-related errors. One week after the evaluation, students received their translated texts with errors identified and categorized. This allowed them to review their mistakes and recall their translation process during subsequent classroom discussions. Students were then interviewed and asked to explain the perceptions, assumptions, or interpretations that led them to translate particular words or sentences incorrectly.

3.5. Data Analysis Procedure

The collected translations were analyzed qualitatively to identify and categorize culture-related translation errors. Each translated text was carefully examined, and errors resulting from insufficient cultural competence were classified into relevant categories. The frequency of each error type was then calculated to determine the most common culture-specific translation problems among the participants. The interview data were analyzed to explore the students' perceptions, assumptions, and interpretations that led to the identified errors. The analysis also examined the extent to which students used culture-oriented translation strategies when dealing with culture-specific items.

4. Results

4.1. Data Analysis of Translation Elicitation Texts

This section presents examples of students' translation errors that illustrate their difficulties in applying the culture-oriented translation strategies described in Che Suh's (2005) model. For each error type, one example is presented and analyzed. Table 1 shows the distribution of cultural translation errors.

Table 1

Frequency and Percentage of The Cultural Translation Errors

Types of cultural translation errors	Frequency	Percentage
Adaptation	28	6.45 %
Borrowing	56	12.09 %
Communicative translation	84	19.35 %
Addition	168	38.70 %
Omission	70	16.12 %
Globalization and localization	28	6.45 %
Total	434	100 %

The distribution of culture-related errors is presented in Table 1. Addition errors were the most frequent, with 168 cases (38%). Students frequently added words to preserve the author's intended meaning. However, these additions often altered the meaning or compromised the accuracy of the translation. Errors in producing an appropriate communicative translation were the second most frequent, accounting for 84 cases (19%). Omission errors were the third most frequent, with 70 cases (16%), and involved the inappropriate omission of cultural elements from the source text. Borrowing errors accounted for 56 cases (12%). Errors related to globalization and localization strategies together accounted for 28 cases (6%). Adaptation errors also accounted for 28 cases (6%).

Because the statistics reported above are descriptive, an inferential analysis was conducted to determine whether the observed frequencies differed significantly from the frequencies expected under the null hypothesis. Given that the data consisted of frequency counts across categories, we used a chi-square goodness-of-fit test.

Two hypotheses were formulated.

- **Null hypothesis (H_0).** All types of culture-related translation errors occur with equal frequency.
- **Alternative hypothesis (H_1).** The frequencies of culture-related translation errors are unequal across categories.

With 434 errors across six categories, the expected frequency for each category under the null hypothesis was $E = 434/6 = 72.33$. The degrees of freedom were calculated as $df = k - 1 = 6 - 1 = 5$. At a significance level of .05 with 5 degrees of freedom, the critical value of χ^2 was 11.07. The chi-square statistic was calculated using the formula $\chi^2 = \Sigma[(O - E)^2/E]$, where O and E

represent the observed and expected frequencies, respectively. Summing the six contributions shown in Table 2 yielded a chi-square statistic of 186.51.

Because the calculated chi-square statistic (186.51) exceeded the critical value (11.07), the null hypothesis was rejected. The observed frequencies differed significantly from the equal frequencies expected under the null hypothesis.

Table 2

Calculation of the Chi-Square Statistic for Comparing Error Types

Error Type	Observed Frequency (O)	Expected Frequency (E)	(O − E)	(O − E)²	(O − E)² / E
Adaptation	28	72.33	−44.33	1965.15	27.16
Borrowing	56	72.33	−16.33	266.67	3.69
Communicative Translation	84	72.33	11.67	136.19	1.88
Addition	168	72.33	95.67	9152.75	126.54
Omission	70	72.33	−2.33	5.43	0.08
Globalization and Localization	28	72.33	−44.33	1965.15	27.16

Note: Total χ2=186.51|chi ^ 2 = 186.51χ2=186.51 (sum of the last column).

The calculated chi-square statistic (186.51) exceeded the critical value (11.07), and the result was statistically significant, $\chi^2(5) = 186.51$, $p < .001$. The null hypothesis was therefore rejected. The observed distribution of culture-related translation errors differed significantly from the equal-frequency distribution expected under the null hypothesis.

Addition errors were the most frequent when students translated cultural elements, while adaptation and globalization/localization errors were the least frequent.

4.1.1. Adaptation

Adaptation errors occur when students apply this strategy inappropriately through literal translation, omission, addition, or excessive free translation, distorting meaning and reducing cultural accuracy.

Example 1:

Student's translation: *and the priest, rising reluctantly from another grave where bread and sweets had been served, will hurriedly say the prayer...*

Source text:

وسید تلقین گو که با اکراه از یک سر خاک نان و حلوادار برخاسته و هنوز دست‌های چرب و آلوده ی خود را پاک نکرده است، هول هول کلمات دعا را چنان خواهد جوید ...

Proposed translation: *and the Sayyid who recites the talqin, rising reluctantly from another grave where bread and halva had been served and has not yet wiped the grease from his dirty hands, will hurriedly mumble the words of the prayer...*

In Example 1, the student translated the culture-specific expression "Sayyid talqin-gu" as "priest," using an inappropriate adaptation strategy that distorted the culture. Although the aim

may have been to make the text more accessible to English-speaking readers, the substitution is inappropriate because a priest belongs to the Christian tradition and does not perform the same role as a "Sayyid talqin-gu" in Islamic–Iranian funeral practices. In the source text, this figure recites the talqin for the deceased, a ritual closely associated with Islamic beliefs concerning death and burial. By replacing this culture-bound term with "priest," the student shifts the setting from an Islamic–Iranian context to a Christian one, leading readers to associate the scene with Christian funeral ceremonies rather than Islamic burial rites. Consequently, the adaptation weakens the text's cultural authenticity and produces a misleading representation of the source culture. This example illustrates a failure to distinguish between functional adaptation and inappropriate cultural substitution, as the translation removes the religious and ritual specificity of the original expression.

4.1.2. Borrowing

A borrowing error occurs when a cultural term is transferred without sufficient explanation or when preserving the original form prevents target readers from understanding its meaning. When used without explanation, or when functional equivalents are available, borrowing becomes a culture-related translation error.

Example 2:

Student's translation: *Then we started shouting and protesting, and we set up an alam-e salati whose other side could not be seen.*

Source text:

....و افتادیم توی بازارها و بنای داد و فریاد را گذاشتیم و علم صلاتی راه انداختیم که آن رویش پیدا نبود.

Proposed translation: *and rushed into the bazaar. Then we started shouting and protesting, raising such a commotion that even the devil would have been impressed.*

In Example 2, the student employed a borrowing strategy by transferring the Persian expression "ᶜalam-e salāti" directly into the target text as "alam e salati." This can be considered an instance of unsuccessful borrowing because the translation preserves the expression's linguistic form but fails to convey its communicative function. In the source text, the expression appears in a context of public excitement and protest, where it is used hyperbolically to emphasize the intensity of the commotion rather than to refer to a specific cultural object. The transliterated expression is unfamiliar to English-speaking readers and appears without explanation, leaving its intended meaning unclear. Furthermore, the literal rendering of the accompanying phrase adds to the ambiguity. The error reflects a misunderstanding of borrowing, as the student transfers the expression's form without conveying its cultural function. Consequently, the translation preserves a surface feature of the source culture but fails to convey the expression's meaning, emotional impact, and stylistic effect, resulting in a culturally opaque and communicatively ineffective target text.

4.1.3. Communicative Translation

Errors in communicative translation occurred when students failed to create the same effect that the source text produces on its original audience.

Example 3:

Student's translation: *Only the old gravedigger—tormented by these kinds of odorless and featureless dead bodies—will press him down…*

Source text:

تنها گورکن پیر که از دست این گونه مرده های بی بو و خاصیت به عذاب آمده او را بفشار و شاید با لگد به میان دخمه تنگی خواهد چپاند

Proposed translation: *Only the old gravedigger—tormented by these kinds of useless, scentless corpses—will press him down and perhaps even shove him with a kick into a narrow pit*

In Example 3, the student's error occurred at the level of communicative translation, as the student translated the Persian expression "bi-bu va khāsiyat" literally, losing its intended meaning and effect. Although the expression consists of the elements "odorless" and "ineffectual," it carries a strongly negative and dismissive connotation in Persian. It is commonly used to describe someone as insignificant or worthless. By translating it as "odorless and featureless dead bodies," the student prioritized lexical equivalence at the expense of communicative impact. In English, "featureless" primarily describes physical appearance and fails to convey the gravedigger's contemptuous attitude. As a result, the emotional and evaluative force of the original expression is weakened, and its ironic tone is lost. The error reflects an overreliance on literal translation and a failure to consider the communicative function of the expression. Consequently, the translation fails to produce the same effect on target readers as the source text produces on its original audience, making it an example of unsuccessful communicative translation.

4.1.4. Addition

Addition errors occur when students add words or information absent from the source text. Such additions may alter meaning or impose unintended interpretations. Although they do not always hinder comprehension, they reduce accuracy and often make translations appear unnatural, awkward, or less faithful to the original text.

Example 4:

Student's translation:

…from another grave where the tasty bread and sweet halva had been served…

Source text:

از یک سر خاک نان و حلوادار برخاسته

Proposed translation:

rising reluctantly from another grave where bread and halva had been served

In this example, the student added the adjectives “tasty” and “sweet” to the culturally significant items “bread and halva,” although the source text omits these qualities. This addition introduces new semantic content and shifts the passage’s tone. In the original text, bread and halva are mentioned simply as customary elements of funeral gatherings and memorial rituals, without emphasis on their sensory appeal. By describing them as “tasty” and “sweet,” the student imposes a positive perspective that is not intended by the author. This is particularly problematic because it conflicts with the narrator’s attitude, which is characterized by bitterness and dissatisfaction. Consequently, the translation creates a tonal inconsistency and presents the funeral setting more positively than intended. The error reflects an unnecessary interpretive intervention that assigns evaluative meanings to culturally embedded elements. Therefore, the translation may weaken the source text’s emotional and stylistic coherence and become less faithful to its original tone.

4.1.5. Omission

Huhtala (1995) listed some reasons that can cause translators to make translation shifts, i.e., omissions and additions in the text: a) to make the text more reader-friendly by clarifying it, b) to simplify its linguistic structure, or c) to alleviate the translation process with change. However, these translation shifts sometimes fail to achieve the expected outcome.

Example 5:

Student’s translation: *even those who are used to hearing these long recitations*

Source text:

حتی نکیر و منکر هم که به شنیدن این تلقین‌های دور و دراز عادت کرده‌اند

Proposed translation: *even Nakir and Munkar—who are accustomed to hearing these long-winded recitations*

In Example 5, the student omitted the names “Nakir and Munkar,” replacing a specific religious reference with a general expression and losing much of its meaning and cultural depth. This omission may have stemmed from the assumption that the reference would be unfamiliar to English-speaking readers. However, removing it eliminates an essential element of the source text’s religious framework. In the original passage, Nakir and Munkar are central to Islamic beliefs about the questioning of the deceased in the grave and contribute directly to the passage’s evocation of funeral rites and the afterlife. Their presence situates the scene within a distinctly Islamic worldview and reinforces the text’s cultural setting. By omitting this reference, the student weakens the passage’s religious dimension and removes an important cultural signal. Moreover, the omission weakens the sentence’s stylistic effect. The original text uses humorous exaggeration by suggesting that even Nakir and Munkar have become accustomed to hearing such lengthy recitations. Replacing this reference with a vague expression removes both the religious imagery and the humorous effect. This example shows how omission can reduce cultural specificity and expressive force while obscuring the source text’s intended meaning.

4.1.6. Localization

Localization occurs when the translator renders a cultural element of the source text in a way that makes it more familiar, comprehensible, or natural for the target-language audience. In this strategy, the translator may modify the source text's structure, expression, or cultural image so the target reader can relate to it more easily (Pym, 2014).

Example 6:

Student's translation: *he would soon become a congressman and sit in Congress*

Source text:

و بدون برو و بیا وکیل هم می‌شد و مجلس‌نشین هم می‌شد

Proposed text: *and that without any connections he'd soon become a member of parliament, sit in the Assembly*

In this example, the student translated the Persian political term "Majles" as "Congress," a familiar term for English-speaking readers that creates cultural distortion. In the source text, "Majles" refers to a specific institution within the Iranian political system. In this historical context, its association with the shah, ministers, representatives, and social change may lead target readers to associate the term with the U.S. political system rather than Iranian historical realities. This weakens the text's cultural authenticity and obscures its original setting. The error reflects an attempt to increase familiarity at the expense of cultural accuracy. Moreover, the mistranslation affects the narrative's social dimension, which focuses on Haji Ali's rise from an ordinary individual to a politically influential figure. Therefore, this example shows how excessive localization can distort political references and reduce the translation's cultural and historical fidelity.

4.1.7. Globalization

Globalization occurs when the translator renders a specific cultural, religious, or local element into a more general, neutral, or universal concept so that it becomes understandable for a wider audience. In this process, the target text usually becomes smoother and more accessible, but some of the cultural specificity of the source text may be lost (Pym, 2014).

Example 7:

Student's translation: *Maybe these are bad times.*

Source text:

شاید آخر الزمونه.

Proposed translation: *Maybe it is the end of times.*

In Example 7, the student translated the Persian expression "ākhar al-zamāneh" as "bad times," an instance of globalization in which a culturally and religiously specific concept is replaced with a universal expression. Although the phrase may refer to social problems or moral decline, it is rooted in religious discourse and carries associations with the end times and apocalyptic disorder. By rendering it as "bad times," the student preserves only the general sense of difficulty while

omitting its religious significance. This loss matters because the later reference to "Sāheb al-Zamān" links contemporary violence to Shiᶜa end-times beliefs and the appearance of a messianic figure. Thus, "ākhar al-zamāneh" establishes the religious framework through which the speaker interprets social events. The translation weakens this connection and reduces coherence between the two statements. It also affects characterization, as the speaker's traditional religious worldview becomes less visible. Therefore, this example demonstrates how globalization can reduce cultural specificity and obscure the text's eschatological dimension.

4.2. Data Analysis of Interview

4.2.1. Data Analysis of Interview with Students

The interview findings indicated that students had difficulty interpreting and translating culture-specific items. As a result, they tended to rely on literal translation or avoid conveying the source text's cultural nuances because they feared that target readers might misunderstand the intended meaning. Another recurring issue was students' limited familiarity with the historical, social, and literary contexts underlying many cultural references, which made it difficult for them to interpret these references accurately before translating them. The interview data also suggested a gap between theoretical knowledge and practical application. Although most participants could identify cultural translation strategies in theory, they struggled to select and apply the most suitable strategy in authentic literary translation tasks. These findings suggest that students' translation problems stem from linguistic and cultural deficiencies, psychological factors, and limited opportunities to practice translating culture-bound literary texts.

5. Discussion

The findings indicate limitations in students' strategic competence when using culture-oriented translation strategies. Addition errors were the most frequent, followed by errors in communicative translation and omission. Errors in adaptation and globalization/localization were less frequent. The predominance of addition errors suggests that students attempted to compensate for perceived cultural gaps by inserting information absent from the source text. This tendency illustrates the challenge of balancing accessibility with textual fidelity when translating culture-specific references, as discussed by Davies (2003) and Baker (2018). The relatively high frequency of errors in communicative translation suggests that students sometimes prioritized lexical correspondence over the communicative effects of culture-bound expressions. This finding relates to Newmark's (1988) distinction between semantic and communicative translation and is consistent with the pedagogical value of communicative translation methods highlighted by Mannahali et al. (2020). Examples of borrowing, adaptation, localization, and globalization illustrate the tension between preserving source-culture specificity and making the translation accessible to target

readers. Translating "Sayyid talqin-gu" as "priest" shows how adaptation can mislead when a substitution disregards the religious context. Similarly, rendering "Majles" as "Congress" illustrates the risks of over-localization. These findings support Aixelá's (1996) emphasis on choices between cultural conservation and substitution and align with Qassem's (2021) emphasis on selecting culturally informed strategies. The interviews revealed that students worried readers might misunderstand their translations, had limited contextual knowledge, and struggled to apply what they knew to authentic translation tasks. These observations are compatible with Waddington's (2001) emphasis on systematic assessment and Ramey's (2023) view of translation as a pedagogical practice. Overall, the findings suggest that translation instruction should integrate strategy training, cultural preparation, literary translation practice, and guided reflection on students' translation decisions.

6. Conclusion

The study highlights the importance of developing students' cultural and strategic competence so that they can make appropriate, context-sensitive translation decisions. Inappropriate use of strategies such as adaptation, borrowing, localization, omission, and communicative translation may result in cultural distortion, loss of meaning, or reduced authenticity. The findings also suggest that limited contextual knowledge and insufficient practical experience can make it difficult for students to apply theoretical knowledge effectively in authentic translation tasks. Therefore, translation curricula and instructional practices should provide more opportunities for cultural training, strategy-based learning, literary translation practice, and guided reflection. This approach can help students become more aware of cultural differences and better able to preserve meaning, stylistic nuance, and communicative effectiveness. Ultimately, integrating the development of cultural competence into practical translation training can contribute to more accurate, context-sensitive, and effective literary translation from Persian into English.

Despite its contributions, this study has several limitations. First, the study involved a limited group of translation students, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other learners or professional translators. Second, the analysis focused on culture-oriented translation strategies in selected Persian literary texts. Other text types and translation challenges were beyond the scope of the study. Third, although the interviews provided valuable insights into students' perspectives, the interview findings relied on participants' self-reported experiences and may capture only some of the factors that influenced their translation decisions. Finally, the study examined students' translations within a specific educational context. Differences in curricula, instructional methods, and cultural backgrounds may influence translation performance in other settings.

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Appendix

Source Text 1

راس راسی من دلم واسه مادرای این جوونکا کبابه. کباب. آخه هرچی باشه بنده خدا که هستن. آدم دلش میسوزه. دلم ریش ریشه. مادر مرده ها.....
شاید آخر الزمونه. شاید اینا همدیگر رو می کشن که کار صاحب زمون راحت بشه..... خدا نکنه روزگار برای آدم بد بیاره. راس راسی می تونه یه روزه یه خونمون رو به باد بده و تموم رشته های آدمو پنبه کنه و آدمو به خاک سر بشونه.....خب خانم بزرگ، عزت شما زیاد. خدا سایه شما را از سر ما کم نکند و به شما طول عمر بدهد.

Proposed Translation of the Source Text 1

Honestly, my heart really aches for the mothers of these young people. It truly aches. After all, they're still God's creations. It breaks your heart. I'm torn to pieces inside. Poor mothers…Maybe it's the end of times. Maybe these people are destroying each other so that the work of the Lord of Time becomes easier…God forbid that life turns against a person. Truly, in a single day it can blow everything away—destroy a whole household—and unravel everything someone has built, bringing them to ruin…Well, dear elder lady, may your honor increase. May God keep your shadow over us and grant you a long life.

Source Text 2

نه کسی آبی بر روی قبرش خواهد ریخت و نه دلبندی گل به مزارش خواهد نهاد. تنها گورکن پیر که از دست این گونه مرده های بی بو و خاصیت به عذاب آمده او را بفشار و شاید با لگد به میان دخمه تنگی خواهد چپاند وسید تلقین گو که با اکراه از یک سر خاک نان و حلوادار برخاسته و هنوز دست‌های چرب و آلوده ی خود را پاک نکرده است، هول هول کلمات دعا را چنان خواهد جوید که حتی نکیر و منکر هم که به شنیدن این تلقین‌های دور و دراز عادت کرده‌اند و شاید هم آن را از بردارند، آن را نخواهند دریافت و شاید خود او همچنان سرگرد باشد که مذکر یا مؤنث بودن مرده را فراموش کند و ضمیر فعل را اشتباهی بیاورد.

Proposed Translation of the Source Text 2

No one will pour water over his grave, nor will any love one place flowers upon it. Only the old gravedigger—tormented by these kinds of useless, scentless corpses—will press him down and perhaps even shove him with a kick into a narrow pit and the Sayyid who recites the talqin, rising reluctantly from another grave where bread and halva had been served and has not yet wiped the grease from his dirty hands, will hurriedly mumble the words of the prayer so carelessly that even Nakir and Munkar—who are accustomed to hearing these long-winded recitations and perhaps even know them by heart—will fail to understand it. He himself may remain so confused that he forgets whether the deceased is male or female and uses the wrong pronoun in the verb.

Source Text 3

از قضا زنم هم حق داشت. حاج علی بی سر و پا و یکتا قبا ازبس سگ دوی کرده و شر و ور بافته بود کم کم برای خود آدمی شده بود اسمش را توی روزنامه ها می نوشتند و می گفتند دموکرات شده و بدون برو و بیا وکیل هم می شد و مجلس نشین هم می شد و با شاه و وزیر نشست و برخواست هم می کرد. خودم هم دیگر راستش این است از این شغل و کار لعنتی و ادبار که بدترین شغل هاست سیر شده بودم و صدای زه کمان از صدای انکر و منکر به گوشم بدتر می آمد و هر وقت چک حلاجیم را به دست می گرفتم، بی ادبی می شود مثل این بود که دست خر نری در دست گرفته باشم. این بود که یک شب که دیگر زن بی چشم و رویم هم سرزنش را به خنکی رساند، با خود قرار گذاشتم که کم کم از حلاجی کناره گرفته و در همان خط حاج علی بیفتم. از قضا بختمان هم زد و خدا خودش کار را همین طور که می خواستم راست آورد. نمی دانم چه اتفاقی افتاده بود که توی بازارها هو افتاده بود که دکان ها را ببندید و در مجلس اجماع کنید. ما هم مثل خر وامانده که معطل هش است مثل برق دکان را در و تخته کردیم و افتادیم توی بازارها و بنای داد و فریاد را گذاشتیم و علم صلاتی راه انداختیم که آن رویش پیدا نبود.

Proposed Translation of the Source Text 3

3. By chance, my wife was right too. Haj Ali — that good-for-nothing, shabby fellow with his single coat — after running around like a dog and spinning lies for so long, had worn himself out. They were writing his name in the newspapers, saying he'd become a Democrat, and that without any connections he'd soon become a member of parliament, sit in the Assembly, and even meet with the Shah and ministers. To be honest, I myself had grown sick and tired of this damned, miserable job — the worst job of all. The sound of the bowstring (of the *halaji* tools) had become more dreadful to my ears than the voices of Nakir and Munkar, and every time I took my *halaji* check in my hand, forgive the expression, it felt as if I were holding a donkey's testicles. So, one night, when my shameless wife took her reproaches too far, I decided that I should gradually distance myself from halaji work and follow in Haj Ali's footsteps. As fate would have it, luck struck our door, and God Himself made things turn out just as I wanted. I don't know what had happened, but word had spread through the bazaars that all the shops should be closed, and everyone should gather in the Assembly. We too — like exhausted donkeys waiting for someone to tell us what to do — shut the shop in a flash and rushed into the bazaar. Then we started shouting and protesting, raising such a commotion that even the devil would have been impressed.