

Employing translation strategies as a dilemma for Iranian translators: the case of M.A. translation students with the special attention to their gender

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Abstract

The present study aimed at investigating Aixela's (1996) translation strategies employed by M.A. translation students to deal with culture-specific items (CSIs) from English into Persian. Furthermore, the most/least used translation strategies were determined. To achieve this, a translation test consisted of 25 statements, which were extracted from the novel *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997), was given to 40 M.A. translation students who were selected conveniently and equally divided into the females and males students. The 25 statements encompassed CSIs which were classified based on the Klingberg's (1986) classification of CSIs. As the results indicated, among Aixela's translation strategies, the males M.A. students applied orthographic adaptation, absolute Universalization, naturalization, linguistic translation, intratextual gloss, synonymy, and limited universalization of which orthographic adaptation was the most used and synonymy was the least employed strategies. The females M.A. students employed the same strategies among which orthographic adaptation and intertextual gloss were the most/least used strategies. The independent sample *t* test was conducted to find out which group of translators was more successful in producing higher quality translations. This led to discover whether the gender had an effect on the translation qualities and on the types of translation strategies. The results of the study showed the effect of the gender of the M.A. students on the translation qualities they produced. The results gave no indication of the effect of the gender on the translation strategies they employed. This study generates some pedagogical implications for translation students and trainee translators, and for those responsible for teaching students and training translators.

Keywords: Translation, Translation strategies, and Culture-specific items (CSIs)

Introduction

Translation provides an opportunity to be aware of the culture of other countries. Tanjour (2011) stated that "interest in the mutual relationship between culture and translation has increased in recent years motivated largely by the awareness of the

need to develop human communication and the translation of texts across cultural and linguistic boundaries" (p. 1). In order to introduce the culture of the country, and make the appropriate relationship between countries, the source text (ST) should be translated in the best possible way. In this

context, Thomas More (1532) argued that if a ST is assumed to show the values of source culture (SC) and to be a representative of the culture of the origin, it should be translated as careful as possible because unsuccessful translation may destroy the foundation of the culture itself.

From various types of texts, as Abdi (2019) noted "literary texts play a very important function in depicting the culture of a country as well as in creating better communication between societies" (p. 89). This is because of the fact that the beliefs and values of the people of another culture are presented via literary texts. Furthermore, "the specific part of the function of a literary text is to produce a particular aesthetic or poetic effect on its readers"(Nord, 1997, p. 82). Literary texts are also one type of texts that create serious problems for translators due to many types of culture-specific items (CSIs) that are included in them. In this regard, Nida (1964) discussed that what poses more problems for translators in translating cultural issues is the difference between cultures, not in language structures. This alludes to the fact that CSIs are "so deeply rooted in their SC and so specific to the culture that produced them" (Guerra, 2012, p. 1).

According to Newmark (1988), foreign CSIs include ecological, material, and social cultures as well as expressions related to social organizations, political, religious, artistic, gestures, and habits. CSIs can also be found in proverbs, collocations, phrasal verbs and figures of speech. In the translation process, the intended meaning of the CSI must be well transferred from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL). It implies that "target text (TT) translation should contain the same sense, mode and semantic prosperities of the ST" (Baalbaki cited in Khammyseh, 2015, p. 103).

Nowadays, in spite of serious discussions take place about the methods of translation among scholar in order to be used by translators to overcome CSIs, translators are

still facing with many problems for translating such items. One of those problems is the lack of strategic competence. The reason of this deficiency with which the most translators, especially Iranian translation students, are encountered may be the fact that they do not take the importance of translation theories seriously, or they have not been taught well on how to employ these strategies. Strategic competence is defined by PACTE Group (2000) as "all the individual procedures, conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal, used to solve the problems found during the translation process" (p. 102). That is to say, the strategy the translator employs to maintain the meaning and the style of the CSI in the TT can be considered a matter of importance. In this way, the translator needs to have a mastery over different types of translation strategies. If a translator is not able to choose an appropriate translation strategy for translating CSIs, he will produce an awkward translation which ends in his failure.

Besides, the audience of the translation is one important factor that needs to be taken into account by the translator. In another word, the strategies the translator employs should be based on the type of the target reader. That is, for what types of audiences he is supposed to translate. As a rule of thumb, choosing an appropriate translation strategy, as Hatim and Masson (1990) discussed, is dependent on "who is translating what, for whom, when, where, why and in what circumstances?" (p. 67).

This study aimed at investigating Aixela's (1996) translation strategies employed to deal with CSIs from English into Persian. Furthermore, it is intended to probe the most/least frequent translation strategies used by Iranian M.A. translation students, who were divided into two the females and males students, to translate CSIs. Moreover, a comparison was drawn between them to find which group was more successful in dealing with CSIs and in producing higher

quality translations. At the end, it was concluded that whether the difference in gender had a noticeable effect on the type of translation strategies and on the translation qualities. To achieve the above objectives, the following questions were answered:

- 1- Which translation strategies presented by Aixela (1996) were employed by the females M.A. translation students in the translation of CSIs from English into Persian?
- 2- Which translation strategies presented by Aixela (1996) were employed by the males M.A. translation students in the translation of CSIs from English into Persian?
- 3- What are the most/least translation strategies, based on Aixela's (1996) taxonomy, used by the females M.A. translation students in the translation of CSIs from English into Persian?
- 4- What are the most/least translation strategies, based on Aixela's (1996) taxonomy, employed by the males 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 dealing with CSIs and in producing higher quality translations?
- 6- Did the gender of M.A. translation students have a noticeable effect on the translation strategies they employed and on the translation qualities they produced?

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

What Is Translation?

Like other disciplines, translation theory and practice have been influenced by other fields of knowledge such as literary theory, linguistics, communication theory, critical theory, culture studies (Jothira, 2004). From beginning to this date, many definitions have been given to translation, and different

types of translation methods and strategies have been proposed. The term translation, as Jothira explained, means "carrying across" because it is composed of two separate words, "trans" and "laturn". The former refers to the Latin word "carried" or "borne" and the latter to "across", or "beyond".

For Nida and Taber (1969), "translating consist of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message, first in the meaning and secondly in the term of style" (p. 12). They further stated that in order to achieve a desired result, one must make dramatic changes in grammatical and lexical parts of the message. In his book *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, Catford (1965) defined translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language" (p. 20). From Levý's (1967) point of view, translation is not only "a process of communication but also a decision process" (p. 148). Munday (2001) expressed that translation can be considered either "the product (the text that has been translated) or the process (the act of producing the translation, otherwise known as translating)" (p. 5).

Culture-Specific Items (CSIs)

To have better understanding of CSIs, the concept of *culture* should first be described. As culture derives from the Latin term *colere*, it traditionally means "to tend to the earth and grow, or cultivation and nurture" Zimmermann (2017). In all attempts to define the word culture, two different concepts of it have emerged, including the humanistic and anthropological concepts (House, 2016). The former encompasses "the cultural heritage as a model of refinement, whereas the latter refers to "the overall way of life of a community or society" (p. 40). Bassnett and Lefevere (1998) pointed to the importance of culture in shaping texts. According to them, as the norms and limitations related to the SC are

effective in producing the ST, so the norms and the values of the target culture (TC) are unavoidably effective in producing the TT. Newmark (1988) pointed out that CSIs are elements which "are deeply rooted in the SL culture and absent in the TL culture" (p. 92). Baker (1992) discussed that the concept that a CSI holds may completely be strange in the target culture. The reason explained by her was that "it may relate to a religious belief, a social custom, or even a type of food" (p. 21). The term *culturemew* was used by Nord (1997) for CSIs. She defined the CSI as "a cultural phenomenon that is present in culture X but not present (in the same way) in culture Y" (p. 34). Antonini(2004, p. 154) used the term *culture-specific references* instead of CSIs and stressed that

Culture-specific references connoting different aspects of everyday life such as education, politics, history, art, institutions, legal systems, units of measurement, place names, foods and drinks, sports and national pastimes, as experienced in different countries and nations of the world.

Various categories of CSIs have been proposed by different scholars. In other words, CSIs have been placed into many different categories in order to be easily identified by translators (see for example Newmark, 1988; Davies, 2003; Espindola & Vasconcellos, 2006). From different models of CSIs, Klingberg (1986) presented one of the most detailed categorizations in which he identified ten types of CSIs. His model was also very helpful for the analysis of each type of text. That is why his model was used in the present study. His model includes the following categorizations:

1. Literary References
2. Foreign language in the source text
3. References to mythology and popular belief
4. Historical, religious and political background
5. Buildings, home furnishing and food

6. Customs and practice, play and games
7. Flora and Fauna
8. Personal names, titles, names of domestic animals, and names of objects
9. Geographical names
10. Weights and measure

Along with categorization of CSIs, many translation strategies have been presented to be used by translators to overcome cultural items, such as Vinay's and Darbelnet's(1995), Pym's (1998), and Baker's (1992) taxonomy of translation strategies. Aixela (1996) paid attention to CSIs and defined taxonomy of translation strategies which a brief explanation of his taxonomy of translation strategies is provided in the next section.

Aixela's Taxonomy of Translation Strategies Aixela (1996) determined two types of CSIs in translation, including *proper nouns* and *common expressions*. To overcome the second type of CSIs, he proposed eleven effective strategies and arranged them "from a lesser to a greater degree of intercultural manipulation" (p. 47). These eleven strategies were divided into two groups: *conservation* and *substitution* strategies. The former strategies are ST-oriented which used to maintain the structure of the ST, whereas the latter strategies are oriented towards the structure of the TT. Because of the variety of translation strategies that his taxonomy provided for the translators to deal with CSIs and the usefulness of his taxonomy in translation theory and practice, it was used for investigating translation strategies applied by the translation students in this study. His model consisted of the following strategies:

- 1- Procedures of conservation
 - a) Repetition: the CSI is transferred from the ST to the TT to keep the original reference as much as possible.
 - b) Orthographic adaptation: it is used when the CSI is expressed in an

alphabet which is different from the one in the target culture.

- c) Linguistic (non-cultural) translation: is a dictionary meaning of the CSI in the TT in such a way that it is understood by the target readers and can still be recognized as belonging to the cultural system of the source text.
 - d) Extratextual gloss: the translator uses one of the above-mentioned procedures by providing some additional explanation for the meaning of the CSI, such as footnote, endnote, glossary, and commentary.
 - e) Intratextual gloss: This is not different from the previous one, but the translators feel they can or should include their gloss as an indistinct part of the text, usually so as not to disturb the reader's attention
- 2- Procedures of substitution
- a) Synonymy: the translator is obliged to use some kind of synonym to avoid repeating the CSI.
 - b) Limited universalization: the CSI is replaced by the TL word due to its total obscurity for the target readers.
 - c) Absolute universalization: it is similar to the previous one, but the translator prefers to delete any foreign connotations and choose a neutral reference for their readers.
 - d) Naturalization: the translator decides to bring the CSI into the intertextual corpus felt as specific by the target language culture.
 - e) Deletion: the translators decide to omit the CSI due to it is not accepted by the target readers or it is not enough understandable to their readers even through gloss.
 - f) Autonomous creation: this is a very little-used strategy in which the translators (or usually their initiators) decide that it could be interesting for their readers to put in some nonexistent cultural reference in the source text. (pp. 61-64)

Materials and methods

The participants of the study were selected conveniently from M.A. translation students of Islamic Azad University, Science and Research, whose ages ranged from 24 to 27 years old. They were asked to participate in the study after they were informed about the objectives of the researcher project. The number of the participants was 40 who were equally divided into the females and males M.A. translation students. The logic behind this selection was the familiarity of the participants with some of the theories of translation and their ability to employ translation strategies because they had worked as translators between 2 and 5 years, and passed some related translation courses such as translation theories and translation workshops.

Instrumentation

A translation test was used for data collection from the participants of the study. The test encompassed 25 statements extracted from *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997). This book was one of the famous series of Harry Potter which consisted of various types of CSIs, including magical world, characters, places, and themes, most of which create significant problems for translators, especially translation students, when translating between two different languages and cultures like English and Persian. The statements contained CSIs and classified based on Klingberg's (1986) model. The test was validated by three university professors who had experience in teaching translation theories and in training translators. The comments provided by them were useful in the rewording and reordering of some statements to make their meaning easier to understand. To measure the reliability of the test, the test-retest method was employed. Thus, the test was given to 15 M.A. translation students who shared the same

characteristics of the sample of the study at different times with a two-week interval. The results of the two trials were correlated and the coefficient of correlation showed the reliability of the test ($r = .761$). After giving information about what type of texts they are translating, the participants were given 50 min to translate the 25 statements, expecting that each statement will take 2 min.

Procedure

For the objectives of the current study and in order to achieve desired results, the chosen English book *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* (Rowling, 1997) was completely under investigation to extract the 25 statements. Then, the statements were classified based on Klingberg's (1986) classification of CSIs and analyzed alongside their corresponding equivalents provided by the females and males

students, according to Aixela's (1996) taxonomy of translation strategies, to find out the strategies applied by them for translating CSIs. This led to determine the most/least used strategies by each group. Finally, to discover which group was more successful in producing higher quality translations, three raters were asked to assess translations based on the model of translation quality assessment presented by House (2015). By doing this, the researcher examined the effect of gender on the translation qualities each group produced and on the translation strategies each group employed.

In what follows, Tables 1- 7 indicate the translation strategies employed by the females and males M.A. translation students to deal with CSIs alongside the examples of each strategy. This make easier to understand the above procedures that the researcher followed.

Table-1 Frequencies and examples of orthographic adaptation used by the females and males M.A. translation students for translating references to literary references, to foreign language in the source text, to mythology and popular belief, to buildings, to customs and practices., and to weights and measures

Strategy	Females students				Males students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Orthographic Adaptation	Brazil	برزیل	20	100.0	Brazil	برزیل	20	100.0
	amigo	آمیگو	8	40.0	amigo	آمیگو	3	15.0
	Alohomora	آلوهومورا	20	100.0	Alohomora	آلوهومورا	20	100.0
	centaur	سنتور	20	100.0	centaur	سنتور	20	100.0
	Gringotts	گرینگوتز	20	100.0	Gringotts	گرینگوتز	20	100.0
	Halloween	هالووین	20	100.0	Halloween	هالووین	20	100.0
	a foot from the ground	در یک فوتی زمین	11	55.0	A foot from the ground	در یک فوتی زمین	8	40.0
	an ounce	انس	7	35.0	an ounce	انس	10	50.0
	eight and a half inches	هشت و نیم اینچ	20	100.0	eight and a half inches	هشت و نیم اینچ	5	25.0

Table-2 Frequencies and examples of linguistic translation used by the females and males M.A. translation students for translating references to mythology and popular belief, to food items, to customs and practices., to food items, to flora and fauna, and to weights and measures

Strategy	Females students				Males students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Linguistic Translation	unicorn	تک شاخ	20	100.0	unicorn	تک شاخ	13	65.0
	phoenix	سمندر	12	60.0	phoenix	سمندر	10	50.0
	dragons	اژدها	20	100.0	dragons	اژدها	20	100.0
	vampire	خون آشام	20	100.0	vampire	خون آشام	20	100.0
	pumpkin pasties	کلوچه کدو تنبلی	11	55.0	pumpkin pasties	کلوچه کدو تنبلی	8	40.0
	the Easter holidays	تعطیلات تعطیلات	20	100.0	the Easter holidays	تعطیلات تعطیلات	7	35.0
	maple	درخت افرا	20	35.0	maple	درخت افرا	20	100.0
	a foot from the ground	دریک متر زمین	9	45.0	a foot from the ground	دریک متر زمین	12	60.0

Table-3 Frequencies and examples of intratextual gloss used by the females and males M.A. translation students for translating references to mythology and popular belief, and to weights and measures

Strategy	Females students				Males students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Intratextual Gloss	phoenix	سمندر (مرغ افسانه ای)	8	40.	phoenix	سمندر (مرغ افسانه ای)	1	50.
	x		0	0	x		0	0
	an ounce	انس (واحد اندازه گیری)	1	65.	an ounce	(انس) (واحد اندازه گیری)	1	50.
			3	0			0	0
					unicorn	تکشاخ (جانور افسانه ای)	7	35.
							0	0
					eight and a half inches	هشتونیم اینچ (واحد اندازه گیری)	1	75.
						5	0	

Table-4 Frequencies and examples of synonymy used by the females and males M.A. translation students for translating references to foreign language in the source text, and to buildings

Strategy	Females students				Males students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Synonymy	amigo	رفيق	12	60.0	amigo	رفيق	17	85.0
	letter-box	صندوقنامهها	20	100.0	letter-box	صندوقنامهها	20	100.0

Table-5 Frequencies and examples of limited universalization used by the females and males M.A. translation students for translating references to buildings, and to customs and practices

Strategy	Females students				Males students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Limited Universalization	take this stuff upstairs	وسايلاتو جمعكبير وبالا	5	25.0	take this stuff upstairs	وسايلاتو جمعمكن بروبالا	6	30.0
	the ticket barrier on the Undergr ound	محلپر داخ تبليندر متر و	20	100.0	the ticket barrier on the Undergr ound	محلپر داخ تبليندر مترو	20	100.0
	gave him the thumbs up	بهاو علام تپيروزين شانداد	9	45.0	gave him the thumbs up	بهاو علام تپيروز ينشانداد	6	30.0
	Bonfire Night	شباتيشباز ي	3	15.0				

Table-6 Frequencies and examples of absolute universalization used by the females and males M.A. translation students for translating references to literary references, to clothes, to food items, to customs and practice, and to flora and fauna

Strategy	Females students				Males students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Absolute	Tiptoe Through the Tulips	نوعيموس يفي	20	100.0	Tiptoe Through the Tulips	نوعيموس يفي	12	60.0
	knickerbockers	لباسمدرس هاش	7	35.0	four-poster bed	تخت	20	100.0
	four-poster	تخت	20	100.0	treacle tart	نوعيشيريني	11	55.0

Universalization	bed								
	Pumpkin	كلوچه	9	45.0	Pumpkin	كلوچه	12	60.0	
	Pasties				Pasties				
	treacle	نوعيشير	20	100.0	the	نوعيشنمسيحيا	13	65.0	
	tart	يني			Easter	ن			
					holidays				
	gave him	بر ايشدست			gave him				
	the	تكانداد	11	55.0	the	بر ايشدستتكانداد	14	70.0	
	thumbs				thumbs				
	up				up				
	Galleons	كشتي	20	100.0	Galleons	كشتي	20	100.0	
	barn owl	جغد	20	100.0	barn owl	جغد	20	100.0	

Table-7 Frequencies and examples of naturalization used by the females and males M.A. translation students for translating references to literary references, to clothes, to food items, to customs and practice, and to flora and fauna

Strategy	Females Students				Males Students			
	ST	TT	f	%	ST	TT	f	%
Naturalization	Take this stuff upstairs	خرتوپرتاتوبرداروبر و طبقهبالا	1	75.0	Tiptoe Through the Tulips	پاورچينميانلالهها	8	40.0
	knickerboc kers	روپوشمدرسه	1	65.0	Take this stuff upstairs	خرتوپرتاتوبرداروبر و طبقهبالا	1	70.0
	Licorice Wands	چوبدستيهاي نيشكري	2	100.0	knickerboc kers	روپوشمدرسه	2	100.0
	Bonfire Night	شب 4 شنبهسوري	1	85.0	Licorice Wands	چوبدستيهاي نيشكري	2	100.0
	pigtails	دماسبي	2	100.0	treacle tart	نونقندي	9	45.0
			0	.0	Bonfire Night	شب 4 شنبهسوري	2	100.0
					pigtails	دماسبي	2	100.0
							0	.0

Data analysis

The collected data were analyzed to investigate Aixela's (1996) translation strategies applied by the females and males M.A. translation students to deal with the CSIs included in the translation test. The frequencies and percentages of the

translation strategies employed by each group were measured and illustrated along with the examples of each strategy in Tables 1-7. Furthermore, a series of descriptive and inferential statistics were employed to test the hypothesis. According to the scores given by the raters, the independent sample *t*

test was performed to find which group

produced higher quality translations.

RESULTS

As Table 8 indicated, the total number of strategies applied by the females M.A. translation students ($N = 560$) was equal to the total number of them employed by the freshmen M.A. students ($N = 560$). Furthermore, orthographic adaption ($n =$

146) and intertextual gloss ($n = 21$) were the most/least translation strategies employed by the females students. By contrast, the males students applied orthographic adaptation ($n = 126$) and limited universalization ($n = 32$) as the most/least used strategies.

Table-8 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>	%
Orthographic adaptation	146	25.0	Orthographic adaptation	126	22.0
Linguistic translation	132	23.0	Absolute Universalization	122	21.0
Absolute Universalization	127	22.0	Naturalization	111	19.0
Naturalization	85	15.0	Linguistic translation	110	19.0
Limited universalization	37	6.0	Intratextual gloss	42	7.0
Synonymy	32	5.5	Synonymy	37	6.0
Intratextual gloss	21	4.0	Limited universalization	32	5.5
Total	580	100.0	Total	580	100

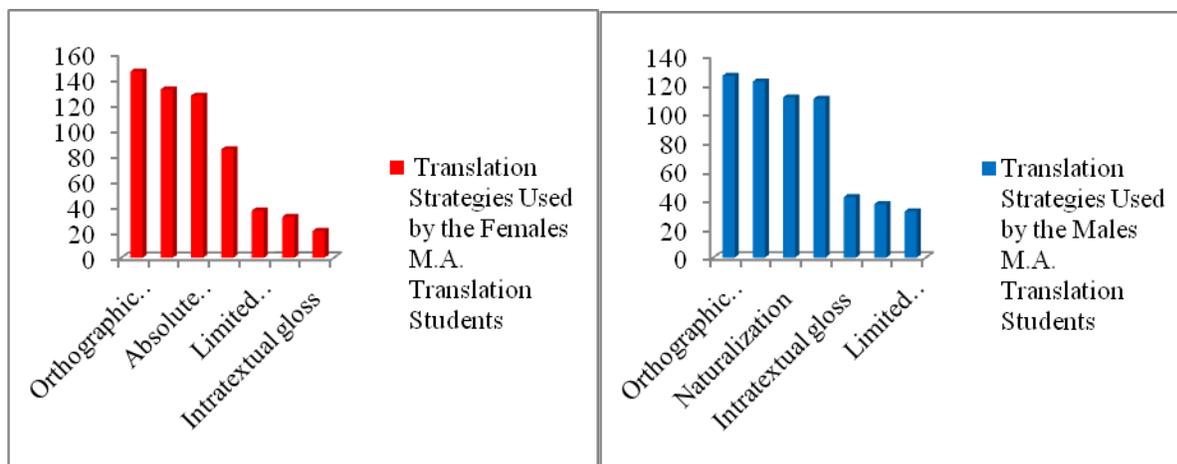


Figure- 1 Translation Strategies Used by Both Groups of M.A. Translation Students for Translating CSIs

Reliability test

The Interrater reliability was calculated to check the reliability of the scores given by the three raters to translations made by the participants. Table 9 Showed correlation coefficient among the raters.

Table-9 Summary of intercorrelations of the three raters

Raters		1	2	3
1. Rater 1	<i>r</i>	1	.839	.798
2. Rater 2	<i>r</i>	.839	1	.693
3. Rater 3	<i>r</i>	.798	.693	1

According to Table 9, there was a perfect agreement among the three raters. In a sense, the correlation among the raters was acceptable and they enjoyed a significant interrater reliability. Furthermore, the highest amount of correlation was between first and second raters ($r = .839$), and the lowest was between second and third ($r = .693$).

Testing the Hypothesis

Before testing the hypothesis, the descriptive statistic was employed to present the results of given scores by the raters to the performance of the M.A. translation students. Table 10 shows a summary of the obtained findings of descriptive statistic.

Table-10 Descriptive statistics of the scores of the females and males M.A. translation students

	<i>N</i>	Mean	<i>SD</i>	Skewness	Kurtosis
	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Std. Error
Females Students	20	15.6	1.09544	0.91820	0.3
Males Students	20	17.35	1.13670	0.17379	0.3

Based on Table 10, the mean score of the females M.A. translation students was 15.6 and the mean score of the males M.A. translation students was 17.35. That is to say, the mean score of the males translators was higher than the mean score of the females students.

Table-11 Summary of the performance of the females and males M.A. 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>MD</i>	<i>SD</i>	95% CI	
									<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Translati on Score	Equal variances assumed	.014	.906	2.0	38	.000	1.75	.0413	2.634	3.96
	Equal variances not assumed			2.0	36.34	.000	1.75	.0413	2.634	3.96

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 performed to test the hypothesis. The advantage of this test was that it gives the translator the chance of finding the

difference in translation qualities produced by two groups. First, the sig value of Levene's test should be checked for the equality of variance. As table 11 indicated, the sig value of Levene's test was .906 which was higher than .05 ($p > .05$). This alludes to the assumption of homogeneity. To find the difference between the performance of the females and males students, the researcher checked the * p value of the first line. As the results indicated, the * p value of this test was 0. which was lower than .05 (* $p < .05$). According to the results, the hypothesis was rejected and there was a significant difference in translation quality of the males students and females students ($MD = 1.75$, 95% CI [2.64, 3.96]). It refers to the fact that the performance of the males M.A. students ($M = 17.35$, $SD = 1.13$) was better than the performance of the females M.A. students ($M = 15.6$, $SD = 1.09$, $t(38) = 2.02$, * $p = .000$, two-tailed).

Discussion and conclusion

The present study investigated Aixela's (1996) translation strategies employed by the females and males M.A. translation students to deal with CSIs. Furthermore, it was intended to determine the most/least translation strategies applied by each group of translators. Finally, the performance of each group of the participants was under investigation to find out whether the gender had an effect on the translation qualities and on the types of translation strategies. Based on the findings of the study, each of these objectives is discussed in this section.

To overcome the only reference to literary references "Tiptoe Through the Tulips", two different translation strategies were applied, including absolute universalization and naturalization. Although these two strategies were TT-oriented, those who applied the latter were more successful in dealing with the CSI. This may be because of the fact that translators attempted to replace the cultural word, which pointed to a popular song in the

1920s and later in the 1960s, by the one in the target culture which was understandable to the target readers.

Among references to foreign words, the problematic casewas the Spanish word "amigo." This cultural word was translated through orthographic adaptation and synonymy. Those who employed synonymy produced higher quality translations because the meaning of the SL word is conveyed more clearly through its synonymy "رفیق". This may allude to the familiarity of the students with the original culture. In the case of references to mythology and popular belief, no problemarose for students when translating different mythological sources because there was a linguistic meaning for each CSI in the target language. Some references to the buildings, home furnishing, and clothes created problems for the students due to the fact that there is somehow a difference between the building system of England and Persian. This may pose a little confusion for the target readers. For example, the cultural word "four-poster" bedwhich was very popular in Persian culture in the past and used by aristocrats, who were in a high social rank at that time. It has also the same connotations of antiquity in English. In the Persian, there was no equivalent for this type of bed. Thus, the participants had to change it into "تخت" and opted for standardization. The other example of this category was the cultural word "knickerbockers" which was a school uniform. This CSI was correctly translated by a few numbered of the females and all males translators through naturalization strategy into "روپوش مدرسه". But the point is that the effect and sense of the CSI were not completely conveyed although the chosen TL word was understandable to the target readers. It would be better that translators provided an additional explanation for the meaning of the CSI, such as interpolations and footnotes. References to the food items did not pose any problem for the participants. All items were correctly

translated through absolute universalization, linguistic translation, and naturalization in such a way that they were enough comprehensive to the target readers. By contrast, some references to customs were challenging items for the participants. The example of such items is the word "Halloween" which was translated through orthographic adaptation. This strategy seems inappropriate for translating references to customs due to the exact meaning of the intended CSI is not transferred into the TL and may remain obscure for most target readers. Thus, using an additional explanation can be helpful to make the meaning clear to the audiences.

From references to animals, "the pig" was the controversial animal which is known as one of the most despised animals in Persian culture which is also prohibited in Islam. That is why the cultural word "pigtail" is replaced by the TL word "ponytail" and translated correctly into "دم اسبی". References to weight and measures were not problematic items for the translators and their meanings were accurately conveyed to the TL. Of course in some case, for instance in the translation of "as an ounce" and "a foot," employing interpolation strategy could be more effective for producing higher quality translations.

As the results of the study indicated, among Aixela's (1996) translation strategies, the males M.A. students employed orthographic adaptation, absolute universalization, naturalization, linguistic translation, intratextual gloss, synonymy, and limited universalization of which orthographic adaptation was the most used and synonymy was the least employed strategies. The same strategies applied by the females M.A. translators among which orthographic adaptation and intertextual gloss were the most/least used strategies. The obvious difference between the males and females students was the overall strategy of them on macro level. In a sense, the males students were more interested in the use of

substitution strategies which referred to their TT orientation on macro level; whereas the females students preferred to employ more of conservation strategies which gave an indication of their faithfulness to the ST structure. Through TT-oriented strategies, the males students were able to make translations that were more comprehensive to the target readers. That is why they were more successful in dealing with CSIs and produced higher quality translations.

The results obtained from Al Faqara's (2015) study on translation students and the problems they encounter when translating political texts from Arabic language into English language was the same as that derived from the females students in this study. It means, the most used translation strategy among the participants was direct translation. The reason given by Al Faqara was a difference in language structures of English and Arab which caused translators to face difficulties in conveying the intended meaning of a given CSI. In another study conducted by Dehbandi and Pourgharib (2013), expert translators produced higher quality translations than senior translation students due to the fact that students were asked to translate text in the classroom that put severe stress on the students while expert translators translated texts in their house where they were completely relaxed. The lack of experience in the translation of CSIs and the cultural gap between both languages was another important reason explained by Khammyseh (2015). In addition, he stated that the problems with which most participants encountered were due to cultural gaps, equivalence and languages styles.

There are many other factors with a noticeable effect on the quality of the translation, such as the level of the study of the students and the intelligence of the translator. The former is supported by Abdi's (2019) study which showed the effect of the level of study on the translation quality, and the latter by Askari and Rahim (2015)

whose study indicated the effect of intelligence on the translation quality and rejects the findings of the previous studies on this subject.

In conclusion, the incorrect use of translation strategies leads to an awkward translation and poor communication between the translator and the target reader. The reason why the translator prefers to use more of conservational strategies is that this opportunity is provided for him to translate CSIs linguistically which are "stylistically acceptable and easily understandable for their readers in target language" (Aixela, 1996, p. 68). In the opposite way, the reason for the least used of substitution strategies, as he discussed, is the limited knowledge of the translator about the cultural item. The ultimate ambiguity of the CSI, as Aixela pointed out, gives the translator the chance of using inappropriate strategies, such as deletion and repetition.

It does not mean that the frequent use of conservational strategies ends in the translator's success or the least employment of substitution strategies results in his failure. The translator needs to employ each type of strategy appropriately and accurately wherever needed because he, as Aixela (1996) noted, carries "full responsibility for the product" (p. 65). This study generates some pedagogical implications for translation students and trainee translators, and for those responsible for teaching students and training translators.

It is recommended that translation students and trainee translators consider some factors before they decide to translate a literary text. The first factor is to give special attention to the target audiences, and think about the purpose of translation. Furthermore, they take into account the social and political limitations. And finally, they choose the overall strategy for the whole text and accurate strategies for the smaller units, such as word, phrase, and sentence, on the basis of previous factors. Moreover, it is suggested that translation students and

trainee translators start to improve the knowledge of the correct use of translation strategies and to enhance their masteries over translation strategies by attending seminars and workshops.

The suggestion for those responsible for teaching students and training translators is that giving frequent translation tests to the students and trainee translators in the classroom to develop their familiarities with the different types of CSIs and cultural features of the foreign language. This helps translation teachers and instructors to recognize the areas that create problems for students in the translation of literary texts and identify dilemmas they face in employing translation strategies to avoid translation errors. Furthermore, they can hold seminars and workshops to introduce the new models and areas of translation based on the needs of today's market. In addition, they teach students and train translators through the modern teaching and training methods to develop both the knowledge and skills of students and translators about how to use different types of translation strategies and deal with various types of CSIs to produce high quality translations and become uncompetitive in this profession.

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Appendix A: Questionnaire

Please translate the following English statements into Persian.

All statements were extracted from D. H. Lawrence's (1930) *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone*, and classified based on Klingberg (1986) categorization of cultural CSIs, including literary reference; foreign language in the source text; references to mythology and popular belief, buildings, home furnishing, objects, clothes; gesture, and habits; food items; customs, practices, play, and games; flora and fauna; and weights and measures.

- 1- Uncle Vernon got out a hammer and nails and boarded up the cracks around the front and back doors so no one could go out. He hummed "**Tiptoe Through the Tulips**" as he worked, and jumped at small noises. (p. 34)
- 2- As the snake slid swiftly past him, Harry could have sworn a low, hissing voice said, "**Brazil**, here I come.... Thanksss, **amigo**." (p. 26)
- 3- "Oh, move over," Hermione snarled. She grabbed Harry's wand, tapped the lock, and whispered, '**Alohomora!**' (p. 119)
- 4- Hermione rolled up the sleeves of her gown, flicked her wand, and said, '**Wingardium Leviosa!**' Their feather rose off the desk and hovered about four feet above their heads. (p. 127)
- 5- A movement in the trees behind Ronan made Hagrid raise his bow again, but it was only a second **centaur**, black-haired and -bodied and wilder-looking than Ronan. (p. 184)
- 6- We use **unicorn** hairs, **phoenix** tail feathers, and the heartstrings of **dragons**. (p. 64)
- 7- His classroom smelled strongly of garlic, which everyone said was to ward off a **vampire** he'd met in Romania and was afraid would be coming back to get him one of these days. (p. 55)
- 8- "Don't ask questions!" snapped his uncle. "**Take this stuff upstairs**, now." (p. 28)
- 9- They found their beds at last: five **four-posters** hung with deep red. (p. 97)
- 10- He got stuck in **the ticket barrier on the Underground**, and complained loudly that the seats were too small and the trains too slowly. (p. 53)
- 11- **Gringotts**, said Hagrid. They had reached a snowy white building that towered over the other little shops. (p. 56)

- 12- As he looked at Dudley in his new **knickerbockers**, Uncle Vernon said gruffly that it was the proudest moment of his life. (p. 24)
- 13- **Pumpkin Pasties, Licorice Wands**, and a number of other strange things Harry had never seen in his life. (p. 67)
- 14- Harry was going to ask Ron if he'd had any of the **treacle tart**, but he fell asleep almost at once. (p. 104)
- 15- On **Halloween** morning they woke up to the delicious smell of baking pumpkin wafting through the corridors. (p.123)
- 16- At the end nearest him sat Hagrid, who caught his eye **and gave him the thumbs up**. (p. 90)
- 17- They piled so much homework on them that **the Easter holidays** weren't nearly as much fun as the Christmas ones.(p. 183)
- 18- Perhaps people have been celebrating **Bonfire Night** early - it's not until next week, folks! (p. 11)
- 19- A pink-faced girl with blonde **pigtails** stumbled out of line (p. 89)
- 20- **A barn owl** brought Neville a small package from his grandmother (p. 114)
- 21- **Maple** and phoenix feather. Seven inches. Quite whippy. (p. 66)
- 22- He didn't have to know how many **Galleons** there were to a pound to know that he was holding more money than he'd had in his whole life. (p. 59)
- 23- A **foot** from the ground he caught it, just in time to pull his broom straight. (p. 111)
- 24- A plump woman ... saying, 'Dragon's liver, seventeen Sickles **an ounce**, they're mad...' (p. 56)

No, no -here, ebony and unicorn hair, **eight and a half inches**, springy. Go on, go on, try it out."