

## Exploring linguistic and cultural barriers in literary translation: an analysis of undergraduate students' strategies and challenges in translating Albanian texts into English

Explorando barreiras linguísticas e culturais na tradução literária: uma análise das estratégias e desafios dos alunos de graduação na tradução de textos albaneses para o inglês

Exploración de las barreras lingüísticas y culturales en la traducción literaria: análisis de las estrategias y dificultades de los estudiantes universitarios al traducir textos albaneses al inglés

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Investigate the challenges undergraduate students face when translating Albanian literary texts into English, focusing on the cultural and linguistic considerations that impact the translation process and the concept of translation loss. **Methodology:** Qualitative analysis of the translation methods used by non-English-speaking students, examining the types of cultural loss, challenges, and solutions encountered. Data were collected by studying translated excerpts from the Albanian literary work "Prilli i Thyer" (Broken April), with attention to the strategies employed by students to address translation challenges. **Findings:** Students predominantly used literal translation, resulting in implicit, modified, and complete cultural losses. Key challenges included translating Albanian cultural words, idiomatic expressions, and grammatical differences. Despite these challenges, students demonstrated proficiency and versatility in literary translation, employing strategies such as adaptation, direct translation, borrowing, and omission. **Implications:** The findings highlight the need for enhanced cultural competence and linguistic skills in translation education. Recommendations include using Albanian-Albanian dictionaries and a deeper engagement with Albanian culture to improve translation accuracy and reduce cultural loss. **Recommendations:** Students should be encouraged to develop a comprehensive understanding of the source culture and to utilize creative translation solutions. Peer collaboration and feedback are also recommended to refine translation skills and strategies. **Conclusion:** This research contributes to the field of translation studies by shedding light on the intricacies of translating Albanian literature into English. It underscores the importance of cultural sensitivity and linguistic proficiency in producing accurate and culturally resonant translations, ultimately fostering a more interconnected and diverse literary world.

**Keywords:** Literary translation, cultural loss, English language, Albanian language, translation methods, EFL students.

### RESUMO

**Objetivo:** Investigar os desafios enfrentados por estudantes de graduação na tradução de textos literários albaneses para o inglês, com foco nas considerações culturais e linguísticas que impactam o processo de tradução e o conceito de perda na tradução. **Metodologia:** Análise qualitativa dos métodos de tradução utilizados por estudantes não falantes de inglês, examinando os tipos de perda cultural, desafios e soluções encontradas. Os dados foram coletados a partir do estudo de trechos traduzidos da obra literária albanesa "Prilli i Thyer" (Abril Quebrado), com atenção às estratégias empregadas pelos estudantes para enfrentar os desafios de tradução. **Resultados:** Os estudantes predominantemente utilizaram a tradução literal, resultando em perdas culturais implícitas, modificadas e completas. Os principais desafios incluíram a tradução de palavras culturais albanesas, expressões idiomáticas e diferenças gramaticais. Apesar desses desafios, os estudantes demonstraram proficiência e versatilidade na tradução literária, empregando estratégias como adaptação, tradução direta, empréstimos e omissões. **Implicações:** Os resultados ressaltam a necessidade de aprimorar a competência cultural e as habilidades linguísticas na educação de tradução. Recomendações incluem o uso de dicionários albanês-albanês e um envolvimento mais profundo com a cultura albanesa para melhorar a precisão da tradução e reduzir a perda cultural. **Conclusões:** Este estudo contribui para o campo dos estudos de tradução ao iluminar as complexidades da tradução da literatura albanesa para o inglês. Enfatiza a importância da sensibilidade cultural e da proficiência linguística na produção de traduções precisas e culturalmente ressonantes, promovendo, em última instância, um mundo literário mais interconectado e diverso.

**Palavras-chave:** Tradução literária, perda cultural, língua inglesa, língua albanesa, métodos de tradução, estudantes de EFL.

### RESUMEN

**Propósito:** Investigar los desafíos que enfrentan los estudiantes de pregrado al traducir textos literarios albaneses al inglés, centrándose en las consideraciones culturales y lingüísticas que impactan el proceso de traducción y el concepto de pérdida en la traducción. **Metodología:** Análisis cualitativo de los métodos de traducción utilizados por estudiantes no angloparlantes, examinando los tipos de pérdida cultural, desafíos y soluciones encontradas. Los datos se recolectaron mediante el estudio de fragmentos traducidos de la obra literaria albanesa "Prilli i Thyer" (Abril Roto), prestando atención a las estrategias empleadas por los estudiantes para abordar los desafíos de traducción. **Resultados:** Los estudiantes utilizaron predominantemente la traducción literal, resultando en pérdidas culturales implícitas, modificadas y completas. Los principales desafíos incluyeron la traducción de palabras culturales albanesas, expresiones idiomáticas y diferencias gramaticales. A pesar de estos desafíos, los estudiantes demostraron competencia y versatilidad en la traducción literaria, empleando estrategias como adaptación, traducción directa, préstamo y omisión. **Implicaciones:** Los hallazgos destacan la necesidad de mejorar la competencia cultural y las habilidades lingüísticas en la educación de traducción. Se recomiendan el uso de diccionarios albanés-albanés y un compromiso más profundo con la cultura albanesa para mejorar la precisión de la traducción y reducir la pérdida cultural. **Conclusión:** Esta investigación contribuye al campo de los estudios de traducción al arrojar luz sobre las complejidades de la traducción de la literatura albanesa al inglés. Subraya la importancia de la sensibilidad cultural y la competencia lingüística en la producción de traducciones precisas y culturalmente resonantes, fomentando, en última instancia, un mundo literario más interconectado y diverso.

**Palabras clave:** Traducción literaria, pérdida cultural, lengua inglesa, lengua albanesa, métodos de traducción, estudiantes de EFL.

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The findings highlight the need for enhanced cultural competence and linguistic skills in translation education. Recommendations include using Albanian-Albanian dictionaries and a deeper engagement with Albanian culture to improve translation accuracy and reduce cultural loss.

**Originality/value:**

The article contributes original insights into mitigating cultural loss in literary translation, emphasizing pedagogical strategies and frameworks for balancing linguistic fidelity with cultural adaptation.

## INTRODUCTION

Fromkin, Rodman, and Hyams (2011) consider language as "a source of human life and power" (p. 284), distinguishing humans from animals. According to them, we share our thoughts, opinions, and ideas via language (in written, spoken, or sign language), making it possible for people to conduct their daily lives. Language is necessary for communication, enabling individuals to effectively exchange information, express their emotions, desires, and needs, and engage in social interaction and cooperation. Language enables the transmission and preserving knowledge, culture, and traditions across generations. As such, it is evident that language is an essential aspect of human existence, influencing various aspects of our lives, including education, politics, and personal relationships.

It is undeniable that language is ruled by grammar, and every human being who speaks a language possesses the knowledge of its grammar (Fromkin et al., 2011, p. 294). Individuals who speak a language possess an inherent understanding of the units and regulations that govern their language. This understanding encompasses the principles of sound combination to create words (phonology), the principles of word formation (morphology), the principles of sentence construction by combining words and phrases (syntax), and the principles of word meaning assignment (semantics). Furthermore, grammar encompasses all of these rules and structures. Understanding the foundational principles of grammar is essential to comprehend the nuances of language (Rodman & Hyams, 2011, p. 294).

Particularly when considering the grammar similarity between two distinct languages, each language contains particular features or qualities that set it apart. Such variations are more apparent when translating writings from one language to another, including more verb tenses, moods, or complicated sentence structures. Even though they both descended from identical Indo-European languages, Albanian and English, for instance, have several grammatical categorizations. The difficulty of translating from Albanian to English is highlighted by the fact that the Albanian language has many more verb moods and tenses than English. In these situations, assimilation, addition, or structural changes must be made to achieve similarity and consistency in the target language. Every language in the world has distinctive characteristics and intricate structures that make translation problematic. The translator's base must be solid to correctly translate the source text into what is intended. It is challenging to convey the same precise idea in another language since every language has its conventions, cultures, and linguistic features (including morphology and syntax). According to Newmark (1988), the best way to provide translators with reasonable methods to translate is by using two basic methods ('semantic' and communicative'), and he sets out the various procedures "for handling texts, sentences, and other units." Translation is a transition from SL to SL, encountering challenges and difficulties when transferring cultural information from ST to TT. For example, when translating a novel from English to Japanese, the translator may encounter challenges conveying cultural nuances and references specific to the English-speaking culture. This could include idiomatic expressions, humor, or references to historical events that may not have direct equivalents in the target language. The translator would need to find creative ways to adapt these cultural elements while ensuring that the overall meaning and impact of the original text are preserved in the target language. The process of translation is necessary to take into account the phenomenon of culture, placing the translator in the role of a cultural intermediary. It urges that such professionals should be trained in language and cultures, and understanding the value system and the mentality of the foreigners. This process encompasses recognizing not only meanings of the communication but also the implications and subtleties necessary for proper representation of the essence of the author in another linguistic environment. The education should be directed on ability and willingness of translators-interpreters to integrate cultural and language aspects of translation (Aksyonova & Akhtambaev, 2014).

According to Baker (1992–2018), translators should be keen on conveying the broader significance of the language in question when attempting to translate a language quickly. We must identify the components and patterns that carry the intended meaning to accomplish this. Translation, as defined by Bassnett (1991), involves transferring meaning from one set of language signs to another while adhering to the proper dictionary and grammar rules. However, this process also involves various non-linguistic criteria and factors. Leonardi (2010) highlights that translation is a vital process that plays a crucial role in our globalized world and a multilingual Europe. Translation involves conveying meaning between languages while taking into account cultural, historical, and social factors that go beyond the linguistic aspects.

As claimed by Lilova (1985), translation is an instance of oral or written activity intended to recreate a verbal or written text that already exists in a specific language into a text in a different language while maintaining the original's attributes, consistency of content, and originality of the author. Beloruhev (1980) considers translation a speech activity that seeks to transmit a message. It requires duplicating communication elements when the sender and recipient's codes do not align. Similarly, Popovic (1980) views translation as the act of converting a linguistic text into a different linguistic form and style while preserving its significance.

Catford (1965) defines *translation* as producing a target text equivalent to the source text. The same thought is shared by Solodub (2005), who sees translation "as a creative intellectual activity" by submitting the transformation of a

message from a source language into a target language. According to Çerkezi et al. (2013) translations are the means of communication across cultures as they help to transport languages and promote intercultural communication and understanding. In this context, it becomes a tool that helps to connect different languages and cultures, providing the mediation and the communicative aspect that is needed in the modern world where access to language is fast becoming a human right. However, perception comes in to play since translation does not happen in any concrete sense within two languages or cultures. This can sometimes cause shifts and changes which are then perceived as loss of the culture of that particular group. Also, Gurtueva and Arslan (2013) agrees that translation is much about bridging gaps between cultures since languages are inextricably tied to their respective cultures. That includes not just translating the words, but also interpreting and adapting cultural nuances. In addition, translation is one of the communication tools that cannot be discarded when it comes to effective communication in different cultures.

Translating literary works from one language to another is a complex endeavor involving linguistic skill and a deep understanding of cultural nuances. Translating Albanian literature into English presents unique challenges due to the distinct cultural and historical contexts embedded within the Albanian language. This article delves into the intricacies of this translation process, examining the hurdles that undergraduate students face as they navigate these two languages' linguistic and cultural landscapes.

**Research Objectives:** The primary objectives of this study are to:

1. Identify students' standard translation methods when translating Albanian literary texts into English.
2. Analyze the types of cultural loss that occur during the translation process.
3. Explore the specific challenges that non-English-speaking students encounter in literary translation.
4. Evaluate the effectiveness of various translation strategies employed by students.

**Rationale:** Understanding the translation process from Albanian to English is crucial for preserving the integrity of the original text while making it accessible to a broader audience. This study is particularly significant as it sheds light on the experiences of undergraduate students who represent the next generation of translators. Their perspectives provide valuable insights into translation studies' educational and practical aspects.

**Purpose:** This study aims to contribute to the body of knowledge on translation studies by documenting the experiences of students translating Albanian literary texts. The study aims to inform and improve translation practices and education by identifying the challenges and strategies these students use. Additionally, it emphasizes the importance of cultural sensitivity in translation, essential for maintaining the richness and authenticity of literary works across different languages.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### Literary Translation

Language is a profound vessel of culture, history, and identity, and its translation is a complex intellectual activity involving linguistic and cultural transposition (Solodub, 2005). Literary translation, a specialized branch of translation, is tasked with transferring words and meanings and the author's unique style, tone, and cultural nuances into another language. This form of translation transcends the mere word-for-word reproduction, aiming to elicit the same emotional response in the reader as intended by the original author.

The theories of dynamic and formal equivalence, as proposed by Eugene Nida, are central to understanding the translator's challenge. Dynamic equivalence emphasizes the importance of conveying the meaning and emotional impact of the original text in a way that feels natural to the target language and culture. In contrast, formal equivalence strives to preserve the exact form and content of the source text (Newmark, 1988). These theories highlight the delicate balance translators must strike between fidelity to the original text and the need to create a resonant and accessible translation for the target audience.

Recent advancements in literary translation have built upon these foundational theories, incorporating insights from various disciplines to address the complexities of the translation process. Modern approaches to translation now consider the communicative purpose and the need for equivalence in the context of the target culture and language (Jones, 2009).

The concept of "translation loss," as discussed by Hervey and Higgins (2002), acknowledges that some aspects of the source text may not be fully translatable due to inherent differences between languages and cultures, suggesting that translators should focus on reducing this loss rather than agonizing over it. In the context of this study, these theories and concepts are particularly relevant when examining the challenges faced by undergraduate students in translating Albanian literary texts into English. The students must navigate the complexities of achieving equivalence while grappling with cultural references and idiomatic expressions unique to the Albanian language and culture. By integrating classical and contemporary

perspectives on literary translation, this research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the evolving nature of the field and the complexities involved in the translation process.

Literary translation, a specific translation branch, focuses on translating literary texts such as novels, poems, and plays. It involves transferring words and meanings and recreating the author's style, tone, and cultural nuances in the target language. The art of literary translation extends beyond mere word-for-word reproduction. The main goal of rewriting is to transmit the original text's genuine meaning, eliciting the reader's intended emotional reaction in the same way as the author had envisioned. This task demands a delicate balance between maintaining the accuracy of the source material and infusing imaginative elements in the target language. Literary translation is regarded as one of the most challenging types, demanding a high skill level and artistic vision. Literary works are a unique product of cultural language and artistic values, which can pose challenges when translating them into other languages. While some believe that literary translation is a mechanical process, critics argue that it requires a level of artistry. In order to accurately convey the message, creativity is essential.

The translation of literary texts has been a focal point of academic inquiry, with a rich body of theoretical and empirical research informing current practices. Theoretical frameworks have been established by scholars such as Nida and Taber, who introduced the concepts of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence, providing a foundation for understanding the balance between linguistic fidelity and cultural adaptation in translation (Nida & Taber, 1969). These concepts are particularly relevant to the challenges in translating Albanian literature into English. Empirical studies have furthered our understanding of the practical aspects of literary translation. Venuti's exploration of the translator's visibility and the strategies of domestication and foreignization has influenced the approach to cultural elements in translation (Venuti, 1995). This research is pertinent to the current study's focus on translating "Prilli i Thyer" (Broken April) and the possible cultural losses.

In Albanian, empirical research has been more limited but is nonetheless insightful. Newmark's work on translating cultural terms provides a practical framework for addressing the translation of culturally bound expressions, which aligns with the challenges students face in translating Albanian literary texts (Newmark, 1988). His categorization of cultural words and suggested translation strategies offer solutions that can be applied to the translation challenges identified. Katan's discussion on the importance of cultural competence in translation emphasizes that a translator's cultural knowledge can significantly impact the quality of the translation (Katan, 2004). This is consistent with the findings, where the students' cultural understanding was crucial to their ability to translate literary texts effectively.

The theoretical and empirical literature thus provides a comprehensive backdrop for understanding the complexities of literary translation. These studies contribute to the body of knowledge that informs the methodology and findings of the current research, highlighting the ongoing challenges and developments in the field of translation studies. To successfully translate literary works, one must possess high creativity and artistic skill. The translator must capture the essence of the original text while expertly adapting it to the target language, creating an enjoyable experience for the reader. Coban (2015) states that cultural understanding is a deep constituent of translation competence. A translator's ability to interpret and render correctly the meaning of the source text is highly dependent upon his or her knowledge concerning culture and the subject area. Such knowledge allows translators to put the source material into context and understand its subtlety—both important features in generating an accurate target text. Translators who lack domain-specific knowledge can hardly comprehend the full meaning of the text, which results in inaccuracies.

Bello (2011) asserts that translation is exceptionally unpleasant and challenging since there is no single translation for each remark that is longer than trivial; instead, there are countless appropriate translations for every utterance. Literary translation might perfectly fit Bello's statement because there cannot be perfect synonyms or similar metaphors of two different languages. Nevertheless, any literary translation cannot be judged as wrong because each translator's style of literary work can have its own choices, art, and methods of transmitting a literary source text into a target one. Being a translator is much more than just converting words from one language to another. It involves a great deal of creativity and cultural awareness to accurately convey idiomatic expressions, appropriate vocabulary, and cultural subtleties. This is a vital component of a translator's job as it guarantees that the true essence of the original text is preserved while also making it more accessible and relatable to the intended audience in a foreign language. This process requires linguistic skills and a deep understanding of the context and themes of the original work. In this way, translators can bridge the gap between languages and cultures, allowing readers to experience the richness of literature worldwide. In this way, translators serve as cultural ambassadors, connecting readers across different language barriers and immersing them in the intricacies of a foreign narrative. They meticulously select words and expressions that capture the essence of the original text while also considering the unique cultural nuances of the target language. By carefully crafting each sentence, translators bring the beauty and depth of literature to a broader audience, fostering a greater appreciation and understanding among diverse communities. Ultimately, their work allows us to share the universal power of storytelling and embrace the diverse tapestry of human experiences.

Huang (2011) asserts that the choice of expression depends heavily on the target language and culture. Furthermore, he added that literary translation is a very complex undertaking because literary texts are rooted in the source language and culture and can sometimes be very difficult to translate into another language. According to Jones (2009), literary translation concentrates on source-target text relations, considering two closely related issues: equivalence and communicative purpose. Also, Mohebbi (2023) agrees that the complexities in translation involve balancing linguistic fidelity against cultural adaptation. Translators have to negotiate the intricate play of cultural references, linguistic subtlety, and variation in the style of humour across cultures. It therefore calls for profound knowledge as to both the cultural background and the social context of the source and target languages. What is more, translators have to take into account cultural conceptualisations, such as schemas, categories, and metaphors, in order to make sure that meaning and humour are transmitted in the target language. The role of a translator as a cultural mediator is immense, and his or her own cultural background and way of perceiving humor will contribute to the translation process, which may not bring about humor appreciated by the target audience.

### **Cultural loss**

In the book "Thinking French Translation" by Hervey and Higgins (2002), the term 'translation loss,' according to them, is inevitable, specifically when transmitting the source culture to the target one. They came up with the term 'translation loss' from the elaboration of equivalence problems by stressing that translators or teachers who teach translation have to accept or admit the idea that SL and TL are "fundamentally different" and "the transfer from ST to TT inevitably imposes difference—or, as we all shall argue loss" (Hervey & Higgins, 2002, p. 20). By this term, they suggest that the translators "should not agonize over the loss, but should concentrate on 'reducing' it, i.e., controlling and channeling it" (Hervey & Higgins, 2002, p. 21).

Furthermore, they consider the 'translation loss' as normal and unavoidable. They point out that once the idea of unavoidable translation loss is acknowledged, a TT that is not, in all culturally relevant respects, a replica of the ST is not a theoretical anomaly. Translators can forget the unrealistic one of channeling translation loss. Indeed, one of the attractions of the notion is that it frees translators to exploit translation loss and introduce any significant loss that enables them to implement the strategy thoroughly. (pg.21)

Hervey and Higgins, in their chapter "Equivalence and Translation Loss" (2002) regarding French text translation to English and its difficulties, try to make translators and student translators aware or inform them that there are no perfect translations or equivalents because of the differences in structure and culture that the two languages share. According to them, instead of the texts as static, solid, independent things, the less inclined are more inclined to emphasize the connection between ST and TT as words in a framework of connections. Notably, "loss" is a reminder that reading a translation of *L'Etranger* is not considered reading *L'Etranger*; rather, it constitutes studying it. (pg.21) According to this statement, there is always a translation loss that can occur differently, categorizing a translation loss into four types: explicit loss, implicit loss, and modified and complete cultural loss. Regarding the equivalence vs. non-equivalence in translation, a research study, realized by Kashgary (2011) found out that cultural context plays a crucial role in translation, particularly when dealing with culture-specific terms and concepts. In his research was found that non-equivalence occurs when there are no direct counterparts in the target language for certain words or phrases from the source language. This is particularly evident in terms related to religion, customs, and social life, which are deeply rooted in Arabic culture and lack direct English equivalents. His research falls in several categories of non-equivalence which were identified between Arabic and English, and include:

**Culture-Specific Terms:** These include, among others, terms specifically Islamic in content, for example, "Al Salat" or "prayers", and "Al Zakat" or "charity". Translators usually fall back on the source language term and supply a short explanation to give the approximate meaning.

**Lexical Gaps:** Every language lexicalizes concepts in its own way concerning cultural relevance. For example, the term "twens" in English does not have a literal translation in Arabic due to cultural differences in how stages of development are identified and named.

**Pragmatic and Intralingual Levels:** The meaning of some Arabic terms extends beyond the referential level, making their translation quite accurate. For instance, the term "intifadhah" is often transliterated rather than translated in view of preserving its full range of meanings, which include pragmatic and cultural connotations.

### **Explicit Losses**

According to Al-Masri (2009), explicit losses indicate a loss of cultural information, including the surface and deep levels of the ST. The explicit loss was also found in Bracaj's study of translating "Pallati i Ëndërrave" to English. According to her, the explicit cultural loss occurred in sentences with Albanian idioms, proverbs, and fixed expressions that express Albanian culture, and often, their translation is impossible or 'suffer' from the occurrence of these types of cultural loss.

For example:

**Albanian:** Për çudi, i zoti i ëndrës nuk ishte muzikant, por shitës lulelakash, nga kryeqyteti. Ç'më polli tha me vete MarkAlemi, pa i hequr sytë nga fleta. Të dilte një perimtar i mallkuar dhe të ngatërronte mendjen (pg.76).

**English:** Strangely enough he wasn't a musician, he was a street trader with a market stall in the capital. Lord! Said Mark-Alem to himself, unable to take his eyes off his information (p.45).

### Implicit losses

Implicit losses are cultural losses, including the implicit loss of cultural information "present in the ST" (Al-Masri, 2009, p. 20). These losses are often overlooked or not fully recognized, as they are not easily quantifiable or measurable. However, they can significantly impact individuals and communities, as they involve the loss of cultural heritage, identity, and knowledge. Implicit losses can occur in various forms, such as language loss, traditional practices, rituals, and stories. They can also manifest through cultural values, beliefs, and customs erosion. These losses can devastate marginalized or minority groups, as they can further marginalize and alienate them from their cultural roots. This type is considered challenging or complex since its understanding can only be achieved if target readers "search for some special possibility of hidden and certainly situation-specific interpretations" (Bailey, 1996, p. 152, as cited in Al-Masri, 2009, p. 16). In Bracaj's study (2016), the implicit loss is found in one example, which contained an Albanian proverb whose translation was not found in English, see below: Albanian: Po s'kam ç'tu bëj, më ka zënë rrota bishtin. (pg.46) English: But there is nothing I can do – *I have no choice*. (p.110).

### Modified cultural loss

Modified cultural losses "refer to losses from replacing cultural expression in the source text with culturally equivalent expressions in the target text" (Al-Masri, 2009, p.23). For example, in a translation from Arabic to English, traditional Arabic proverbs or idioms may be replaced with culturally equivalent expressions in English, resulting in a modified cultural loss. Such cases can lead to a loss of the richness and uniqueness of the source culture's language and expressions in the translated text. As a result, the translated text may lose its authenticity and fail to represent the cultural nuances of the source language. In addition, the loss of cultural expression can hinder the reader's understanding and appreciation of the original text, as they may miss out on the deeper meanings and cultural references embedded within the language. Therefore, translators must carefully consider the cultural implications of their choices to ensure that the translated text maintains the essence and cultural richness of the source language.

When translating idioms, proverbs, or fixed expressions from one language to another, it is not uncommon for the translator to use a completely different word structure to convey the same meaning, referred to as modified cultural loss, and it occurs when the message of the original text is preserved, but the specific wording is changed. In 2009, Al-Masri conducted a study analyzing this phenomenon while translating Arabic text into English. He observed that the English translation replaces the source proverb with an expression that is culturally equivalent to convey the original text's intended message.

### Complete cultural loss

Complete cultural losses are those types of losses that ignore entirely "the linguistic codes of the source text" (Al-Masri, 2009, p. 27). These losses occur when the translator fails to recognize and convey the cultural significance of certain words, phrases, or idioms in the source text. As a result, the translated version may need to include the intended cultural message of the original text. In such cases, the cultural context and richness of the source text are lost, leading to a diminished understanding and appreciation of the text in the target language. This type of cultural loss can occur when the cultural information is deeply rooted in SL and cannot have any equivalent translation to TL or, in other cases, might be considered as a failure in delivering the same cultural information of ST.

The cultural loss issue can be found in Bracaj's study (2016) in her example of complete cultural loss that has occurred during translation to English, see below:

**Albanian:** O Zot! – ia bënte herë pas here nëna e Mark-Alemit. Ç'ne gjithë kjo gjëmë! (pg.198)

**English:** Mark-Alem's mother groaned from time to time. My God what was that ghastly business? (pg.140)

According to Bracaj (2016), a complete cultural loss occurred in this sentence since the delivery of the cultural information has failed because "ghastly business" does not transmit the same intention as the word "gjëmë" and cannot be used in this context. Generally, it can be stated that 'translation loss' can occur in the translation process and should be considered normal and inescapable. Its types are mostly found when we have to deal with texts or sentences that consist of idioms, proverbs, or a fixed expression that sometimes hardly has a full equivalence or conveys the intention or message of the SL to the TT.

## METHODOLOGY

The method used in this study focuses on analyzing the translation of Albanian literary text into English by identifying translation methods, types of cultural loss, and difficulties encountered by non-English-speaking students when translating. This study was carried out using empirical, qualitative and comparative research method. The research methodology involved examining the translation techniques employed by non-English-speaking students when faced with idioms, proverbs, or fixed expressions in Albanian literature.

### Research aims

The research aims are to identify :

1. Translation methods that students used during translation process;
2. The types of cultural loss that may occur in the translation process;
3. Challenges that students face during translation;
4. Find solutions to the challenges participants face.

### Research hypothesis

The translation methods used during the translation process were literal translation, adaptation, borrowing, and omission. The forms of cultural loss that occurred in Albanian literary text translation are implicit, modified, and complete. The difficulties or challenges were mostly in sentences containing fixed expressions, idioms, or Albanian cultural words.

### Research Design

The study was conducted using selected excerpts from "Prilli i Thyer" (April Broken) produced by non-English-speaking students participating in this study. They also had to answer two open-ended questions in the questionnaire in which they elaborated on challenges they faced when translating selected passages of text from "Prilli i Thyer" (April Broken) and the solutions they recommend to face challenges.

The research included 70 second-year Albanian students in the "English Language- Translation and Interpretation" program at the University "Fehmi Agani" in Gjakova from the Faculty of Philology. This study contained 2,728 sentences from the selected excerpts from "Prilli i Thyer" (April Broken). The selected excerpts of "Broken April" were given to students in printed form, and the translation procedure took more than an hour and a half. After translating the excerpts, they had to complete the questionnaire containing two open-ended questions. The last procedure took 20-25 minutes.

### Instruments

"Prilli i Thyer" is a novel by Ismail Kadare in 1980. "Prilli i Thyer" is a novel of words and silence, human pain and sacrifice, and life and death together. In it, Kadare knew how to skillfully assemble pieces of a significant culture. "Prilli i Thyer" is a world where its seasons, months, and days can be broken, but tradition is not.

This book is full of culturally bound elements and elaborates on topics such as besa, blood feuds, and Kanun in the mountain areas of northern Albania. It has been translated into many languages, as well as the English language. Translating "Prilli i Thyer" into different languages, including English, has allowed a broader audience to access and understand the rich cultural elements portrayed in the book. Through its exploration of besa, blood feud, and Kanun, the novel sheds light on the unique traditions and customs of the mountainous regions in northern Albania. To examine the translation strategies employed by students when dealing with culturally specific terms, 44 sentences from "Prilli i Thyer" were selected.

The analysis of these translations seeks to achieve the research aims regarding the translation methods, types of cultural losses, the identification of challenges, and finding solutions elaborated by students. Following each analysis of the students' translations, an English version translated by New Amsterdam Books and Saqi Books (1990) will be provided. The results of this study will contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges of translating culturally specific terms and produce valuable insights for future translation efforts.

The second instrument was a questionnaire containing two open-ended questions: 1. Did you have any challenges during translation? If yes, please be more specific in identifying challenges you faced during translation! 2. What solutions have you considered for the challenges mentioned in the first question?

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Data analysis on translation methods used in Albanian literary selected excerpts from "Prilli i Thyer"

The selected text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer" comprise 44 sentences. Of the 70 participants who translated extracts from "Prilli i Thyer," only 62 managed to translate ultimately. So, 2728 sentences were analyzed individually. The data analysis revealed that the most common translation method used by the students was literal translation, accounting for 40% of the total sentences. This indicates a need for more creativity and adaptability in their approach to translating literary works. Additionally, the analysis showed that only a tiny percentage of the students successfully captured the poetic elements and nuances of the original text, further emphasizing the need for additional training and exposure to enhance their skills in literary translation.

**Table 1.** Translation methods used during the translation of selected excerpts from "Prilli i Thyer" (Broken April)

Translation Strategies	Number of translated versions	Number of Strategy used	%
Adaptation	62	62	100
Direct Translation	62	62	100
Borrowing	62	44	70.96
Omission	62	24	38.70

**Source:** Author's development using the research data

In the comparative study of the 2728 translated sentences, students used four translation strategies: adaptation, direct, borrowing, and omission. The 2728 analyzed sentences were sorted according to the strategies used for each respective version. So, 62 translated versions (or 100% of them) were found or used in adaptation and direct. Translation strategies are employed for various purposes. Direct translation aims to preserve the original text's integrity, while adaptation is utilized to modify certain linguistic or cultural aspects to enhance the text's accessibility for the target audience. In both approaches, the primary goal is to ensure that the essence and meaning of the original text are accurately conveyed in the translated versions. The selected text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer" comprise 44 sentences. From the 70 participants who took part in the translation of extracts from "Prilli i Thyer," only 62 managed to translate. So, 2728 sentences were analyzed individually. The data analysis revealed that the most common translation method used by the students was literal translation, accounting for 40% of the total sentences. This indicates a lack of creativity and adaptability in their approach to translating literary works.

Additionally, the analysis showed that only a tiny percentage of the students successfully captured the poetic elements and nuances of the original text, further emphasizing the need for additional training and exposure to enhance their skills in literary translation of the original text as much as possible without making significant changes. The use of borrowing and omission strategies was minimal, indicating that the students prioritized fidelity to the source text while also considering the needs of the target readership. Overall, this study showcased the students' proficiency and versatility in literary translation.

The third used translation strategy is borrowing, which was used in 44 versions (70.96% of them), and omission is used in 24 versions (or 38.70%). The high frequency of borrowing and omission strategies in the students' translations suggests that they were willing to deviate from the source text to meet the target readership's needs. However, the fact that these strategies were not used extensively indicates that the students still aimed to maintain the integrity and accuracy of the original text. This balance between fidelity and adaptation showcases the students' skill and adaptability in literary translation.

In translating selected text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer," students have realized the difference between coherent and non-coherent translations. They have carefully chosen the most appropriate translation strategies to convey the meaning and style of the original text in a way that resonates with the target readership. The coherent translation focuses on maintaining the logical flow and coherence of the text, while the non-coherent translation aims to capture the poetic and artistic elements of the original. The students' translations exhibit a profound comprehension of the intricacies and subtleties inherent in literary translation. Their work showcases their capacity to make well-informed judgments based on the unique demands of each passage. Ultimately, their translations serve as a remarkable testament to their unwavering commitment and exceptional aptitude for uniting languages and cultures through the art of language.

Strategies like adaptation, omission, and borrowing have realized coherent translation. These strategies ensure that the original work's essence and beauty are preserved while making it accessible to a new audience. By adapting certain phrases or expressions, the translators are able to convey the same emotions and imagery in a way that resonates with the target language. Omission allows for a more streamlined and concise translation while borrowing certain words or phrases adds an authentic touch and maintains the integrity of the original text. Through these thoughtful techniques, the translators



are able to create translations that capture the poetic and artistic elements of the original, showcasing their mastery of the craft. Students who have done coherent translations have changed the word class, added new words or expressions, omitted Albanian words that were not equivalent in English, and used borrowing in extracts that had Albanian cultural words. By employing these strategies, students can ensure that their translations not only convey the text's literal meaning but also preserve its cultural significance. This attention to detail showcases the students' understanding of both languages and demonstrates their ability to adapt and convey the nuances of the original work. Ultimately, these coherent translations serve as a testament to the students' dedication and skill in the field of translation.

The non-coherent sentences or extracts were those translated using the direct translation strategy (or word-by-word) and did not transmit the same idea or message from the SL to the TL. Producing translations that lack coherence and fail to capture the essence and subtleties of the original text can lead to a confusing final product. While a direct translation approach may be adequate for certain types of documents, literary works or complex texts require a more nuanced approach. Students who use coherent translations demonstrate their ability to bridge the language gap and convey intended meaning. It is noteworthy that almost all students have employed more than two translation strategies in a single version, resulting in a total of 192 strategies.

### Data analysis of cultural losses in translation of Albanian literary text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer"

Based on the Table 2, there were only two types of cultural loss that happened during translation: modified cultural loss and complete cultural loss. The total number of types of cultural loss is 124. Instances of modified cultural loss occur when the meaning or essence of a cultural element is changed or diluted in the translated version due to linguistic limitations, cultural context, or the translator's interpretation. On the other hand, complete cultural loss occurs when a cultural element needs to be included in the translation, resulting in a significant gap in understanding for the target audience.

The high number of identified cultural losses indicates the complexity and challenges faced in accurately conveying cultural nuances in the translation process. The high number of identified cultural losses indicates the complexity and challenges faced in accurately conveying cultural nuances in the translation process. These losses highlight the need for skilled and culturally sensitive translators who can effectively bridge the gap between languages and cultures. The target audience may notice and understand critical cultural elements with such translators, hindering their comprehension and appreciation of the translated material. Therefore, it is crucial to prioritize cultural competency and understanding in the translation process to minimize complete cultural loss.

**Table 2.** Data analysis of types of cultural losses identified in the translation of Albanian literary selected excerpts from "Prilli i Thyer" (Broken April)

No of translated versions of text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer"	Number of Cultural losses	Modified Cultural Loss		Complete Cultural Loss	
		No	%	No	%
62	124	62	100%	62	100%

Source: Author's development using the research data

### Data analysis of types of difficulties on questionnaire of selected text extracts from the book "Prilli i Thyer"

There were many different answers and thoughts regarding challenges that participants wrote in the questionnaire after completing the translation. In answer to the first question, related to challenges in translating the selected text extracts from "Prilli i thyer" (Broken April) from 62 questionnaires, students' challenges have been divided into three groups, such as translation of Albanian cultural words, differences in grammar among Albanian and English, and translation of Albanian idioms (Table 3).

The challenges undergraduate students face in translating Albanian literary texts into English predominantly stem from a combination of cultural differences and linguistic complexities. The data analysis from the questionnaires indicates that most students (83.87%) encountered difficulties translating Albanian cultural words, which are deeply embedded in the Albanian culture, mentality, beliefs, and manners. This suggests that cultural differences play a substantial role in the translation challenges, as students struggle to find equivalent expressions in English that convey the same cultural significance.

In addition to cultural challenges, linguistic complexities also contribute to the difficulties in translation. A notable percentage of students (17.74%) reported that differences in grammar between Albanian and English, such as the non-equivalence of tenses, the lack of a subjunctive verb mood in English, and the complex nature of Albanian noun declension, created obstacles in achieving accurate translations. Furthermore, the absence of definite and indefinite articles in Albanian and the use of gendered pronouns, compared to the gender-neutral pronouns in English, presented additional challenges.

The translation of Albanian idioms also posed problems for students (16.12%), as the non-equivalence of these idioms or fixed expressions to English often resulted in non-coherent and non-equivalent translations, highlighting the complexities of translating between two languages with distinct grammatical structures and cultural expressions.

Therefore, the challenges in translating Albanian literary texts into English are multifaceted, involving the need to navigate cultural nuances and overcome linguistic barriers. The students' experiences underscore the importance of a comprehensive understanding of both the source and target languages and the cultural contexts from which the literary works originate. The combination of cultural and linguistic factors makes the translation process particularly challenging, requiring translators to employ creative strategies and a deep appreciation for the subtleties of both languages.

**Table 3.** Data analysis for challenges/difficulties that participants have expressed after translation

Types of Challenges	Number of questionnaires	Number of mentioned challenges	%
Translation of Albanian cultural words	62	52	83.87%
Differences in grammar among Albanian and English	62	11	17.74%
Translation of Albanian idioms	62	10	16.12%

Source: Author's development using the research data

### Data analysis of types of solutions on the questionnaire of selected text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer"

The solutions identified by students were classified into three major groups: using translation strategies with 54.83%, background knowledge in Albanian culture with 46.77%, and using the Albanian-Albanian dictionary with 40.32% (Table 4). Moreover, 54.83% of students gave the "use of translation strategies" as a solution, mainly recommending omission and borrowing. Another recommendation given by students is that in cases where there is no way to translate a literary word to TL, translators might use "shifting from literary meaning to non-literary meaning" to transmit the whole meaning of SL to TL.

Furthermore, "Having a background knowledge in Albanian" culture has been stated as a solution with less percentage (46.77%). In this group, students declared that it is a must for translators of such literary parts to study and analyze the source text before beginning the translation process. Otherwise, the lack of the source language's general background makes the translation process non-coherent and meaningless.

The last proposed solution by 40.32% of the students is coherently linked with the previous one because the need for Albanian-Albanian dictionaries suggests that students did not have enough knowledge of the source language, as well as its meaning, which complicated the translation process, but equally forced them to consider as a solution the use of Albanian-Albanian dictionary. To sum up, the data analysis related to solutions recommended for the translation of text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer" below are presented some samples of students' responses taken from their questionnaire:

For the solution "*Usage of translation strategies*," Student responded:

"There cannot be many solutions because of the difference in expressions, especially traditional meanings and quotes and sayings from different languages; all you can do is adjust it and modify it to in a context that the reader can understand as to what the meaning and the content of the material was."

Student answered:

"Solutions for difficulties above can be the usage of borrowing, especially for cultural Albanian words, the usage of an Albanian-Albanian dictionary, and making changes in verb forms when it comes to non-equivalence of verb moods between Albanian and English."

As for "*A background knowledge in Albanian culture*," the student wrote:

"First of all, we should have a background knowledge of Albanian cultural words and read more in Albanian literature since I didn't understand most of the Albanian words or expressions. The second solution might be using translation strategies, for example, omission, borrowing, or making different changes but not losing the intention of the source language."

Also, the Student stated:

"When it comes to literary translation, there might not be many solutions, but in my opinion, related to the selected text extracts from "Prilli i Thyer" there is a must to have background knowledge on Albanian culture and to be a great reader of Albanian literature, especially of Ismail Kadare's books would be more accessible to translate such Albanian words or expressions if a translator is familiar with them; otherwise, the translation will be meaningless in English."

For the third solution, "*Usage of Albanian-Albanian dictionary*," the student wrote:

"A solution that would have helped me is if I had had a bit more knowledge when it comes to Old Albanian, and having an old Albanian dictionary instead of a modern one, because it is an old text."

The student also claimed that:

"Solutions for difficulties above can be the usage of borrowing, especially for cultural Albanian words, the usage of an Albanian-Albanian dictionary, and making changes in verb forms when it comes to non-equivalence of verb moods between Albanian and English."

**Table 4.** Data analysis of types of solutions on questionnaire of the translation of selected text extracts from the book "Prilli i thyer" (Broken April)

Types of Solutions	Number of questionnaires	Number of solution mentioned	%
Usage of translation strategies	62	34	54.83%
A background knowledge in Albanian culture	62	29	46.77%
Usage of Albanian- Albanian dictionary	62	25	40.32%

**Source:** Author's development using the research data

In the discussion of the findings from the study on the translation of Albanian literary texts into English, students' predominant use of literal translation methods is a significant result. This aligns with previous research suggesting novice translators often rely on a word-for-word approach, which can lead to various cultural losses. The study's identification of implicit, modified, and complete cultural losses during the translation process is consistent with the challenges highlighted in the literature regarding translating culturally embedded texts.

Students' difficulties, particularly with sentences containing fixed expressions, idioms, or Albanian cultural words, underscore the complexity of translating between languages with distinct grammatical categorizations, such as Albanian and English. This aligns with previous research emphasizing the challenges of translating between languages with different grammatical structures and the importance of a solid linguistic foundation for translators. Moreover, the study revealed that only a tiny percentage of students could capture the poetic elements and nuances of the original text. This suggests a need for more comprehensive training in literary translation to enhance students' abilities to convey the subtleties of the source language, a sentiment echoed in prior studies.

As demonstrated by almost all students, the use of multiple translation strategies within a single version indicates a level of creativity and adaptability. However, the presence of non-coherent translations highlights the ongoing challenge of maintaining the meaning and culture of the source language, a common issue in translation studies. In summary, the main results of this study contribute to the body of research on translation methods and cultural loss in literary translation. The findings corroborate and expand upon previous research, emphasizing the need for pedagogical improvements to address the identified challenges.

Regarding the first research aim, based on the analysis of 2728 sentences of selected text extracts from "Prilli i thyer" (Broken April), the most commonly used translation strategies were adaptation and direct translation, used by 100% of the students participating in the research, followed by borrowing, used by 70.96% of the students, and omission, used by 38.70%. The analysis of the students' translation of "Prilli i thyer" (Broken April) reveals that the most common translation strategies employed were adaptation and direct. A significant proportion of students placed a great deal of emphasis on utilizing adaptation and direct translation techniques throughout the translation process. All participants' primary methods of approach demonstrated their unwavering commitment to accurately conveying information to their desired audience. This steadfast dedication affirms that the students were resolute in preserving the authenticity of the source material while making the necessary modifications to ensure the intended message was effectively communicated in their translations. They endeavored to uphold the overall message and essence of the work in the target language.

Additionally, a significant number of students The use of borrowing by a significant number of students (70.96%) shows that they also utilized borrowing as a translation strategy, indicating their comfort with incorporating certain words or phrases and their willingness to incorporate foreign elements into their translations. from the source language into their translations, possibly to the use of omission, although less frequent, to preserve the cultural context. Alternatively, 38.70% specific connotations suggest that some students may have. The relatively lower percentage of students using omission suggests that they struggled more with finding equivalent expressions or terms in the target language. Generally, students have done a coherent translation, except in some cases where they completely changed the meaning of the source language and did not give a coherent translation. A non-coherent translation may result from the many Albanian words that are not equivalent in English because of their deep cultural meaning related to Albanian tradition. Below are some translated parts of "Prilli i Thyer" by different students:

17) "Në grumbullin e rrugëtarëve u bë një çast heshtje. – "Të ka zënë gjaku? - pyeti dikush." (Prilli i thyer, Ismail Kadare, p. 17)

Students' translation:

1. *"In the heap of the pedestrians, there was a moment of silence.....? someone asked."*
2. *"Between the crowd of travelers, it became a moment of silence. - Did you get upset? - somebody asked"*
3. *"There was a moment of silence in the crowd of travelers. -Are you afraid? - someone asked."*

By analyzing the versions from the students, it can be stated that they have used direct and adaptation translation strategies. The direct translation strategy can be noticed at the very beginning of the versions, which are primarily translated in the same way, with some exceptions in a few versions, such as the first, second, fifth, seventh, twelfth, and thirteenth versions. In contrast, the rest have used the direct or word-by-word translation strategy. On the other hand, the rest of the sentences have been translated using the adaptation translation strategy because of the sentence "Të ka zënë gjaku?" which has been misunderstood by some students and ignored by others. The non-coherent versions of the translation of this sentence are the second, third, fifth, sixth, ninth, tenth, and fourteenth. All these versions lack a coherent and equivalent translation because the meaning of SL is not transferred to TL. For example: "Between the crowd of travelers, it became a moment of silence. - Did you get upset? - somebody asked".

The version mentioned above does not imply the meaning of the source language because the sentence "Did you get upset?" is unrelated to the blood feud or does not transmit the author's intention. For example: "There was a moment of silence in the gathering of the citizens. –Are you blood-sick? Somebody asked". This has been proven in the translation of "Prilli i thyer" (Broken April) in the English version, published by Vintage, 2003:

"The little group was still. Then a voice asked. "You're not blood-sick, are you?" (Broken April, p. 10)

Students' versions cannot be judged as poor because they needed the whole text to read to translate, but they still came up with the best possible translation. In translations, changes are allowed as long as they maintain the meaning of the source language and culture. In translation, changes are permitted if they maintain the meaning and culture of the source language. Below are presented some other selected extracts that contain other Albanian cultural words and their translations by students:

*"Nga dritaret e kullave të veçuara këmbëshin lajmet e fundit:*

*-Gjorg Berisha vrau Zef Kryeqyqen, e morët vesh?*

*-Gjorgu i Berishajve lau gjakun e të vëllait.*

*-A do ta kërkojnë Berishajt besën njëzetekatërorëshe? Me siguri, po" (Prilli i Thyer, pg 19-20)*

Students' translation:

1. *"From the separate tower windows, the latest news was being exchanged:" "Gjorg Berisha killed Zef Kryeqyqen..." "Gjorgu of the Bersishas got revenge on behalf of his brother." "Will the Berishas be asking for...." I'm pretty sure."*
2. *The latest news was being exchanged from the windows of the divided towers:" "Gjorg Berisha murdered Zef Kryeqyqen. Did you hear that?" "Berisha's Gjorg took revenge for his brother's blood." "Will Berishas ask for twenty-four hours' faith?"*
3. *From the windows of separate towers, the latest news was being told:" "Gjorg Berisha killed Zef Kryeqyqen, did you get it?" "The Gjorg of Berisha family did the blood feud of his brother." "Will Berisha family ask for twenty-four hours besa? Probably yes".*

The second selected extract from "Prilli i Thyer" contains some sentences as well as expressions that cannot have a direct translation to the English language since the use of the direct translation strategy in the sentence "lau gjakun" is non-coherent as well as non-equivalent in the English language. In such cases, where in the paragraph there are specific expressions or words like "Besa," the strategies of borrowing and adaptation are the most helpful. For example, the eighth sentence has a non-coherent translation since the verb "wash" does not transmit the same message as it is in SL, and because of this word choice, the whole paragraph seems non-equivalent and non-coherent to SL. A complete understanding of TL's meaning needs to be understood, leading to complete cultural loss. The other non-coherent or poor translation is found in the first and tenth sentences. The first one ignored the translation of the word "Besa," and the tenth sentence did a non-literary translation, leading to a complete cultural loss in SL. Other versions appear close to a good translation, such as the second, fifth, sixth, seventh, eighth, and ninth, which added extra words and sentence elements because of the sentence "lau gjakun."

Generally, most coherent translations of this part have had the same word choices and ways of translation.

To give a clear view of the translation of "lau gjakun" and "besa," below are presented the word choices:

1. "Lau gjakun":
  - "took revenge"
  - "Did the blood feud"
1. "Besa"
  - "Faith"
  - "Bessa"
  - "Besa"

So, adaptation and borrowing were used as translation strategies to make a coherent but non-equivalent translation. The borrowing strategy suggests that the word "Besa" is non-equivalent to the English language because there does not exist an English word that has the same exact meaning as in the Albanian language. The same can be seen in the English version of "Prilli i thyer" (Amsterdam Books and Saqi Books, 1990), which the translator has translated in this way:

*"At the windows of houses on the outskirts, people exchanged the latest news:" "Have you heard? Gjorg Berisha has killed Zef Kryeqye." "Gjorg Berisha has taken back his brother's blood." "Are the Berishas going to ask for twenty-four-hour Bessa?"*

Also, the translator has used the borrowing translation strategy to refer to "Besa" by explaining at the end of the page: "The pledged word, faith, truce" ("Broken April," p. 13).

The following paragraph presents other expressions or words that students have changed differently.

*"Ky s'ishte veç fillimi. Shumë shpejt, disi i habitur, arriti të rrokte me mend se rregullat e vrasjes nuk ishin veçse një pjesë e Kodit, madje tepër e vogël, në krahasim me tjetrën, atë të papërlyerën me gjak. Megjithatë, ishin të lidhura të dyja me dhjetëra pejza dhe askush nuk e dinte kufirin ku mbaronte njëra e ku fillonte tjetra dhe gjithçka ishte krijuar në një mënyrë të tillë që ato të pillnin njëra-tjetrën, papërgjakurën e kështu gjithmonë, nga koha në kohë e nga brezi në brez." (p. 34).*

Students' translation:

1. *This wasn't only the beginning. Very soon, somehow surprised, he realized that the rules of the killing weren't only a part of the code, in fact, very small if you compare it with the other, the one that doesn't have blood over it. However, both were tied to tent sinews, and none knew where the end of one was and the start of the other. everything was created in a way that they could create one another, and this is how things were from one time to another and from generation to the other".*

2. *This wasn't only the beginning. Too soon, somehow distracted, I managed to understand that the rules of the murder weren't anything but a part of the Code, even too tiny, in comparison with the other one, the one not touched by blood. Nonetheless, both of them were tied with dozens of strings, and nobody knew they gave birth to each other, always like this, from period to period and from generation to generation.*

3. *This was not the beginning. Very quickly, somehow surprised, he could guess that the rules of murders were not just a part of the Code; it was even smaller than the other one, the bloodless one. However, both of them were tied with dozens of filters, and no one knew the limit where the one would end and where the other one would begin, everything was created in such a way that they would give birth to each other, a bloodless one and so forever will be like this, from time to time, from generation to generation.*

Regarding the above paragraph versions, students used direct and adaptation strategies. It can be noticed that almost all five translated versions are almost the same, except for some changes in some specific words such as: "rregullat e crashes," "të papërlyerën me jak," "të pilling."

On the first version of the noun phrase "rregullat e vrasjes" it has been translated as "the rules of the killing," whereas on the second version, it has been translated as "rules of murder," as well as in the third and fourth versions. In comparison, the fifth example is the most coherent in word choice because he/she has translated it as "rules of blood feud," which is coherent with all selected extracts from "Prilli i Thyer" since the whole story of the book deals with blood feud. In the rest of the versions, almost every student has used the noun phrase "the rules of killing" or "rules of murder," which does not give the precise meaning of ST.

The adjective phrase "të papërlyerën me gjak" has been translated differently among the versions presented above and among those not presented in this paper.

The adjective mentioned above has been translated in these ways: (Note: All the above versions represent other students' translations, which are not presented in this paper because of the high number of versions.)

"Të papërlyerën me gjak"

- "That doesn't have blood over it."
- "The one not touched by blood."
- "The bloodless one"
- "The bloodless one"
- *Totally ignored or not translated*

All versions are coherent with TL, except for the fifth version, which does not have the translation of the Albanian adjective phrase. The verb "të pillnin" expresses the action of animals giving birth, but it is not used for human beings. Possibly, the author has used this verb to give a negative connotation to the meaning of the paragraph or the context; however, this verb is in the subjunctive verb mood, whose formation and function differ from the English subjunctive verb mood. According to Kabashi (2000), the subjunctive verb mood in English is not used in modern written English and very rarely in modern spoken English; however, other constructions have replaced it, and it has the present and past tense. The present subjunctive in English refers to "an action as uncertain, problematic, desired, or suggested, but not as contrary to reality" (Kabashi, 2000, p. 66). Whereas the past subjunctive is "identical with the simple past, except that the verb "to be" has "were" for all persons throughout the past tense" (Kabashi, 2000, p. 67). In addition, "the past subjunctive is hypothetical in meaning" and is "used in conditional and subordinate clauses to express an unreal condition, referring to present and future time" (Kabashi, 2000, p. 66).

On the other hand, in the Albanian language, the subjunctive verb mood expresses "mainly the modality of possibility, but in some cases, it also expresses the modality of desire or obligation" (Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Albania, p.320). With such differences, translation can sometimes be realized through changes. Students have translated this verb mostly in these forms:

"Të pillnin"

-was created

-gave birth

-was created

All the versions state that the equivalence of the Albanian subjunctive verb mood can be found in the English language by using the past simple form of passive voice, which does not correspond at all with the past subjunctive of the English language. The exception is on the third and fifth versions, which have used a different structure of verbs, and it is the same as the English version of "Broken April." See below:

"However, the rules of the blood feud were only a small part of the Code, just a chapter. As weeks and months went by, Gjorg came to understand that the other part, which was concerned with everyday living and was not drenched with blood, was inextricably bound to the bloody part, so much so that no one could really tell where one part left off and the other began. The whole was so conceived that one begat the other, the stainless giving birth to the bloody, and the second to the first, and so on forever, from generation to generation." (Broken April, p. 24)

The following paragraph presents the implementation of the subject, the use of borrowing, the coherent and non-coherent translations, and the equivalence and non-equivalence of TL.

Albanian version:

"Diçka kishte dëgjuar, vite më parë, për një katund besëshkelës, në një krahinë të largët, të ndëshkuar prej flamurit. Ishte vrarë një ndërmjetës në një grindje kufijsh midis dyfshatrave. Mikun e prerë në besë flamuri e lypi nga katundi ku ai u vra dhe, meqenëse katund i doli mendsh e nuk e lau gjakun, u mor vendim për zhbërjen e tij ("Prilli i thyer", pg. 50).

Students' translation:

1. "Years ago, he had heard of a village of verbal-truce traitors who live in a distant region that were punished by the Elders. An intermediary was killed as a consequence of a boundary quarrel between two villages. The Elders demanded an eye for an eye, but since the perpetrator's village did not comply, the village was banished."
2. "Gjorgj had heard years earlier about a betraying village in a valley far away, punished by the flag. A mediator was killed in a dispute between two villagers. The betrayed friend was searched for by the flag of the country where he got

*killed, and so the village didn't avenge him, and the act came to disperse the village."*

*"He heard something years ago for a village that had violated the best somewhere in a far district, who got banned by the banner. During a fight over boundaries between two villages, someone to whom besa was granted got killed. The rules of the Code foresee avenge from the village of the killed man, and because no one from the village answered to avenge him, it was decided to invalidate the village."*

The above Albanian paragraph consists of Albanian cultural words and expressions such as: "Katund besëshkelës," "Mikun e prerë në besë," "Katundi doli mendsh," "Nuk e lau gjakun." Based on the students' translation, such words or expressions are translated this way:

*"Katund besëshkelës"*

- *"Verbal –truce traitors"*
- *"A betraying village"*
- *"Had violated the besa"*
- *"had violated the besa"*
- *"besëshkelës"*

The noun phrase "Katund besëshkelës" has been translated using the adaptation and borrowing translation strategy, which tells us that this Albanian expression is not equivalent to English and should take different forms to be translated in the most coherent way. The identical translations have been found in the English version of "Broken April" as "of a village far way that has violated the Bessa" (Broken April, p.43.).

*"Mikun e prerë në besë"*

- *no translation*
- *"The betrayed friend"*
- *no translation*
- *"The banner"*
- *"The friend broke on the trust."*

The sentence "Mikun e prerë në besë" mostly has been omitted because of the non-equivalence meaning in English. The exception is in the second version, which explains for whom it is being discussed, as well as in the fourth version, which is found the same in the English version of "The Banner" ("Broken April," p. 43) and implemented by the addition of the subject to TL, in this case in the English language, which requires the subject to be meaningful and coherent. The implementation of the subject in this paragraph can be noticed in the third sentence, which can also be found in the English version as "The Banner" ("Broken April," p. 43).

As per the second research aim, regarding the identification of types of cultural loss, two categories of cultural loss can occur during translation: modified cultural loss and complete cultural loss. In total, 124 different types of cultural loss can happen. Modified cultural loss occurs when the translated version dilutes or alters the meaning or essence of a cultural element due to linguistic limitations, cultural context, or the translator's interpretation. On the other hand, complete cultural loss occurs when the translation fails to include a cultural element, causing significant confusion for the intended audience.

The many cultural losses identified demonstrate the difficulty and complexity of accurately conveying cultural nuances during translation. These losses serve as a reminder of the importance of skilled translators who possess cultural sensitivity and can bridge the gap between languages and cultures. With such translators, the intended audience may be able to fully understand and appreciate the cultural elements within the translated material. Therefore, cultural sensitivity and competence must be given priority during the translation process to avoid complete cultural loss. Based on the responses to the two open-ended questions, it was discovered that students encountered several challenges while translating excerpts from "Prilli I Thyer" (Broken April) and completing the associated questionnaire. The majority of students found it challenging to translate Albanian words such as "Besa," "Falja e Gjakut," "Kanuni," and "Gjakmarrja," as well as idioms and expressions. Other challenges included translating Albanian cultural words and identifying the equivalent verb moods between Albanian and English, resulting in word choices and sentence structure changes.

The students expressed that the challenge of translating these words and expressions lies in the fact that they are deeply rooted in Albanian identity and carry a sense of pride and heritage. It is essential to convey the literal meaning of these words and the emotions and values they represent. The students acknowledged that accurate translation requires linguistic skills and a profound appreciation for the cultural nuances and historical significance embedded within these terms.

This understanding is necessary for translations to retain the essence of the original language and stay balanced.

The students recognized the weight of their responsibility in accurately conveying the Albanian identity through translation, as any misinterpretation could erase centuries of cultural heritage. Students suggested using Albanian-Albanian dictionaries to aid in the translation process, but they also acknowledged the need to understand the language better. They believed reading more Albanian literature would enhance their comprehension of the source meaning, allowing for a better translation into English. Additionally, to overcome these difficulties, some students recommended omitting, adapting, or borrowing translations for fixed expressions of cultural words.

Pedagogical solutions play a crucial role in addressing the challenges faced by students in literary translation. Based on the questionnaire data analysis, students identified several vital solutions that could be integrated into the pedagogical framework to enhance their translation skills and overcome difficulties. One such solution is the increased emphasis on the usage of translation strategies, which was mentioned by 54.83% of the students. Educators can incorporate targeted exercises that apply various translation strategies such as adaptation, borrowing, and omission. These exercises can help students understand when and how to use these strategies effectively, improving their ability to produce coherent and culturally sensitive translations.

Another pedagogical approach is to provide students with a strong background knowledge of Albanian culture, which 46.77% of students found essential. This could be achieved by including cultural studies in the curriculum, where students explore the source language's historical, social, and literary contexts. Such knowledge is invaluable when translating texts deeply rooted in the source culture, as it allows students to make informed decisions about conveying cultural references and idioms. Furthermore, 40.32% of students suggested using Albanian-Albanian dictionaries as a helpful tool. Instructors can encourage using such dictionaries in class and guide students on effectively utilizing them to understand and translate complex or archaic terms that may have little equivalents in the target language. In addition to these solutions, fostering an environment that encourages critical thinking and problem-solving is essential. Students should be given opportunities to engage in discussions and collaborative translation projects where they can share their insights and strategies with peers. This collaborative learning approach can lead to a deeper understanding of the translation process and more nuanced translation skills. Lastly, incorporating technology in the form of translation software and online resources can also be beneficial. While these tools should not replace the translator's judgment, they can aid the translation process, providing students with additional references and perspectives.

In conclusion, a pedagogical framework that includes a combination of translation strategy exercises, cultural studies, dictionary usage, collaborative learning, and technology integration can provide students with a comprehensive set of tools to tackle the challenges of literary translation. By addressing these pedagogical aspects, educators can help students develop the skills necessary to produce accurate and culturally resonant translations.

## FINAL REMARKS

The discussion focused on selected text excerpts from "Prilli i Thyer" (Broken April) and concluded that the students had invested significant effort into producing a good translation. The students demonstrated a strong determination to do justice to their language and ensure that future generations would continue to appreciate and understand the rich tapestry of Albanian expressions. The student's understanding of translation went beyond the mere conversion of words from one language to another. They believed translation is about capturing each expression's nuances, emotions, and cultural context. The students' approach to this task was diligent and dedicated, aiming to preserve and promote the beauty and significance of the Albanian language for generations to come.

*Translation* is a task that extends beyond replacing words from one language to another. Its value lies in the ability to convey the essence and subtleties of the original text. Skilled translators are conscious that even a single word or phrase can possess multiple interpretations and implications, and they strive to find the most accurate and significant equivalent in the target language. The students aimed to create translations that would resonate with native speakers and those unfamiliar with the language, fostering a deeper appreciation for the beauty and depth of Albanian literature. They believed translation bridges the gap between different cultures and fosters mutual understanding. Through their meticulous work, they hoped to stimulate readers' curiosity to explore more about Albania and its rich cultural heritage, ultimately contributing to a more interconnected and diverse literary world.

### Recommendations

The study on translating Albanian literary texts into English has provided some insightful findings. Based on these findings, the following recommendations can be made to improve the translation process and outcomes for undergraduate students (Table 5):



**Table 5.** Recommendations to improve the translation process in undergraduate students

Area of opportunity	Recommendation
Improve Cultural Understanding	Students should immerse themselves in Albanian culture to better understand the context of the translated literary works. This can be achieved through cultural workshops, literature courses, and interaction with native speakers
Enhance Linguistic Proficiency	To achieve successful translations, students must have a strong command of both Albanian and English languages. Advanced language courses and practice with native speakers can help improve proficiency
Utilize Translation Strategies	Students should be trained in various translation strategies such as adaptation, direct translation, borrowing, and omission. Understanding when and how to apply these strategies will be essential to successful translation
Address Translation Loss	Educate students about translation loss, particularly cultural loss, and discuss ways to minimize it. This may include the use of footnotes or appendices to explain cultural references
Use Linguistic Resources	Encourage using Albanian-Albanian dictionaries and other linguistic resources to find the most accurate translations for challenging words and phrases
Practice Translation	Regular practice translating various texts, including those with cultural nuances and idiomatic expressions, will help students learn to handle complex translations
Peer Collaboration and Feedback	Organize peer review sessions where students can give and receive translation feedback. Collaborative exercises help students learn from each other's approaches and solutions
Focus on Coherence and Fidelity	Stress the importance of maintaining coherence in translation while being faithful to the original text. This may involve balancing a literal translation and a more creative approach that captures the original work's essence
Develop Cultural Competence	Encourage students to develop cultural competence, which includes sensitivity to cultural nuances and an understanding of historical significance. This will aid in producing translations that are culturally respectful and accurate
Promote Interdisciplinary Learning	Encourage students to engage in interdisciplinary learning that combines language studies with history, literature, and cultural studies. This holistic approach can provide a richer context for translation work

Source: Author's development

### Limitations of the study

The research study on undergraduate students translating Albanian literary texts into English has some limitations. The study mainly focused on specific excerpts from "Prilli i Thyer" (Broken April) and didn't cover the full range of Albanian literature with its diverse linguistic and cultural elements. Also, the number and backgrounds of participating students affected the generalizability of the findings. The study could have included a more extensive and diverse sample to understand the translation challenges and strategies comprehensively. The students' experience and proficiency in translation needed to be specified, and including both novice and experienced translators could have produced different findings.

Additionally, the subjective nature of assessing cultural loss could have influenced the researchers' or participants' interpretations and biases, thus affecting the conclusions drawn from the study. Self-reporting bias could have also affected the accuracy of the study's findings if the survey relied on students' self-assessments of their translation strategies and challenges. Although the study mentioned adaptation, direct translation, borrowing, and omission as translation strategies, it didn't explore the full range of possible translation strategies or the nuances of when and how they are best applied. Lastly, while Albanian-Albanian dictionaries were recommended, the study needed to address the effects of other translation tools or resources, such as online translation databases or software.

### Implications for Research

The findings from this study on the translation of Albanian literary texts into English have several implications for future research. Firstly, the prevalence of literal translation as a standard method among students suggests a need for further investigation into pedagogical approaches that encourage more nuanced translation strategies. Research could explore the effectiveness of various teaching methods in enhancing students' abilities to balance fidelity to the source text with the target language's cultural and linguistic norms. Secondly, the types of cultural loss identified—implicit, modified, and complete—point to a gap in translation studies regarding preserving cultural identity in translated works. Future research could delve into developing frameworks or models that specifically address the mitigation of cultural loss in literary translation.

Lastly, the challenges and solutions identified by the students provide: a) a basis for empirical studies that examine the impact of background cultural knowledge; b) the use of bilingual dictionaries; c) the application of specific translation strategies on the quality of literary translations. Such studies could contribute to the development of evidence-based translation training programs.

### Implications for Practice

For practitioners, the study's insights into the difficulties of translating cultural words and idioms underscore the importance of cultural competence in the translation process. Translation educators should consider integrating cultural studies into their curriculum to better prepare students for the challenges of literary translation. The recommendation by students to use Albanian-Albanian dictionaries suggests that translation practitioners should have access to comprehensive

linguistic resources. Publishers and language institutions might consider investing in developing more extensive and detailed dictionaries to support translators. Various translation strategies, such as adaptation and direct translation, indicate that practitioners should be flexible and creative in their approach. Translation service providers could offer workshops or continuing education courses that focus on the practical application of these strategies in literary translation.

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