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Investigating Culture-Specific Items in Roald Dahl's "Charlie and Chocolate Factory" Based on Newmark's Model

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Abstract

Culture-specific items (CSIs) abound in languages. Sometimes these items are peculiar to one culture and sometimes they may be shared across several cultures. Every translator encounters a variety of CSIs in different texts and may face difficulties in translating them, particularly in literary translation (e.g. children's literature). To overcome the problem of finding the right equivalent, the translator has to rely on different strategies. This study investigates the strategies used to render CSIs in two Persian translations of Roald Dahl's "Charlie and Chocolate Factory", following Newmark's (1988) model (which includes categories such as cultural equivalent, transference, functional equivalent, through-translation, etc.). The study also compares the two translations, inspecting and explaining the strategies used in each one to translate the CSIs observed. Based on the data analysis and the results of the study, the most widely used strategies was "cultural equivalent", followed by "through-translation" and "recognized translation."

Keywords: cultural items, literary translation, equivalence, translation strategy, Peter Newmark

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1. Introduction

In translating children's literature storybooks, one of the most important challenges for the translator is how to render culture-specific items (CSIs). S/he should try to transfer the original cultural messages to the target text readers, using various translation strategies or procedures. In doing so, the translator must possess linguistic competence and cultural background knowledge in the both languages involved. Every culture, however, encompasses concepts that are peculiar to it; as a result of expansive communication (as in globalization), some of these concepts are cross-culturally exchanged (Yousefi, 2017). CSIs may appear as elements without any specific equivalent in other cultures or have a different position in the cultural system of the target language (Aixela, 1996). Evidently, mere linguistic knowledge of the source and target languages would not guarantee competence in translating CSIs.

Apart from having a linguistic knowledge of the source and target languages (e.g. vocabulary, grammar, lexicon), having cultural knowledge is another qualification for a competent translator. This includes knowledge of cultural differences in both languages. CSIs are concepts specific to a certain culture, referring to domains such as flora, fauna, food, clothes, housing, work, leisure, politics, law, and religion among others (Keshtkar & Karimnia, 2016; Moradi & Karimnia, 2013; Newmark, 1988). These concepts can be different in every culture or language, which is a condition making their translation very challenging. Literary works normally involve a plethora of cultural concepts and notions. In the translation process, such dimensions can pose serious difficulties because they demand extra-linguistic knowledge. Novels, which are usually lengthy and rich, can host a larger number of CSIs of various types, compared to other literary types.

The purpose of this study is to use Newmark's (1988) model to investigate two Persian translations of the CSIs in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, as a famous English novel. This investigation tries to discover which translation strategies are used in translating the cultural notions. The purpose of the study, more specifically, is to identify the CSIs, investigate their cultural impact in the target text (TT), and find out the strategies used for translating them. *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* is a novel written for children by British writer Roald Dahl in 1964. The story is about the adventures of a boy named *Charlie Bucket* at the Willy Wonka's Chocolate Factory, and as such it contains numerous CSIs that can be challenging for translating a book for children or adolescents.

2. Literature Review

Various scholars have expressed their ideas about the relationship between language and culture, emphasizing the inseparable relationship between them. According to Brown (2000), a language is a part of a culture, and a culture is a part of a language; the two are so intricately interwoven that one cannot separate them without losing the significance of either language or culture (p. 177) (Fishman, 1996). Given this strong affinity between culture and language, the impact of culture on various fields of language studies and applied linguistics must be seriously investigated. As far as translation is concerned, Liang (2007) observes that literary translation has long been viewed as a cross-cultural form of communication and is probably one of humankind's most complex activities.

Yet, because of the lack of a comprehensive understanding of cultural differences and cross-cultural interactions, translation scholars and translators often find literary translation a thorny task (Liang, 2007). In recent years, cultural translation has attracted the attention of many scholars, and many of them have discussed cross-cultural encounters (Kung, 2009). Scholars emphasize that cultural translation occurs when one statement is transferred from one specific culture to another, creating a new statement or a different version of the same (Bhabha, 1994). In terms of Thriveni (2001), the translator should not only be bilingual, but also a *bicultural*, and be familiar with the writer's expectations and intentions.

Cultures can gain knowledge about each other through translation, finding a channel to better understand each other (Schäffner, 1995). Newmark (1988) states that the translation of universal words does not pose a serious problem, but the actual difficulty lies in *cultural* words. In fact, one can contend that, "due to the cultural gap or the distance between the SL [source language] and TL [target language], there is a problem in translation" (Newmark, 1988, p. 94). *Traditional cultural expressions*, the term used by Wong and Fernandini (2011) instead of CSIs, are "any forms, whether tangible and intangible, in which traditional culture and knowledge are expressed, appear or are manifested" (p. 1). Various terminologies have been used by various scholars to refer to cultural items (Gonzalez Davies & Scott-Tennent, 2005, p. 166).

For example, Newmark (2010) calls these terms *cultural words*, Baker (1992) defines cultural elements as *culture specific concepts*. Gambier (2007) considers them as *specific cultural resources*. Nord (1997) uses the term *cultureme*

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to define these culture-specific elements. Yet, the important issue, as Brasienė (2013) explains, is that many CSIs are transferred when two or more cultures come into interaction. Yet, if there are actually culture-specific elements that are perceived differently across cultures, where do such elements come from? Some scholars have tried to trace the resources contributing to the formation of CSIs.

Newmark (1988), for instance, enumerates such resources as ecology (geographic specificity), gestures and habits (e.g. doing a slow bump, giving finger to the top), and material culture (e.g. clothes, foods, housing). Identifying CSIs, Aixela (1996) underscores such sources as historical figures, local institutions, proper names, works of art, periodicals, and so on (Halloran, 2006). Espindola (2006, as cited in Brasienė 2013) also suggests another classification of CSIs, taking into account anthroponomy, forms of entertainment, foods and drinks, means of transportation, fictional characters, measuring systems, and religious celebrations.

The major work of Peter Newmark, a renowned translation theorist and critic, is *Translation Approaches*, which includes semantic and communicative translation. Newmark (1988) states that "only communicative and semantic translation fulfill the two main aims of translation, which are first, accuracy, and second, economy. In general, a semantic translation is written at the author's linguistic level, a communicative at the readership's" (1988, p. 47).

His approach to translation involves several strategies including naturalization, cultural equivalent, descriptive equivalent, synonyms, notes, glosses, additions, recognized translation, functional equivalent, transference, transposition/shift, paraphrase, translation label, modulation, compensation, expansion, reduction, through-translation, couplets, componential analysis, and deletion. An interesting question is how these strategies help to analyze translators' choices in terms of CSIs in literary translation. This is the purpose of the present study. In the following section, Newmark's strategies and the method employed in this study are detailed.

3. Methodology

3.1 Design of the Study

As a qualitative-descriptive research, this study focused on the CSIs in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and Chocolate Factory* and the strategies used to translate them in its two Persian translations. This study employed the qualitative method because qualitative research methods in translation address the perspectives, experiences, and thoughts of text producers, and explore the purpose, meaning or reality contained in them (Behrooznia, Pishghadam, & Ghazanfari, 2015). The descriptive dimension also deals with gathering data to identify the qualities and organize the data collected (Glass & Hopkins, 1984).

3.2 The Corpus of the Study

The corpus of this study was *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*, as a novel written in 1964 for children by British writer Roald Dahl. Two Iranian translators of this book are Mahboubeh Najafkhani and Shahla Tahmasebi. This study compared the works of these two translators. Najafkhani has translated most of Dahl's works as well as this one. The publisher of this book is Ofogh Publishing, and the book has been reprinted eleven times, the last one being in 2018 (total of 248 pages). The other translator is Tahmasebi, who published her translation in Markaz publishing; this work was first published in 2011 and has been reprinted 8 times since then (a total of 174 pages). Clearly, these two translated books are popular (reprinted several times within a short period) and available on market.

3.3 Data Collection

The data were collected from the English original book and its two corresponding translations to answer the related research questions of the study. Initially, the researchers scrutinized the ST, then read the translations carefully in order to find the cultural notions based on Newmark's model.

3.4 Data Analysis

The framework of this study was based on Newmark's translation model. Newmark distinguished six categories of CSIs including ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs, and pursuits as well as private passions (Newmark, 2010). Moreover, Newmark suggested twelve different methods used to translate CSIs, which are cultural equivalent, couplet, neutralization, transference, label, through-translation, deletion, componential analysis, paraphrase, recognized translation, notes, and gloss (1988).

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Table 1. Newmark's diagram of translation procedures

Newmark's procedures	Definition
1) Cultural Equivalent	It involves replacing a cultural word in the SL with a TL one. However, "they are not accurate" (Newmark, 1988: 83)
2) Transference	It is the process of transferring a SL word to a stretch of text. It includes transliteration and is the same as what Harvey (2000: 5) calls "transcription."
3) Functional Equivalent	This procedure is used to generalize/neutralize the cultural word in the SL through a culture-free word. This procedure, which is a cultural componential analysis, is the most accurate way of *deculturalising* a cultural word (1988, p. 83).
4) Through-translation	It is "the literal translation of common collocations, the components of compounds, names of organizations, and perhaps phrases. It can also be called loan translation or calque" (Newmark, 1988, p. 84)
5) Naturalization	It adapts the SL item first to the normal pronunciation, then to the normal morphology of the TL (Newmark, 1988, p.82)
6) Translation Label	This is a temporary mode of translation usually for a new institutional term (Newmark, 1988, p. 90).
7) Addition, Gloss, Notes	These are additional information implemented by the translator to overcome CSIs.
8) Expansion/Reduction	This procedure is similar to Delisle and colleagues' (1999) *amplification* procedure, which involves the use of more words in the TT in order to re-express an idea or reinforce the sense of the ST item because it does not completely correspond to any single TL item. Reduction is the opposite of this procedure, through an idea may be partially expressed.
9) Recognized Translation	Using the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term, where appropriate.
10) Couplet	It occurs when the translator combines two different procedures (Newmark, 1988).
11) Synonymy	It is a "near TL equivalent." Here economy is prioritized over accuracy (Newmark, 1988b, p. 84).
12) Deletion	A ST word or phrase, as a translation unit, is fully omitted in the TT.

4. Findings

4.1 Analysis of Newmark's Procedures

In the textual analysis reported in this section, the strategies are investigated in Tables. The columns in each table are ST (source text), TT1 (translated text 1), TT1 (translated text 2); TT1 reports Mahboubeh Najaf Khani's while TT2 lists the choices made by Shahla Tahmasebi.

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Table 2. Cultural equivalent

ST	TT1	TT2
They burst into peals of laughter.	.زدند زیرخنده و غش غش خندیدند	قاه قاه زدند زیر خنده. حالا نخند و کی بخند
His mouth watering like mad	مثل دیوانه ها آب از لب و لوچه اش راه می افتاد.	با حسرت و اشتیاق آب دهانش را قورت می داد.
After he had finished his supper of watery cabbage soup.	بعد از اینکه شامش را که سوپ آبکی کلم بود می خورد	عصر ها همیشه بعد از اینکه سوپ کلم آبکی اش را تمام می کرد
I'm not even going to nibble the staircase or lick the walls!	حتی یک لیس هم به پله هاو دیوارهایش نمی زنم!	من نه راه پله اش را گاز می زنم و نه حتی دیوارهایش را می لیسم
Good luck to you all	بخت یارتان	همگی موفق باشید

In the first example the core concept is transferred correctly but the translators used idioms in the target language. This is not rare in literary translation and genre. The reason for doing so is that the translator tries to show the literary aspect of the ST in the target language. In the second example the translators also used idioms in translating the ST. Yet, in choosing the right idiom for the source language item, care must be exercised. Although both of the Persian translations and the English idiom suggest laughing madly but it seems that the Persian idioms involve more exaggeration. In *"after he had finished his supper of watery cabbage soup"* the cultural item is related to food. One translator has translated the *"supper"* as عصرانه and the other as شام; this suggests that sometimes there are differences in the interpretation of words and maybe there is no accepted translation for *"supper."* "*Good luck to you all*", it is directly translated into the equivalent words that are used for expressing good luck in the Iranian culture. This is a good example of cultural equivalent.

Table 3. Transference

ST	TT1	TT2
Professor Foulbody	پروفسور فول بادی	پروفسور فول بادی
duchess	(اشراف زاده) ------	دوشس

In the first example, the translators used transference to translate the *"Professor Foulbody"*, using a phonological adaption. This method was mostly used in translating proper names, foods, transport, plants, etc. In the second example, TT2 used the transference method for translating *"duchess"* (دوشس), although TT1 resorted to cultural equivalent (اشراف زاده). The difference in selecting translation strategies may be associated with translators' inability to find the appropriate cultural equivalence in the target language or to their attempts to maintain local color of source language.

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Table 4. Functional equivalent

ST	TT1	TT2
dining-room	اتاق پذیرایی	اتاق پذیرایی
boat	قایق	قایق

In both examples, the translators first interpreted the meaning of the items, and then found a way of expressing the precisely as target language items with exactly the same denotations; as such the choices would be culture-neutral. The compound phrase اتاق پذیرایی and the word قایق are culture-neutral.

Table 5. Through-translation

ST	TT1	TT2
It was WONKA'S FACTORY	نام کارخانه وانکا	کارخانه وانکا
The tiny men	(مردان کوتوله)----------	مردان کوچک

Because the first example is the name of the chocolate factory, the translators used the through-translation strategy, which is the most common one for translating names of organizations. TT2, for instance, relied on through-translation in translating *"The tiny men"* as مردان کوچک by rendering the semantic components of a compound word into pieces. Yet, TT1 used the cultural equivalent to translate the *"The tiny men"* as مردان کوتوله. This choice be due to the translator's desire to replace the cultural expressions of the source language with its cultural equivalent in the target language.

Table 6. Reduction and expansion

ST	TT1	TT2
One Wonka's Whipple-Scrumptious Fudge mallow Delight	یک بسته شکلات کره ای لذیذ و نشاط آور وانکا بدهید	یک شکلات کره ای مغزدار و لذیذ وانکا با طعم طالبی و عسل می خواهم
Gooey piece	آدامس کهنه و چسبناکم	آدامس چسبناکم

In the first example, TT2 used reduction in translating "One Wonka's Whipple-Scrumptious Fudge mallow Delight", by semantically condensing *"whipple scrumptious"* as شکلات کره ای. The English CSI, however, refers to a soft candy made of sugar, butter, milk, chocolate, and sometimes nuts. In the second example, TT1 expands *"Gooey piece"* by adding the adjective کهنه (old).

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Table 7. Recognized translation

ST	TT1	TT2
glass	شیشه مغازه	شیشه
mattresses	تشک	تشک
dagger	خنجر	خنجر

Since the word “glass” in Persian means “شیشه”, both translators in the first example used the same equivalent in their translations, by using the method of recognized translation concerning the word or phrase in question. In the second example, both translators tried to translate the cultural word “mattress”, using the word "تشک", which is the Persian equivalent of the word and well-known in the target culture. Clearly, the word “dagger” in Persian is equivalent to “خنجر” and both translators used the same word to translate “dagger” which is a familiar word in the target culture, too.

Table 8. Couplet

ST	**TT1**	**TT2**
caramels	آبنبات	آبنبات
feathery sweets	نقل های نرم و خوشمزه	شیرینی

Couplet involves the use of multiple strategies in translating a phrase or word. Both TT1 and TT2 relied on cultural equivalent and synonym of the word *“caramel”* in translating the word. In the second example, however, TT1 draws on synonymy and cultural equivalent again to translate the *“feathery sweets”*, although TT2 uses the synonymy only. The reason for this choice may be because of the preservation of the local color of the source language.

Table 9. Synonymy

ST	TT1	TT2
sugar balloons	بادکنک خوراکی	یک جور بادکنک خوراکی
Charlie went on wolfing the chocolate	چارلی همچنان به لمباندن شکلات ادامه داد	چارلی بقیه شکلات را یکجا توی دهانش گذاشت.
Charlie stammered	چارلی من من کنان گفت	چارلی من من کرد:

In the first example, both TT1 and TT2 tried to use the closest synonym to translate the *“sugar balloons.”* Although the phrase بادکنک خوراکی is not a common word in the target language and readers may not perceive it well, the translators used synonymy, while introducing a new phrase to the target language readers. In the second example, the translators tried to use the closest equivalent in translating *“wolfing”*, as we know wolfing means “to eat a large amount of food very quickly.” The first translator has chosen the word "لمباندن" according to its definition in English, while the second translator has translated it as "یک جا توی دهانش گذاشت". In the third example, the translators have used

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exactly the nearest equivalent to translate the word “stammered.” This term, which is common in the target language culture, was chosen by translators as "من من کردن", which seems to be a good choice because it is a tangible and common word in the target language culture.

Table 10. Deletion

ST	**TT1**	**TT2**
Three cheers	----------	----------
Charlie, you mark my words.	----------	----------

In the first example, both translators omitted the phrase *“three cheers.”* The reason for this may be the lack of a suitable word in the target language or the translators’ refusal to introduce an idea specific to the source culture in the target culture.

4.2 Statistical Analysis of Newmark’s Strategies

An analysis of the frequencies of the strategies employed in the translations of *Charlie and Chocolate Factory* is illustrated in Table 11.

Table 11. The frequency of Newmark’s procedures

Procedures		Frequency		
		Translation by Mahboubeh Najaf Khani	Translation by Shahla Tahmasbi	Total
1	Cultural Equivalent	95	89	184
2	Transference	3	3	6
3	Functional Equivalent	2	3	5
4	Through-translation	7	6	13
5	Naturalization	0	0	0
6	Translation label	0	0	0
7	Addition, gloss, notes, etc.	0	0	0
8	Reduction and Expansion	2	2	4
9	Recognized translation	5	7	12
10	Couplet	4	1	5
11	Synonymy	4	7	11

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12	Deletion	2	6	8
Total		124	124	248

As it is shown in Table 11, cases of "cultural equivalent" were most frequently strategies applied by the two Iranian translators (n= 184). The next frequent cases were the "through-translation" (n=13) and "recognized translation" (n=12). Figure 1 shows the distribution of each strategy. As the Figure 1 suggests, the most common strategy used by both translators was "cultural Equivalent."

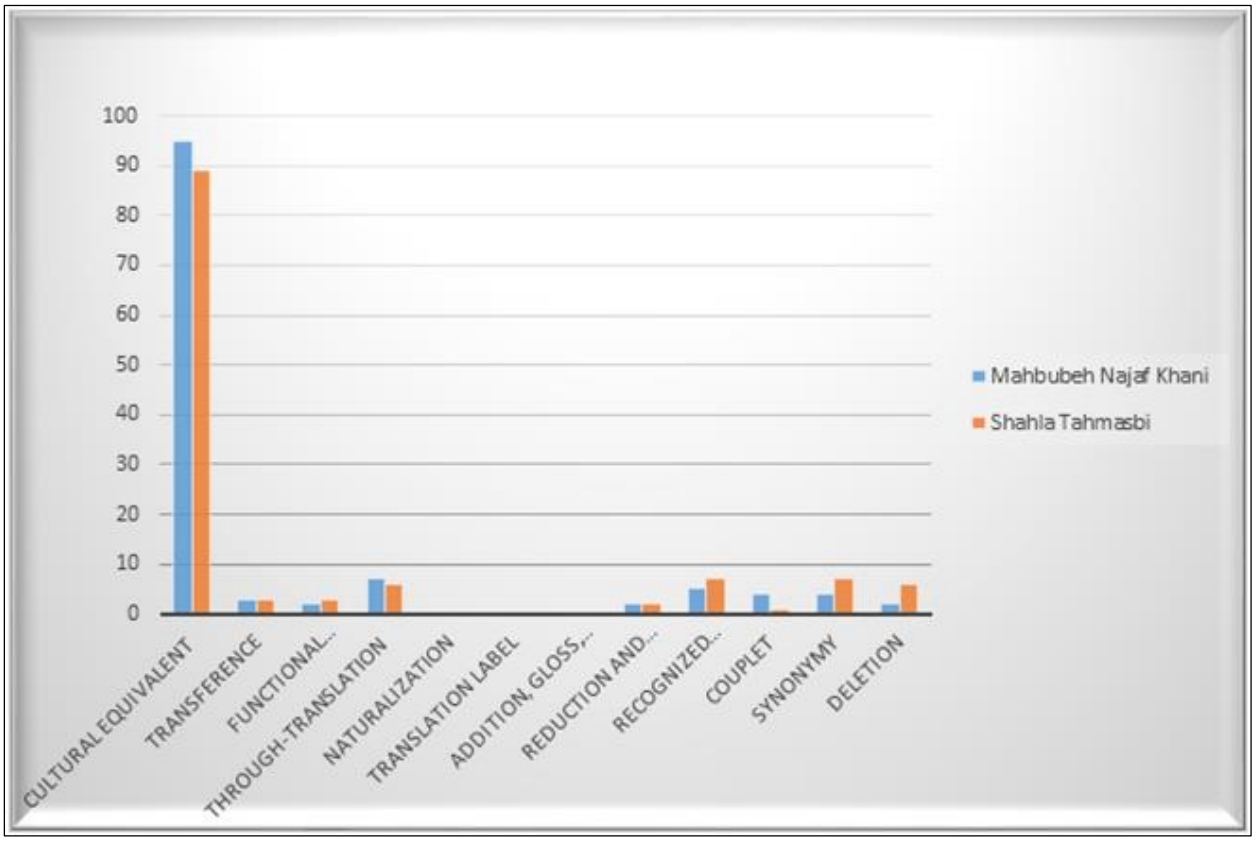


Figure 1. The frequency of translation strategies

4.3 Research Question

The question addressed in this study was concerned with translation strategies proposed by Newmark as used in two Persian translations of the CSIs in Roald Dahl's *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory*? Concerning this question, "cultural equivalent" (n =184, 92%) was the most frequent strategy used. This was followed by "through-translation" (n=13, 6.5%), "recognized translation" (n=12, 6 %), and "synonymy" (n=11, 5.5 %). Of the selected procedures investigated in this study, the translators did not use three ones in their translations: "naturalization", "translation label", and "addition, notes, gloss." Figure 2 shows the percentages of the strategies.

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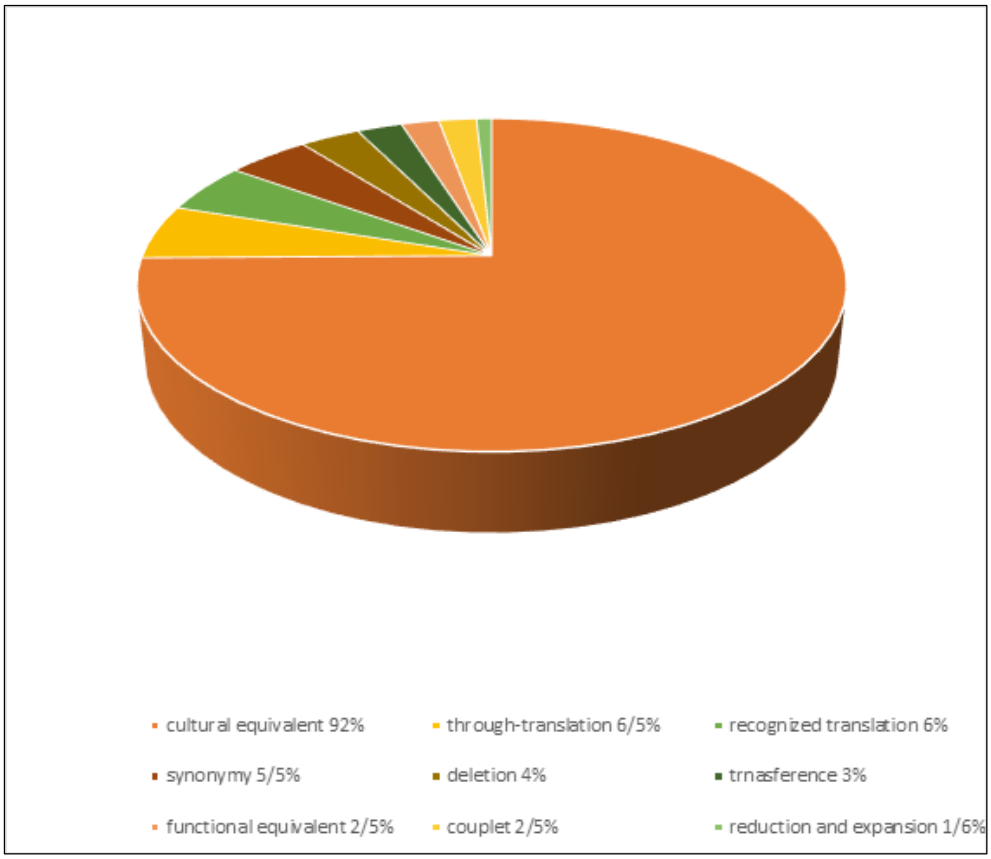


Figure 2. The percentages of translation procedures

5. Discussion

The strategies found in this study were "cultural equivalent", "transference", "functional equivalent", "reduction and expansion", "recognized translation", "couplet", "synonymy", and "deletion." The findings revealed that the most frequently used strategies were cases of "cultural equivalent" (n=184, 92%). The second frequent strategy was "through-translation" (n=13, 6.5%), followed by "recognized translation" (n=12, 6%). Yet, out of the procedures under investigation, the translators did not use three ones in their translations: "naturalization", "translation label", and "addition, notes, gloss."

Daghoughi and Hashemian (2016), drawing on Newmark's (1988) five domains of CSIs, sought to find his proposed translation strategies applied in Ghanoonparvar's English translation of Jalal Al-Ahmad's *By the Pen* (1988). They also found the frequency of each strategy to determine the one mostly used in translating the CSIs. To accomplish this, both the ST text and the TT translation were scrutinized; then, the translation strategies applied were detected. Results showed that "functional equivalent" was the most frequently used strategy, whereas "modulation" and "paraphrase" were the least frequently used ones.

Yousefi (2017) tried to find out how Edward Rehatsek translated CSIs in *Gulistan* of Saadi. In doing so, Yousefi first had to find all of the CSIs in the masterpiece of Persian prose, and then compared them with their English equivalents using Newmark's taxonomy of translation strategies for translating CSIs. The study found 102 cases of CSIs and concluded that among the strategies Rehatsek used, such as "functional equivalent", "through-translation", "synonymy", etc., "transference" was the most frequently used strategy in rendering the CSIs.

Yet, as the present study revealed, Najafkhani and Tahmasebi heavily relied on "cultural equivalence" as their method of translating target cultural concepts embedded in the ST by encoding them in their original target language forms. This strategy is a domestication process which seeks to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text to the target reader. Considering the research question that addressed the strategies used for translating CSIs in Dahl's "Charlie

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and Chocolate Factory", the results showed that of the eighteen strategy proposed by Newmark (1988), only twelve ones were utilized in the study, of course with different frequencies.

It can be concluded that because of the cultural differences between the two cultures, the translators tried to find the right balance the CSIs to make the reading experience easy for target readers. Given the differences between the two cultures involved in this translation process, the translators chose the right strategies for translating the CSIs. It seems that a combination of domesticating strategies in translating CSIs was an appropriate strategy as the readers of the book would be mostly children and adolescents.

6. Conclusion

This study drew on Newmark's (1988) model to investigate two Persian translations of the CSIs in Roald *Dahl's Charlie and the Chocolate* Factory. Considering the data obtained, it can be concluded that the two Iranian translators used almost all of Newmark's translation procedures to render the CSIs. Among Newmark's (1988) list of strategies, "cultural equivalence" was the most frequently used one in translating the CSIs, whereas "reduction and expansion" was the least frequently used strategy. Following "cultural equivalence" as the dominant strategy in this study, the important strategies were "through-translation", "recognized translation", "synonymy", "deletion", "transference", "functional equivalent", and "couplet." As the results demonstrated, among Newmark's (1988) strategies, "cultural equivalent" could be considered the most effective strategy in translating literary texts as it could simplify the TT and make it relatable to general readers. Translators have to gain awareness of CSIs of STs and learn different ways, depending on the situation, to effectively render them. The observations of this research could prove to be useful to translation studies students and literary translators who try to find a systematic method of gaining knowledge about the translation of cultural dimensions.

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