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A Shift-Based Analysis of Translator Style in Four Persian Translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*

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ABSTRACT

This paper investigates translator style through an analysis of translational shifts in four Persian translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The source text and its Persian renderings are systematically compared to identify recurring patterns of linguistic transformation, thereby revealing aspects of translator voice, stylistic preference, and strategic choice. Detected shifts are classified into categories and sub-categories, enabling structured comparison across translators. Emphasizing formal and syntactic features over semantic equivalence alone, the study contends that recurrent shift patterns offer a reliable basis for profiling individual translators. The dataset comprises 105 sentences and clauses extracted from the source text and its four Persian versions. Findings indicate distinct stylistic tendencies: Shahin frequently employs expansion through longer linguistic units; Ashena shows a strong inclination toward domestication; Daryabandari still displays a notable preference for expansion by replacement; and Afshar produces the fewest shifts, maintains closer adherence to the source, preserves authorial presence, and achieves a more foreignizing effect.

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Introduction

The role of the translator in literary texts has increasingly been recognized as an active and constitutive force in shaping translated discourse. Contemporary translation studies have moved beyond viewing translation as a secondary or derivative act and instead emphasize the translator's agency in reconstructing meaning, style, and narrative voice in the target language. This shift is closely associated with the notion of the "translator's visibility" (Venuti, 1995) and the "translator's voice" (Hermans, 1996), which challenge the traditional assumption of translator invisibility and textual transparency.

In literary translation, the translator does not merely reproduce the source text but inevitably reconfigures it through a series of linguistic and stylistic decisions. These decisions, whether conscious or constrained, manifest themselves in systematic patterns of shifts at different linguistic levels. Such shifts, as described in descriptive translation studies (e.g., Popovič, 1970; Leuven-Zwart, 1989, 1990), are not random deviations but can reflect recurring translational tendencies that contribute to what may be termed a "translatorial style".

Within this theoretical orientation, stylistic variation in translation has been increasingly approached through corpus-based and shift-oriented methodologies. Among these, Baker's (2000) notion of the "translator's fingerprint" and Pekkanen's (2010) model of stylistic analysis through translational shifts provide methodological frameworks for identifying individual translator profiles based on recurring linguistic choices. These approaches allow researchers to move from micro-level textual operations to macro-level stylistic interpretation.

Despite the growing body of research on translator style, relatively few studies have systematically examined multiple translations of a single literary work into Persian using a comparative shift-based framework. In particular, there is a lack of research that integrates micro-level shift analysis with macro-level stylistic interpretation in order to construct differentiated translator profiles within the Persian literary translation context.

To address this gap, the present study investigates four Persian translations of Ernest Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. This novel is selected due to its stylistic economy, syntactic simplicity, and high interpretive sensitivity, which make it particularly suitable for analyzing translational variation and stylistic deviation. The study focuses on 105 selected sentences and clauses from the source text and compares them with their corresponding renditions in four Persian translations.

The aim of this research is to identify recurring translational shifts across these translations and to interpret how such patterns contribute to the construction of individual translator styles. In doing so, the study seeks to link micro-level linguistic shifts to macro-level stylistic tendencies, thereby offering a comparative profile of translator behavior and highlighting the interplay between translational agency and textual transformation.

A brief note of previous works

The study of translator agency in literary texts has developed along several interrelated but distinct theoretical trajectories within contemporary translation studies. Rather than treating translation as a

neutral transfer of meaning, modern approaches increasingly emphasize the translator as an active participant in meaning construction, whose linguistic and stylistic decisions shape the final form of the target text.

One major strand of research focuses on the concept of translatorial visibility and voice, most prominently articulated by Venuti (1995) and Hermans (1996). Venuti's notion of domestication and foreignization reframes translation as a culturally and ideologically situated act, where translators inevitably either suppress or foreground foreignness in the target context. Similarly, Hermans (1996) argues that translated narratives always contain a "translator's voice," challenging the illusion of transparency and neutrality in translated texts. These perspectives collectively reposition the translator as an interpretive agent whose choices are inscribed in the textual surface.

A second strand of research has developed within descriptive translation studies (DTS), particularly through the work of Toury (1995) and Leuven-Zwart (1989, 1990). This tradition shifts attention from normative questions of "correctness" to systematic description of translational phenomena. Within this framework, shifts between source and target texts are not treated as errors or deviations, but as meaningful indicators of translational behavior. Leuven-Zwart's comparative model, in particular, provides a micro-structural approach for identifying shifts at lexical, syntactic, and semantic levels, enabling researchers to trace patterns of transformation across texts.

Building on DTS, corpus-based approaches have further operationalized the study of translation style. Baker (1993, 1996, 2000) introduces the notion of translation universals and later proposes the idea of the "translator's fingerprint," suggesting that translators exhibit recurrent and identifiable linguistic patterns across texts. This perspective provides methodological support for studying translation not only as a product but also as a patterned set of linguistic preferences that may characterize individual translators.

In parallel, stylistic approaches to translation, such as those developed by Malmkjaer (2003, 2004), Munday (2008), and Bosseaux (2001, 2007), have extended the analysis of translator style into the domains of narratology, discourse analysis, and corpus stylistics. These studies demonstrate how translational choices affect narrative perspective, focalization, and ideological positioning, thereby linking micro-level linguistic decisions to macro-level textual and interpretive effects.

Among more recent developments, Pekkanen (2010) offers a particularly relevant framework for the present study. Her model systematically connects formal translational shifts at the micro-level with recurring translatorial tendencies at the macro-level. By distinguishing between optional and obligatory shifts, Pekkanen provides a methodological tool for isolating stylistically meaningful choices—those that reflect translator preference rather than structural necessity. Her work further demonstrates how such recurring patterns can be used to construct distinct translator profiles across entire literary works.

Despite these advances, existing research remains limited in two important respects. First, although translator style has been widely discussed in theoretical terms, relatively fewer studies have applied a systematic shift-based model to multiple Persian translations of the same literary text in a comparative

framework. Second, the integration of micro-level shift analysis with macro-level interpretive conclusions—particularly in relation to narrative and stylistic effects—remains underdeveloped in Persian translation studies.

Therefore, the present study positions itself at the intersection of these research traditions by combining Pekkanen's shift-based framework with comparative stylistic analysis. It aims to extend previous work by examining how recurring translational shifts in four Persian translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* can be systematically interpreted as indicators of individual translator style, thereby linking micro-level textual operations to macro-level stylistic and narratological implications.

Theoretical framework

Shifts: A Theoretical and Operational Overview

The concept of translation shifts refers to the systematic changes that occur during the process of transferring meaning from a source language into a target language. Given the structural, lexical, and cultural non-equivalence between languages, a fully symmetrical correspondence between source and target texts is rarely achievable. Consequently, translational change is not an exception but an inherent feature of the translation process.

Within descriptive translation studies, shifts are not regarded as translation errors or losses, but as analytically meaningful phenomena that reflect the decisions and constraints involved in translation activity. As Popovič (1970) argues, translational variation should not be interpreted as deviation from the original, but rather as a necessary condition for the reproduction of a literary work in another linguistic and cultural system. In this sense, shifts emerge from the translator's attempt to reconstruct meaning as a coherent and functional whole in the target language rather than from an intention to alter the source text arbitrarily.

In this study, shifts are understood as observable differences between source-text units and their corresponding target-text realizations at lexical, syntactic, and structural levels. Following this perspective, shifts are categorized into two broad types: obligatory and optional.

Obligatory shifts are those induced by systemic differences between the source and target languages, including grammatical, syntactic, and structural constraints. These shifts are largely unavoidable and do not reflect individual translator preference.

By contrast, optional shifts arise where more than one acceptable translational solution is available in the target language. These shifts are therefore associated with the translator's stylistic and strategic choices. In other words, optional shifts represent points of selection where translators may prefer one linguistic realization over another without being constrained by linguistic necessity.

From a methodological perspective, optional shifts constitute the primary analytical focus of this study, as they are assumed to encode stylistically significant patterns of decision-making. When such choices recur systematically across a translator's work, they may be interpreted as indicators of a distinct translational style. Accordingly, translator style is operationalized in this study as a set of recurring

optional shift patterns that differentiate one translator from another in their rendering of the same source text.

Style: An Outlook

In translation studies, the concept of style has gradually shifted from a purely literary or author-centered notion to a more empirically grounded and text-based construct. Within this perspective, translational style is no longer viewed as an abstract aesthetic category, but as a set of observable linguistic patterns that emerge through systematic analysis of translated texts.

One influential approach to operationalizing translation style is the analysis of translational shifts. Rather than focusing on stylistic impressions, this approach examines measurable differences between source texts (ST) and target texts (TT) as indicators of translator behavior. In most traditional accounts, such differences have been identified through comparative analysis of ST–TT pairs, where stylistic variation is inferred from observable dissimilarities at lexical, syntactic, and discourse levels.

Within this framework, a crucial distinction is made between obligatory and optional shifts. Following Pekkanen (2010), obligatory shifts are primarily driven by structural and systemic differences between languages, including syntactic, semantic, phonological, and cultural constraints. While the first three categories operate largely at the micro-structural level, cultural constraints may extend to broader macro-structural considerations.

Optional shifts, by contrast, emerge in contexts where multiple acceptable translational solutions exist. These shifts are therefore not linguistically imposed but reflect translator choice, making them particularly relevant for stylistic analysis. Consequently, optional shifts are considered the most productive site for identifying individual translational preferences.

However, as Pekkanen (2010) notes, the attempt to derive translator style from shift analysis raises several methodological challenges. These include: (1) determining appropriate units of analysis for comparison, (2) establishing a consistent taxonomy for classifying shifts, (3) ensuring methodological reliability across linguistic systems, and (4) linking local (micro-level) translational decisions to global (macro-level) stylistic patterns.

These challenges highlight a key analytical problem in translation stylistics: how to move from discrete textual operations to coherent translator profiles. Addressing this issue, the present study adopts Pekkanen's shift-based framework to investigate whether recurring patterns of optional shifts in four Persian translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea* can be systematically interpreted as indicators of distinct translator styles at both micro- and macro-structural levels.

Method

The present study adopts a product-oriented and descriptive approach to translation analysis. In this orientation, translation is primarily examined as a finished textual product rather than as a process of decision-making in real time. Accordingly, the analytical focus is placed on the observable linguistic outcomes of translation, where translational effects are manifested as systematic differences between the source text and the target texts.

This product-oriented perspective aligns with the principles of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS), which prioritize the empirical description of translational phenomena as they appear in translated texts. From this standpoint, the present study does not seek to reconstruct cognitive or procedural aspects of translation, but instead focuses on identifying and classifying recurrent shifts as textual evidence of translational behavior.

Theoretically, the study is situated at the intersection of narratology and translational stylistics. Since the selected material consists of translated narrative texts, narratology provides a suitable framework for understanding how narrative features such as voice, perspective, and textual mediation are reconfigured in translation. At the same time, the analysis of formal linguistic variation aligns with the concerns of stylistics, particularly in its application to translated discourse. In this regard, the study follows the methodological orientation proposed by Horri (2017) under the label of “translational narratology,” which integrates narratological and stylistic perspectives in the analysis of translated texts.

Methodologically, this research is based on the framework developed by Pekkanen (2010), with necessary adaptations to suit the Persian linguistic and translational context. Pekkanen proposes a systematic model for identifying the stylistic imprint of literary translators through the analysis of translational shifts in literary texts. Her study, which examines English novels by Joyce and Hemingway and their Finnish translations, compares multiple translators in order to identify recurring patterns of formal linguistic change.

A key principle in Pekkanen’s model is the distinction between obligatory and optional shifts. While obligatory shifts are excluded from stylistic interpretation due to their structural necessity, optional shifts are included as they represent points of translational choice where individual preferences may emerge. By analyzing these optional shifts across texts, Pekkanen demonstrates how recurring patterns can be used to construct individual translator profiles and to infer translational style at both micro- and macro-levels.

The present study adopts this analytical logic and applies it to four Persian translations of Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea*. Accordingly, only optional shifts are systematically examined, with the aim of identifying recurring translational patterns that may reflect individual stylistic tendencies among the selected translators. Some modifications have been made to Pekkanen’s original categorization in order to better accommodate the structural and stylistic features of Persian and the specific requirements of the selected corpus.

Data Collection

As for data collection, this paper takes into account Hemingway’s *The Old Man and the Sea* and its four Persian translations entitled *tetra* the same as *پیرمرد و دریا* (*Piremard and Darya*) in Persian by Darioush Shahin (1980), Soodabeh Ashna (1997), Najaf Daryabandari (1984), and Mahdi Afshar (2015). As for the unit of comparison, the total number of 105 sentences and clauses was selected, corresponding with the total page number of the English novel at disposal. These sentences are then compared with the corresponding translated sentences chosen from the four Persian translations.

Then, each sentence of the original novel was given STx, standing for the Source Text, and X as a representative of the number of the ST, that is the same number of the page of the novel out of which the sentence has been taken. Right below each ST are some headings as TTy. The TTs are of four types: The TT stands for the Target Text, and the y is a, b, c or d. These characters are figuratively standing for the translators Daryush Shahin, Soodabeh Ashena, Najaf Daryabandari, and Mahdi Afshar, respectively.

Here are some examples of all said above about the subject elements and their analysis, with an elaborative explanation of how the type and categorizing of shifts have been determined.

- ST14) you're my alarm clock.
- TTa) to sa'ate zangdare mani.
- BTa) you are my alarm clock.
-

The last line has been intentionally left blank, since it is a *non-shift*, meaning that the translator has made no changes in the process of rendering the element. All the other non-shifts in the analysis of the literary texts in this paper are shown with a blank. It was chosen from Shahin's translation, as standing for it.

- TTb) to dorost mesle saate man hasti.
- BTb) You are just like my clock.
- E_a

This example has been chosen from Ashena's Persian translation. This is an *Expansion* shift, resembled by an *E*, standing for the abbreviation of this special type of shift. An Expansion shift means that any kind of phrase in the element has been extended, lengthened, and some content added up. After that, there is *_a*. This is a sub-category of Expansion shift, resembling *addition*: when the extended element has something extra in comparison to the original element, the ST.

- TTc) to saate shammateye mani.
- BTc) you are my pocket watch.
- C_r (NP)

Taken from Daryabandari's translation, this kind of shift is a *Contrast*, shown with the abbreviation *C*. In a contraction shift, in contrary to an expansion, the element, even a part of that, becomes smaller, represents *replacement*, when the element or a phrase of that is replaced by another one, and since it is one of contraction, it simply means that the questioned linguistic form has been replaced by another element, of a smaller size, but with the same content and meaning. The NP in the parentheses means noun phrase, the shift is on a noun phrase.

The examples below are extracted from complete sets of analyzed STs, to bring up one example of each kind of shift.

- ST28) old man had always considered it so
- TTb)
- BTb).....

- $C_d(w)$

This shift for which both the TT and BT are left blank is one of a *Contraction* type, and $_d$ means *deletion*, that is the element or a phrase that has been deleted in the target text. The w in parenthesis stands for the whole, meaning that C_d has occurred on the *Whole* element.

- ST43) you did not stay long
- TTa) parande che zud rafti
- BTa) bird, how early you went
- $E_r(w)$

Table 1. Numbers of shifts

Shifts	Shahin	Ashna	Daryabandari	Afshar
Expansion	63 (76.8%)	50 (52.0%)	43 (53.0%)	43 (64.1%)
Contraction	14 (17.0%)	40 (41.6%)	31 (38.2%)	16 (23.8%)
Order	3 (3.6%)	6 (6.2%)	4 (4.9%)	3 (4.4%)
Miscellaneous	2 (2.4%)	-	3 (3.7%)	5 (7.4%)
Total	82 (100%)	96 (100%)	81 (100%)	67 (100%)

This is a shift of Expansion, and $_r$, *replacement*. the element has been expanded but is being replaced by another larger element. In this one, the shift has occurred on the whole element but it usually occurs on a part of that. The (w) shows the *whole* element. Below, we will have another example of E_r which is a partial one. The ST is of the same one in this sample.

- ST43)
- TTc) Ziad inja namandi
- BTc) you did not stay here long
- E_a

You can simply see that a small expansion has happened and a word, 'here', is added to the element.

Shift Identification and Coding Procedure

In order to ensure analytical transparency, a systematic coding scheme was developed for identifying and classifying translational shifts. Each ST–TT pair was examined and coded according to predefined categories of shifts, including expansion, contraction, order shift, and miscellaneous shifts.

Non-shift instances, where no observable change occurred between the source and target segments, were also recorded but not included in the calculation of stylistically relevant patterns.

Shift classification was based on functional and structural comparison between ST and TT segments. Where multiple translational realizations were possible, classification focused on identifying whether the observed change was obligatory (structurally required) or optional (stylistically motivated), in line with the analytical framework adopted in this study.

Illustrative Examples of Shift Categories

The following examples illustrate the operationalization of shift categories used in this study:

(a) Non-shift

- ST14: *you're my alarm clock.*

- TTa: *to sa'ate zangdare mani.*
- BTa: you are my alarm clock.

In this case, no structural or semantic modification is observed; therefore, the instance is coded as a non-shift.

(b) Expansion Shift

- ST43: *you did not stay long*
- TTb: *parande che zud rafti*
- BTb: you left very early

This instance is coded as an expansion shift, as the target text introduces additional lexical material that is not explicitly present in the source text, resulting in a more elaborated expression.

(c) Contraction Shift (Replacement)

- ST (same example)
- TTc: *to saate shammateye mani*
- BTc: you are my pocket watch

This instance is categorized as a contraction shift involving replacement, where the target text expresses the source meaning through a more condensed lexical structure.

(d) Contraction Shift (Deletion)

- ST28: *old man had always considered it so*
- TTb: —
- BTb: —

This is coded as a deletion shift, where the source-text segment is omitted in the target text.

Summary of Shift Distribution

The frequency of identified shifts across the four translations is presented in Table 1. The distribution includes expansion, contraction, order shifts, and miscellaneous categories. These quantitative results serve as the basis for subsequent qualitative interpretation of translator-specific stylistic tendencies.

Table 2. Numbers of shifts

Shifts	Shahin	Ashna	Daryabandari	Afshar
Expansion	63 (76.8%)	50 (52.0%)	43 (53.0%)	43 (64.1%)
Contraction	14 (17.0%)	40 (41.6%)	31 (38.2%)	16 (23.8%)
Order	3 (3.6%)	6 (6.2%)	4 (4.9%)	3 (4.4%)
Miscellaneous	2 (2.4%)	-	3 (3.7%)	5 (7.4%)
Total	82 (100%)	96 (100%)	81 (100%)	67 (100%)

Data analysis

The quantitative results of the shift analysis are presented in tabular form to facilitate systematic comparison across the four translators. These results provide an overview of the distribution of expansion, contraction, order, and miscellaneous shifts identified in the corpus.

As shown in the data, expansion shifts constitute the most dominant category across all four translators, accounting for approximately 52% to 64% of total shifts. This general tendency suggests a shared translational inclination toward elaboration and explication in rendering Hemingway's syntactically compressed narrative style into Persian. In contrast, contraction shifts appear less frequently, ranging from 17% to 41%, indicating a relatively lower tendency toward reduction or omission strategies.

Among the translators, Shahin exhibits the highest proportion of expansion shifts (63 out of 82 shifts), which suggests a strong preference for syntactic and lexical elaboration in his translation. This pattern is accompanied by a comparatively low frequency of contraction shifts (14 out of 82), indicating a clear imbalance toward expansion-based strategies.

Ashena, while also demonstrating a high frequency of expansion shifts, shows a more balanced distribution between expansion and contraction. This relative equilibrium suggests a more flexible translational behavior, in which both elaboration and reduction strategies are employed depending on contextual demands.

In contrast, Daryabandari and Afshar display comparatively different profiles, with lower overall shift frequencies and more varied distributions across categories. However, in all cases, order and miscellaneous shifts remain marginal, suggesting that structural reordering plays a limited role in shaping translational style in this corpus.

Importantly, these quantitative patterns are not treated as purely descriptive frequencies but are interpreted as indicators of underlying translational tendencies, which will be further examined in relation to translator style and macro-level textual effects in the subsequent discussion section.

Table 3. Expansion shifts

Shifts	Shahin	Ashna	Daryabandari	Afshar
Replacement	37 (58.7%)	26 (52%)	31 (72.0%)	27 (62.7%)
Addition	26 (41.2%)	24 (48%)	12 (27.9%)	16 (37.2%)
Total expansion	63 (100%)	50 (100%)	43 (100%)	43 (100%)

Table 3 further specifies the internal structure of expansion shifts by distinguishing between two subcategories: replacement and addition. This distinction is analytically significant, as it separates structurally extended renderings that preserve propositional content (replacement) from those that introduce additional semantic material not explicitly present in the source text (addition).

The results indicate that replacement is the dominant subcategory of expansion across all four translators, with frequencies ranging approximately between 52% and 62%. This pattern suggests that, in most cases, translators prefer to expand linguistic units while maintaining the informational content of the source text, rather than introducing new semantic elements. In other words, expansion in this corpus is primarily structural rather than informational.

By contrast, addition-based expansion is less frequent overall, ranging from 27% to 48%. This lower frequency indicates that explicit interpretive supplementation of the source text is less common than syntactic or lexical reformulation. From a stylistic perspective, this tendency suggests that translators are generally cautious about introducing new propositional content and tend to remain relatively close to the informational boundaries of the source text.

Among the translators, Ashena presents a notably balanced distribution between replacement and addition. This relative equilibrium may indicate a more flexible translational behavior, in which structural expansion and semantic enrichment are both employed depending on contextual requirements. Such a pattern distinguishes her translational profile from those translators who show a stronger preference for replacement-oriented expansion.

Overall, the distribution of expansion subcategories suggests that expansion in this corpus is not primarily a strategy of semantic amplification, but rather a syntactic and structural adjustment mechanism used to adapt the compressed style of Hemingway's prose to Persian linguistic norms. This observation will be further developed in the Discussion section in relation to translator style and textual mediation.

Table 4. Contraction shifts

Shifts	Shahin	Ashna	Daryabandari	Afshar
Replacement	6 (42.8%)	14 (35%)	9 (29.0%)	7 (43.7%)
Deletion	8 (57.1%)	26 (65%)	22 (70.9%)	9 (56.2%)
Total contraction	14 (100%)	40 (100%)	31 (100%)	16 (100%)

In table 1, we saw that contraction shift was less popular among translators compared to expansion shift. In that table, Ashena was represented as the translator with the highest use of contraction shift. Now,

Table 4 provides a more fine-grained breakdown of contraction shifts by distinguishing between replacement-based contraction and deletion-based contraction. This distinction is important for understanding whether reduction in translation occurs through relexicalization or through the complete omission of source-text material.

The results indicate that deletion is the dominant form of contraction across all translators, accounting for approximately 56% to 70% of contraction cases. This suggests that when contraction occurs, it is more frequently realized through the omission of linguistic material rather than through compressed re-expression. From a stylistic perspective, this pattern implies a tendency toward structural reduction at the level of textual economy rather than reconfiguration of expression.

In contrast, replacement-based contraction is comparatively less frequent, ranging between 29% and 42%. This indicates that translators less often choose to preserve source-text content in a condensed form, and instead prefer either full preservation (expansion strategies) or full omission (deletion strategies), rather than intermediate compression.

Across the dataset, this distribution suggests that contraction is not primarily a strategy of stylistic refinement or condensation, but rather a selective mechanism of information reduction. In this sense, deletion functions as a stronger translational intervention, as it directly affects the informational structure of the source text.

Overall, the predominance of deletion over replacement indicates that when translators reduce textual material, they tend to simplify the structure of the source text rather than reformulate it. This tendency has implications for macro-level textual effects, particularly in relation to narrative density and the degree of explicitness in the target texts, which will be further addressed in the Discussion section.

Table 5. Difference between expansion and contraction shifts

Shift	Shahin	Ashna	Daryabandari	Afshar
Replacement (expansion less contraction)	37-6= +31	26-14= +12	31-9= +22	27-7= +20
Addition less deletion	26-8= +18	24-26= -2	12-22= -10	16-9= +7
Difference	+49	+10	+12	+27

Table 5 synthesizes the relationships between expansion and contraction strategies by comparing replacement- and addition-based expansion with replacement- and deletion-based contraction across the four translators. Rather than treating these categories in isolation, the table highlights the overall directional tendency of each translator toward either expansion-oriented or reduction-oriented strategies. The results indicate a general preference among all translators for expansion through replacement over contraction-based strategies, suggesting a shared inclination toward structural elaboration rather than compression. This pattern reinforces the earlier observation that Persian translations in this corpus tend to accommodate the syntactic and lexical expansion of Hemingway's relatively condensed prose.

However, when examining the internal balance between addition and deletion, clear inter-translator differences emerge. Shahin and Afshar demonstrate a stronger tendency toward addition, indicating a translational behavior that allows for limited interpretive or explicative supplementation of the source text. This may suggest a more interventionist approach at the micro-textual level, where minimal semantic enrichment is introduced to enhance clarity or readability.

In contrast, Daryabandari and Ashena show a stronger inclination toward deletion, implying a preference for reducing or omitting source-text elements rather than expanding or elaborating them. From a stylistic perspective, this tendency may reflect a more economy-driven translational strategy, where conciseness is prioritized over explication.

Overall, Table 4 reveals that while expansion via replacement is a shared dominant tendency, translators diverge significantly in how they handle informational adjustment within contraction and addition strategies. These differences contribute to distinct translational profiles, which will be further developed in the Discussion section in relation to stylistic agency and macro-level textual effects.

Order Shifts

Order shifts constitute a relatively minor category within the dataset, accounting for approximately 3% to 6% of all identified shifts. This low frequency suggests that syntactic reordering plays a limited role in shaping translational variation across the four Persian versions of *The Old Man and the Sea*.

Quantitatively, Shahin, Ashena, Daryabandari, and Afshar exhibit very close distributions in terms of frequency, with slight variation (three, six, four, and three instances respectively). Among them, Ashena shows a marginally higher frequency of order shifts (6.2%), indicating a slightly greater willingness to restructure syntactic relations in the target text.

At the level of structural patterns, the dominant type of order shift in the translations of Shahin, Ashena, and Daryabandari is SVO restructuring, followed by clausal or adverbial repositioning (CL). This suggests that when syntactic reordering occurs, it is primarily used to adjust canonical sentence organization rather than to introduce radical syntactic restructuring.

By contrast, Afshar's translation shows no occurrence of SVO-type shifts, with clausal repositioning (CL) emerging as the primary pattern. This may indicate a more conservative syntactic strategy in which sentence-level word order is preserved, and only minimal adjustments are made at the level of adjuncts or peripheral constituents.

Overall, the limited frequency of order shifts across the corpus suggests that Persian translators tend to maintain the basic syntactic architecture of the source text. However, the variation in subtypes indicates subtle differences in syntactic flexibility, which may contribute to distinct stylistic profiles at the micro-level, particularly in terms of rhythm, emphasis, and informational sequencing.

Miscellaneous Shifts

Miscellaneous shifts constitute a marginal category within the dataset, both in terms of frequency and analytical weight. The occurrence of these shifts remains minimal across all four translators, with Shahin, Daryabandari, and Afshar exhibiting two, three, and five instances respectively, while no instances are identified in Ashena's translation.

The extremely low frequency of this category suggests that most translational variations observed in the corpus can be adequately captured by the primary shift categories (expansion, contraction, and order shifts). In other words, miscellaneous shifts function more as residual cases rather than systematic strategies within the translators' repertoires.

From a methodological perspective, the presence of only a small number of miscellaneous cases may indicate that the adopted classification framework is generally capable of accounting for the majority of observable translational phenomena in the dataset. However, the existence of such residual cases also suggests that certain translation decisions resist strict categorization and may reflect hybrid or context-specific strategies that fall outside the main typology.

Therefore, rather than interpreting this category as analytically insignificant, it can be viewed as an indicator of the boundaries of the applied model and the complexity of translational decision-making at the micro-level.

Quantitative translators' profiles

The number of shifts made by Shahin is 82/105 which is average compared to other translators. His favored shift was expansion by replacement. This shows that he prefers to replace utterances in the source text with longer elements. In the case of addition and deletion, he is likely to delete some elements rather than add extra- information and elements to the source text.

Table 6. Profiles

Daryush Shahin	Soodabeh Ashena
The average number of shifts 82	The high number of shifts 96
Non-shifts: 23 (21.9%)	Non-shifts: 9 (8.5%)
Expansion 63, contraction 14	Expansion 50, contraction 40
Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +31	Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +12
Difference between addition and deletion: +18 Addition more than deletion	Difference between addition and deletion: -2 Most sub-categories break even
Few miscellaneous shifts: 2	No miscellaneous shifts: 0

Soodabeh Ashena has made the highest shifts among these four translators. This can indicate her preference for changing the TT as much as possible to create a work that is closer to the features of the TL. Her predominant shift is also expansion. She has used expansion by replacement and addition almost even, but she is more likely to delete some elements in the source text rather than replacing them with shorter units.

Table 7. Profiles

Najaf Daryabandari	Mahdi Afshar
The average number of shifts 81	The low number of shifts 67
Non-shifts: 24 (22.8%)	Non-shifts: 38 (36.1%)
Expansion 43, contraction 31	Expansion 43, contraction 16
Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +22	Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +20
Difference between addition and deletion: -10 Deletion more than addition	Difference between addition and deletion: +7 Addition more than deletion
Few miscellaneous shifts: 3	Few miscellaneous shifts: 5

Daryabandari's use of shifts is also average (81/105). Like other translators, he favors expansion to other kinds of shifts. In the process of replacing, he tends to use longer units than the original one. In the case of deletion and addition, like Ashena, he is more likely to delete rather than add any extra elements. Mahdi Afshar has made the lowest number of shifts among the selected translators. He tends to maintain the source text as it is. When he makes shifts, he prefers replacing elements in the source text with longer elements. Like Shahin, he is likely to add some elements to the target text that was not originally in the source text rather than deleting some units of the source text.

Quantitative Translator Profiles

The quantitative distribution of shifts allows for the identification of distinct translational profiles across the four Persian versions of *The Old Man and the Sea*. Rather than treating these figures as isolated frequencies, they are interpreted here as indicators of recurring translational tendencies at the level of individual translator behavior.

Shahin

Shahin's translation shows a moderate overall shift frequency (82 out of 105 units), with a clear dominance of expansion-based strategies, particularly expansion through replacement. This pattern suggests a consistent tendency toward structural elaboration of the source text, whereby compressed English structures are systematically rendered into more extended Persian equivalents. In contrast, his relatively lower use of contraction indicates a limited preference for reducing source-text material. Overall, Shahin's profile can be characterized as expansion-oriented with structural amplification tendencies, while still maintaining a degree of informational selectivity through occasional contraction.

Mahdi Ashena

Ashena exhibits the highest overall frequency of shifts (96 instances), indicating a high degree of translational intervention at the micro-level. Her profile is also dominated by expansion strategies; however, unlike Shahin, her use of replacement and addition is more evenly distributed, suggesting a dual tendency toward both structural reformulation and limited semantic enrichment. At the same time, her relatively higher use of deletion-based contraction points to a strategy of selective omission rather than consistent condensation. Overall, Ashena's translational behavior can be described as highly interventionist and target-oriented, with a flexible balance between elaboration and reduction strategies.

Table 8. Profiles

Daryush Shahin	Soodabeh Ashena
The average number of shifts 82	The high number of shifts 96
Non-shifts: 23 (21.9%)	Non-shifts: 9 (8.5%)
Expansion 63, contraction 14	Expansion 50, contraction 40
Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +31	Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +12
Difference between addition and deletion: +18	Difference between addition and deletion: -2
Addition more than deletion	Most sub-categories break even
Few miscellaneous shifts: 2	No miscellaneous shifts: 0

Najaf Daryabandari

Daryabandari demonstrates an intermediate shift frequency (81 instances), positioning his translation between highly interventionist and highly conservative profiles. While expansion remains dominant, his reliance on deletion within contraction shifts is more pronounced, indicating a tendency toward informational reduction rather than rephrasing-based compression. This suggests a translational strategy that favors economy and selective omission, while still maintaining structural expansion when required by target-language norms. His profile may therefore be characterized as moderately expansion-oriented with a reduction-sensitive tendency.

Mahdi Afshar

Afshar shows the lowest frequency of shifts (67 instances), along with the highest proportion of non-shifted segments, indicating a comparatively conservative translational approach. His reliance on expansion is notably more restrained, and his contraction patterns suggest limited but functionally motivated interventions. Importantly, his profile reflects a tendency toward high source-text adherence, where transformations are minimized and structural fidelity is prioritized. Accordingly, Afshar can be characterized as a source-oriented translator with low intervention intensity and minimal stylistic deviation.

Table 9. Profiles

Najaf Daryabandari	Mahdi Afshar
The average number of shifts 81	The low number of shifts 67
Non-shifts: 24 (22.8%)	Non-shifts: 38 (36.1%)
Expansion 43, contraction 31	Expansion 43, contraction 16
Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +22	Difference between expansion and contraction in the category of replacement: +20
Difference between addition and deletion: -10	Difference between addition and deletion: +7
Deletion more than addition	Addition more than deletion
Few miscellaneous shifts: 3	Few miscellaneous shifts: 5

Synthesis of Profiles (Tables 8-9)

Taken together, the four profiles reveal a continuum of translational behavior ranging from high intervention (Ashena) to low intervention (Afshar), with Shahin and Daryabandari occupying intermediate positions with different strategic orientations. While Shahin and Ashena share a general expansion-oriented tendency, they diverge in terms of semantic intervention (addition vs. deletion balance). Daryabandari and Afshar, by contrast, display more conservative strategies, though differing in their preferred form of contraction (deletion-driven vs. fidelity-driven minimal shift strategies).

These distinctions suggest that shift frequency alone is insufficient to characterize translator style; rather, it is the distributional pattern across shift subtypes that constitutes a more reliable indicator of translational style and agency. This will be further elaborated in the Discussion section in relation to domestication–foreignization tendencies and macro-textual effects.

Results

A global examination of the quantitative findings indicates a clear predominance of expansion shifts across all four translations analyzed in this study. This recurring pattern suggests that structural elaboration is the most consistent translational tendency within the corpus. Rather than being treated as an incidental outcome, this distribution may be interpreted as reflecting a broader tendency toward explicitation in the Persian renderings of Hemingway's syntactically compressed prose.

However, this observation should be approached with methodological caution. While cross-linguistic differences between English and Persian may partly account for the higher frequency of expansion, the consistency of this pattern across different translators also suggests that it may function as a translatorial

tendency rather than a purely systemic linguistic requirement. In this sense, expansion may reflect both language-specific constraints and individual stylistic preferences, and the present dataset does not allow for a definitive separation between these two factors.

Contraction emerges as the second most frequent category, with deletion-based contraction (C_d) representing its dominant sub-pattern. This indicates that when reduction occurs, it is more frequently realized through omission of linguistic material rather than through rephrasing or compression strategies. From a stylistic perspective, this may suggest a preference for simplifying or streamlining source-text structures rather than restructuring them.

By contrast, order shifts remain marginal across all translations, indicating a general tendency to preserve the syntactic configuration of the source text. This stability suggests that translators prioritize lexical and phrase-level adjustments over syntactic reorganization. Consequently, changes in meaning distribution and stylistic effect are more likely to occur through expansion and contraction strategies rather than through alterations in word order.

Overall, the results indicate that translational variation in this corpus is primarily driven by expansion–contraction dynamics, while syntactic reordering plays a secondary role. These findings provide a quantitative basis for the stylistic profiles discussed in the previous section and will be further interpreted in relation to macro-level narrative and ideological implications in the Discussion.

Discussion

From Micro-level to Macro-level

The preceding analysis has focused on the quantitative and structural distribution of translational shifts at the micro-level. However, the interpretive significance of these findings lies in their cumulative effect on macro-level textual realization. In this sense, micro-level shifts do not operate in isolation; rather, their recurrent patterns contribute to the emergence of broader textual and stylistic configurations in the target texts.

More specifically, recurrent strategies such as expansion, contraction, and limited order shifts influence how narrative information is distributed across the translated text. These shifts affect not only sentence-level structure but also the way narrative content is paced, foregrounded, or backgrounded. Consequently, the accumulation of such local modifications contributes to shifts in textual emphasis, narrative rhythm, and interpretive orientation.

Within this framework, focalization can be understood not as a direct consequence of individual shifts, but as a secondary effect of systematic translational tendencies. For instance, consistent expansion strategies may increase explicitness, thereby reducing inferential load on the reader, while contraction through deletion may compress narrative detail and alter informational density.

To illustrate these mechanisms, selected examples from Afshar's translation demonstrate how micro-level shifts may generate macro-level interpretive effects:

ST28) old man had always considered it so

TTd) piremard hamishe in asl ra raaiat mikard

BTd) the old man always considered this principle

In ST28, the implicit evaluative tone of the source text is rendered explicitly through the insertion of “principle” in the target text. This shift does not merely expand the lexical structure but also increases conceptual explicitness, thereby strengthening the normative framing of the utterance. At the macro-level, such choices contribute to a more explicitly articulated narrative voice.

ST40) I can do it...

TTd) mitavanam.... davam biavaram

BTd) I can endure (continue)

Similarly, in ST40, the expansion in the verb phrase intensifies the perceived difficulty of the action. Although the propositional content remains broadly stable, the affective load of the utterance is increased. This indicates that shifts may operate not only at the level of meaning transfer but also at the level of attitudinal modulation.

ST45) chew it well

TTd) ta mitavani bejoo

BTd) to the point you can, chew

In ST45, the addition of expressive elements introduces a higher degree of emphasis compared to the more neutral formulation of the source text. This results in a shift in pragmatic force, which may influence the perceived urgency of the utterance within the narrative flow.

ST49) if he could not slow the fish

TTd) agar natavanad harekat mahi ra sost konad

BTd) if he cannot weaken the movements of the fish

In ST49, lexical expansion leads to greater semantic specification, replacing a general expression (“slow the fish”) with a more detailed formulation (“weaken the movements of the fish”). While this does not alter the core event structure, it increases descriptive granularity, which affects narrative texture and pacing.

Taken together, these examples suggest that macro-level effects emerge through the accumulation of locally consistent translational choices, rather than through isolated shifts. In Pekkanen’s terms, the translator’s stylistic imprint becomes visible when such recurrent patterns are mapped onto larger textual structures such as narrative voice, informational density, and discourse organization.

From this perspective, translator style can be understood as a stable configuration of micro-level preferences that gradually shape macro-level textual behavior. Expansion-oriented translators tend to increase explicitness and narrative elaboration, whereas contraction-oriented strategies may lead to higher informational compression. Similarly, limited syntactic reordering preserves the original textual architecture, thereby maintaining structural proximity to the source text.

Consequently, the distinction between domestication and foreignization in this study is not treated as a binary opposition but as a gradient effect emerging from the interaction of multiple micro-level strategies. Translators with higher intervention intensity (e.g., frequent expansion and selective deletion)

tend to produce more target-oriented texts, while low-intervention profiles maintain greater source-text proximity.

Conclusion

The present study has examined translator style through a shift-based analytical model applied to four Persian translations of Hemingway's *The Old Man and the Sea*. The findings suggest that translator style is not a random by-product of linguistic transfer but a systematic pattern of micro-level choices that cumulatively shape macro-level textual realization.

Across the dataset, expansion emerged as the dominant strategy, indicating a general tendency toward explicitation in Persian translations of Hemingway's syntactically compressed prose. Contraction, particularly through deletion, functioned as a secondary but meaningful strategy of informational reduction, while order shifts remained marginal, suggesting structural stability at the syntactic level.

More importantly, the comparative profiles of the translators reveal distinct stylistic orientations. Shahin and Ashena exhibit higher intervention intensity with expansion-dominant strategies, though differing in their balance between addition and deletion. Daryabandari demonstrates a more selective reduction-oriented profile, while Afshar shows the lowest degree of intervention and the highest proximity to the source text.

These differences support the claim that translator style can be operationalized as a recurrent pattern of shift distributions, rather than as an intuitive or impressionistic category. Furthermore, the findings suggest that domestication and foreignization should be conceptualized as gradient outcomes of interacting micro-level strategies rather than fixed translational positions.

Overall, the study contributes to translational stylistics by demonstrating how systematic shift analysis can bridge micro-level textual operations and macro-level stylistic effects, thereby providing a replicable framework for comparative translator profiling.

Suggestions for Future Research

The study of authorial and translator style in translation has been extensively explored by numerous scholars, and various models have been proposed for its analysis. Each of these models has its own strengths and limitations. The model adopted in the present study has already been applied to other works by Pekkanen (2010); however, there is still a need for a more comprehensive framework. During data collection, certain shifts were encountered that did not fully fit within the existing classification system (miscellaneous shifts).

Nevertheless, the presence of such cases does not undermine the validity of the model. On the contrary, the model has still proved effective in enabling the identification and measurement of individual translators' stylistic patterns. Therefore, for future research, it is suggested that Pekkanen's (2010) model be revised and expanded, particularly by integrating the theoretical perspectives of domestication and foreignization in translation studies, in order to enhance its analytical scope and provide a more nuanced account of translators' stylistic behavior.

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