

# Translation Equivalence Theory Meets Cultural Linguistics

## A Cultural Conceptual Model of Equivalence

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### *Abstract*

The present research explores a cutting-edge multidisciplinary field of enquiry, Cultural Linguistics implications for the long-lasting problem of equivalence in translation theory, and focuses on rendering *cultural conceptualisations* underlying lexical items in translation, for the first time. We undertake this investigation by expanding on the recently-developed analytical framework of Cultural Linguistics that categorises utterances according to their underlying conceptual structures. These conceptual structures are described as comprising either *cultural schemas*, *cultural metaphors* or *cultural categories*. The study starts by stating the aims and objectives of the research, at first. Second, it focuses on a brief literature review. Third, it explains the theoretical background, and then the methodology of the study. Forth, it moves towards an in-depth analysis of underlying *cultural conceptualisations* in translation and demonstrates a crucial role Cultural Linguistics plays in the core model of equivalence. The analysis of the data indicates that neither the “sense” nor the “form” if translated, can render necessarily the underlying *cultural conceptualisations* associated with a particular lexical item. The study discusses that this necessitates paying closer attention to the conceptual aspects of translation in the core model of equivalence, especially conceptual dimensions that are culturally constructed. The study moves further and proposes a new model of equivalence namely: ‘Cultural Conceptual Model of Equivalence,’ which is capable of capturing, unpacking, and analysing *cultural conceptualisations* underlying lexical items in the source text, and deconstructing them into the new linguistic reality of the target text, for the first time, in translation academic history in this particular focus of the cutting-edge field of enquiry, Cultural Linguistics.

### *Key Words*

Cultural linguistics, cultural conceptual model of equivalence, dynamic equivalence, formal equivalence, translation equivalence theory.

*Introduction*

The study of culture and language is of course not new, which can be traced back at least to the eighteenth century to the works of prominent scholars such as Wilhelm Von Humboldt (1767–1835), Franz Boas (1858–1942), Edward Sapir (1884–1939), and Benjamin Whorf (1897–1941). However, the exploration of language and *cultural conceptualisations* in this particular focus, within the recently developed framework of Cultural Linguistics is pretty new, cutting-edge field of enquiry. The goal of this study is to demonstrate some of the implications of the current progressive field of enquiry, Cultural Linguistics (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b), for translation theory, and for the notion of equivalence in translation studies, in particular. Therefore, the study focuses on the analysis of the translation of culturally-constructed lexical items (see the data analysis), and their underlying *cultural conceptualisations* (see the theoretical framework) in translation between languages that come from cultures distant and different such as English and Persian. Our objective is mainly to apply the theory of Cultural Linguistics to the translation of culturally-constructed elements in order (a) to demonstrate its implications for the notion of equivalence and the translator's daily task, and (b) to propose a new equivalence model namely: 'Cultural Conceptual Model of Equivalence' and thus contribute to the on-going research in translation theory and practice.

*A Brief Literature Review*

At the core model of equivalence, there are Cicero's (106–43 B.C.) and Jerome's (348–420 A.D.) fundamental premises, who asserted that translators should adopt different translation models for different translation tasks (Gambier & Van Doorslaer, 2010). For example, Jerome discusses that there are cases where the translator must reproduce the form and keep the word order of the original; while in other cases, he argued that it is more important to transfer the sense of the original, having acceptability of the target readers in mind (Gambier & Van Doorslaer, 2010). Nida in the seminal work, *Toward a Science of Translating* (1964), in a similar vein, distinguishes between formal and dynamic models of equivalence. Formal equivalence focuses on a faithful reproduction of source-text-linguistic form, emphasizing the fidelity to lexical items and grammatical structures of the original. Dynamic equivalence sticks to the sense of the original focusing on the content, adapting the original form to

the readability of the target text for the target audience. As Gambier and Van Doorslaer, in the *Handbook of Translation Studies* (2010, 2012, 2013, 2016) discuss, formal and dynamic equivalences between the source and the target text elements, which are still language-oriented, and whose theoretical foundations are laid on linguistics, have been the quality yardstick in these models, which remain open to question (Gambier & Stecconi, 2019; Gambier & Van Doorslaer, 2010). Adopting Cultural Linguistics approach to translation (see the methodology), we question these translation equivalence models by arguing that neither the “sense” nor the “form” if translated, can render necessarily the underlying *cultural conceptualisations* (see below) associated with a particular lexical item across the source language to the target language (cf. Sharifian, 2016a; Wilson et al., 2019).

A very good example of this is ‘*namak*’ [salt], which is frequently used for conceptualising funniness of things, words, or people in the Persian language and culture. ‘*Namak*’ has a very significant place in Persian (Sharifian, 2016a). It has many different underlying *cultural conceptualisations* associated with it (Sharifian, 2016a; see the theoretical framework for a definition of cultural conceptualisations). An instance of this is ‘*ba namak*’ [salty], which expresses funniness of somebody or something in the Persian language and culture, which conjures up the *cultural conceptualisations* of ‘A FUNNY PERSON OR THING’ for Persian audiences. However, in translation to English, the lexical item for ‘*namak*’ is ‘salt,’ which is not capable of activating the same *cultural conceptualisations* of the original source text, for the target audiences correct cultural-conceptual-inferences. On the contrary, ‘salty,’ as a slang term in English language and culture, is used to describe ‘SOMEONE FEELING OR SHOWING RESENTMENT TOWARDS ANOTHER PERSON OR A SITUATION: BITTER OR IRRITATED’ (see Merriam-Webster Dictionary, 2019). We can see the extent to which conceptual differences between lexical items across the source language to the target language, can cause miscommunications/misunderstandings in translation between languages that come from cultures distant and different. This necessitates paying closer attention to the conceptual aspects of translation in the core model of equivalence, especially conceptual dimensions that are culturally constructed (cf. Sharifian, 2016a; Wilson et al., 2019). The present research accounts for this long-lasting conceptual problem in translation equivalence models, by expanding on a cutting-edge, recently developed multidisciplinary framework of *cultural conceptualisations*, which are the specific property of Cultural Linguistics framework. The *cultural conceptualisations* that are however remained,

to date, unexplored in translation studies. The present study, hence, contributes to the on-going debate in translation theory and practice, by proposing a new model of equivalence namely: ‘Cultural Conceptual Model of Equivalence,’ which is capable of capturing, unpacking, and analysing *cultural conceptualisations* underlying lexical items in the source text, and reconstructing them into the new linguistic reality of the target text (see the methodology).

*Theoretical Background*  
*Cultural Linguistics and Translation Studies*

Cultural Linguistics is a multidisciplinary field of research recently developed in Monash University, Melbourne (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b), that explores the relationship between language and *cultural conceptualisations* (see also Sharifian, 2003, 2011, 2012, 2015). “Cultural conceptualisations are the tools Cultural Linguistics uses to study aspects of cultural cognition and its instantiation in language” (Peeters, 2016, p. 1). Sharifian explains that Cultural Linguistics (a) assumes that features of human languages communicate and embody conceptualisations, and (b) focuses on the analysis of conceptualisations that are culturally constructed (2011, 2012, 2017a, 2017b). This is highly relevant to this research since culturally-constructed lexical items are subject to significant influence from cultural-conceptual contexts in which they are used. Sharifian (2011) further maintains that the advent of this multidisciplinary area of research “has shifted focus from the relationship of individual cognition and language as highlighted in the cognitive approaches to language, to the relationship between language, cultural conceptualisation and cognition” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 3).

For Cultural Linguistics “language is a cultural form, and that conceptualisations underlying language and language use are largely formed by cultural systems” (Yu, 2007, p. 65). *Cultural conceptualisation* as a central concept here is used in the present research to indicate “patterns of distributed knowledge across the cultural group” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 3), which also covers Strauss and Quinn’s (1997) schematisation and schemas (see the section on cultural schemas below), and Lakoff’s (1987) categories and metaphors (see the sections on cultural categories & metaphors below), which are of particular importance for the analysis of the translation of culturally-constructed elements. All in all, by moving beyond the current cognitive and linguistic theories and with the aim of analysing the relationship between language and

*cultural conceptualisations* for describing embodied and culturally-embedded lexical items, Cultural Linguistics (2017a, 2017b) provides coherent multidisciplinary analytical tools in the form of conceptual, analytical units such as *cultural schemas*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural categories*, which are collectively called *cultural conceptualisations*, that will be applied, for the first time, in this research, to the notion of equivalence in translation theory.

*Cultural conceptualisations* as Sharifian (2017a, 2017b) argues, capture all aspects of human life such as the conceptualisations of life and death, to conceptualisations of emotion, body, religion, gender, marriage, politics, etc. (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b) encoded and communicated through language features (Slavova & Borysenko, 2018; Wilson et al., 2019). These language features are of special importance for translators in their daily task, for example, culturally-constructed lexical items which do not have equivalence in the target language, semantic and pragmatic meanings of culturally-constructed lexical items, and morpho-syntactic features of them, which pose significant challenges for translators. Since culturally-constructed lexical items, are deeply rooted in a specific culture, consequently, for understanding and translating them, different types of cultural presuppositions are required (Sharifian, 2017b; cf. Stankic, 2017). For this reason, in order to translate a particular culturally-constructed lexical item, translators need to be aware of both the language and the cultural context of the source text to which that particular lexical item refers so that both the language and the culture can be reconstructed into the new linguistic reality of the target text (Sharifian, 2017b; cf. Muñoz Martín & Cardona Guerra, 2019).

What is of particular importance here is that this cultural context underlying language features is shared by members of a linguistic community collectively (Kecskes, 2015, p. 114). The explanation for this is connected to the fact that as Sharifian (2011, p. 5) maintains language is deeply rooted in a group-level cognition that emerges from the interactions between members of a cultural group. Since language and culture are inseparable, intertwined and closely related, it is evident that language is one of the tools for storing and conveying *cultural conceptualisations* that emerge from the group-level cognition across time and space.

Internationally published autobiographies and weblogs for the global audience are created for different target groups of audiences, that may not essentially fit into a same linguistic and/or cultural community (Sharifian, 2017b; Stankic, 2017), as is the case in the present research's dataset, which is created for the

global audience. Hence, the authors of this kind of discourse for absorbing a larger audience not only should have in mind the perception of their content by the individual audience, but also the audience as a group. Cultural Linguistics plays a crucial role and accounts for this collective conceptualisation (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). Human conceptualisation as Sharifian (2017a, pp. 2-4) argues moves beyond the level of the individual mind, and therefore is collective at the level of a cultural group, and these collective *cultural conceptualisations* form cultural cognition. This collective characteristic of *cultural conceptualisations* is highly relevant to research on the translation of culturally-constructed lexical items, which is often overlooked in current equivalence models, and linguistic and cognitive approaches to translation, which tend to focus merely on the individual level of conceptualisations (Sharifian, 2017bcf. Wilson et al., 2019).

Since the present study compares two languages and cultures through the prism of translation studies, it seems necessary at this point to describe what is the *tertium comparationis* in this comparative analysis. Leuven-Zwart in (1989, 1990) maintains that in the comparative analysis, the basic textual units entering into comparison are called *transemes*. These are units of a relational nature which do not exist *a priori* since they are only valid for the compared texts (Santoyo, 1986; Santoyo & Rabadan, 1991; see also Rojo López, 2002, 2015). As Rojo López (2002, p. 312) argues “the fact that these translation units are established *a posteriori* does not mean that we cannot previously formulate a general hypothesis that serves as ‘tertium comparationis’ in the analysis” (see also Hermans, 2019). Hence bearing in mind that the present research deals with the translation of culturally-constructed lexical items, the hypothesis that serves as *tertium comparationis* between the source text and the target text is the notion of *cultural conceptualisations*. *Cultural conceptualisations*, as previously discussed, are conceptual, analytical structures such as *cultural schemas*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural categories*, which not only exist at the individual level of cognition but also the level of cultural group cognition, that are negotiated across time and space (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). These conceptual, analytical tools of the Cultural Linguistics will be explicated in the following sections before moving to the method of data analysis.

### *Cultural Categories*

Cultural categories are a class of *cultural conceptualisations*, grounded in cultural cognition. They are culturally-constructed conceptual categories that are reflected in the lexicon of human languages (Sharifian, 2017a, 2017b). Cultural categories are rooted in people's cultural experiences gained from their situatedness in a particular culture, and they mirror the structure of attributes perceived in the world which inevitably shape people's thoughts (Polzenhagen & Xia, 2014), such as *emotion categories*, *event categories*, *colour categories*, *age categories*, *food categories*, or *kinship categories* (Sharifian, 2017a; 2017b; see the data analysis for the examples of these conceptual, analytical structures).

### *Cultural Metaphors*

Cultural metaphors are “cognitive structures that allow us to understand one conceptual domain in terms of another” (Sharifian, 2013a, p. 1591; cf. Lakoff & Johnson, 1980, p. 5). Cultural metaphors shape the way people think and act in intra-and-intercultural communication, and are categorised as fundamental to human thought and action (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b). For example, in the Persian language and culture, the cultural metaphor ‘*sefid-bakht*’ [literal translation: ‘white-fate’] refers to marriage (Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019). The underlying cultural conceptualisation is ‘HAPPY MARRIED LIFE AS HAVING A WHITE FATE’ (Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019) so that mentioning that in Persian cultural conceptualisations happy married life is conceptualised as having a white fate, which has got its roots in old Persian worldview of Zoroastrianism (Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019).

### *Cultural Schemas*

The notion of the *schema* has a very high explanatory power to effectively explain its subject matter (Sharifian, 2001, 2017a, 2017b; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). In general, schemas are “building blocks of cognition that help organise, interpret, and communicate information” (Sharifian, 2016b, p. 507). In particular, cultural schemas are a subclass of schemas that are shaped by culture and function as a foundation for communicating and interpreting cultural meanings (Sharifian, 2015, 2017a, 2017b; Strauss & Quinn, 1997). They

include *event schemas*, *role schemas*, *image schemas*, *proposition schemas*, or *emotion schemas* entrenched in cultural knowledge and experience, which are explained as the following:

1. *Event schemas* are “abstracted from our experience of certain events” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 8), such as the event schema of Persian Wedding Celebration.
2. *Role schemas* are “knowledge about social roles which denote sets of behaviours that are expected of people in particular social positions” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 9), such as role schema of a university professor.
3. *Image schemas* are “intermediate abstractions between mental images and abstract propositions that are readily imagined, perhaps as iconic images, and clearly related to physical or social experiences” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 10), for example in an utterance such as ‘he has gone off the rails’ we are drawing on the image schema of the ‘path’ to capture the conceptualisation of the domain of ‘thinking.’ The ‘path’ image schema in this example shows the application of this image schema to the domain of ‘thinking’ (cf. Sharifian, 2011).
4. *Proposition schemas* are “abstractions which act as models of thought and behaviour and specify concepts and the relations which hold among them” such as Persian *cultural conceptualisation* of ‘*kehshbakhti*/happiness’ as pre-destined fate (Sharifian, 2011, p. 10; see also Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019).
5. *Emotion schemas* pave our way to “define, explain and understand emotions primarily by reference to the events and situations in which they occur” (Sharifian, 2011, p. 11), such as Persian *cultural emotion schema* of ‘*kebejalat*,’ which is multilayered and overlaps with three different *cultural emotion schemas* in English namely: embarrassment, shyness and shame (Sharifian, 2017a; Sharifian & Bagheri, 2019; see also the data analysis for the application of these conceptual, analytical structures to the study’s method of data analysis).

### *Corpus*

The corpus of the study was collected from an online publically available weblog: *My Persian Corner* accessed via <https://www.mypersiancorner.com>. It is an autobiography of an author born and raised in the US, from Persian Parents, depicting Persian heritage, language and culture aimed at the global



audience. The English translations of the analysed Persian source texts have been provided on the same weblog by Ponita Fallahi (2018, 2019).

*Methodology*  
*Functionalism in Translation Studies*

Before proceeding to explain the procedure of data analysis, it is necessary to discuss functional equivalence in translation, which is highly relevant to the method of analysis proposed in this study. Shuttleworth and Cowie in the *Dictionary of Translation Studies* (1997, p. 64) argue that functional equivalence is the kind of equivalence reflected in a target text which aims to adapt the function of the original source text in order to suit the specific context for which it has been produced (see also Nord, 2018).

In general, when translators find an instance of a culturally-constructed lexical item in the source text, they assign a function to that instance within an overall skopos of the translation task (Reiss & Vermeer, 2014), and use this function to find solutions they consider adequate (Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015). Such solutions may or may not be acceptable to the target readers of the translated text. Hence, here we are not dealing with a total equivalence, but with a correspondence that may or may not be acceptable to the readers of the target text. From this perspective, the important issue is not to ask whether the semantic import of the target language instances is or is not a total equivalent of that of the source language instances, but whether their textual function as activators of *cultural conceptualisations* is or is not equivalent to that of the source text instances (cf. Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015). In this way, based on Nord's Functionalism in translation (2010, p. 186), the instances of the target text are considered as functional equivalents of that of the source text if these instances comply with the textual function involved and if there is a high degree of correspondence between the semantic-pragmatic and stylistic information of the conceptual structures, e.g. *cultural schemas*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural categories* they activate (see also Nord, 2018, pp. 219-230). Based on this assumption (Rojo Lopez, 2002, p. 316) that the translation of a culturally-constructed element should be compared to the 'conceptual profile' of the source text's elements; that is, to the *cultural conceptualisations* they activate, then the important step here is to analyse the function carried out by source text's elements within the source culture (see also Rojo Lopez, 2002). This way, the source text element's 'conceptual profile' forms a norm which serves as a

framework to decide the adequacy of the target text's element based on the *cultural conceptualisations* it activates within the target culture (cf. Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015; Wilson et al., 2019).

### *Cultural Conceptual Equivalence*

Susan Bassnett in *The Oxford Handbook of Translation Studies* discusses that the Functionalist approach is broadly also said to be a cultural approach, which has been applied by translators, as cross-cultural mediators, to a wide range of texts such as the autobiographies and the like (Bassnett, 2011). According to the Functionalist approach, as Nord (2010) argues:

In order to make their texts work, text producers will try to provide them with (linguistic or non-linguistic) markers indicating the function the text is intended for, such as [a] particular format, specific syntactic structures or stylistic devices. (Nord, 2010, p. 186)

This means that as Katharina Reiss and Hans Vermeer in *Towards A General Theory of Translational Action: Skopos Theory Explained* (2014) discuss, based on the Functionalist approach, the intended function (skopos) of the source text element should be the main focus of the translator as a cross-cultural mediator. The function is transferred to the target readers by the target text translated element, which creates conceptual structures, *cultural conceptualisations* in the mind of readers to enable them to receive the target text element in the same way as it was intended for the source text readers (see also Nord, 2018).

Therefore, the basic translator task is to mediate the *cultural conceptualisations* of source text senders and target text receptors in the translation task (see also Neubert & Shreve, 1992; Rojo Lopez, 2002, 2015). The aim of this translation task as a purposeful activity (Nord, 2018), is to achieve a 'cultural conceptual equivalence' in translation, in order to transfer concepts across the source language to the target language, which consequently balances two important notions in translation: the linguistic expressions and the *cultural conceptualisations* they invoke. This viewpoint is supported by several other scholars such as Wilson and colleagues (2019), and it is in line with the current shift towards conceptual transfer in translation, language and cultural studies (Brekhus & Ignatow, 2019; Sharifian et al., 2019; Wilson et al., 2019; Strandell, 2019).

This translation task, as previously discussed, requires the translator to be aware of not only the language but also, more importantly, the culture in the source text. They need to break down cultures and analyse their components in the source text so that both the language and the culture can be reconstructed into the new linguistic reality of the target text (cf. Munoz Basols, 2012). In other words, the translator needs to be aware of not only the differences between the source text audience *cultural conceptualisations* and the target text audience *cultural conceptualisations* but also of how textual and linguistic processes are linked to ‘cultural-conceptualisation-based-knowledge,’ that is the link between the linguistic expressions and the *cultural conceptualisations* they invoke.

All in all, proposing Cultural Linguistics as a method of analysis in Translation Studies, the present research intends to facilitate the translator’s task by using a new equivalence model based on the interaction between the text (textual, linguistic knowledge) and the *cultural conceptualisations* (extra-linguistic knowledge) of the text interpreter. The translator’s task in the model of ‘cultural conceptual equivalence’ proposed here, is to mediate their analysis to the comprehension process (see the data analysis), considering that their task is to project the source language *cultural conceptualisations* (e.g. *cultural schemas*, *cultural categories*, and *cultural metaphors*) onto the target language linguistic elements that invoke a *cultural conceptualisation* which should be, as much as possible, semantically, pragmatically and stylistically equivalent to that activated by the source text elements (cf. Sharifian, 2014, 2017a). The new model of ‘cultural conceptual equivalence’ as discussed before, proposes that *cultural conceptualisations* are the *tertium comparationis* in the translation of culturally-constructed elements, and only if the target-text-linguistic elements activate the relevant *cultural conceptualisations* for the interpretation of the text in the mind of the readers, will then target audience be able to draw the correct cultural-conceptual-inferences on the basis of their system of *cultural conceptualisations*. From this perspective, through adopting ‘cultural conceptual equivalence’ model in translation, the translator becomes a kind of ‘cultural linguistics mediator’ between two different systems of *cultural conceptualisations* that each linguistic community has. This way, the translator will consequently be able to produce efficient functional translations, both culturally and linguistically, for successful/effective intercultural communication (see Sharifian, 2018). A phenomenon that needs desperate attention and exploration, perhaps more than ever in the history of human interaction (cf. Sharifian et al., 2019).

*Procedure of Data Analysis*

For operationalizing the method of data analysis, the analysis procedure has been conducted in multiple essential phases. In the first phase, the source text Persian expression has been presented using English transliteration, along with its back-translation. At the end of this section, we indicated the name of the source where the example has been collected, and the number of the paragraph where the example was found. In the second phase, we presented the target text English translations. In this section, the source is also indicated and the paragraph number where the translation was found. The third phase is the analysis phase, which entails the context-specific information about the events, objects and persons of the dialogues of the texts and other relevant features of the context (the surrounding objects and events). This section also offers a comparative textual and para-textual analysis of source text elements implementing the proposed model, and their translation counterparts in the target text applying the analytical framework of Cultural Linguistics which focuses on *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural schemas* activated in the mind of the audience. We discussed which *cultural categories*, *cultural metaphors*, or *cultural schemas* they invoke in the mind of the audience, whether they are the same or not. And what their similarities and differences denote in terms of the cultural values that are upheld in each particular language and culture, which led to patterns and *cultural conceptualisations* underlying the corpus, and allowed the researchers to describe how translators dealt with the challenges these *cultural conceptualisations* imposed, and what translations methods adopted in confronting these challenges. We have also proposed an alternative translation of the analyzed culturally-constructed expressions adopting the ‘cultural conceptual equivalence’ model presented in this study.

*Data Analysis*

The data analysis was both quantitative and qualitative, yet for the purpose of this research, we focused, first and foremost, on the findings obtained from the qualitative analysis. Seventy-three items were collected and analyzed in this research. Due to the space limitations of this paper, only some examples, including one for each analytical tools of *cultural conceptualisations*, i.e. *cultural schemas*, *cultural metaphors*, and *cultural categories* have been presented, those

interested in this research may contact the authors for the full version of the research.

### Example 1

**Persian Source Text:** *Ghābel na-dāreh* (My Persian Corner, 2018, p. 14).

Worthy not-have.

**English Target Text:** It is not worthy of you (Fallahi, 2018, p. 14).

**Analysis:** This culturally-constructed expression, '*ghābel na-dāreh*,' invokes the cultural conceptualisation, 'YOU ARE MORE PRECIOUS THAN WHAT YOU HAVE BOUGHT OR WHAT YOU HAVE BEEN OFFERED (E.G. A SERVICE OR A COMMODITY SUCH AS JEWELRY), SO THAT YOU DO NOT NEED TO PAY FOR IT' (see below for more explanations). '*Ghābel na-dāreh*' is closely tied to the Persian cultural schema of '*taārof*,' which is a very common culturally-constructed Persian norm. '*Taārof*' underlies a significant part of everyday social interactions in Persian, and it is one of the most fundamental notions to understand about Persian culture (Sharifian, 2011, p. 144). It denotes 'compliment(s),' 'offer,' 'courtesy,' 'flattery' in Persian (Aryanpur Kashani & Aryanpur Kashani, 1984, p. 226; see also Sharifian, 2013, p. 99), which has no direct equivalence in English. In this example, in the source text, at the author-audience level, the author draws on the Persian cultural schema of '*taārof*' (Sharifian, 2011, 2016a; Sharifian & Jamarani, 2013b; see below), and the reference to this Persian cultural schema is explicit.

In general, '*taārof*' has been translated into English as 'social etiquette,' 'ritual politeness,' etc. (see Sharifian, 2016a; see also Pourmohammadi, 2018); however, none of these notions really captures what this cultural schema is.

'*Taārof*' underlies a wide variety of speech acts in Persian, for instance, in this excerpt, it underlies the speech act of 'offering goods,' for example when you buy some goods, let us say a piece of jewellery, and you ask for the price, and instead of the price, you hear '*taārof*' from the salesman (see Sharifian, 2016a; see also Sharifian and Bagheri, 2019). Hence, that is the underlying cultural schema, which is called '*taārof*' in the Persian.

In the next layer, '*taārof*' got associated with a speech act of 'offering goods' (Sharifian, 2016a), for instance, in this excerpt, the salesman is offering a piece of jewellery, out of '*taārof*.'

That particular speech act, then, got associated with a number of pragmatic units (Sharifian, 2016a). Therefore, one of the pragmatic units of, for example, the speech act of ‘offering goods,’ such as ‘offering a piece of jewellery,’ which is associated with ‘*taārof*,’ is: ‘insist on the offer for several turns’ (Sharifian, 2016a).

Hence, the underlying cultural schema is broad and is associated with a number of speech acts, one of the speech acts, is ‘offering goods,’ such as ‘offering a piece of jewellery.’ Then, one of the pragmatic units associated with this speech act, activated in Persians’ minds is: ‘insist on the offer for several turns,’ which is a very common norm in Persian culture.

Finally, the actual linguistic realisation of this can again be in several different formats (see Sharifian, 2016a). One of them activated in Persians’ minds is: ‘*ghābel nadāreh* [you are more precious than what you have bought so that you do not need to pay for it, it is on me, be my guest], and the salesman insists on this for several times, and the customer refuses that for several times, out of what in Persian culture is called ‘*taārof*,’ until the salesman, eventually, tells the price, and the customer makes the payment (see Sharifian, 2016a; see also Pourmohammadi, 2018). Such a relationship between cultural schemas, speech acts, their pragmatic units, and their actual linguistics realizations, can be described by Cultural linguistics analytical framework.

As outlined above, the cultural schema of ‘*taārof*’ is defined as ‘compliment(s),’ ‘offer,’ ‘courtesy,’ ‘flattery’ in Persian according to Aryanpour Dictionary (1984, p. 226; see also Sharifian, 2013, p. 99), and in this excerpt, the expression ‘*ghābel nadāreh*’ conjures up an ‘un-serious offer’ in the mind of the source language-and-culture-audience, with a special culturally-constructed function. In the target text, at the translator-audience level, the translator adopts the paraphrase translation method, “it is not worthy of you” (Fallahi, 2018, p. 14), and uses the neutral expression ‘not worthy of you,’ which is not capable of recreating the same cultural conceptualisation, ‘YOU ARE MORE PRECIOUS THAN WHAT YOU HAVE BOUGHT, SO THAT YOU DO NOT NEED TO PAY FOR IT,’ in the target text, in order to activate the same impact of the original source text for the target audience’s correct cultural-conceptual-inferences, which consequently impairs the function of the original. All in all, the ‘cultural conceptual equivalent’ of ‘*ghābel nadāreh*’ is: ‘IT IS ON ME/BE MY GUEST.’ Overall, the cultural conceptual model proposed here is capable of capturing cultural schemas, and describing, analysing, unpacking such a relationship between cultural schemas, their speech acts, their associated

pragmatic units, and their actual linguistic realisations for translators, which the existing translation models are not capable of, in deconstructing the translation of culturally-constructed elements across the source language to the target language.

### Example 2

**Persian Source Text:** *Fadā-ye sar-et* (My Persian Corner, 2018, p. 3).

Sacrifice-for head-your.

**English Target Text:** May it be sacrificed for your head (Fallahi, 2018, p. 3).

**Analysis:** This culturally-constructed expression, '*fadā-ye sar-et*,' is used in a wide variety of speech acts in the Persian language and culture, for instance, in a situation where you have crashed your father's car, and got afraid that he will reprimand you seriously. But, instead, he reacts to this situation by saying: '*fadā-ye sareh*.' It invokes the cultural conceptualisation, 'DON'T WORRY ABOUT IT/FORGET ABOUT IT,' in the minds of the Persian language-and-culture-audiences. It alludes to the cultural event schema of 'EBRĀHĪM SACRIFICING HIS SON, ESMĀEĪL,' in Muslim Tradition (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011).

According to the Encyclopaedia Iranica (2011), in Muslim Tradition, Ebrāhīm was known to prophet Moḥammad as one of the prophets before him to profess Monotheism (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011). Once, Ebrāhīm received the divine revelation, and the promise of his offspring multiplying, and building a great nation, in the land of Canaan (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011). Upon receiving the revelation, Ebrāhīm together with his wife, Sarah, migrated to Canaan, where he lived since then (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011). Ebrāhīm remained without any descendants, despite several divine promises of nationhood for his children. Consequently, he married one of his servants, Hājar, as his second wife, and as a result of this marriage, Esmāeīl was born (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011). Later, Eshāq was born from Sarah, his first spouse. Eshāq's birth caused disharmony in the family. As a result, Hājar and her son, Esmāeīl, were expelled upon Sarah's demand (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011). Some years later, Ebrāhīm prepared himself to obey God's command, according to Muslim tradition, to sacrifice and cut the head off his son Esmāeīl, and Esmāeīl was prepared to be sacrificed; however, the sacrifice command was overturned, at the last moment, by an angel of God (Encyclopaedia Iranica, 2011, pp. 61-62).

Esmāeīl remained sound and safe, no worries were there, and nothing ill-omen happened to him. ‘*Fadā-ye sar-e!*’ is associated with this cultural event schema that activates the cultural conceptualisation, ‘DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT/FORGET ABOUT IT’ in the source text. However, in the target text, at the translator-audience level, the translator adopts the expansion translation method, “may it be sacrificed for your head” (Fallahi, 2018, p. 3), which is not capable of recreating the same cultural conceptualisation, ‘DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT/FORGET ABOUT IT’ in the target text, in order to activate the same impact of the original source text, for the target audience’s correct cultural-conceptual-inferences, which consequently impairs the intended function of the original. The ‘cultural conceptual equivalence’ of ‘*fadā-ye sar-e!*’ is ‘DON’T WORRY ABOUT IT/FORGET ABOUT IT.’

### Example 3

**Persian Source Text:** *Jān-am* (My Persian Corner, 2018, p. 7).

Soul/life-my.

**English Target Text:** My Soul (Fallahi, 2018, p. 7).

**Analysis:** This culturally-constructed lexical item, ‘*jān,*’ has many different meanings and conceptualisations associated with it in the Persian language and culture. It underlies a verity of speech acts in Persian, for instance, as a cultural emotion schema it underlies the speech act of ‘endearment’ used after someone’s name in Persian, which is intended to mean ‘dear’ in English terms. However, in this example, the linguistic expression ‘*jān-am*’ activates the cultural metaphor of addressing ‘PEOPLE AS YOUR SOUL/LIFE’ in the minds of the Persian language-and-culture-audience (cf. Sharifian, 2012). In this example, in the source text, at the author-audience level, the author exploits the Persian culturally-constructed expression ‘*jān-am*’ to invoke an underlying cultural conceptualisation ‘I BEG YOUR PARDON?’ and the reference to this Persian cultural conceptualisation is explicit (cf. Rahimieh, 2015). However, in the target text, at the translator-audience level, the translator utilizes the literal translation method, “my soul” (Fallahi, 2018, p. 7), which is not capable of recreating the same cultural conceptualisation, ‘I BEG YOUR PARDON?’ in the target text, in order to activate the same impact of the original source text, for the target readers correct-cultural-conceptual inferences, which consequently distorts the intended function of the original. The ‘cultural conceptual equivalent’ of ‘*jān-am*’ is ‘I BEG YOUR PARDON?’.



#### Example 4

**Persian Source Text:** *Cheshm-hā-ye-tān ghashang mibīnad* (My Persian Corner, 2018, p. 10).

Eye-s-of-your beautiful see.

**English Target Text:** Your eyes see beautifully (Fallahi, 2018, p. 10).

**Analysis:** This culturally-constructed expression, ‘*cheshm-hā-ye-tān ghashang mibīnad*,’ is closely related to the Persian cultural schema of ‘*shékasteb-nafsī*,’ which has no direct equivalence in English. The cultural schema of ‘*shékasteb-nafsī*’ (Sharifian, 2005, p. 337), motivates the interlocutors to downplay their talents, skills, achievements - beauty in this example - while praising a similar trait in another speaker. It is a very commonly used norm, in the everyday language use of Persians, which encourages the interlocutors to re-assign the compliment to the giver of the compliment. For instance, in this example, the cultural schema of ‘*cheshm-hā-ye-tān ghashang mibīnad*,’ conjures up the cultural conceptualisation, ‘THANK YOU. IT IS NOT ME WHO IS BEAUTIFUL; IT IS YOUR EYES THAT SEE ME BEAUTIFULLY,’ for the Persian language-and-culture-audiences. It is a form of ‘thank you’ in response to a compliment (Sharifian, 2005, p. 337).

In this example, in the source text, at the author-audience level, the author exploits the Persian cultural proposition schema ‘*cheshm-hā-ye-tān ghashang mibīnad*,’ and the reference to this Persian cultural proposition schema is explicit. In the target text, at the translator-audience level, the translator adopts the literal translation method, “your eyes see beautifully” (Fallahi, 2018, p. 10), which is not capable of recreating the same cultural conceptualisation, ‘THANK YOU. IT IS NOT ME WHO IS BEAUTIFUL; IT IS YOUR EYES THAT SEE ME BEAUTIFULLY,’ in the target text, in order to recreate the same impact of the original source text, for the target audience’s correct cultural-conceptual-inferences, which consequently impairs the intended function of the original. All in all, the ‘cultural conceptual equivalent’ of ‘*cheshm-hā-ye-tān ghashang mibīnad*’ is ‘THANK YOU. IT IS NOT ME WHO IS BEAUTIFUL; IT IS YOUR EYES THAT SEE ME BEAUTIFULLY’ (cf. Sharifian, 2005).

*Discussion and Concluding Remarks*

The analysis of the data in this research indicated that the source text culturally-constructed lexical items draw heavily on various kinds of *cultural conceptualisations*, e.g. *cultural schemas*, *cultural metaphors* and *cultural categories*, and that their meanings cannot be transferred across the source language to the target language by linguistic components “alone.” In other words, when translating culturally-constructed lexical items, linguistic components are hardly ever sufficient to explain their configuration and *raison d’être* in order to convey their underlying *cultural conceptualisations* across the source language to the target language for the target audience’s correct cultural-conceptual-inferences. We argue that neither the “sense” nor the “form” if translated, can render necessarily the underlying *cultural conceptualisations* associated with a particular lexical item across the source language to the target language. This necessitates paying closer attention to the conceptual aspects of translation in the core model of equivalence, especially conceptual dimensions that are culturally constructed. What we propose in this research, is a new systematic multidisciplinary analytical model, from the meta-theoretical point of view, for an in-depth analysis of culturally-constructed elements – despite their long-lasting notorious elusiveness, as analytical objects, in translation studies. The ‘Cultural Conceptual Model of Equivalence’ developed in this research is capable of capturing, unpacking and analysing the conceptual aspects of translation for the first time, which the existing translation models are not capable of, in deconstructing the translation of culturally-constructed elements across the source language to the target language, for successful/effective intercultural communication. Several scholars often lucidly emphasize that taking into account multiple culturally-constructed conceptual dimensions underlying language features and linguistic expressions in order to provide an exhaustive model of translation equivalence, is a large step for translation scholars, which the present research attempted to take. Several other researchers support this discussion, and it is in line with the progressive global currents towards conceptual transfer in translation, language and cultural studies. A notion which increases intercultural understanding, and which needs desperate attention and exploration, perhaps more than ever in the history of human interaction, in this globalized world.

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