

## Developing Intercultural Competence: Empowering Students as Intercultural Mediators<sup>1</sup>

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### Abstract

This research challenges the traditional 'read and translate' approach to translation pedagogy, arguing that it overlooks the crucial role of translation as intercultural communication. The study introduces the concept of translation as intercultural mediation, drawing on Katan's exploration of Hall's Iceberg Theory and Triad of Culture, as well as Katan's Hierarchical Learning Levels. Employing a qualitative approach involving diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment types, this study assesses, monitors, and evaluates 19 students at the beginning, during, and at the end of the course, respectively, in an Iranian academic context, to track students' learning trajectory and identify changes in students' performance. The findings revealed a significant shift in students' understanding of translation. Initially viewing translation as a linguistic task, they developed a deeper understanding of it as an act of intercultural mediation. This shift was marked by students' improved critical engagement with their own cultural perspectives and an increased capacity for mediating cultural conflicts by developing a third perceptual position. The research concludes that this framework empowers students to shift their perceptual positions based on the specific context of the translation, enabling them to consciously choose their level of intervention based on how they engage with the context: as a mediator or activist.

**Keywords:** Culture, Intercultural competence, Intercultural mediation, Translator as an intercultural Mediator

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## 1. Introduction

Translation is a multifaceted activity, stretching far beyond the straightforward task of transferring the intended message of the source text. In fact, translation serves the role of bridging two linguacultural contexts, requiring the translator to address the requirements of intercultural communication. In this respect, translation becomes a problem of cultural transfer based on the intricate nexus between language and culture. This activity of relocating meaning across a cultural frontier then constitutes the core of the translation process, tapping the translator's repertoire of intercultural skills. It is in fact this intercultural dimension of translation that elevates it from a linguistic task to an act of intercultural communication. Arguably, developing intercultural competence should be accorded much prominence in academic contexts. On this basis, the motive behind this study was developing intercultural competence, which, it is assumed, fails to be achieved by the "read and translate" (Gonzales-Davies, 2004, p. 2) approach. In fact, this traditional approach is grounded in this premise that language functions as a 'conduit' (Reddy, 1993) to exchange meaning between people, with translation serving as the tool to transfer unchanged the underlying meaning in the container of language from one language to another. Such a narrow picture of translation as reproduction of an already-existing meaning through a faithful translation is insufficient from a pedagogical perspective. Also known as *performance magistrale* by Jean-Rene Ladmiral (1977, as cited in Baer & Koby, 2003, p. viii) or *who'll take the next sentence (WTNS)* approach by Kiraly (2005), the traditional approach is recognized by its limited view of translation as substitution of equivalent words "rather than maintaining the natural complexity of professional translational activity as a social, inter-cultural and interpretive process" (p. 1101).

Existing models of translation competence (e.g., Bell (1991), Kelly (2005), Kiraly (1995), Neubert (2000), PACTE (2000/2003), Shreve (2006), Wilss (1976)) often include cultural competence but lack a clear definition and operationalization

of intercultural competence (Tomozeiu & Kumpulainen, 2016). This hinders the understanding of how culture interacts with language in translation, highlighting the need for a model that addresses the various levels of cultural manifestation within language. Additionally, these models fail to explicitly address intercultural mediation, crucial for fulfilling the requirements of intercultural mediation.

Katan (2002) highlights the under-exploration of the third position or mediating role in discussions on intercultural competence, which are mainly focused on the polarized dichotomy between literal and non-literal translation. This study utilizes the concept of translation as intercultural mediation, encouraging students to adopt a “meta position” (O’Connor, 2001, p. 278), allowing them to reconcile contrasting cultural norms. This shift in role empowers students to act as mediators, bridging “ideologies, moral systems, and socio-political structures” (Hatim & Mason, 1990, p. 223). However, Katan (2013) emphasizes that when language is used ideologically, mediation becomes “ethically untenable” (p. 88), requiring translators to intervene actively and “take sides”, acknowledging the ideological implications of texts (Katan, 2009a, p. 88).

This research investigates the concept of translation as intercultural mediation, highlighting the insufficient attention given to the role of translators as mediators (Liddicoat, 2015). It critiques the traditional pedagogical approach that views translation merely as reproducing equivalent texts in the target language. To address this, the study employs Katan’s framework, informed by Hall’s (1982, 1959/1990) Iceberg Theory and Triad of Culture, alongside Katan’s (2009b) Hierarchical Learning Levels (Intercultural Competencies for Translators) aimed at developing intercultural competence in translating journalistic texts. It is due to the fact in journalistic texts language can be used as a tool to impart ideological undertones, necessitating that students understand their position not just as conduits for ideas (Davies, 2012; Cheung, 2014), but as intercultural mediators who

reconcile cultural conflicts from differing worldviews and understand the implications of their mediating actions (Katan, 2009b). As Katan (2015) highlights, this requires a delicate balance: an intercultural mediator “neither acquiesces nor resists the system a priori” (p. 4).

## **2. Research Question**

What is the impact of incorporating the concept of translation as intercultural mediation to develop intercultural competence, particularly in relation to the traditional ‘read and translate’ approach used in academic contexts?

## **3. Review of the Related Literature**

While translation competence models often include cultural competence, they often lack a clear definition and operationalization of intercultural competence. For instance, Neubert’s model (2000) incorporates cultural competence as knowledge about interpreting texts within their cultural context. However, Tomozeiu and Kumpulainen (2016) argue that mere knowledge of cultures is insufficient; understanding how cultural differences impact translation and how to address them for effective communication is essential.

Kelly’s model of translation competence (2005) includes cultural and intercultural competence alongside other components, viewing culture as “encyclopaedic knowledge” encompassing beliefs, social organization, accepted practices, values and the way these reflect in texts (p. 32). However, Yarosh (2015) points out the model’s lack of the crucial “inter-cultural mediating component” (p. 161), highlighting a gap in understanding the role of intercultural mediation in translation.

Katan (2012, p. 1, *italics in the original*) outlines three cultural approaches to translation based on the translator’s engagement with self and other, namely

“translating *from* cultures”—providing extensive explanations for readers from different backgrounds; “translating *for* cultures”—adapting the source text to fit cultural assumptions of the target language; “translating *between* cultures”—resolving cultural conflicts to facilitate meaning transfer.

Drawing on Hall’s (1982, 1959/1990) Iceberg Theory and Triad of Culture, Katan proposes a multi-layered model of culture. He likens culture to an iceberg, with visible, semi-visible, and invisible parts representing different levels of cultural understanding. The technical level, the tip of the iceberg, encompasses tangible cultural artifacts (Katan, 2013) and language with a referential function (Katan, 2009a). This level represents communication at a scientific or factual level (Katan, 1999/2004), focusing on objective information. The formal level, the semi-visible part, represents the accepted norms and practices within a culture, including social etiquette and conventions. Translation at this level requires an awareness of these norms and involves mediating between two diverging systems of cultural understanding (Katan, 2009a). The informal level, the submerged part of the iceberg, encompasses unconscious “core values and beliefs” (Katan, 2009a, p. 83), as well as narratives that shape a group’s shared identity. These deeply embedded cultural elements often remain outside conscious awareness, influencing behavior and interpretation in subtle ways.

#### **4. Theoretical Framework**

Katan (2009b, p. 6) links levels of intercultural competencies for translators to learning levels by drawing on NLP, Bloom’s Taxonomy, as well as the Dublin Descriptors, viewing learning hierarchically as a concatenated series of objectives to be achieved one after another.

Table 1. Hierarchical Learning Levels

NLP Logical Level	Bloom's Taxonomy of Cognitive Domains	Dublin Descriptors	Intercultural Competencies for Translators
Why	Evaluation	Making Judgments	Mediation
How <i>creating patterns</i>	Analysis Synthesis	Learning Skills	Perceptual positions
How <i>following procedure</i>	Application	Applying Knowledge and Understanding	Cultural Grammars
What	Comprehension	Knowledge and Understanding	Linguacultures
	Knowledge		Cultural Locatedness

Time and Experience  
↑  
2nd cycle  
1st cycle

Note. Reprinted from "Translator Training and Intercultural Competence" by D. Katan, 2009, in S. Cavagnoli, E. Di Giovanni, & R. Merlini, *La ricerca nella comunicazione interlinguistica. Modelli teorici e metodologici*, p. 6. Copyright 2009 by Franco Angeli.

Developing intercultural competence involves a multi-stage process. First, students must gain knowledge and understanding of cultures and how language and culture shape perceptions. This includes learning about linguacultures and cultural locatedness. Next, students need to move beyond declarative knowledge and understand how unique 'emic' patterns (Pike, 1967), as the "set of subconscious rules" (Wierzbicka, 1996, p. 527, as quoted in Katan, 2009b, p. 16), influence meaning construction within different cultures. This deeper understanding is crucial for addressing challenges arising from cultural differences. The final stage involves developing metacognitive skills of analysis and synthesis to decipher meaning patterns and understand how factors affect interpretation and transfer in the target culture. This requires a 'mindshift' (Taft, 1981) to embrace diverse viewpoints and adjust understanding accordingly. Ultimately, students should explore different perceptual positions—their own, other, and a meta-position—and actively seek to understand the motivations behind actions and decisions, questing the 'why' to gain a bird's eye view of the situation and the significance of those actions. In fact, this "self-reflexive, meta-cognitive level (why)" (Katan, 2009b, p. 7)

empowers students to develop awareness and understanding of the foundation of their own values, beliefs, and motivations. This self-awareness allows them to become more effective and responsible translators, enabling them to actively seek to “influence the reception of the message away from the intention of the original speaker” (Katan, 2011, p. 12, italic in the original) or “to mediate or tackle conflict” (Katan, 2009c, p. 113).

## **5. Methodology**

Employing a qualitative approach constitutive of diagnostic, formative, and summative assessment types, students are assessed, monitored, and evaluated at the beginning, during, and at the end of a semester, respectively, to assess their prior knowledge and understanding of the concepts related to the objectives of this study, track their learning trajectory during the learning process, and identify changes in their performance in the final stage.

### **5.1. Participants**

The participants in this study selected through convenience sampling method, were 19 B.A. TEFL students in an Iranian university. They were in their third educational year at sixth semester of TEFL program, who attended *Translating Journalistic Texts* course.

### **5.2. Instruments**

Four instruments were administered in this study; two instruments were used initially for the purpose of diagnostic assessment before the initiation of the learning process, while two instruments were used as summative assessment at the end of the learning process.

### **5.3. Data Collection**

#### **5.3.1. Diagnostic Assessment**

In the initial phase, general questions were posed to assess students' characteristics such as motivation, expectations, and prior translation course

experience. This approach enables the trainer to “tailor instruction to student needs” (Miller, 2019, p. 2). For example, one of the questions included an inquiry about interest in journalism and feelings about the course.

The second phase of the diagnostic assessment evaluated students’ prior knowledge related to intercultural competence through eight tailored questions. This assessment informed the teaching material and served as a foundation for the formative assessment stage. Key topics included text types, culture, intercultural competence, the translator’s role, and manipulation. The initial assessment enables the trainer to monitor student progress and measure learning outcomes in the final summative assessment. An example question addressed the necessity of intercultural competence for translators of journalistic texts.

### 5.3.2. Formative Assessment

Cizek (2010) emphasizes that formative assessment acts as a “collaborative process”, enabling trainers to track students’ performance with the aim of “deepening their understandings and improving their achievement” (p. 7). Based on an initial assessment of students’ prior knowledge related to study objectives, the trainer developed seven activities for fourteen sessions, each centered on a main question derived from the diagnostic assessment. These activities included aims, steps, and teaching units, with instructional materials provided in one of the two sessions per activity. Following each session, students submitted written reflections on challenges or misunderstandings encountered. Miller (2019) highlights that formative assessment is used to “build understanding” rather than to “assign a grade” (pp. 2–4), while Cizek (2010) notes it can help identify “areas for improvement” without assigning an “evaluation aspect” (p. 6). Bennet (2011) describes the monitoring of students’ performance during the learning process as an “*inferential process*”, suggesting that observations are essentially “conjectures” that require refinement based on student feedback (p. 16, *italic in the original*).



### 5.3.3. Summative Assessment

At the end of the learning process, students' achievements regarding learning objectives were evaluated using a third instrument consisting of seven revised questions based on the second instrument and the theoretical concepts fleshed out in class. One example question addressed the roles of cultural mediators versus translators. Students were then tasked with translating a short text in two different ways through a fourth instrument, assessing their ability to adapt their approach according to the context and their evaluations of the translation situation.

### 5.4. Data Analysis

The learning process involved formative assessment, tracking student performance, and providing feedback aligned with teaching objectives. At the final stage, students were evaluated by comparing data from two assessments to identify performance changes and determine if learning outcomes were met. Additionally, a translation exam was administered to assess students' ability to apply their knowledge and demonstrate intercultural competence as a metacognitive skill. Table 2 analyses the learning trajectory of one student:

Table 2. Analysis of Data Related to One Student's Performance in the Diagnostic, Formative, and Summative stages

<b>Diagnostic/Initial Assessment</b>
<b>Instrument 1</b>
General questions on students' characteristics, including their motivation, expectations, intended objectives and skills, and their previous experience with translation courses.
<b>Analysis of Instrument 1</b>
This student initially viewed translation as a task involving the replacement of words from the source language with those in the target language. Nevertheless, the student recognized the importance of theoretical knowledge in facilitating an understanding of the principles underlying the translation process. This student taught a translation class should focus on identifying the reasons behind students' translation challenges and clearly defining what constitutes translation competence. This student's response regarding the prediction of the course, likely influenced by their previous translation education experiences, reflected her initial perception of translation as a focus on transferring meaning.
<b>Instrument 2</b>

Questions on students' prior knowledge of topics related to the objectives of the study, namely their perspectives or perceptions on how they define translation or understanding of what translation encompasses, function of journalism, notion of culture and intercultural competence, notion of translation as mediation vis-à-vis manipulation.	
<b>Analysis of Instrument 2</b>	
<p>Interestingly, this student's understanding of translation changed in the second phase, recognizing it as a complex process that involves both cognitive and sociocultural aspects. She highlighted the dual responsibility of the translator: to remain faithful to the source text while ensuring that the translation reads naturally in the target language. This student also acknowledged the unique characteristics of journalistic texts, recognizing their distinct function, linguistic features, and potential for conveying ideological meaning. This student acknowledged the connection between language and culture, but her explanation of how this interplay manifests itself in translation remained underdeveloped. While she recognized the value of intercultural competence for addressing cultural issues in cross-cultural communication, she focused primarily on the importance of understanding the target culture. The student's emphasis on the target culture, however, seemed to overshadow the impact of the source culture on the translation process. This inconsistency contradicts her earlier statement that translation is intrinsically linked to both source and target languages. While this student did not fully explore the concept of translation as intercultural mediation or distinguish it from manipulation, she did emphasize the translator's role in analyzing the source text and its context to accurately convey the message in the target language. She emphasized faithfulness to the source text, but allowed for necessary changes to clarify the context for the target recipients. Be that as it may, this student offered two seemingly contradictory interpretations of translation. Initially, she defined translation as a process intertwined with both source and target languages. Later, she presented a more straightforward view of translation as simply transferring the message of the source text to the target language. Of course, this suggests a need for further development in her understanding of the complex relationship between language, culture, and the translation process.</p>	
<b>Formative Assessment</b>	
<b>Activity</b>	<b>Learning Outcomes</b>
1	The student appears somewhat constrained by the source text's linguistic structures, suggesting a reluctance to make necessary changes for clarity or fluency in the target language.
2	From a theoretical standpoint, the student demonstrates an understanding of journalistic texts and their translation requirements. She recognizes the importance of conveying the content accurately while acknowledging that stylistic features of the source text need not be replicated.
3	This student recognizes the interdependence of language and culture, viewing language as a mouthpiece for cultural expression. However, she fails to elaborate on how and in what specific ways culture is manifested through language.

4	Despite acquiring knowledge about various cultural layers, particularly regarding the technical aspect and relating it to informative texts, the student struggled to apply this knowledge in practice. Her translation of an informative text, where words are primarily used in their denotative meaning, resulted in a reproduction of the source text's structures in the target language, indicating a lack of fluency and adaptation.
5	A Look at this student's responses indicates that she possesses familiarity with identifying text types, though she lacked a detailed explanation of their characteristic features and appropriate translation strategies. The student also acknowledged the challenges of understanding and transferring meaning in different text types, revealing her level of translation competence. She specifically found literary texts most challenging, highlighting the need for knowledge of both literary systems to produce a translation that captures the original text's literary features. The student also acknowledged the impact of cultural beliefs and values on text production.
6	This student recognizes the importance of ethics in translation, advocating for the translator to act as a neutral agent. However, she acknowledges the limitations of neutrality due to external factors, including the influence of dominant ideologies. This perspective is reflected in their translation.
7	According to this student, given that journalism often serves as a platform for various political viewpoints, it is essential to adapt texts that propagate specific perspectives to ensure neutrality and avoid potential bias in the translation.
<b>Summative/Final Assessment</b>	
<b>Instrument 3</b>	
Building upon the theoretical concepts explored in class and drawing upon the questions in the second instrument, students were evaluated on a series of questions, including the nature of reality in journalism, macro-strategies for translating different text types, challenges in the traditional approach, different levels of culture, and the translator's role as an intercultural mediation.	
<b>Analysis of Instrument 3</b>	
This student demonstrates a solid understanding of the technical level of culture, but her explanation of the formal and informal levels lacks clarity and depth. She offered limited insight into how these levels manifest linguistically within texts or the implications they hold for translation. However, she effectively differentiated between various text types and their characteristics, outlining appropriate translation strategies for each. This student correctly points out that manipulation is context-dependent. Texts intended to promote specific viewpoints or worldviews require the translator to move beyond neutrality and engage with the inherent bias. She further highlighted how language used ideologically can distort reality, presenting a particular narrative that supports a specific worldview. Despite these strengths, the student's answer to a question relating to her understanding of traditional translation approaches and their limitations in relation to contemporary training objectives was not satisfactory. Unfortunately, the student's response failed to adequately address this	

critical aspect.	
<b>Instrument 4</b>	
<b>Final Exam Description</b>	
Please translate the text in two different ways: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1) Human rights expert;</li> <li>• 2) Foreign news agency;</li> </ul>	
<b>Translation Task</b>	
Sanctions imposed on Iran's key economic sectors along with numerous national companies has led to <b>severe drop of State revenues, inflation, growing poverty rates, and scarcity of resources to guarantee the basic needs of those most in need.</b>	
<b>Translation 1</b>	<b>Translation 2</b>
(۱) <u>کارشناس حقوق بشر</u> : تحریم‌هایی که بر بخش‌های اساسی اقتصاد ایران با شرکت‌های ملی کثیری وضع شده باعث افت شدید بودجه‌ی دولت، تورم، گسترش فقر و کمبود منابع اولیه جهت تأمین مهم‌ترین نیازهای اولیه‌ی نیازمندان/تهی‌دستان شده است.	(۲) <u>رسانه خارجی</u> : تحریم‌های ظالمانه‌ای که بخش‌های اقتصادی کشور عزیزمان را هدف گرفته، اتفاقاً چندان برایشان موفقیت‌آمیز نبوده است، چراکه ایران با کمک گرفتن از مهره‌ی توانمند تولید داخلی و عنصر خودکفایی توانسته است تورم، افت بودجه‌ی دولت، فقر و کمبود منابع را خوبی مدیریت کند.
نظرات دانشجو: متن اول را سعی کردم با تمرکز به حقوق انسانها ترجمه کنم چون نگاه سازمان‌های حقوق بشر به این قضیه خنثی و بشردوستانه است.	نظرات دانشجو: از آنجا که قرار است فرض کنیم این متن توسط یک خبرگزاری خارجی نوشته شده، طبیعی است که این خبرگزاری وقایع را از نگاه خودش بیان کرده تا تأثیر تحریم‌ها را افزایش دهد و در نهایت ضعیف شدن ایران را نشان دهد، که خب با واقعیت‌هایی که در کشورم لمس می‌کنم ناسازگار است. بنابراین سعی می‌کنم در ترجمه‌ام با ایجاد تغییرات، این واقعیات را نشان دهم. بنابراین، از آنجا که این دیدگاه آمریکایی‌ها بوده به تحریم‌ها و به‌نظرم از آنچه در کشور می‌گذرد متفاوت است، ترجمه‌ام را بر اساس آنچه خودم از اوضاع می‌دانستم تغییر دادم.

## 6. Results and Discussion

Initially, students viewed translation as a simple process of accurately transferring meaning, reflecting Nida and Taber's (1969) definition of translation as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source

language message" (p. 12). Their understanding was probably influenced by prior exposure to translation theories, though one student noted the importance of norms but struggled to articulate practical implications. There was consensus that culture encapsulates community life, values, and behaviors, with one student linking it to societal norms. Despite some grasp of the study's objectives, opinions varied, indicating a lack of consensus on key concepts. However, by the end, students shifted their views to see translation as intercultural mediation, allowing them to apply theoretical knowledge purposefully and choose their intervention levels based on context, facilitated by developing a "sound and conscious knowledge base of" their "own core framework of beliefs and values, and ethics" (Katan, 2008, p. 11).

The student's performance shows an evolution in her understanding of translation. Initially, she viewed it as a straightforward transfer of meaning, focusing on techniques for overcoming challenges. However, she later recognized the dual influence of source and target cultures, shifting towards seeing translation as intercultural mediation. By the final exam, she acknowledged the complex role of culture and successfully connected linguistic and cultural elements in journalistic texts, while also identifying societal influences on interpretations.

From a practical aspect, the student effectively chooses her perceptual positions based on context. Initially, she adopts a first perceptual position to highlight the negative impact of sanctions on the Iranian people from a human rights perspective, producing a translation that emphasizes the cruelty of these sanctions. However, aware of the socio-political implications of her translation choices, she shifts to a third perceptual position when the context changes to a political agenda. This leads to a translation that balances the ideational content of the source text with the target culture's sociocultural expectations, aiming to represent both sides and resolve conflict in intercultural communication.

Figure 1 displays students' translation exam performance based on the perceptual positions they adopted in response to two contexts. Most students (except one) emphasized the negative impact of sanctions from a human rights perspective, aligning with the source culture. However, when the context shifted to a political

agenda, 12 students clearly favored the source culture, while only 2 aimed for balance in representing both sides. The remaining 5 students aligned with the target culture, downplaying sanctions to oppose the political aims of the source.

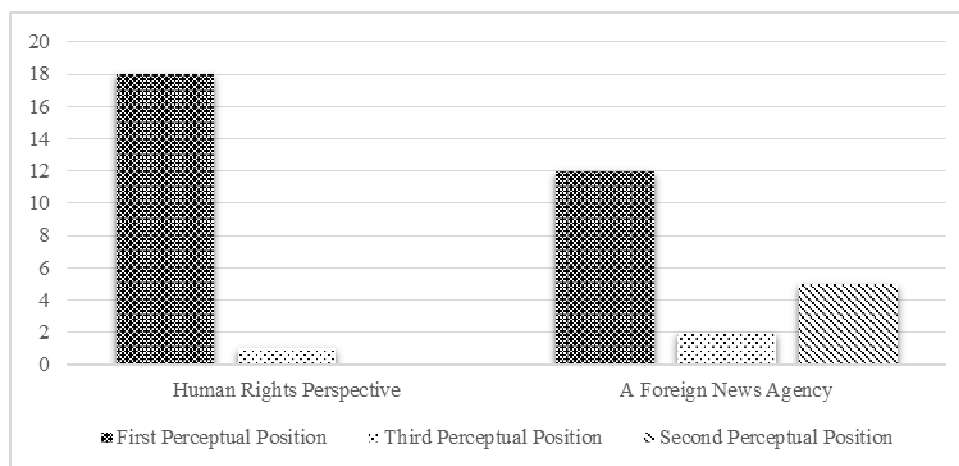


Figure 1. Perceptual Positions in Translation Exam: Student Responses to Contextual Shifts

## 7. Conclusion

This research emphasizes the need to view translation as intercultural mediation to develop intercultural competence in academic settings. A micro-linguistic approach, focusing solely on finding the best equivalents, fails to address the sociocultural factors impacting translation. Training students to see translation as mediation allows them to ‘mindshift’, i.e., to revise or change their perception of translation, moving away from a myopic understanding of translation as a transfer of meaning. Furthermore, they are granted a “meta position” (O’Connor, 2001, p. 278), which allows them to distance themselves from the own and other positions, essentially viewing translation process from the standpoint of both parties. Students are then enabled to critically examine their cultural biases, and understand the motivations behind their choices. They learn to differentiate their role as translators from that of activists, acknowledging that while absolute neutrality is elusive, they should not fall into the trap of believing that the “only alternative is to embrace bias and become a committed activist” (Katan, 2009b, p. 20).

This research advocates for a shift in translation pedagogy towards developing intercultural competence. Key implications include: 1) Focus shift: It challenges the traditional emphasis on linguistic equivalence, highlighting culture's role in meaning and urging educators to adopt a sociocultural perspective; 2) Role of translator: It redefines the translator as an intercultural mediator who resolves cultural conflicts, enabling students to promote cultural understanding; 3) Multi-level competence: It outlines a three-tiered approach to intercultural competence, namely a) Knowledge: Understanding cultures and their interplay with language; b) Analysis: Developing skills to identify cultural patterns and synthesize insights for translation; c) Evaluation: Fostering critical awareness of personal biases to make ethical translation decisions.

This study seconds the body of literature within Translation Studies that highlights the sociocultural side of translation, stretching beyond a solely linguistic perspective. The study's focus on translation as intercultural mediation directly takes to task the enduring, long-lived 'equivalence' paradigm, which posited that finding equivalent linguistic items guarantees accurate translation. The study also underlined the need for further research on the effectiveness of intercultural competence training programs for translators. This study may also provoke scholarly enquiry into the effect of 'third perceptual positions' on translation outcomes.

## **8. Limitations of the Study**

The study highlights limitations in data collection, particularly the reliance on self-reported data by students, which is subjective and prone to bias. To counter this, a competence-oriented assessment approach was used, focusing on diagnostic, formative, and summative assessments to observe learner progress. However, assessing understanding through observation remains inferential. The qualitative nature and small sample size limit generalizability to a larger translation student population, though the findings contribute to understanding intercultural competence development in the Iranian academic context. A larger sample would enhance these findings' applicability.

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