

Quality Assessment of AI-Generated Persian Translation of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*

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Abstract

Large language models can now produce remarkably fluent literary translations, but fluency does not necessarily entail the preservation of a text's distinctive voice, interpersonal meanings, or pragmatic effects. This study examines this tension through a qualitative case study of an AI-generated Persian translation of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*. Drawing on House's (2015) Revised Translation Quality Assessment Model, the study constructs independent textual profiles of the English source text and Persian target text and compares them across field, tenor, mode, genre, and textual function. The analysis reveals a high degree of functional correspondence; the translation preserves the story's propositional content, narrative progression, thematic development, interpersonal relationships, cultural references, and overall communicative function. The principal divergences emerge not from mistranslation or loss of meaning but from stylistic and pragmatic shifts. In particular, explicitation, normalization, formalization, syntactic smoothing, and moderate emotional intensification occasionally make the Persian text more explicit, literary, and emotionally expressive than the original, reducing aspects of O. Henry's conversational informality, understated irony, and stylistic restraint. The results highlight a central challenge in AI-generated literary translation: semantic and functional adequacy can coexist with subtle changes in literary voice. The findings are particularly relevant to translation scholars, literary translators, and educators seeking to evaluate and critically use AI-generated literary translations.

Keywords: Artificial intelligence, functional equivalence, literary translation, translation quality assessment

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1. Introduction

In the early stages of cinema, films were created as silent movies with no dialogue. In such silent films, intertitles were used to convey the narrative between scenes. These printed texts, often used to summarize the plot, could be easily translated into different languages and inserted into the film (Díaz-Cintas & Remael, 2014). Though these intertitles are considered an early form of audiovisual translation (AVT), it was not until the late 1920s with the emergence of talking films that the need for more formalized translation became evident (Chaume, 2012; Chiaro, 2009; Ranzato, 2016; Remael, 2013). With the introduction of sound into cinema, the process of translation became intricate, creating a new set of challenges for translators.

Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) remains a central concern in Translation Studies because translation quality cannot be reduced to lexical or grammatical correspondence between source text (ST) and target text (TT). Contemporary approaches increasingly consider the communicative effectiveness of translation and the extent to which a TT fulfils the functions of its ST within a different linguistic and cultural context (House, 2015; Munday, 2016). This perspective is particularly important in literary translation, where meaning and effect are shaped not only by propositional content but also by stylistic choices, narrative voice, irony, interpersonal relations, and cultural references.

The emergence of Artificial Intelligence (AI), particularly Large Language Models (LLMs), has added a new dimension to this issue. Contemporary AI systems can generate translations characterized by considerable fluency, coherence, and contextual consistency, extending machine translation beyond the sentence-level processing associated with earlier approaches (Kenny, 2022). As a result, questions of AI translation quality increasingly concern more than lexical accuracy. They also involve stylistic adequacy, pragmatic meaning, functional equivalence, and the preservation of authorial voice.

These concerns are especially relevant to literary translation. Literary texts often derive their effects from the interaction of linguistic form and implied meaning, including irony, symbolism, figurative language, cultural references, and stylistic individuality (Baker, 2018; Newmark, 1988). An AI-generated translation may therefore convey the basic meaning of a literary work while modifying features that contribute to its particular narrative and aesthetic effect. Research has indeed identified continuing challenges for AI-generated literary translation in areas such as authorial voice, irony, figurative language, cultural nuance, and stylistic variation (Toral & Way, 2018). Human evaluation consequently remains important, particularly when translation quality involves textual and pragmatic characteristics that cannot be fully captured by automatic metrics.

Within this context, functional-pragmatic approaches to TQA provide a useful basis for examining AI-generated literary translation. Rather than assessing translation primarily through formal correspondence, such approaches consider how linguistic choices contribute to the communicative and textual functions of the source and TTs. House's Revised Translation Quality Assessment Model is particularly relevant because it evaluates translation through the comparison of source- and target-text profiles across situational and functional dimensions (House, 2015).

Despite the growing body of research on AI-assisted translation, relatively limited attention has been given to the systematic application of established Translation Studies frameworks to AI-generated literary translation (Kenny, 2022), particularly in the English–Persian language pair. Much of the existing research has focused on automatic evaluation, machine translation systems, or general measures of translation performance, while functional-pragmatic analyses of AI-generated literary texts remain comparatively limited. Research involving Persian literary translation generated by contemporary AI systems is also still relatively underexplored. This leaves a need for studies that

examine AI-generated literary translation through frameworks capable of accounting for register, interpersonal meaning, textual function, and broader contextual relationships.

The present study addresses this gap by evaluating an AI-generated Persian translation of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi* through House's (2015) Revised Translation Quality Assessment Model. The story provides a suitable case for such an investigation because its relatively simple narrative combines colloquial dialogue, authorial intervention, irony, symbolism, and emotional restraint. The study first develops independent profiles of the English ST and the Persian TT and then compares them across Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre, and Textual Function. The analysis focuses on functional correspondences, translation shifts, and mismatches between the two texts.

Rather than assigning a general positive or negative judgment to the AI-generated translation, the study examines how particular translation choices affect the functional relationship between the source and TTs. It therefore seeks to identify both the features that are maintained and the areas in which AI-generated translation modifies the ST's stylistic or pragmatic profile.

The study addresses the following research questions:

1. How closely does the AI-generated Persian translation of *The Gift of the Magi* correspond to the ST according to House's Revised TQA Model?
2. What types of translation shifts and functional mismatches emerge across the dimensions of Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre, and Textual Function?

By addressing these questions, the study contributes to research on AI-assisted literary translation and examines the continued relevance of a functional-pragmatic framework for evaluating literary translations generated by contemporary AI systems.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Framework

The question of how translation quality should be evaluated has generated sustained discussion in Translation Studies. Different approaches have emphasized different dimensions of translation, ranging from linguistic and formal correspondence to communicative function and contextual appropriateness. Early approaches were strongly influenced by linguistic theories of equivalence and focused on lexical, grammatical, and semantic relationships between source and TTs (Catford, 1965; Nida & Taber, 1969). Although these approaches provided important analytical foundations, subsequent scholarship increasingly recognized that translation is embedded in communicative, pragmatic, and cultural contexts that cannot be adequately represented through formal correspondence alone (Hatim & Mason, 1997; House, 2015).

Functionalist perspectives consequently broadened the understanding of translation quality by shifting attention from linguistic similarity toward communicative purpose and textual function. From this perspective, a translation is evaluated not simply according to how closely it reproduces the linguistic form of its source but also according to how successfully it fulfils the relevant communicative functions within the target context (House, 2015; Munday, 2016). This shift is particularly significant for literary translation, where stylistic and pragmatic choices contribute directly to the meaning and effect of the text.

Among functional-pragmatic approaches, House's Translation Quality Assessment model has become an influential framework. Originally introduced in 1977 and subsequently revised in 1997 and 2015, the model evaluates translation quality by comparing the situational profiles of the ST and TT. Its central principle is functional equivalence: rather than requiring formal similarity, the model examines the extent to which the TT corresponds to the ST in its relevant situational and functional characteristics (House, 2015).

In the Revised Model, situational context is described through the register variables of Field, Tenor, and Mode. Field concerns the nature of the social activity and subject matter represented in the text; Tenor concerns the participants, their relationships, and their degree of social distance and involvement; and Mode concerns the role of language and the medium through which communication takes place. These dimensions operate within the broader category of Genre, while their interaction contributes to the text's overall Textual Function, which includes ideational and interpersonal components (House, 2015). This multidimensional framework allows translation to be examined at the level of the text as a whole rather than through isolated lexical or grammatical correspondences.

The revised model also distinguishes between overt and covert translation. Overt translation maintains a visible relationship with the source culture and acknowledges its status as a translation, whereas covert translation is designed to function as a target-culture text. House further distinguishes between overtly erroneous errors, involving denotative inaccuracies, and covertly erroneous errors, which arise when functional or situational equivalence is not adequately maintained (House, 2015). Because the translation examined in the present study retains the original cultural setting of *The Gift of the Magi*, the analysis is primarily informed by the concept of overt translation.

The relevance of such a framework becomes particularly clear in literary translation. Literary meaning depends not only on propositional content but also on how that content is expressed. Stylistic individuality, figurative language, irony, symbolism, cultural references, and narrative perspective can all contribute to the communicative and aesthetic effects of a literary text (Baker, 2018; Newmark, 1988). Consequently, evaluating literary translation requires attention to both linguistic transfer and artistic expression. Scholars have emphasized the importance of maintaining authorial voice, stylistic identity, narrative perspective, and pragmatic intention, even when achieving these effects requires departures from close lexical correspondence (Hatim & Mason, 1997; House, 2015).

O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi* provides an appropriate case for examining these dimensions. The story combines colloquial dialogue, authorial intervention, irony, symbolism, and emotional restraint within a relatively simple narrative structure. These characteristics make it possible to investigate whether an AI-generated translation preserves not only the propositional content of the source but also its broader stylistic, interpersonal, and pragmatic profile.

The emergence of LLMs has further complicated questions of translation quality. Contemporary systems differ from earlier statistical and neural machine translation approaches in their capacity to generate highly fluent and contextually coherent text and to process broader textual contexts (Kenny, 2022). These developments have encouraged researchers to reconsider how machine-generated translation should be evaluated, particularly when the output is intended to function as a complete text rather than as a sequence of independently translated sentences.

At the same time, increased fluency does not necessarily ensure functional equivalence in literary translation. Studies have reported continuing difficulties in preserving authorial voice, irony, figurative language, cultural nuances, and stylistic variation in AI-generated literary translation (Toral & Way, 2018). Research on document-level literary translation has likewise shown that broader textual context can contribute to coherence, while human evaluation can still identify differences between AI-generated and professionally produced translations, particularly in narrative voice and aesthetic effect. These findings suggest that the evaluation of AI-generated literary translation requires attention to dimensions that extend beyond semantic adequacy and automatic evaluation metrics.

Functional-pragmatic frameworks can address this need by examining how translation choices affect the relationships among linguistic form, situational context, interpersonal meaning, and textual function. In this respect, House's model provides an established analytical framework through which AI-generated literary translation can be examined at the level of the text as a whole (House, 2015). Its

emphasis on register and textual function is particularly relevant when a translation appears semantically accurate but introduces stylistic, interpersonal, or pragmatic shifts.

Overall, the existing literature indicates that developments in AI have increased the fluency and contextual sophistication of machine-generated translation, while literary translation continues to present challenges involving stylistic and pragmatic meaning. At the same time, functional approaches to TQA remain relevant because they allow such dimensions to be examined systematically. Applying House's Revised Model to an English–Persian AI-generated literary translation therefore provides an opportunity to investigate how contemporary AI handles the relationship between propositional meaning and the broader functional characteristics of a literary text.

3. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive case-study design to examine an AI-generated Persian translation of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*. The qualitative approach is appropriate because the study examines functional, pragmatic, and stylistic relationships between the source and TTs rather than measuring translation quality numerically. The case-study design allows for an in-depth examination of a single AI-generated literary translation and the application of House's (2015) Revised TQA Model to this case.

The ST is O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*, originally published in 1905. The story was selected because its combination of narrative description, dialogue, irony, symbolism, and cultural references provides a range of linguistic, stylistic, and pragmatic features suitable for functional analysis. Its relatively concise length also permits detailed examination of the complete text. The TT is a Persian translation generated using OpenAI's ChatGPT (GPT-5.5) in July 2026. The complete story was submitted with a prompt requesting a Persian literary translation. The resulting translation was analyzed without post-editing, human revision, or other deliberate intervention.

The analysis follows House's (2015) Revised TQA Model. First, an independent profile was constructed for the English ST and then for the Persian TT. Each text was analyzed independently before the two profiles were compared. The analysis considered five interrelated dimensions. Field concerns the nature of the social activity represented in the text, including the subject matter, participants' activities, and the kinds of events or processes being represented. Tenor concerns the discourse participants and their interpersonal relationships, including their social roles, relative status, degree of social distance, and attitudinal or affective positioning. Mode concerns the role and medium of language, including whether communication is written or spoken, the degree of interactivity between participants, and the extent to which language is used to enact or represent interaction. Genre concerns the conventional text type and the socially recognized communicative purpose through which the text is organized. Textual Function concerns the overall function resulting from the interaction of these dimensions and is examined in terms of the text's ideational and interpersonal meanings (House, 2015).

Following the independent profiling of the two texts, the source and target profiles were systematically compared to identify functional correspondences, translation shifts, and mismatches. The comparison examined whether changes in the TT affected the ST's Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre, or Textual Function. Particular attention was given to shifts in register, interpersonal positioning, narrative presentation, and textual organization. House's distinction between overtly erroneous and covertly erroneous errors was also considered where relevant. Identified translation shifts included clarification, normalization, formalization, and cultural transfer; these were not treated as inherently positive or negative but were evaluated according to their effects on functional correspondence.

The overall assessment was based on the cumulative evidence obtained from the comparison of the two textual profiles. Individual lexical or grammatical differences were therefore not automatically classified as translation problems. Instead, a shift was considered analytically significant when it produced a change in the situational or functional profile of the TT or affected the communicative and stylistic effects of the ST. This procedure enabled the assessment to remain focused on functional relationships rather than isolated linguistic differences.

To enhance analytical credibility, evaluative claims were grounded in textual evidence from both the source and TTs and linked to the relevant categories of House's Revised TQA Model. Given the interpretive nature of qualitative TQA, analytical decisions were made systematically and supported by explicit textual evidence rather than impressionistic judgments. The consistent application of the framework and the use of the same analytical procedure for both texts further support the credibility and dependability of the analysis.

4. Results

4.1. Textual Profile of ST

In House's (2015) Revised TQA model, translation evaluation begins with an independent analysis of the ST. The purpose of this stage is to establish the text's situational profile by examining its Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre, and Textual Function before any comparison is made with the TT. Only after this profile has been established can the extent to which the TT preserves the ST's functional-pragmatic characteristics be meaningfully assessed. Accordingly, this section develops an ST textual profile of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*, which serves as the basis for the subsequent comparison with the AI-generated Persian translation.

4.1.1. Field

Field concerns what is happening in the text, including the social activity being represented, the processes involved, the participants who perform or experience them, and the circumstances in which they occur (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; House, 2015). In *The Gift of the Magi*, the Field centres on the domestic and interpersonal life of Jim and Della Young, a married couple living under financial constraints. The narrative represents mainly material, mental, relational, and verbal processes. Material processes involve everyday activities such as working, buying, selling, preparing, and exchanging gifts. Mental processes construe the couple's desires, concerns, love, and attitudes toward their possessions, while relational processes establish their identities, circumstances, and changing perceptions of value. Verbal processes occur through their interactions and contribute to the expression of intentions and emotions. Jim and Della are the central participants, while possessions such as Della's hair and Jim's watch function as significant elements within the represented activity. Circumstances of place, time, and manner situate these processes within domestic life and the Christmas period. Biblical references to the Magi, Solomon, and the Queen of Sheba extend this experiential domain beyond the immediate household. Thus, the Field represents ordinary domestic and interpersonal activity while construing material sacrifice and gift-giving as experiences of love, generosity, and value.

4.1.2. Tenor

Tenor concerns the social relationships among participants, their relative roles and status, and the attitudes and interpersonal meanings expressed through language (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014;

House, 2015). In *The Gift of the Magi*, the relationship between Jim and Della is intimate and reciprocal. Neither occupies a dominant position; both act out of mutual care and willingly sacrifice valued possessions for the other. Their dialogue and reactions construe affection, concern, and emotional closeness.

The narrator also has a distinctive interpersonal role. Rather than maintaining complete distance, the narrator directly engages the reader through conversational address, evaluative comments, irony, and reflections on the significance of the characters' actions. This creates a relatively informal and intimate relationship with the reader while positioning the narrator as an interpreter of events and values. The use of expressions such as "friends" reinforces this conversational stance.

The mode of interaction shifts across narration, dialogue, description, humour, and reflective commentary, producing variations in interpersonal tone. These shifts construct a narrator who is simultaneously conversational, humorous, sympathetic, and evaluative. Overall, the Tenor is characterized by close interpersonal relations between the protagonists and an involved narrator who establishes an informal, engaging, and reflective relationship with the reader.

4.1.3. Mode

Mode concerns the role language plays in the communicative situation, including the channel of communication and the organization of discourse (Halliday & Matthiessen, 2014; House, 2015). *The Gift of the Magi* is a written literary narrative intended for publication, making the written channel central to its construction. However, the narrator frequently adopts features associated with spoken interaction through direct address, conversational comments, rhetorical questions, and informal expressions. These choices reduce the distance between narrator and reader and create a sense of interaction within the written medium.

The discourse is organized through a combination of narration, dialogue, description, and reflective commentary. Narration advances the sequence of events, while dialogue represents direct interaction between Jim and Della and provides access to their interpersonal relationship. Descriptive and reflective passages slow the narrative and foreground settings, emotions, and evaluations. These shifts in discourse function create variation in pace and contribute to the progression toward the story's final revelation.

Mode therefore combines the permanence and planned organization of written discourse with features that simulate conversational interaction. This hybrid mode allows the narrative to maintain coherent storytelling while creating immediacy and reader engagement. The organization of narration, dialogue, and commentary also enables the story to communicate both its immediate events and their broader emotional and evaluative significance.

4.1.4. Genre

Genre refers to the conventional type of discourse to which a text belongs, determined by its communicative purpose, social function, and characteristic patterns of organization (House, 2015). *The Gift of the Magi* belongs to the genre of the short story, more specifically a literary narrative that combines interpersonal experience with moral and symbolic reflection. Its generic organization follows a recognizable narrative progression: the characters and their circumstances are introduced, a central problem develops around their limited financial resources and desire to exchange Christmas gifts, and the subsequent actions lead to an ironic reversal. The concluding evaluation reframes these actions and establishes their moral significance.

The text also draws on conventions associated with O. Henry's short fiction, particularly a compact narrative structure, characterization through action and dialogue, irony, and a climactic ending that invites the reader to reinterpret earlier events. These conventions contribute to the text's communicative purpose by engaging readers emotionally while encouraging reflection on love, sacrifice, generosity, and value.

4.1.5. Textual Function

Textual profile considers how a text realizes its ideational and interpersonal functions. The ideational function concerns the representation of experience, while the interpersonal function concerns the relationship established between the text and its participants.

In *The Gift of the Magi*, the ideational function is realized through the representation of Jim and Della's domestic life, financial difficulties, and actions surrounding the exchange of Christmas gifts. The narrative organizes these experiences around material processes such as buying, selling, and giving, together with mental and relational processes that construe love, desire, sacrifice, and value. The final ironic reversal gives these experiences a broader significance by challenging conventional associations between material possessions and worth.

The interpersonal function is realized through the narrator's distinctive relationship with the reader. Direct address, conversational expressions, humor, irony, and evaluative comments create an informal and engaging interaction. Rather than simply presenting events, the narrator guides readers toward particular interpretations of the characters' actions and their significance.

Overall, the textual profile integrates the ideational representation of domestic and emotional experience with interpersonal engagement, enabling the story to communicate its events while simultaneously shaping the reader's emotional and evaluative response.

4.2. Textual Profile of TT

4.2.1. Field

The Persian text represents a domestic and interpersonal world shaped by financial hardship, marital affection, Christmas gift-giving, and acts of sacrifice. Its experiential content centres on Jim and Della, their limited material circumstances, their efforts to obtain gifts for one another, and the consequences of these efforts. The narrative moves from descriptions of everyday domestic life and material deprivation to acts of self-sacrifice and the final ironic revelation concerning the gifts. Material circumstances and emotional experience are therefore closely intertwined throughout the text.

At the lexical level, the text draws on everyday vocabulary associated with domestic and material experience, including «آپارتمان» (apartment), «قهوه» (coffee), «شام» (dinner), «کت» (coat), and «زنجیر ساعت» (watch chain). It also uses vocabulary associated with emotional and relational experience, such as «عشق» (love), «فداکاری» (sacrifice), «اشتیاق» (longing), and «محبت» (affection). The combination of these lexical fields constructs a narrative world in which economic hardship provides the material context for expressions of love and generosity.

The text occasionally makes emotional or contextual meanings more explicit through lexical expansion and elaboration. These choices increase the explicitness of experiential information while retaining the central focus on domestic life, material circumstances, interpersonal relationships, and emotional experience.

4.2.2. Tenor

The interpersonal relations represented in the Persian text are primarily intimate, affectionate, and reciprocal. Jim and Della are constructed as a married couple whose interactions are characterized by emotional closeness, mutual concern, and willingness to sacrifice for one another. Forms of address such as «جیم، عزیزم» (Jim, darling) contribute to the expression of marital intimacy and create a warm interpersonal tone.

The narrator occupies an external but involved position in relation to the events and characters. Through expressions such as «دوستان عزیز» (Dear friends), as well as reflective and evaluative comments, the narrator occasionally establishes direct contact with readers. This produces a degree of narrator–reader proximity and gives the narrative a conversational dimension.

At the same time, the narrator’s language frequently adopts a formal and literary register. Elevated lexical choices and syntactic patterns create a relatively polished narrative voice, while occasional emotional intensification gives certain passages a stronger affective quality. The coexistence of intimate character relationships, narrator–reader engagement, and a relatively formal narrative voice constitutes the principal interpersonal configuration of the Persian text.

4.2.3. Mode

The Persian text functions as a written literary narrative designed primarily for silent reading. Its discourse combines narration, description, dialogue, and authorial commentary, producing a continuous narrative mode in which events, character actions, descriptions, and reflective observations are integrated.

The text demonstrates a high degree of internal cohesion and coherence. Connectives, paragraph transitions, reference relations, and thematic progression guide the movement between events and ideas. Dialogue is embedded within the surrounding narrative rather than functioning as an independent discourse mode, allowing spoken interaction and narrative description to form a continuous textual structure.

Syntactically, the text frequently employs relatively long and integrated sentence structures. Clausal combinations and connective devices contribute to a smooth and continuous rhythm, particularly in descriptive and reflective passages. These features give the prose a fluent and cohesive quality while maintaining clear narrative progression.

4.2.4. Genre

The Persian text belongs to the genre of the literary short story and combines narrative, descriptive, dialogic, and reflective elements. Its organization centres on characters, events, interpersonal relationships, and a culminating revelation. Characterization is developed through actions, dialogue, descriptions, and emotional responses, while irony and moral reflection contribute to the text’s literary character.

The narrative also functions as a Christmas tale in which gift-giving, self-sacrifice, love, and generosity provide central thematic and symbolic elements. Christmas and gift-giving serve not merely as contextual details but as organizing elements within the narrative’s representation of marital devotion and sacrifice.

Stylistically, the text employs fluent and relatively elevated Persian literary prose. Descriptive passages, emotional vocabulary, and reflective commentary contribute to its literary register. The combination

of narrative progression, characterization, irony, symbolism, and moral reflection firmly establishes the text as a literary short story with a strong emphasis on interpersonal values and self-sacrifice.

4.2.5. Textual Function

The Persian text performs both ideational and interpersonal functions by constructing a narrative centred on economic hardship, marital love, sacrifice, generosity, and gift-giving. It engages readers emotionally through the portrayal of the protagonists' relationships and sacrifices, while the narrator's reflective stance and direct address strengthen reader involvement. Irony further adds a reflective dimension by highlighting the contrast between material value and emotional significance. Overall, the text combines experiential representation, interpersonal engagement, literary narration, and irony to convey a narrative of love and sacrifice while encouraging an affective and reflective response from readers.

4.3. Comparative Analysis of the ST and TT

With independent profiles of the ST (ST) and the TT (TT) now established, the analysis turns to a systematic comparison of the two texts using House's (2015) Revised TQA model. The purpose of this stage is to evaluate how well the Persian translation achieves functional equivalence with the English original as we examine areas of correspondence and divergence in all dimensions of Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre, and Textual Function (House, 2015). In addition to these macro-level dimensions, the comparison considers lexical, syntactic, textual, pragmatic, and cultural features that form the translation's overall communicative effectiveness.

4.3.1. Register Comparison

Comparison of the two texts shows a high degree of functional correspondence in terms of Field. The Persian translation saves the central thematic concerns of the original, including poverty, marital devotion, sacrifice, and the symbolic significance of Christmas gift-giving. It also preserves the sequence of events and the narrative's moral development, which allows the overall communicative purpose of the ST to remain intact. But at the lexical level the translation shows a tendency towards explication. Meanings that are only implied in the English text are at times expressed more directly in Persian. Such shifts do not change the subject or the social action of the narrative, but they affect the style of O. Henry's prose.

Example 1

The ST expression "Give it to me quick" is translated as «زود بدهیدش به من» (Give it to me quickly). Although the translation is semantically accurate, the use of the polite plural imperative «بدهید» makes the utterance slightly more formal than the original. The English expression is brief, abrupt, and colloquial, reflecting Della's excitement and urgency. A closer functional equivalent could be «زود، پولش» (Quick, give me the money!) or, at a more informal level, «رد کن بیاد» (Hand it over!). The shift from an informal imperative to a polite form slightly reduces the immediacy and emotional intensity of Della's utterance.

Example 2

The ST expression "Forget the hashed metaphor" is rendered as «این تشبیه کلیشه‌ای را نادیده بگیرید» (Ignore this cliché-like simile). The translation successfully conveys the narrator's ironic interruption, but «کلیشه‌ای» does not fully capture the meaning of "hashed", which refers to a worn-out or overused literary expression. More expressive equivalents could be «از این استعاره نخنما بگذریم» (Let us move past this worn-out metaphor) or «از این تشبیه نخنما صرف نظر کنیم» (Let us disregard this worn-out simile). Although

the published translation remains acceptable, the choice of «کلیشه‌ای» slightly reduces the humorous self-awareness and playful tone of O. Henry's narration.

Overall, the Field is preserved with a high degree of equivalence, with the main shifts occurring at the stylistic rather than semantic level.

In terms of Tenor, the interpersonal relationship between Jim and Della remains remarkably consistent in the Persian translation. For instance, "Jim, darling" is rendered as «جیم، عزیزم» (Jim, my darling), preserving the intimacy and affection of their marital relationship. Likewise, the familiar form of address "Dell" is naturally retained as «دل» (Dell), maintaining the personal and affectionate tone of their exchanges. These choices effectively preserve the closeness between the two characters that is central to the story.

The narrator's voice shows a more noticeable shift in the Persian translation. O. Henry frequently addresses the reader directly through playful irony, as in "Dear friends", rendered as «دوستان عزیز» (Dear friends), which accurately preserves the direct and friendly address. However, in other instances, the narrator's conversational irony becomes more literary. For example, "Which is all very good" is translated as «و این، خود، چیز بسیار خوبی است» (And this, in itself, is a very good thing). Although elegant, the Persian rendering sounds more formal and lacks the light conversational irony of the original. More functionally equivalent alternatives could be «که البته این خودش بهترین بخش ماجراست» (Which, of course, is the best part of the story) or «و راستش، همین از همه بهتر است» (And honestly, this is the best of all). These alternatives more effectively retain the narrator's friendly, conversational style.

Overall, the translation successfully preserves the interpersonal relations between the characters, although the narrator's voice is occasionally rendered in a slightly more elevated and literary register.

In terms of Mode, the translation preserves the interplay among narration, dialogue, and description throughout the text. Dialogue remains fluent and natural, while the cohesive progression of the narrative is also maintained. However, the Persian translation occasionally restructures O. Henry's short, independent clauses into longer and more interconnected syntactic units. For example, concise clauses such as "She counted it three times", "Tomorrow would be Christmas", and "There was nothing to do" may be integrated into broader Persian sentence structures. Although the experiential and propositional content remains unchanged, this restructuring produces a smoother and less abrupt narrative flow. Consequently, some of the tension and immediacy associated with O. Henry's concise sentence structure is slightly reduced. Overall, the Mode is functionally preserved, with the main shifts reflecting syntactic and stylistic adaptation to Persian narrative conventions.

4.3.2. Genre Comparison

The translation successfully reproduces the generic conventions of the literary short story. Its ironic ending, symbolic structure, dialogue, and narrative progression are all retained, preserving the text's overall generic identity. The Christmas setting is likewise maintained without cultural domestication. Rather than replacing Christmas with a culturally equivalent Persian setting or tradition, the translation retains the original cultural framework and its associated references. This choice is consistent with House's concept of overt translation, in which the translator deliberately preserves the ST's cultural and contextual features rather than adapting them to the target culture. The translation therefore maintains the defining characteristics of the original genre while allowing the narrative to remain recognisably situated within its original cultural context.

4.3.3. Functional Comparison

House considers functional comparison the most important stage of analysis. In the Persian translation, the ideational function remains almost entirely intact, allowing readers to understand the central themes of poverty, sacrifice, generosity, love, and irony as conveyed in the original. The interpersonal function is likewise largely preserved, enabling readers to empathize with Jim and Della. However, the translation occasionally heightens emotional intensity. For example, “She cried” is rendered as «های‌های» (She wept bitterly), which conveys a stronger emotional response than the relatively restrained English expression. Similarly, “Her eyes were shining” becomes «چشمانش برق می‌زد» (Her eyes were sparkling), an acceptable and natural rendering. Although individual choices remain appropriate, their cumulative effect makes the Persian version slightly more sentimental than O. Henry’s restrained prose. This constitutes a minor functional shift rather than a translation error.

4.4. Translation Mismatches

House distinguishes between functional correspondence and functional mismatch. Importantly, a mismatch is not necessarily a “mistake”. It is any point where the TT diverges from the ST in a way that affects register, genre, or textual function. The following examples illustrate the principal translation shifts identified in the Persian translation.

4.4.1. Lexical Mismatches

In the lexical domain, most shifts involve explicitation, emotional amplification, or stylistic smoothing rather than substantial semantic loss. For example, “bulldozing the grocer” is rendered as «چانه‌زدن» (bargaining persistently with the grocer). Although this rendering conveys the persistence implied by “bulldozing”, it weakens the metaphorical and humorous exaggeration of the English verb. Expressions such as «آن‌قدر با بقال کلنجار رفته بود» (she had struggled with the grocer so much) or «آن‌قدر سماجت کرده بود» (she had insisted so persistently) could preserve more of the comic force.

By contrast, “shabby little couch” is translated as «کاناپه کوچک و رنگ‌ورورفته» (a small, faded couch). The choice of «رنگ‌ورورفته» effectively conveys both the physical condition of the object and its emotional atmosphere, making this a functionally successful rendering rather than a mismatch. Similarly, “flop down” becomes «خودش را روی کاناپه انداخت» (she threw herself onto the couch), which is natural in Persian but somewhat less informal than the English verb. A colloquial alternative such as «ولو شد روی کاناپه» (she flopped onto the couch) would more closely reproduce the original informality.

A further shift appears in “howl”, rendered as «های‌های گریه کرد» (she wept bitterly). The Persian expression intensifies the emotional effect, as “howl” does not necessarily specify such an intense form of crying. This constitutes a minor interpersonal shift. Finally, “truant schoolboy” is translated as «پسرچه‌ای بازیگوش و مدرسه‌گریز» (a playful and school-avoiding boy), which makes the implied image more explicit without producing a significant loss of meaning. Overall, the lexical shifts primarily involve changes in explicitness, emotional intensity, and stylistic force.

4.4.2. Syntactic Mismatches

House places less emphasis on grammatical form itself than on its functional consequences. One example is “Three times Della counted it”, rendered as «دلا سه بار پول را شمرد» (Della counted the money

three times). The Persian sentence is natural and grammatically appropriate, but the marked initial position of “Three times” is normalized, slightly reducing the emphasis created by the English word order. A rendering such as «سه بار بود که دلا پول را شمرد» (It was three times that Della counted the money) could preserve this emphasis more closely.

By contrast, “One dollar and eighty-seven cents” becomes «یک دلار و هشتاد و هفت سنت» (one dollar and eighty-seven cents), with no notable functional shift. Syntactic adaptation is also evident when several short English sentences are combined into a longer Persian structure. For example, “Twenty dollars a week doesn’t go far. Expenses had been greater than she had calculated” is rendered as «با هفته‌ای بیست دلار درآمد، زندگی به‌سختی می‌گذشت. هزینه‌ها همیشه بیشتر از آن چیزی از آب درمی‌آمد که او حساب کرده بود» (With an income of twenty dollars a week, life was difficult. Expenses always turned out to be more than she had calculated). Although the information is retained, the expanded structure produces a smoother rhythm and slightly reduces the concise pacing of the original.

4.4.3. Pragmatic Mismatches

Pragmatic shifts are particularly relevant to House’s analysis because they may affect interpersonal meaning and the relationship between the narrator and the reader. “Forget the hashed metaphor”, for instance, becomes «این تشبیه کلیشه‌ای را نادیده بگیرید» (Ignore this clichéd simile). While the literal meaning is conveyed, «کلیشه‌ای» does not fully reproduce the narrator’s playful and self-deprecating humour. A more functionally equivalent rendering could be «از این استعاره نخنما بگذریم» (Let us move past this worn-out metaphor).

In contrast, “dear friends” is translated as «دوستان عزیز» (dear friends), preserving the narrator’s direct and friendly address without a significant pragmatic shift. Similarly, “Which is all very good” becomes «و این، خود، چیز بسیار خوبی است» (And this, in itself, is a very good thing). Although semantically accurate, the Persian formulation is somewhat more formal and literary, making the narrator sound less conversational. Finally, “What could I do?” is rendered as «آخر چه کار دیگری از دستم برمی‌آمد؟» (After all, what else could I do?). The addition of «آخر» enhances the naturalness of spoken Persian and reinforces the pragmatic force of the utterance without altering its communicative function.

4.4.4. Cultural Mismatches

Cultural references are generally retained rather than domesticated. “The Magi” is translated as «مغان», preserving the foreign cultural reference while using a term established in Persian literary and religious discourse. The choice is culturally significant because «مجوسیان» (Magi/Zoroastrians) could be semantically appropriate but may evoke a somewhat different cultural association for contemporary Persian readers.

Likewise, “Coney Island chorus girl” becomes «دخترهای گروه کُر کُنِی آیلند» (the girls of the Coney Island chorus group), retaining the geographical and cultural reference. Readers unfamiliar with early twentieth-century American entertainment may not fully perceive its contextual implications, but the absence of domestication is consistent with an overt translation strategy. “Queen of Sheba” and “King Solomon” are similarly retained, preserving the cultural framework of the original without introducing target-culture equivalents.

4.4.5. Stylistic Mismatches

House treats literary style as an integral component of textual function. Overall, the Persian translation preserves O. Henry's distinctive literary style, but three recurrent tendencies can be observed. First, implicit meanings are occasionally made more explicit. Second, some expressions intensify the emotional force of the original. Third, the narrator occasionally adopts a more formal or literary register than the conversational English source. None of these tendencies substantially alters the communicative purpose of the story; however, taken together, they give the TT a slightly more elevated stylistic profile than the ST.

4.5. Overall Quality Statement

The comparative analysis indicates that the Persian translation achieves a high degree of functional equivalence with the English ST within House's (2015) Revised TQA model. It reconstructs the principal communicative purpose of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi* while largely preserving its thematic structure, narrative progression, interpersonal relations, and literary identity.

At the level of Field, the translation retains the central themes of poverty, self-sacrifice, marital devotion, generosity, and Christmas gift-giving. The sequence of events and underlying narrative logic remain intact. Although some lexical choices involve explicitation or stylistic adaptation, these have little effect on the ideational content.

The analysis of Tenor similarly reveals a high degree of correspondence. The affectionate relationship between Jim and Della is maintained, as is the narrator's role as an external commentator who occasionally addresses the reader directly. The main shift concerns stylistic formalization, as the Persian narrator sometimes adopts a more elevated literary register than O. Henry's conversational and ironic voice.

In terms of Mode, the translation preserves the interplay between narration, dialogue, and description, while cohesion and coherence remain strong. Some syntactic restructuring produces a smoother narrative rhythm, reflecting Persian literary conventions without substantially affecting textual function.

Genre is likewise preserved. The narrative organization, ironic reversal, symbolic ending, and moral resolution of the literary short story remain intact. The Christmas setting and other cultural references are also retained rather than domesticated, consistent with House's (2015) concept of overt translation.

The analysis of Textual Function further confirms substantial equivalence. Both ideational and interpersonal functions are largely maintained, although occasional lexical expansion and emotional intensification make the Persian version somewhat more explicit and expressive.

The identified mismatches are best classified as *covertly erroneous errors* in House's (2015) terminology, involving explicitation, normalization, formalization, and moderate emotional amplification. No significant *overtly erroneous errors*, such as mistranslations, omissions, or distortions of propositional meaning, were identified. Overall, the translation preserves the communicative, literary, and cultural functions of the ST, with the principal divergences occurring at the stylistic level.

5. Conclusion

This study employed House's (2015) Revised TQA model to examine an AI-generated Persian translation of O. Henry's *The Gift of the Magi*. Following House's procedure, independent profiles of the ST and target text TT were established and subsequently compared across Field, Tenor, Mode,

Genre, and Textual Function. The findings indicate that the translation achieves a high degree of functional equivalence with the English original. Its narrative organization, thematic development, interpersonal relationships, and overall communicative purpose are largely preserved, demonstrating that contemporary LLMs can process and reproduce literary discourse beyond sentence-level correspondence.

The strongest correspondence was observed at the semantic and macro-textual levels. The Persian translation retains the central themes of poverty, sacrifice, generosity, marital devotion, and gift-giving, while maintaining the sequence of events and relationships among the characters. Few instances of overt mistranslation or loss of propositional meaning were identified. This suggests that lexical and grammatical accuracy is no longer necessarily the principal limitation of contemporary AI-assisted literary translation. Rather, the more substantial differences emerge in areas where literary meaning depends on pragmatic nuance, stylistic choices, and the interaction between linguistic form and textual function.

The analysis therefore indicates that successful transfer of propositional meaning does not necessarily entail complete stylistic equivalence. The principal shifts identified in the Persian translation involve lexical explicitation, normalization, formalization, and moderate emotional intensification. These choices occasionally make the narrator's voice more explicit, formal, or emotionally expressive than in O. Henry's original. In particular, some of the irony, conversational informality, and subtle narrator-reader relationship are slightly altered. Nevertheless, these shifts generally do not undermine the overall communicative purpose of the text.

Importantly, not all deviations from the ST should be regarded as translation errors. Several stylistic changes appear to reflect established conventions of Persian literary prose, including smoother syntactic progression, greater explicitness, and a somewhat more elevated narrative register. From this perspective, some differences can be understood as target-language adaptation rather than failures of comprehension. The distinction is particularly relevant to AI-generated literary translation because fluent output may result from the model's tendency to normalize marked or stylistically distinctive ST features according to patterns prevalent in the target language.

The treatment of culture-specific references provides a further indication of this tendency. References such as the Magi, Broadway, and Coney Island are generally retained rather than domesticated. This corresponds with House's (2015) concept of overt translation, in which significant elements of the source culture remain visible in the TT. Such preservation allows the translation to maintain the cultural positioning of the original while remaining accessible to Persian readers.

These findings also demonstrate the continuing relevance of House's functional-pragmatic framework for evaluating AI-generated literary translation. By examining the interaction of Field, Tenor, Mode, Genre, and Textual Function, the model provides a basis for identifying differences that would remain invisible in evaluations focused primarily on lexical accuracy or grammatical correctness. Its application in the present study shows that an AI translation can be semantically accurate and communicatively effective while still exhibiting subtle shifts in register, interpersonal meaning, and literary style.

The findings have implications for the role of AI in contemporary literary translation. Current LLMs can generate fluent, coherent, and structurally consistent first drafts, potentially reducing the amount of routine post-editing required (Castilho, 2020; Kenny, 2022). However, the present analysis suggests that human intervention remains particularly important when the preservation of authorial voice, irony, pragmatic nuance, and stylistic individuality is required. Literary translation involves interpretive decisions that cannot always be captured through semantic correspondence alone. Accordingly, AI is more appropriately understood as an assisting technology that complements rather than replaces the expertise of human literary translators.

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting these findings. First, the study examines a single literary work and therefore does not seek to establish generalizable conclusions. Rather, it constitutes an in-depth qualitative case study of the application of House's (2015) Revised TQA Model to an AI-generated literary translation. Second, the evaluation of literary translation inevitably involves interpretive judgment. Although House's framework provides systematic analytical criteria, alternative interpretations of particular translation choices may remain possible. Finally, the study investigates the output of a single AI system, OpenAI's ChatGPT (GPT-5.5), and therefore does not account for differences among models or versions. Future research could compare multiple AI systems, examine the effects of different prompting strategies, and investigate how human post-editing affects the stylistic and functional quality of AI-generated literary translations.

Overall, the study demonstrates that contemporary AI-assisted translation can reproduce the principal communicative and semantic functions of a literary work with considerable effectiveness, while stylistic and pragmatic equivalence remains more challenging. The combination of AI-generated drafts with informed human evaluation and revision therefore represents a practical approach to literary translation in which technological efficiency is complemented by human interpretive and stylistic expertise.

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