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İÇİNDEKİLER

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"Bu kitapta yer alan bölümlerde kullanılan kaynakların, görüşlerin, bulguların, sonuçların, tablo, şekil, resim ve her türlü içeriğin sorumluluğu yazar veya yazarlarına ait olup ulusal ve uluslararası telif haklarına konu olabilecek mali ve hukuki sorumluluk da yazarlara aittir."

THE TRANSLATION OF GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE IN FICTION: NEGOTIATING POWER AND REPRESENTATION

Neslihan PARLAK¹

1. INTRODUCTION

Gender-based violence has become one of the most widely discussed issues across disciplines such as sociology, gender studies, literary studies, and cultural studies. Beyond its physical manifestations, gender-based violence encompasses psychological, emotional, verbal, and symbolic forms of domination that are embedded in social structures and everyday discourses. Literature has long served as a powerful medium through which such experiences are represented, questioned, and interpreted. Fictional narratives, in particular, provide a space where the complex dynamics of power, oppression, resistance, and agency can be explored through the experiences of individual characters and communities. Consequently, literary representations of gender-based violence do not merely reflect social realities; they also participate in the construction of cultural understandings of gender, power, and identity.

When literary texts travel across linguistic and cultural boundaries, these representations inevitably undergo processes of transformation. Translation is not a neutral act of linguistic transfer but a complex process of cultural negotiation in which meanings are selected, reframed, and reconstructed. As feminist translation scholars have repeatedly argued, translation

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constitutes a site of ideological intervention where questions of gender, power, and representation become particularly visible (Simon, 1996, pp. 1–2). Rather than functioning as an invisible mediator, the translator actively participates in the production of meaning and may contribute to the reinforcement, mitigation, or reconfiguration of gendered discourses embedded in the source text. Feminist approaches to translation have therefore challenged traditional assumptions of equivalence and neutrality by emphasizing the translator's agency and the political dimensions of translation practice (von Flotow, 1997, pp. 12–15).

The relationship between translation and gender becomes even more significant when the source text contains representations of violence directed at women or other gendered subjects. Such representations are often constructed through subtle linguistic choices, narrative perspectives, and discursive strategies rather than explicit descriptions alone. The translation of gender-based violence thus involves more than the transfer of lexical meanings; it requires the negotiation of culturally situated understandings of victimhood, agency, resistance, and power. Translators frequently face ethical and ideological challenges when rendering scenes of abuse, coercion, intimidation, or psychological manipulation, particularly when the target culture may interpret these experiences differently. As a result, translation can either preserve the critical force of the original narrative or unintentionally reshape the ways in which violence is perceived and understood.

From a narratological perspective, representations of violence are closely linked to questions of narrative voice, focalization, and character interiority. Readers do not encounter violence directly; rather, they experience it through specific narrative structures that determine whose perspective is privileged, whose voice is heard, and whose emotions become accessible. Narrative representation therefore plays a crucial role

in shaping readers' perceptions of gendered power relations. Changes introduced during translation may alter the narrative distance between readers and characters, shift patterns of focalization, or modify the emotional intensity of traumatic experiences. Such shifts can significantly influence how gender-based violence is interpreted within the target text and how readers position themselves in relation to victims and perpetrators.

Recent developments in translation studies have increasingly highlighted the importance of translator agency in the circulation of narratives and ideologies. According to Baker (2019), translators are not passive conveyors of stories but active participants in the dissemination, contestation, and transformation of narratives across cultures (pp. 3–5). This perspective is particularly relevant to the translation of gender-based violence because translators inevitably engage with broader social narratives concerning gender, authority, vulnerability, and resistance. Their choices may reinforce dominant discourses or create opportunities for alternative interpretations that challenge existing power structures.

Against this background, the present chapter examines the translation of gender-based violence in fiction through the interconnected concepts of narrative representation and translator agency. Bringing together insights from Feminist Translation Studies, Gender Studies, and Narrative Theory, the chapter explores how representations of violence are reconstructed in translation and how such reconstructions affect the negotiation of power relations within literary narratives. More specifically, it investigates the ways in which translational choices influence the representation of female subjectivity, the portrayal of violence, and the positioning of readers in relation to gendered experiences of oppression and resistance. By focusing on the interaction between violence, narrative representation, and translator agency,

the chapter aims to contribute to ongoing discussions regarding the ethical, ideological, and narratological dimensions of literary translation.

2. GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE AND GENDER AND POWER

Gender-based violence is not merely an act of physical aggression but a structural and discursive phenomenon embedded within broader relations of power, ideology, and social hierarchy. In feminist scholarship, violence against women and other gendered subjects is widely understood as a manifestation of unequal power relations rather than isolated interpersonal incidents. From this perspective, gender-based violence is produced and sustained through cultural norms, institutional practices, and linguistic representations that normalize domination and inequality (Butler, 1990, pp. 33–35).

In literary contexts, gender-based violence is often represented through narrative strategies that shape how readers perceive both victims and perpetrators. Such representations are never neutral; they are filtered through discourse, focalization, and narrative framing, which influence the degree of empathy, distance, or critical engagement produced in the reader. As feminist theorists have argued, language itself participates in the construction of gendered realities, meaning that the way violence is narrated is as significant as the violence itself (hooks, 2000, pp. 15–18). From a power-oriented perspective, gender-based violence can be conceptualized as a mechanism through which patriarchal structures are maintained and reproduced. Pierre Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence is particularly relevant here, as it highlights how domination operates not only through physical force but also through subtle forms of cultural and linguistic imposition that are often misrecognized as legitimate or

natural. In this sense, violence becomes embedded in everyday discourse, shaping how gender roles and hierarchies are perceived and internalized.

Within literary narratives, such symbolic and structural dimensions of violence are frequently encoded in dialogue, narration, and character positioning. The representation of female characters, for instance, is often mediated through male-gazed or institutionally shaped perspectives, which may reinforce or challenge dominant ideological frameworks. Narrative theory provides useful tools for analyzing these processes. Gérard Genette emphasizes the importance of focalization in determining whose perspective structures the narrative, while Mieke Bal extends this discussion by highlighting how narrative layers influence meaning production and reader interpretation.

Gender-based violence in fiction, therefore, cannot be separated from the narrative mechanisms through which it is constructed. The same event may appear radically different depending on whether it is focalized through the victim, the perpetrator, or an external narrator. This narrative positioning directly affects how agency, responsibility, and emotional intensity are distributed within the text. As a result, violence is not only represented but also interpreted through specific ideological lenses embedded in narrative form.

When these narratives are translated, the relationship between gender, power, and representation becomes even more complex. Translators inevitably engage with the ideological load of the source text, making decisions that may either reinforce or subtly transform the power relations embedded within the narrative. In this sense, gender-based violence becomes a site of interpretive negotiation in translation, where meaning is not simply transferred but reconstructed across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

2.1. Feminist Translation Studies and Translator Agency

Feminist Translation Studies emerged as a critical response to traditional translation paradigms that conceptualized translation as a neutral, transparent, and mechanical transfer of meaning between languages. Instead, feminist approaches argue that translation is inherently ideological and that every translational act participates in the production, circulation, and transformation of meaning within specific cultural and political contexts. In this respect, translation is no longer seen as secondary or derivative, but as a form of rewriting that actively shapes how texts—and particularly gendered narratives—are understood in the target culture (Simon, 1996, pp. 1–3).

One of the foundational contributions to this field is Sherry Simon’s work, which explicitly situates translation within feminist cultural critique. Simon emphasizes that language is not a neutral medium but a site where gendered power relations are inscribed and reproduced (Simon, 1996, pp. 2–4). From this perspective, translation becomes a space where these power relations can either be reinforced or challenged. The translator, therefore, is not an invisible intermediary but an active participant in ideological production. Simon’s approach fundamentally disrupts the traditional expectation of translator invisibility by highlighting the political responsibility embedded in translational decision-making.

Building on this framework, Luise von Flotow further develops the idea of feminist translation as an interventionist practice. Von Flotow argues that feminist translators often adopt visible strategies such as supplementing, prefacing, and even “hijacking” texts in order to expose or resist patriarchal discourse structures embedded in the source material (von Flotow, 1997, pp. 14–17). These strategies demonstrate that translation is not

merely interpretive but also transformative. In feminist translation practice, the act of translating becomes a form of ethical engagement with gendered language, where the translator deliberately intervenes to make women's voices more visible within the target culture.

In this theoretical lineage, the concept of translator agency gains central importance. Rather than being constrained by notions of fidelity or equivalence, the translator is understood as a socially and ideologically situated subject who actively participates in meaning-making processes. This shift is particularly significant in the translation of narratives that involve gender-based violence, where linguistic choices directly affect the representation of suffering, agency, and power. As recent scholarship in translation studies has emphasized, translators inevitably make interpretive decisions that shape how ideological positions are transmitted across languages, meaning that neutrality is neither possible nor theoretically sustainable (Baker, 2019, pp. 3–5).

Mona Baker's narrative theory of translation further strengthens this argument by conceptualizing translation as a form of "re-narration." From this perspective, translators do not simply transfer narratives but actively reconstruct them within new socio-cultural frameworks. This reconstruction process has direct implications for how gendered violence is represented in translated fiction. The translator may amplify, mitigate, or reframe the intensity of violence through lexical choices, syntactic restructuring, and shifts in focalization. Consequently, translation becomes a site where competing narratives of gender, power, and morality are negotiated.

The intersection of translator agency and feminist ethics becomes particularly visible in narratives of gender-based violence. Translators are often confronted with ethically charged

decisions regarding how explicitly violence should be rendered, whether emotional intensity should be preserved or softened, and how victims' subjectivity should be linguistically constructed. These decisions are not merely technical but deeply ideological, as they determine whether the translated text reinforces dominant patriarchal narratives or opens space for alternative readings of gendered experience.

From a feminist ethical standpoint, translation can be understood as a form of responsibility toward both the source text and the target readership. However, this responsibility is not symmetrical. Feminist translation theory challenges the assumption of absolute fidelity and instead proposes a more dynamic model of ethical accountability, where the translator is responsible for the social effects of textual transmission. In cases of gender-based violence, this implies a careful negotiation between preserving the reality of violence and avoiding its normalization or sensationalization within the target culture.

Ultimately, feminist translation theory positions the translator as an ideological agent operating at the intersection of language, power, and representation. In narratives of gender-based violence, this agency becomes even more pronounced, as translation decisions directly affect how violence is perceived, interpreted, and emotionally experienced by readers. The translator, therefore, occupies a critical position in the construction of meaning, where ethical, political, and narrative dimensions converge. Within this framework, translation is not only an act of linguistic mediation but also a form of cultural and ideological intervention that shapes the representation of gendered experience across linguistic borders.

2.2. Narrative Representation of Violence: Voice, Focalization and Interiority

The representation of gender-based violence in fiction is deeply embedded in narrative structures that determine how violence is perceived, interpreted, and emotionally processed by readers. Violence in literary texts does not exist as a direct or transparent event; rather, it is always mediated through narrative voice, focalization, and the representation of consciousness. In this sense, narrative form does not simply describe violence but actively constructs its meaning and affective force within the text (Bal, 2009, pp. 145–148).

Narrative voice plays a crucial role in shaping the reader's ethical and emotional engagement with violent events. Who speaks, who sees, and who is silenced are not neutral textual decisions but ideological ones that structure the distribution of power within the narrative. Recent narratological studies emphasize that narrative voice is not merely a technical feature but a site where subjectivity, authority, and gendered positioning are negotiated (Cao, 2025, pp. 602–605). In the context of gender-based violence, narrative voice becomes even more significant, as it can either foreground the victim's experience or obscure it through externalized or distanced narration.

Closely related to narrative voice is focalization, which determines the perspective through which events are filtered. As Genette's foundational framework suggests, focalization regulates the relationship between what is seen and who sees it (Genette, 1980, pp. 189–193). However, contemporary narratology has expanded this concept to account for the fluidity of perspective, particularly in narratives involving trauma and violence. Studies of literary representations of women's oppression demonstrate that shifts in focalization can significantly alter the perceived intensity and ethical framing of

violence, especially when internal focalization is replaced with external or omniscient perspectives (Agustina & Budiman, 2024, pp. 236–238).

Interiority, understood as the representation of a character's inner thoughts, emotions, and consciousness, is another key dimension in the narration of violence. The degree to which a text grants access to interiority determines whether violence is experienced as distant observation or embodied affect. Feminist narratological research has shown that women's interior experiences of violence are often marginalized or fragmented in literary discourse, which has implications for how agency and victimhood are constructed (Martínez-Falquina, 2020, pp. 5–8). When translated, these representations of interiority may undergo further transformation, depending on how translators interpret and render psychological depth, emotional intensity, and narrative immediacy.

Recent interdisciplinary studies highlight that narrative representations of violence are not only shaped by literary conventions but also by broader discursive and ideological structures. For example, narrative framing has been shown to influence how gender-based violence is socially understood and legitimized, particularly when narratives reproduce normalized or naturalized forms of abuse (Saccà & Belmonte, 2022, pp. 45–47). In such cases, violence becomes embedded in everyday storytelling practices, making its recognition more difficult for readers.

From a translation studies perspective, the interaction between narrative structure and ideological mediation becomes even more complex. Translators do not only transfer lexical meaning but also reconstruct narrative configurations such as focalization, voice alignment, and access to interiority. These processes inevitably involve interpretive decisions that can either

preserve or alter the original narrative's ethical positioning. As recent research on translation and narrative perspective demonstrates, shifts in narrative voice during translation may significantly affect how readers perceive cultural and gendered identities within the text (Tahiri, 2020, pp. 205–208).

Furthermore, studies on narrative bias and representation highlight that textual structures often encode implicit gender hierarchies, which can be reinforced or challenged through narrative design (Gala et al., 2020, pp. 2–4). These narrative patterns are not only present in literary fiction but also extend to broader media discourses, where gendered tropes shape the representation of violence and agency. In this regard, narrative violence is not limited to the depiction of physical harm but also includes the structural silencing or marginalization of certain voices within the story. Interiority and focalization become especially important when considering feminist adaptations and rewritings of canonical texts. Research shows that when narrative authority is shifted toward female characters, representations of violence are reconfigured in ways that foreground resistance, ambiguity, and emotional complexity (Jin & Piao, 2025, pp. 160–164). This suggests that narrative form is not fixed but can be strategically reworked to challenge dominant representations of gendered suffering.

In translation, these narrative dynamics are further complicated by linguistic and cultural differences. Translators may unconsciously shift focalization patterns or alter the depth of interior access, thereby reshaping how violence is experienced in the target text. Computational and corpus-based studies of translation bias have also demonstrated that narrative structures can reproduce gender asymmetries across languages, particularly in relation to voice assignment and subject positioning (Conti et al., 2025). Such findings reinforce the idea that narrative representation is inseparable from ideological mediation.

Ultimately, narrative representation of gender-based violence operates at the intersection of voice, focalization, and interiority. These three dimensions work together to construct not only how violence is narrated but also how it is ethically and emotionally interpreted. In translation, these narrative elements become sites of negotiation, where meaning is reconstructed and power relations are potentially reconfigured. Understanding these processes is essential for examining how gender-based violence travels across languages and how its representation is shaped by both narrative and translational choices.

3. DISCUSSION

3.1. Negotiating Gender-Based Violence, Narrative Representation and Translator Agency

This chapter has argued that the translation of gender-based violence in fiction cannot be understood as a purely linguistic operation. Instead, it emerges as a complex site where narrative structures, ideological positioning, and translational decision-making intersect. In this final discussion, the three central dimensions of the study—gender-based violence, narrative representation, and translator agency—are brought together in order to highlight how meaning is continuously negotiated rather than transferred across languages.

A key finding that emerges from recent feminist and narratological scholarship is that gender-based violence is not only represented through explicit depictions of physical harm but also through subtle narrative configurations that shape how violence is perceived and interpreted. Contemporary research increasingly emphasizes that violence in narrative is constructed through discourse, framing, and perspective rather than merely event-based description (Schwanck & Penttinen, 2025, pp. 6–9). This means that what counts as violence in a literary text is

inseparable from how it is narrated and from whose point of view it is filtered.

Within this framework, narrative representation becomes a crucial mediating layer. Studies on narrative agency highlight that storytelling itself is a relational act in which meaning is co-constructed between narrator, character, and reader (Schwanck & Penttinen, 2025; Schwanck & Penttinen, 2025, pp. 10–12). When applied to gender-based violence, this relational structure determines whether the victim's experience is centered, fragmented, or silenced. Similarly, research on narrative agency in feminist storytelling demonstrates that voice and perspective are not fixed properties of the text but dynamic structures that shape ethical interpretation (Schwanck & Penttinen, 2025, pp. 3–5). In translation, these structures are further reconfigured, making narrative representation a particularly sensitive site of ideological negotiation.

Translator agency plays a decisive role in this process. As feminist translation theory has long argued, translators are not invisible intermediaries but active agents who intervene in the production of meaning (Simon, 1996, pp. 2–4; von Flotow, 1997, pp. 14–17). However, more recent scholarship has expanded this view by emphasizing that translator agency is not only ideological but also relational and distributed across textual systems. Translators operate within constraints imposed by linguistic structures, cultural expectations, and institutional norms, yet they still make interpretive decisions that affect how gendered violence is framed and understood in the target text (Burkhard & Park, 2023, pp. 7–10).

Recent developments in translation studies further complicate this picture by highlighting the ethical dimension of translator agency. Feminist ethics in translation research argue that translating trauma and gender-based violence requires an

acute awareness of the potential harm or distortion that may arise from translational choices (Bosseaux, 2025, pp. 92–94). In this sense, translation becomes an ethical practice of care, where the translator must balance fidelity to the source narrative with responsibility toward the target audience. This ethical tension is particularly evident in the representation of violent scenes, where decisions about explicitness, mitigation, or intensification directly shape the reader’s emotional and cognitive engagement.

At the same time, narrative theory provides essential tools for understanding how these ethical decisions operate at the textual level. Studies on narrative voice and focalization demonstrate that shifts in perspective can significantly alter the ideological positioning of characters, especially in contexts involving gendered violence (Agustina & Budiman, 2024, pp. 236–238). When translators modify focalization patterns—either deliberately or unintentionally—they may change the perceived agency of female characters and the visibility of their suffering. This highlights the importance of considering narrative structure not as a stable framework but as a malleable site of translational intervention.

Another important dimension concerns the emotional and cognitive effects of violent narratives on readers. Research on translation and affect shows that exposure to violent content influences translators’ interpretive strategies and narrative transportation, suggesting that translation is not only a cognitive but also an affective process (Rojo López, 2024, pp. 301–304). This affective dimension becomes particularly significant in feminist contexts, where emotional engagement with gendered violence may shape how translators render tone, intensity, and subjectivity in the target text.

Moreover, recent interdisciplinary studies in gender and translation highlight the persistence of structural bias in both

human and machine translation systems. Gender bias in translation technologies reveals how linguistic systems may reproduce masculine defaults or obscure gendered subject positions, thereby reinforcing broader patterns of inequality (Cabrera & Niehues, 2023; Savoldi et al., 2022). Although these studies focus on computational systems, their implications extend to literary translation, where similar asymmetries may emerge in the representation of gendered agency and violence. From a broader ideological perspective, translation can thus be understood as a site where competing narratives of gender, power, and violence are continuously reconstructed. Feminist and decolonial approaches emphasize that translation does not merely transfer meaning across languages but actively participates in shaping how gendered experiences are made visible or invisible across cultural contexts (Niu, 2025). This suggests that translation is always embedded within wider systems of power that influence how violence is narrated, interpreted, and legitimized.

Importantly, the concept of narrative violence itself extends beyond the representation of physical harm to include the structural silencing of certain voices within the text. Studies on narrative exclusion and framing show that what is left unsaid or marginalized in storytelling can be as significant as what is explicitly narrated (Saccà & Belmonte, 2022, pp. 44–46). In translation, such silences may be intensified or mitigated depending on the translator's interpretive stance, further reinforcing the role of translator agency in shaping narrative ethics.

Taken together, these findings suggest that the translation of gender-based violence operates at the intersection of three interdependent forces: narrative structure, ideological positioning, and translator agency. Narrative representation determines how violence is framed; translator agency shapes how this framing is reconstructed in the target language; and feminist

ethics governs the responsibility attached to these choices. Rather than functioning independently, these dimensions form a dynamic system of negotiation in which meaning is continuously produced and re-produced across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

Ultimately, this chapter argues that translating gender-based violence in fiction should be understood as an act of ethical and narrative negotiation rather than mechanical transfer. Translators are positioned at a critical intersection where they must navigate between preserving the affective and ideological intensity of the source text and adapting it to the cultural and linguistic expectations of the target readership. In doing so, they actively participate in the construction of gendered narratives of violence, making translation a profoundly political and ethical practice.

4. CONCLUSION

This chapter has examined the translation of gender-based violence in fiction by integrating three interdependent analytical dimensions: narrative representation, gendered power structures, and translator agency. Rather than treating translation as a secondary act of linguistic transfer, the discussion has positioned it as a constitutive site where violence is reconfigured through narrative and ideological processes. In doing so, the chapter has argued that gender-based violence in fiction is not simply represented but continuously reconstructed across narrative and translational layers.

A key theoretical implication of this study is that narrative representation is not a neutral container of violent events but an active mechanism of meaning production. Narrative voice, focalization, and interiority do not merely mediate access to violence; they structure its ethical intelligibility. In other words,

how violence is narrated directly determines how it is cognitively and affectively processed by readers. This reinforces the idea that narrative form is inseparable from the ideological framing of gendered suffering and agency.

Within this framework, translation introduces an additional layer of mediation that complicates narrative stability. Translational processes may alter focalization patterns, redistribute narrative voice, or modify access to character interiority. These shifts, whether deliberate or implicit, have significant implications for the representation of gender-based violence in the target text. As a result, translation should be understood not as replication but as narrative reconfiguration, where meaning is re-encoded within new linguistic and cultural conditions.

The analysis also demonstrates that translator agency occupies a central position in this process of reconfiguration. Building on feminist translation theory (Simon, 1996; von Flotow, 1997), this chapter has further argued that translators function as ideological agents who actively participate in the production of gendered meaning. However, this agency is not unlimited; it is embedded within institutional, linguistic, and cultural constraints. The translator therefore operates within a field of tension between interpretive freedom and structural limitation, particularly when dealing with narratives of violence.

Importantly, gender-based violence in fiction emerges as a multi-layered phenomenon encompassing physical, psychological, symbolic, and discursive dimensions. Each of these dimensions is narratively constructed and thus susceptible to transformation in translation. Even subtle shifts in lexical choice or narrative perspective may recalibrate the intensity, visibility, or moral framing of violence. This underscores the

necessity of approaching translation as an ethically charged interpretive practice rather than a purely technical operation.

From an ethical standpoint, the findings of this chapter suggest that translating gender-based violence requires a heightened awareness of representational responsibility. Translators are not only accountable to the source text but also to the socio-cultural implications of their interpretive decisions. Feminist translation ethics therefore provides a productive framework for understanding translation as a form of relational accountability, in which decisions about visibility, intensity, and narrative framing carry ideological consequences.

At a broader theoretical level, the integration of gender-based violence, narrative representation, and translator agency contributes to a more complex understanding of literary translation as a site of negotiation rather than equivalence. This perspective moves beyond traditional dichotomies such as fidelity versus freedom or visibility versus invisibility and instead foregrounds translation as a dynamic process of narrative and ideological reconstruction.

Finally, this chapter opens up several avenues for future research. Empirical studies focusing on specific bilingual corpora could further clarify how narrative shifts manifest in translated representations of gender-based violence. Comparative research across different cultural and linguistic contexts could also illuminate how ideological norms shape translational strategies. Additionally, interdisciplinary approaches incorporating cognitive narratology and affect studies may deepen our understanding of how translated narratives of violence are received and emotionally processed by readers.

In conclusion, the translation of gender-based violence in fiction must be understood as a complex process of narrative negotiation in which meaning, power, and ethics are continuously

reconfigured. The translator occupies a critical mediating position within this process, functioning not as a neutral conduit but as an active participant in the reconstruction of gendered narratives. This study ultimately demonstrates that translation is not merely a linguistic practice but a form of narrative and ideological intervention that shapes how gendered experiences of violence circulate across cultural and linguistic boundaries.

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THE FACTORY SETTINGS OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE AND THE HUMAN ESSENCE IN TRANSLATION¹

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1. INTRODUCTION: BEYOND THE “END OF TRANSLATION” NARRATIVE

For several years, one prediction has echoed insistently through both academic circles and the language services industry: human translation is nearing its end. Driven by the rapid advancement of large language models and neural networks, this deterministic view reduces the centuries-old art of translation to a mere computational problem. The mainstream narrative suggests that, given enough data, the machine will eventually decipher the human experience. The picture from the field is more complicated. Professional translators take up machine translation with as much resistance as accommodation, shaped by concerns about quality, trust, and the place of human judgement in the workflow (Cadwell, O’Brien & Teixeira, 2018).

This chapter argues that the prophecy mistakes what translation actually is. It treats translation as the mechanical replacement of words—a literal decoding and encoding process—whereas translation is a situated act of cultural

¹ The conceptual foundation of this chapter—the person-centred, personalized translation modeling paradigm—draws on the author’s prior work (Vural, 2023). The large language model-based operationalization of PTM, the evaluation framework, and the illustrative application presented here are original to this chapter and are not contained in that prior work.

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negotiation performed by a human being. The chapter proceeds in two movements. The first examines the “factory settings” of artificial intelligence: what the technology inherently is, and, more importantly, what it is not. The second operationalizes Personalized Translation Modeling (PTM)—the person-centred translation paradigm proposed by Vural (2023)—for the era of foundation models. The PTM concept and its rationale are due to Vural (2023); the specific contribution of this chapter is its computational realization, which repositions the machine as an adaptable extension of the individual translator rather than a generic substitute for them.

2. THE ANATOMY OF A COMPUTATIONAL APPRENTICE

To see why artificial intelligence cannot simply replace the human translator, it helps to look under the hood of modern NMT and LLM systems. At their core, these systems operate on probability, not comprehension. A neural system does not “read” a text the way a human does: it converts words into vectors—numerical values in a multi-dimensional space—and computes the statistical likelihood of which token should follow another, based on patterns in its training data (Forcada, 2017). The encoder–decoder architectures that displaced statistical machine translation brought measurable gains in fluency and adequacy, and were quickly heralded as a new state of the art (Castilho et al., 2017); but the underlying mechanism remained predictive pattern-matching over distributed representations.

Modern systems are remarkably good at mimicking human syntax, producing grammatically flawless sentences in seconds and, with them, an illusion of understanding. Yet this is a purely mechanical fluency. The machine operates within its factory settings: pattern recognition, statistical prediction, and

surface-level syntax matching. It has no concept of truth, no subjective experience, and no awareness of the world outside its dataset—a limitation captured in the description of large models as “stochastic parrots” that recombine linguistic form without communicative intent (Bender, Gebru, McMillan-Major & Shmitchell, 2021). Viewing such a system as an autonomous translator is therefore a conceptual error; it is more accurately a highly capable but fundamentally raw apprentice.

3. ALGORITHMIC HOMOGENIZATION: THE EMPIRICAL EVIDENCE

The cost of factory-setting translation is not hypothetical; it has been measured. Because optimization minimizes loss against massive cross-domain reference data, machine outputs gravitate toward statistically safe averages. Empirical work shows that machine translation systematically fails to render the lexical diversity of human-generated or human-translated text, exacerbating frequent patterns while discarding less frequent ones (Vanmassenhove, Shterionov & Way, 2019). Subsequent experiments across paradigms and language pairs confirmed a measurable loss of lexical and morphological richness—an artificially impoverished language the authors call “machine translationese” (Vanmassenhove, Shterionov & Gwilliam, 2021).

The same homogenizing pressure reaches the level of the individual translator. In a controlled study of a renowned literary translator post-editing neural output, Kenny and Winters (2020) found that his textual voice was measurably diminished in post-edited work compared to its stronger manifestation in his unaided translation. Parallel reception research shows that human translation scores higher than machine translation and post-edited text on creativity and narrative engagement (Guerberof-Arenas & Toral, 2020). Together, these findings put empirical weight

behind a long-standing theoretical insight: the translator's presence in the text is constitutive, not decorative (Hermans, 1996; Venuti, 2008), and a technology that erases it does not merely change style—it removes an ethically significant layer of authorship.

4. CONTEXT, CULTURE, AND THE UNMAPPABLE NUANCE

The real contest between human intuition and machine computation plays out in context and cultural memory. Language is not an isolated system of signs; it is a living ecosystem deeply intertwined with history, sociology, and human emotion. An algorithm excels at local textual coherence but struggles with the unsaid: the subtle shift in tone, the historical echo of a phrase, the political undertone of a particular word choice. Idioms, metaphors, and wordplay are not just linguistic puzzles; they are reflections of a society's worldview, and their transfer requires a negotiation between two distinct cultural realities rather than the substitution of tokens.

The human translator acts here as a cultural filter. This negotiation requires empathy, shared human experience, and an understanding of human nature—qualities that cannot be reduced to an algorithmic matrix. This insight is what motivates a personalized, person-centred theory of translation: in the PTM framework, the source speaker or author is read as an individual whose idiolect, culture, and discourse form a single fabric that must be interpreted together before it can be responsibly transformed for a target culture (Vural, 2023). Where conventional computational models chase one-to-one equivalence, the personalized paradigm begins from difference.

5. THE STYLISTIC FINGERPRINT: EPISTEMIC UNDERPINNINGS

Within descriptive translation studies, style is not an ornamental layer applied to a target text; it is the manifestation of the translator's cognitive background, socio-cultural positioning, and interpretive choices (Toury, 1995). Corpus-based research has established that individual translators leave consistent, identifiable traces—recurring lexical preferences, syntactic habits, and rhetorical strategies—that function as an intellectual signature (Baker, 2000), and that this “translator style” can be investigated with methodological rigour (Saldanha, 2011). Every translation scholar builds such a repertoire through academic, professional, and institutional engagement, and it shapes the readability and positioning of the texts they produce.

Standard engineering frameworks actively suppress these variations: the phenomenon documented in Section 3 is precisely an algorithmic regression to the mean that strips the text of its rhetorical sharp edges and deliberate departures from standard usage. PTM inverts this logic. It establishes that stylistic variation is not noise to be smoothed out, but the essential qualitative substance of advanced translation practice, and it shifts the technological mandate from generic prediction to individual replication.

6. CONCEPTUALIZING PERSONALIZED TRANSLATION MODELING (PTM)

Personalized Translation Modeling (PTM) was proposed by Vural (2023) as the written-translation counterpart of the personalized modeling paradigm; this chapter gives it a computational architecture for the era of foundation models. While the PTM concept and its person-centred rationale are due to Vural (2023), the technical operationalization developed

here—corpus curation, low-rank adaptation, and a human-in-the-loop feedback loop—is the specific contribution of this chapter. Rather than forcing human scholars to adjust their cognitive workflows to the rigid constraints of a generic network, PTM asks how an algorithmic architecture can be recursively calibrated to respect, preserve, and project an individual idiolect and an institutional stylistic register. The model repositions the technological matrix as a specialized, adaptable extension of the translator’s stylistic persona—an instrument of authorship rather than an automated utility.

Architecturally, this adaptation runs through a multi-layered pipeline rather than surface-level prompting, which cannot hold stylistic consistency over long text segments. The pipeline comprises three technical phases (Figure 1).

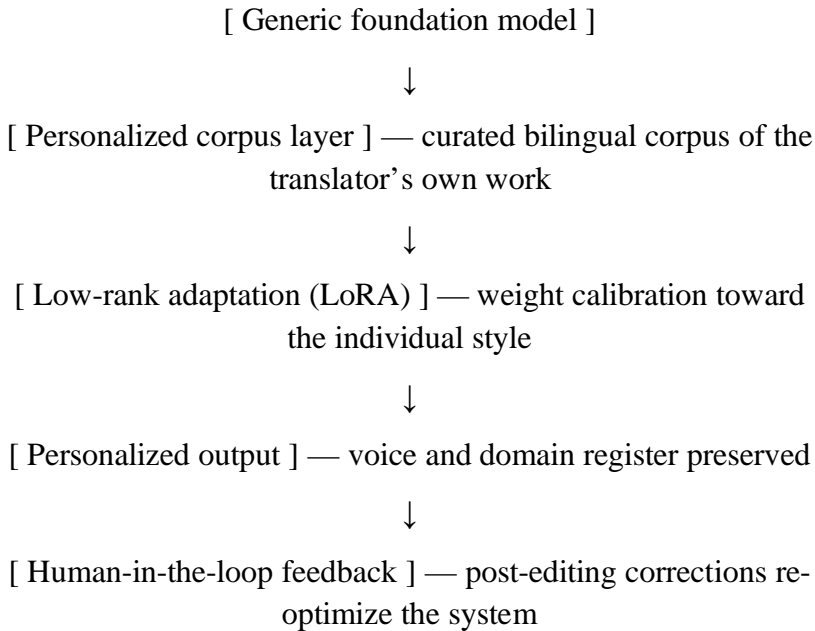


Figure 1. The PTM pipeline.

(1) Corpus selection and curation. The model ingests a curated, high-quality bilingual corpus representing the

translator's own output—published academic texts, sworn-translation records, or peer-reviewed publications. This localized dataset functions as the baseline for stylistic alignment.

(2) Low-rank adaptation and weight calibration. Instead of executing costly full-parameter fine-tuning, PTM freezes the foundational layers of the model and inserts trainable rank-decomposition matrices into the transformer layers (Hu et al., 2022). This alters the attention weights of the network to reflect the syntactic density, connective phrases, and vocabulary preferences of the individual scholar.

(3) Real-time human-in-the-loop feedback. As the translator post-edits, corrections are fed back into the system through a recursive learning loop, progressively reducing the post-editing friction and cognitive load that empirical research has long associated with machine-translation workflows (Krings, 2001).

7. EVALUATING STYLISTIC ALIGNMENT

Assessing whether a personalized system truly preserves a translator's voice calls for a dual-layered methodology that combines quantitative corpus metrics with qualitative cognitive tracking, in line with the multidimensional view of translation quality assessment advocated in recent scholarship (Moorkens, Castilho, Gaspari & Doherty, 2018). On the quantitative side, type–token ratios capture lexical diversity, sentence-length variance captures structural rhythm, and similarity scores between machine output and the translator's historical reference corpus capture stylistic proximity. On the qualitative side, time-to-edit tracking and keystroke logging operationalize the cognitive friction experienced during post-editing. Table 1 summarizes the contrast between factory-setting systems and PTM along these dimensions.

Table 1. Operational comparison: standard LLM/NMT framework versus Personalized Translation Modeling (PTM)

Evaluation dimension	Standard LLM / NMT (factory settings)	Personalized Translation Modeling (PTM)
Lexical diversity (type–token ratio)	Regresses toward corpus averages; loss of low-frequency vocabulary (Vanmassenhove et al., 2019)	Calibrated to reproduce the translator’s idiolectal lexical range
Syntactic and morphological variance	Reduced structural variety; “machine translationese” (Vanmassenhove et al., 2021)	Preserves sentence-length variance and characteristic syntactic patterns
Terminology and register	Generic, dictionary-level equivalents; weak domain register	Domain- and institution-specific register drawn from the personalized corpus
Authorial / translatorial voice	Voice diminished in post-edited output (Kenny & Winters, 2020)	Voice treated as a primary optimization target, not as noise
Creativity of output	Lower creativity scores than human translation (Guerberof-Arenas & Toral, 2020)	Human creative decisions retained; system supports rather than overwrites them
Post-editing friction	High correction load on stylistically marked texts (cf. Krings, 2001)	Reduced cognitive friction as the model converges on the translator’s norms

8. CASE ILLUSTRATION: REGISTER PRESERVATION IN LEGAL-ACADEMIC TRANSLATION

A short example from the author’s professional domain—sworn and court-appointed translation between English and Turkish—shows what is at stake. Consider the source sentence: “The judicial court expert is under an unyielding obligation to deliver an objective evaluation, ensuring that the socio-legal

context of the evidence is neither obscured by linguistic asymmetry nor flattened by standard administrative prose.”

A factory-setting system renders this as: “Adli mahkeme uzmanı, kanıtların sosyo-hukuki bağlamının ne dilsel asimetri ile karartılmamasını ne de standart idari nesir tarafından düzleştirilmemesini sağlayarak nesnel bir değerlendirme sunma konusunda katı bir yükümlülük altındadır.” While grammatically sound, the output exhibits syntactic calque—English clause architecture forced onto Turkish prose—and lexical de-individuation: “judicial court expert” is rendered with the generic “adli mahkeme uzmanı” rather than the standardized institutional term, and the register of legal obligation is flattened.

A personalized model calibrated on expert legal corpora instead produces: “Bilirkişi, delillerin sosyo-hukuki bağlamının dilsel asimetriyle gölgelenmesine veya basmakalıp idari üslupla tektipleştirilmesine mahal vermeksizin, tarafsız bir mütalaa sunmakla mükelleftir.” The personalized output enters the authoritative legal register (bilirkişi, mütalaa, mükelleftir), restructures the syntax into natural Turkish flow, and preserves the professional voice—without extensive post-editing intervention. The example is illustrative rather than experimental, but it concretizes the dimensions tabulated above.

9. BOUNDARIES AND REALITIES: THE LIMITS OF PERSONALIZATION

A balanced assessment also has to mark out the practical boundaries of personalization. Three limits stand out. First, the overfitting dilemma: if the personalized corpus is overly restricted or repetitive, the model risks becoming so hyper-specialized in a translator’s historical choices that it loses the semantic flexibility required for neologisms, unexpected conceptual developments, or abrupt genre shifts—a small-scale

analogue of the documentation and data-curation risks identified for large models in general (Bender et al., 2021).

Second, data asymmetry: robust personalization requires a substantial, clean corpus of the translator's own work. For early-career scholars, or for researchers in rare specializations, the data footprint may be insufficient to generate meaningful weight adjustments. Third, blind-spot replication: if the historical corpus contains systematic errors, idiosyncratic biases, or outdated terminology, the model will faithfully reproduce and amplify them. Personalized modeling therefore presupposes rigorous initial data cleaning and continuous critical human review; it augments expertise, it does not replace editorial responsibility.

10. CONCLUSION: THE AUGMENTATION ERA

The relationship between the human translator and artificial intelligence need not be framed as a zero-sum struggle for survival. The factory settings of AI provide unprecedented speed, terminological consistency, and structural efficiency; these are tools that, when mastered, liberate the translator from the mundane and repetitive aspects of the craft. But the soul of translation—the critical decisions, the cultural negotiation, the ethical boundaries, and the stylistic identity documented throughout this chapter—remains entirely human.

Personalized Translation Modeling (PTM) offers a concrete path between uncritical automation and technological refusal. By shifting the conversation from total automation to intentional personalization, grounded in the person-centred paradigm of Vural (2023) and in the empirical literature on translator style and machine translationese, PTM demonstrates that advanced technologies can amplify rather than eliminate human stylistic identity and academic authorship. The future of translation studies belongs neither to the machine alone nor to the

translator who ignores technology; it belongs to the translator who commands the machine, and whose voice remains distinct, articulate, and irreplaceable in a digital world.

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