

# Identifying the Challenges of University Faculty Members in Non-English Disciplines Regarding the Translation of English Texts: A Case Study of Fargangian University

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## ABSTRACT

In non-English disciplines, university professors are increasingly asked to translate English texts for teaching, research, and administrative tasks. Recognizing the potential challenges faced by academic members in non-English fields is crucial. Therefore, this qualitative study, with an exploratory approach, aimed to identify the challenges faced by faculty members at Farhangian University in non-English disciplines in translating English texts. Participants included faculty members in non-English disciplines at Farhangian University in the provinces of Hamedan, Ilam, Kurdistan, Kermanshah, and Lorestan (located in the West of Iran), with 21 selected through a purposive criterion-based sampling method. Data were collected via semi-structured, in-depth interviews. Data analysis was performed using thematic analysis, resulting in one main theme, five organizing themes, and 26 basic themes. The findings identified eight major challenges facing faculty members during translation, including differences in sentence structure between source and target languages, issues with equivalence and transfer of concepts, semantic diversity of words, maintaining faithfulness to the original text, challenges with colloquial and non-specialized texts, lack of English proficiency, the transfer of cultural and indigenous concepts, and the time-consuming nature of translation. These results will benefit stakeholders of English language teaching in higher education as well as translation educators and workshop instructors.

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## 1. Introduction

Translation is a multifaceted and complex process that involves various cognitive, social, cross-linguistic, and cross-cultural factors (House, 2015; Korol, 2020). Calvo

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(2011) referred to the complication and variability of translation. Zehnalová et al. (2013, p. 43) stated that “translation is a complex form of communication, engaging not only the subjects of the text producer and recipient but also the subject of the communication mediator, the translator”. Likewise, according to Kabilan et al. (2010), translation is a dynamic, cognitive, and interactive process. It is not merely a matter of decoding codes in printed form; rather, it is a process of creating meaning that results from the interaction between the reader and the text. Translation is the transmission of a thought from one language to another. It involves translating written source language text into the target language (Newmark, 1991).

Despite the complexity of translation, in an increasingly globalized academic environment, in which English is the scientific language of the world and acts as a lingua franca for sharing ideas and discoveries (Mauranen et al., 2016), university lecturers are often required to engage with English-language texts, whether for teaching, research, or publication purposes. While many lecturers may possess a working knowledge of English, translating texts into other languages may pose a unique set of challenges since dealing with specialized texts may not be easy because several issues and factors affect these texts, such as style and terminology (Al-Abbas & Haider, 2021). Farhangian University, as a relatively new institution, trains teachers in educational sciences, humanities, and basic sciences. Additionally, the academic staff at this university translates books related to education across various disciplines within their areas of expertise. However, they may frequently encounter challenges during the translation process. Therefore, understanding potential difficulties academic members face when translating English texts can provide valuable insights into these obstacles, ultimately helping to overcome them and assisting professors in enhancing their skills in this area.

Likewise, the Rapid integration of Artificial Intelligence (AI) with education is drastically transforming contextual aspects of learning-teaching. As AI continues to gain importance in educational settings, understanding its influential role in overcoming the possible challenges that university academic members from non-English disciplines face in translation can be contributive. Indeed, although some studies have demonstrated that the advent of Artificial Intelligence-powered language tools has proven effective in improving the quality of translation (Tran, 2024; Chen & Wei, 2021), Liu (2022) posits that the present AI technologies lack the requisite advancement to entirely supplant human translators. Although AI has made notable advancements in the domain of language translation, it still falls short of the nuanced comprehension of language and cultural context that human translators possess. Regarding these divergent ideas, eliciting faculty members’ lived experiences with the use of AI-powered tools in addressing the challenges of translating English text is important.

## 2. Review of Literature

A relatively large number of studies have been conducted to examine students’ problems in translation (Ahmadi et al., 2023; Al-Naser Nasr, 2022; Alrishan & Smadi, 2015; Al-Smadi, 2022; Arono & Nadrah, 2019), as well as the perceptions/challenges of university faculty members majoring in English language or non-English disciplines regarding translation (Al-Salman & Haidar, 2024; Bello & Muhammad, 2023; Rezaee Danesh et al., 2021; Zare and Sadighi, 2022; Nguyen et al., 2025). Although to date no research directly addressing the challenges of faculty members from non-English

disciplines in translating English texts has been reported, particularly in an Iranian context, a few studies more relevant to the present one are briefly reviewed below.

Rezaee Danesh et al. (2021) investigated teachers' and students' perspectives on the competence and sub-competencies needed for a successful English and Persian translation in the context of undergraduate education in Iran. Their results showed that while teachers weigh pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and mental personality competence, students focused on pedagogical knowledge, content knowledge, and psychological-personality competence. While the study provides valuable insights into the types of knowledge important for translation, it remains limited to participants majoring in the English language and does not investigate the faculty members' perspectives from non-English disciplines.

Zare and Sadighi (2022) investigated the perception of translation educators about the need for teaching translation theories to undergraduate students of translation studies. Using a quantitative design, the participants, including 62 translation teachers from seven Iranian universities, completed a questionnaire. The researchers found that there is a positive attitude toward teaching translation theories (p. 61). Despite delivering outstanding results, the study is limited to translation trainers majoring in the English language or translation studies.

In contrast, Bello and Muhammad (2023) take a broader comparative approach by investigating the challenges faced by translators in translating scientific and technical terms from English into Fulfulde. Using structured questionnaires and unstructured interviews as data collection instruments, they administered 10 questionnaires in seven different national and international organizations and interviewed 5 people. The informants included school teachers, college and university lecturers, and journalists from different mass media organizations. Their findings showed that the participants faced challenges such as new words, particular concepts that do not exist in the culture, philosophy, and history of the Fulfulde, and a lack of substitute words in Fulfulde for scientific or technical English words. The study's strength lies in its integration of questionnaires and interviews, but it falls short of addressing the lived experiences of a sufficient number of university lecturers as participants, thus overlooking the specific challenges that university lecturers from non-English disciplines may face. Similarly, it is not clear whether participants with native languages other than Fulfulde still face the same challenges.

Nguyen et al. (2025), in a qualitative study, investigated the benefits and challenges of AI translation tools in translation education to identify how these tools enhance and hinder students and teachers. Their corpus consisted of 20 peer-reviewed articles (2014-2024) on six academic databases. Their results showed eight benefits and six challenges. Some of the main benefits included "enhanced translation efficiency, improved vocabulary and grammar, post-editing support," and some of the main challenges consisted of "overreliance on AI, contextual inaccuracies, digital inequity, and insufficient training and pedagogical gaps" (p. 132). One part of the study stands out for the challenges of AI translation tools—a critical but often underexplored aspect of translation. Similarly, the study is valuable for its exploration of the benefits and challenges of digital translation, yet its scope on the documentary corpus may miss the broader ideas and challenges of faculty members in the translation.

Taken together, existing literature highlights the students' and translation educators' perceptions on the types of knowledge for translation, challenges that translators face in translating different texts, and the benefits and challenges of using AI

tools in translation, but often overlooks the actual lived experiences of faculty members at teacher-training institutions like Farhangian University. Therefore, more research needs to fill the relevant gap. The findings of such a study can help Farhangian University's educational administrators and planners to document and objectively understand the challenges professors face in translation and empower faculty members by holding effective and efficient translation workshops. These faculty members balance institutional mandates, research responsibilities, language barriers, and disciplinary complexities, often without systematic support. This study attempts to employ in-depth qualitative interviews to identify the challenges faced by academic members of non-English disciplines in translating English texts. The primary research questions are as follows:

1. What challenges do Farhangian University faculty members of non-English disciplines face when translating English texts in their academic or professional work?
2. What are Farhangian University faculty members' opinions on using artificial intelligence tools for translation to address their challenges?

### **3. Theoretical Framework**

This study conceptualizes translation not as a mechanical transfer of linguistic elements but as an interpretive and multidimensional act. Translation involves recreating meaning, tone, and intention across linguistic and cultural boundaries, making it a process of negotiation rather than substitution (Munday, 2016). Decisions around domestication and foreignization (Venuti, 2008) illustrate the inherently strategic nature of translation, where competing principles, accuracy, equivalence, clarity, purposefulness, or Skopos Theory (proposed by Vermeer in 1978, as cited in Gasparyan, 2024), and consistency must be balanced.

Accuracy safeguards the integrity of the original message, while equivalence ensures that the translation achieves a comparable effect in the target language. Readability and clarity guarantee that the text resonates naturally with its audience (Canavese, 2023). Since language is culture-bound, translators navigate between domestication and foreignization depending on purpose and audience expectations (Guo, 2023). Skopos theory highlights this functional orientation, affirming that translation choices must serve communicative intent (Gasparyan, 2024). Consistency is crucial in translation, particularly for technical, legal, and academic texts. It ensures clarity, reliability, and professionalism through uniform terminology and style. As House (2015) notes, consistency strengthens not only readability but also overall coherence. These principles ground the study's understanding of translation as a practice shaped by both fidelity to the source text and responsiveness to the needs of the target audience.

To capture its complexity, this research adopts a multidimensional view of translation in which several interrelated dimensions operate simultaneously. At the cognitive level, translation requires comprehension, problem-solving, and constant monitoring, with translators continually weighing alternatives, resolving ambiguities, and managing both mental and emotional load (Emirkadi, 2023; Carl, 2025). These cognitive demands directly intersect with the linguistic dimension, since accuracy, grammar, register, cohesion, and rhetorical appropriateness must all be negotiated to achieve discourse-level coherence and fluency (Morell & Pastor Cesteros, 2019),

though even professional translators show variability under cognitive strain (De Sutter et al., 2023). Yet these linguistic decisions are embedded within cultural and disciplinary contexts, as academic discourse varies across fields in its preferred hedging strategies, argument structures, and citation practices (McGrathy et al., 2019).

The technological dimension adds further complexity: machine translation and computer-assisted tools can enhance efficiency and vocabulary access (Tian et al., 2023), but without critical awareness, such reliance risks distorting nuance and compromising quality (Vieira et al., 2023). Finally, the affective dimension shapes the extent to which translators can manage these demands, since confidence, training, and emotional resilience influence whether they rely on intuition or systematic strategies (Komeili et al., 2023), and factors such as emotional intelligence and self-esteem affect both their willingness to engage with technology and their ability to navigate institutional pressures to publish internationally (Zhao et al., 2025).

Taken together, these dimensions underscore translation as a composite competence requiring cognitive agility, linguistic skill, cultural and disciplinary awareness, technological literacy, and affective readiness. Positioning translation in this multidimensional way provides the conceptual foundation for this study. It enables an examination of how faculty in non-English disciplines negotiate translation demands and highlights how their challenges are not reducible to linguistic transfer but emerge from the dynamic interplay of these interrelated factors. This framework, therefore, guides both the data collection through in-depth interviews and the analysis and interpretation of findings, ensuring that translation is studied as a complex, situated practice.

## 4. Method

### 4-1. Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative, exploratory design to gain in-depth insights into faculty members' perspectives and challenges regarding translating English texts. The research is guided by a constructivist paradigm, emphasizing the co-construction of knowledge between the researcher and participants. The study employed a phenomenological approach to understand the lived experiences of faculty members of Farhangian University concerning English text translation. While a purely qualitative approach brings with it clear limitations in terms of generalizability of the findings and sample size, it allows for a more detailed exploration of individual opinions, thus adding a degree of depth to the available data and its analysis that facilitates "collecting stories, analyzing their contents, finding patterns and sharing what is learned" (Mears, 2012, p. 175).

### 4-2. Participants

The participants in the present study were all faculty members of Farhangian University in five provinces, including Hamedan, Ilam, Kurdistan, Kermanshah, and Lorestan, from whom 21 people (males=16 and females=5) were selected through a purposive



criteria-based method. The criteria for selecting participants in the study consisted of their work experience (at least 3 years) and research resumes, and it can be said that they were outstanding in their field of work. This information was extracted by reviewing the research resumes of the faculty members. It is also worth noting that for confidentiality and anonymity, the transcribed interviews were randomly identified with numbers from 1 to 21.

#### 4-3. Data Collection Instrument

Since in qualitative research, the researcher seeks to have the interviewees express their views in their verbal statements and have flexibility in responding, a semi-structured interview was used. The interview questions consisted of five researcher-made questions as follows:

1. Have you ever attended translation training workshops (formally or informally)? If so, please explain what you learned and how satisfied you were with the workshops.
2. As a university academic member, have you ever translated English texts into Persian (or perhaps Persian into English)? Please explain (For example, the areas of translation, the amount of translation, ...).
3. If you have not succeeded in translating scientific texts yet (from English to Persian), what obstacles do you think have prevented you from pursuing translation?
4. What are the challenges you face when translating? (e.g., English sentence structure, vocabulary, ...). Explain in detail. Also, what is the most difficult part of translating for you? Please explain.
5. Do you use artificial intelligence for translation? Are you satisfied with the translations provided by artificial intelligence? Please explain the benefits and possible challenges.

To ensure the validity of the interview questions, expert judgment was used; therefore, the questions were reviewed and approved by two instructors in the fields of applied linguistics and translation. To ensure the reliability of the interview questions, three participants other than the participants in the present study were interviewed, and their responses were reviewed by the researcher of the present study and two instructors in the field of applied linguistics (as raters), and there was a relatively complete agreement between the researcher and the raters regarding the coverage of the questions by the responses provided. The interviews were recorded with the permission of the participants, and their approximate duration was between 25 and 35 minutes. It is worth noting that theoretical saturation of the data was achieved in the seventeenth interview, but for further validation, the interviews were continued with up to 21 people.

#### 4-4. Data collection analysis

The recorded interviews were carefully transcribed, and the collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis. This method, one of the common qualitative approaches, serves as a process for analyzing textual data and transforming scattered, diverse information into detailed, rich insights (Braun & Clarke, 2006). This process is, of course, iterative and not linear (Attride-Stirling, 2001). MaxQDA software (version 2020) was used for data analysis. For data coding, Colaizzi's seven-step model (Colaizzi, 1978) was employed to uncover the participants' perceived challenges regarding the phenomenon in question. Colaizzi's model consists of the following seven steps: 1. Note-taking and converting conversations into texts. 2. Reading the transcribed

text multiple times and identifying important phrases related to the phenomenon under study. 3. Conceptualizing the extracted significant sentences. 4. Sorting the participants' descriptions and common concepts into specific categories. 5. Transforming all derived opinions into comprehensive and complete descriptions. 6. Condensing the complete descriptions of the phenomenon into a brief and concise summary. 7. Final validation.

Likewise, to assess the validity and reliability of the data, Guba and Lincoln's (1994) reliability criterion was used, including four criteria. The four criteria include the following:

1. Credibility: To ensure the data's credibility, two steps were followed. First, prolonged engagement with the data and critical reflection on the reaction to findings were done through the process. Second, member checking was employed by a colleague who holds a PhD in TEFL to ensure the accuracy of the findings.

2. Transferability: Efforts were made to ensure the necessary accuracy and sensitivity in interpreting, analyzing, and describing the data, while also providing the required comprehensiveness for the data review.

3. Dependability: An attempt was made to interpret the participants' lived experiences, accurately record the steps and methods used to combine, integrate, and summarize the data, and to follow a single method to enable other researchers to replicate this study and achieve new outcomes rather than reaching the same results.

4. Reliability: An attempt was made to review the research results and processes.

## 5. Results

Interviews with Farhangian University faculty members revealed one main theme supported by five organizing themes and 26 basic themes (Table 2). These covered professors' experiences with translation training and its effectiveness, their professional expertise in specialized texts, and the barriers—personal, professional, and structural—that limit translation activity. They also highlighted challenges within translation practice and critically examined artificial intelligence's potential and limitations. The basic themes touched on skills, workload, motivation, institutional support, ethics, and technology, portraying professors' nuanced struggles, growth, and perspectives on translation in academic contexts. In the following, each of the organizing themes is examined separately for the basic themes and related narratives.

**Table 2**

*Main theme and Sub-themes extracted from the interviews*

Main (Overarching) Theme	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
Perceptions, practical experiences, and professional challenges of university professors in the field of scientific text translation and analysis of attitudes towards the use of artificial intelligence in translation	1. Professors' lived experience of participating in translation training courses and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the courses	1. General principles and foundations of translation (verb tenses, grammatical rules, appropriate vocabulary, etc.) 2. Improving translation skills (expanding vocabulary, scientific writing and editing of texts, practical experience, techniques for transferring concepts, and facilitating the translation process)

Main (Overarching) Theme	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
		3. Getting acquainted with ethical principles in translation 4. Getting acquainted with the attitude of cultural pluralism regarding translation 5. Getting acquainted with the types and dimensions of translation 6. Getting acquainted with linguistic, cultural, etc., challenges in translation 7. Getting acquainted with translation tools
	2. Professors' professional background and practical experiences in translating scientific and specialized texts	1. Translation method (one-way or two-way) 2. Goals and applications of translation 3. Field related to translation (specialized or non-specialized)
	3. Identifying personal, professional, and structural barriers that prevent professors from engaging in translation activities	1. Lack of linguistic proficiency and expertise 2. Lack of self-confidence and lack of motivation 3. Lack of mastery of translation techniques and skills 4. Daily problems 5. Challenges related to publishing the work 6. Lack of familiarity with modern translation tools
	4. Analyzing the various dimensions of the challenges facing professors in the translation process	1. Differences in the structure of source and target sentences (tense, grammatical rules, translation of terms, etc.) 2. Equivalence and transfer of concepts 3. Semantic diversity of words and terms 4. Faithfulness to the text and authentic translation 5. Colloquial and non-specialized texts 6. Lack of proficiency in English 7. Challenges in transferring cultural and indigenous concepts 8. Time-consuming



Main (Overarching) Theme	Organizing Themes	Basic Themes
	5. The critical analysis of professors' attitudes and experiences towards the effectiveness and limitations of artificial intelligence in translation	1. Amount of use and satisfaction with artificial intelligence 2. Advantages and disadvantages of artificial intelligence

### **1. Professors' lived experience of participating in translation training courses and critical evaluation of the effectiveness of the courses**

According to the extracted themes obtained from the interviews in the general dimension, the following points can be mentioned: Of the 21 study participants, 12 had taken some kind of translation course, while nine had not. Of those with training, most were satisfied—seven fully and five to a reasonable degree. From both courses and experience, participants stressed key lessons: watching verb tenses, following grammar rules, and choosing words carefully. Examples:

“Yes, I have participated in the translation workshop held by Farhangian University. I gained a brief introduction to the general principles of translation.” (Interviewee No. 3)

“I attended a session where the emphasis was on paying attention to verb tenses and observing them in translation.” (Interviewee No. 5)

Likewise, Participants reported that translation courses improved their skills, helping them grow vocabulary, edit and write better, and transfer ideas more clearly. They also valued learning about cultural and language challenges, translation tools, and even the ethical responsibilities tied to translation work. An example:

“In these courses, I learned the basic principles of translation, techniques for transferring concepts, and cultural and linguistic challenges.” (Interviewee No. 8)

### **2. Professors' professional background and practical experiences in translating scientific and specialized texts**

All but one participant reported some background in translating scientific or specialized texts. A few, however, stated their experience was more limited, sometimes relying on tools or even outsourcing parts of the work when needed. Examples:

“Mainly to use foreign sources to write articles in the field of education and research methods, as well as preparing English abstracts, and twice to write ISI articles.” (Interviewee No. 4)

“I have translated a book and I also did the initial translation of two of my Persian articles, and I provided them to a private translator for finalization and correction.” (Interviewee No. 6)

In terms of the translation from English to Persian and vice versa, only three of the participants translated in two directions, and the rest (18 people) completely recounted their translation experiences in one direction, from English to Persian. Examples:

“I have done both translation modes.” (Interviewee No. 11)

“I have done translations in both directions, English to Persian and Persian to English.” (Interviewee No. 13)

Next, regarding the goals and applications of the translations, most participants stated they translated mainly for academic needs, like articles, research, or dissertations. But about eight had broader goals, hoping to translate and share books or international works in Persian, going beyond immediate, practical purposes. An example:

“I usually use foreign articles to prepare scientific articles and translate as much as I need.” (Interviewee No. 19)

Likewise, one participant highlighted translating for more than just research or books—also for practical teaching purposes, like lesson studies and classroom activities. Overall, translations tended to stay within participants’ areas of expertise, serving both their professional and academic needs as stated in the following.

“I have translated specialized fields. Most of the translations I have done have been in the field of educational sciences and related to theses and doctoral dissertations, as well as articles.” (Interviewee No. 13)

### **3. Identifying personal, professional, and structural barriers that prevent professors from engaging in translation activities**

Considering the information obtained from the interviews on the extracted theme of identifying personal, professional, and structural barriers affecting the lack of professors' entry into translation activities, almost all participants stated at least one to a maximum of two of the following three cases:

1. Lack of additional language expertise (generally English),
2. Challenges such as insufficient experience in the field of translation, the difficulty of specialized texts in translation, and difficulties in translation techniques, and
3. Lack of self-confidence and lack of motivation.

An example:

“Not being familiar with and fluent in English, and not having sufficient experience in this field, has prevented me from translating detailed texts.” (Interviewee No. 2)

Also, seven people did not mention any specific obstacles in this regard, like the following example:

“Since I have had experience in translating scientific texts from English to Persian, I have not had any general obstacles to entering this field.” (Interviewee No. 13)

Moreover, Participants reported several key challenges: everyday issues like time constraints, obstacles in publishing due to costs, low recognition of translation in academia, and copyright concerns, as well as a lack of familiarity with modern translation tools. Examples:

“I have no obstacles to translation except everyday problems, educational, research, and administrative activities at the university, especially in the field of educational sciences, are time-consuming and do not leave enough time for continuous and systematic translation.” (Interviewee No. 11)

“In many universities, especially for faculty members, writing and publishing scientific research articles is given higher priority than translation; for this reason, translation is usually considered a secondary and low-paying activity.” (Interviewee No. 20)

#### **4. Analyzing the various dimensions of the challenges facing professors in the translation process**

Interviews revealed two main translation challenges: structural differences between source and target languages (tense, grammar, terms) and achieving equivalence and accurate concept transfer, highlighted by nearly all participants. Examples:

“In general, translation challenges include structural differences between languages, idiomatic expressions, and the complexity and possible density of the text.” (Interviewee No. 12)

“When to use the verb (verb tense) and what verb to use is appropriate. English sentences are often complex and long, while Persian tends to have shorter, more fluent sentences.” (Interviewee No. 16)

Participants highlighted four main translation challenges: word and term diversity, balancing fidelity with fluency, handling colloquial/non-specialized texts, and limited English proficiency. These were consistently viewed as key obstacles. An example:

“In my opinion, the most important challenge in the field of translation is the polysemy or semantic diversity of words. Most of the challenges are related to words, which, unfortunately, lead to different interpretations of words. Likewise, some terms and concepts that have multiple meanings, I sometimes translate solely based on the concepts of the term, which is also a point worth considering.” (Interviewee No. 21)

Finally, the two categories of challenges in transferring cultural and indigenous concepts and time-consuming tasks were also introduced by three people as obstacles to translation. An example:

“Due to my lack of proficiency in English, translating is time-consuming. In my opinion, transferring cultural concepts and indigenous terms is necessary because it requires understanding the cultural and value context of the source society.” (Interviewee No. 15)

#### **5. Critical analysis of professors' attitudes and experiences towards the effectiveness and limitations of artificial intelligence in translation:**

Among the 21 participants, six reported not using artificial intelligence for translation at all. Of the remaining 15, usage levels were distributed evenly, with six indicating high use, six moderate use, and three low use. Satisfaction with AI translation outcomes reflected a similar pattern: six participants expressed high satisfaction, six moderate satisfaction, and three low satisfaction. Notably, satisfaction levels did not consistently correspond with usage frequency. In several cases, heavy users reported lower satisfaction, while some occasional users expressed more positive views. These findings suggest that factors beyond simple frequency of use influence participant perceptions of AI translation. Examples:

“I use them a lot, but artificial intelligence translations are not satisfactory at all.” (Interviewee No. 5)

“Overall, I am satisfied with the translations these tools provide, but no tool can completely replace human understanding, linguistic nuances, and cultural adaptation.” (Interviewee No. 10)

Everyone agreed that AI translations have drawbacks: they often mishandle technical terms and usually need editing to improve clarity. Still, participants valued AI for its speed and the quick insights it provides, helping them grasp content more easily. Overall, they saw AI as both flawed and practically useful. An example:

“It often mistranslates specialized words and requires careful and serious revision. And in the next place, its disadvantages were stated as cultural incompatibility and merely the aspect of facilitating the work.” (Interviewee No. 9)

## 6. Discussion

This investigation explored the obstacles confronting Farhangian University faculty when translating academic English texts, focusing particularly on those from non-English scholarly backgrounds. The initial theme, participants’ experiences with translation instruction, provided valuable insights into engaging fundamental translation principles, employing practical skill-building strategies, navigating ethical dilemmas, appreciating cultural diversity, and leveraging translation technologies. These outcomes underline the benefits of ongoing structured workshops, detailed instructor feedback, and comprehensive pedagogical and assessment initiatives, partially reinforcing Abdel Latif and Alrashed’s (2023) advocacy for specialized training to achieve mastery of discipline-specific terminology.

Regarding the second theme, academic backgrounds and professional experience, many participants said their translation efforts were mostly one-way (English to Persian), citing a perceived difficulty in thinking in English. This supports the idea that effective bilingual translation requires more than grammar knowledge; it needs cognitive flexibility and immersion in the target language’s worldview. The third and fourth themes highlight that translation is not a simple, word-for-word task but a complex, mentally demanding activity influenced by cultural and linguistic differences. Participants identified key obstacles such as limited language skills, structural differences between English and Persian, and challenges in translating technical and academic vocabulary. These issues align with findings from House (2015), Korol (2020), and others who emphasize the subtlety involved in accurate academic translation. Participants’ concerns about their technical knowledge and training align with Ebrahimi and Rezaei’s (2016) view that lacking methodological expertise significantly hinders effective academic translation.

A common concern was the limited understanding of English subtleties. Participants experienced difficulty keeping both meaning and style appropriate, especially in specialized texts. The differences between English and Persian grammar, verb tense, syntax, and idiomatic expressions often made natural and culturally fitting translations difficult, confirming the conclusions of Ahmadi et al. (2023) and Arono and Nadrah (2019). Additionally, many participants underscored the absence of formalized training in academic translation, a challenge that aligns with Ahmadi et al.’s (2023) findings, even though their investigation centered on student teachers. Although they didn’t explicitly mention self-translation, the absence of formal instruction and reliance on personal experience imply such practices.

Similarly, a clear pattern emerged around the gap between theory and practice. Almost every participant identified fidelity, equivalence, and clarity as core principles of translation. However, when working on specialized texts, like a developmental psychology article, they felt their toolkit was missing concrete tools: handling statistical terminology, maintaining nuance in idiomatic expressions, or adapting Persian rhetorical patterns into English academic style. These issues align with Ebrahimi and Rezaei (2016), who lament the lack of interdisciplinary, practical translation training in Iranian universities. Without real-world practice—such as peer workshops, mentor feedback, and iterative revisions—concepts stay abstract, and confidence may suffer.

The fifth major theme considered the integration of AI-driven platforms in academic translation. Tools such as Google Translate, DeepL, and ChatGPT have become go-to resources for drafting and comprehension, appreciated for accelerating initial workflows. Nonetheless, users consistently reported deficiencies in specialized terminology, cultural nuance, and stylistic cohesion. In line with Nguyen et al. (2025), participants viewed AI as a valuable aid that cannot substitute for human critical judgment. At the same time, as Al-Salman and Haidar (2024) reported, unchecked AI outputs risk introducing subtle inaccuracies and eroding the richness of contextual detail.

Findings indicate that faculty translation encounters obstacles on three fronts: individual, institutional, and motivational. Personal impediments included limited English proficiency, anxiety about mistakes, and the strain of multiple revisions. Structural constraints involved the lack of official recognition in promotion criteria and insufficient support for bilingual publishing. Motivational barriers arose from perceiving translation as a peripheral duty rather than central scholarship. These observations mirror Patel (2020), who stresses that without external rewards, self-regulation and persistence are essential for rigorous, sustained academic translation practice.

Overall, these findings demonstrate that academic translation presents intertwined linguistic, cultural, cognitive, and organizational challenges. Addressing these demands requires a holistic pedagogical framework that fosters language proficiency, familiarizes faculty with professional translation resources, and establishes institutional policies that acknowledge translation's scholarly value while providing necessary and ongoing structural support.

## 7. Conclusion

This study explores the challenges that faculty at Farhangian University face when translating academic texts, particularly in non-English fields. Translation proved to be a demanding task, shaped by limited English proficiency, structural differences between Persian and English, and the inherent complexity of academic writing. While faculty acknowledged the usefulness of artificial intelligence (AI) tools for generating initial drafts and saving time, they stressed that AI cannot replace human expertise, often falling short in capturing technical precision and cultural nuance. Instead, it serves as a helpful assistant.

The findings point to the need for well-designed training programs that combine theory with practical application, strengthening both language and technical skills. Such programs should prepare translators to navigate discipline-specific and intercultural challenges. Workshops tailored to each academic field can help faculty master terminology, syntactic structures, genre conventions, and pragmatic adaptations. Beyond individual development, institutional support is crucial. Translation should be formally recognized as a scholarly activity, and high-quality translations should be credited like research publications, reflecting their scope and significance.

To maintain quality and foster collaboration, universities could establish centralized facilities offering editorial support, domain-specific glossaries, and mentorship from experienced translators. Informal peer groups can encourage feedback, shared problem-solving, and professional growth. Faculty training should also address hybrid workflows, where AI drafts are refined through careful human revision, and

institutional glossaries and style manuals integrated into AI platforms can enhance consistency and reduce ambiguity.

The study has limitations, including its focus on a single university, small sample size, and reliance on self-reported interviews, which may limit generalizability. Future research should explore multiple institutions, use mixed methods, and systematically compare AI and human translations. Long-term, multi-stakeholder studies could provide deeper insight into how training, institutional support, and technology shape academic translation practices. Ultimately, supporting academic translation requires both individual skill-building and institutional recognition, ensuring knowledge can be shared across languages and cultures.

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The author declares no potential conflict of interest regarding the research, authorship, and publication of this article.

### Disclosure of AI use in manuscript preparation

During the preparation of this manuscript, the author occasionally used ChatGPT to assist with language editing and enhance clarity.

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