

Intertextuality in Human and AI Literary Translation: A Comparative Study Through Kristeva's Theory and Hatim & Mason's Framework¹

_____ Sajjad Tahmasbi Boveiri² & Dariush Nejadansari Mahabadi³

Mohammadtaghi Shahnazari⁴ & Mahmoud Afrouz⁵

Abstract

Grounded in Kristeva's (1966) theory of intertextuality and Hatim and Mason's (1990) intertextual framework, the present research addresses the representation of intertextual references in Persian translations of six English novels. The corpus includes translations by three human translators—Hosseini, Badiei, and Karimi Hakkak—and an AI language model, GPT-4. To this end, using literary criticism, the most frequent intertextual elements were identified and compared with the translations. The findings reveal that human translators often employ strategies such as accommodation and explanation, drawing on classical Persian literature to recreate the intertextual layers of the source text, mirroring the original authors' reliance on earlier literary works. The results further indicate that GPT-4, when effectively prompted, utilizes strategies like adaptation and explanation, showing similar performance to human translators in many cases, though its use of classical Persian literature remains limited. The outcomes highlight that both translation and writing are intertextual processes. While AI language models like GPT-4 have made significant progress, further development is needed to more effectively leverage the potential of classical Persian literature in these models. Utilizing classical literature in translation not only enriches translated works but also plays a key role in preserving target language and culture in the face of global linguistic shifts.

Keywords: AI translation, Intertextuality, Literary translation, Literary translator, Translation strategies

1. This paper was received on 02.05.2025 and approved on 21.07.2025.

2. Ph.D. Candidate in Translation Studies, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran; email: s.tahmasbi@fgn.ui.ac.ir

3. Corresponding Author: Faculty Member, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran; email: d.nejadansari@fgn.ui.ac.ir

4. Faculty Member, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran; email: m.shahnazari@fgn.ui.ac.ir

5. Faculty Member, Department of English Language and Literature, Faculty of Foreign Languages, University of Isfahan, Isfahan, Iran; email: m.afrouz@fgn.ui.ac.ir

1 Introduction

Writers do not produce entirely original works from their own imagination; instead, they draw on pre-existing texts. As Kristeva (1980) explains, a text is “a permutation of texts, an intertextuality in the space of a given text”, in which “several utterances, taken from other texts, intersect and neutralize one another” (as cited in Allen, 2011, p. 35).

Kristeva (1980), drawing on the theories of both Bakhtin and Saussure, attempted to combine their insights. Since neither Saussure nor Bakhtin used the term, Kristeva is widely recognized as the originator of ‘intertextuality’ (as cited in Allen 2011, p. 11). According to Kristeva (1980), a text is not an isolated piece, but “a permutation of texts” in which “several utterances taken from other texts intersect and neutralize one another” (as cited in De Nooy 1998, p. 270). Within the same line of thinking, Fowler (2000) maintains that “We do not read a text in isolation but within a matrix of possibilities constituted by earlier texts which function as langue to the parole of individual textual production” (p. 117). In this context, Barthes (1977, as cited in Allen, 2011) describes text as:

woven entirely with citations, references, echoes, cultural languages (what language is not?) antecedent or contemporary, which cut across it through and through in a vast stereophony. The intertextual in which every text is held, it itself being the text-between of another text, is not to be confused with some origin of the text: to try to find the ‘sources’, the ‘influences’ of a work, is to fall in with the myth of filiation; the citations which go to make up a text are anonymous, untraceable, and yet already read: they are quotations without inverted commas (p. 67).

Given the increasing complexity of cross-cultural texts—particularly in literary domains—the accurate translation of intertextual references has become a key challenge for translators. This challenge is further intensified in multilingual contexts, where the target audience’s cultural background significantly influences interpretation. In this context, the role of translators has evolved from simple language

converters to cultural mediators who must skillfully interpret and adapt intertextual cues.

AI language models such as ChatGPT-4 demonstrate significant potential in generating and adapting natural language across linguistic and cultural boundaries. However, their ability to preserve intertextual and culturally embedded references—particularly in literary translation—remains insufficiently examined. This study aims to address this gap by investigating how GPT-4 renders intertextual elements in English-to-Persian literary translations, through a comparative analysis of its outputs alongside those produced by professional human translators.

The significance of this research lies in its potential to shed light on how AI tools may reshape translation workflows—particularly in domains, where creativity and cultural sensitivity are essential. As Zhang and Zhao (2015) note, while intertextuality theory has led scholars to reconceptualize the translator's role, ignoring the translator's subjectivity and creativity may hinder the translation process.

In this regard, the present study also explores whether growing reliance on AI tools may diminish the need for human translators in tasks that demand deep cultural and literary awareness. To this end, the study addresses the following research questions:

1. How do human literary translators and GPT-4 differ in preserving intertextual references in Persian translations?
2. What are the most frequent translation strategies employed by professional literary translators versus GPT-4 in rendering the source intertextual elements in the target language?

2 Literature Review

A substantial body of scholarly research has explored the concept of intertextuality from various perspectives. The following subsections present a critical review of some of the most influential studies in this field.

2.1 *Intertextuality and Translation*

Various scholars have offered different viewpoints on intertextuality and translation. Farahzad (2009), for instance, views translation as an “intertextual practice” that links a “prototext” (source text) and a “metatext” (target text) (pp. 2–4). Schöffner (2012) regards translation as a type of intercultural intertextuality. Moreover, Neubert and Shreve (1992) regard translation as mediated intertextuality based on their earlier concept of translation as text-induced text production. Hatim and Mason (1990) describe the process of translation as the movement of a sign from one text to another, which they refer to as the “intertextual space” (p. 129). In the same vein, Hatim (1997) explores the concept of intertextuality in translation and evaluates its significance in the translation process. Hatim (1997) emphasizes that in order to find different types of intertextual relationships, the translators must be considered within a conception of translation strategy that captures the complexity of decision-making. Furthermore, Venuti (2009) asserts that translation is a special form of intertextuality. According to Venuti (2009), merely repeating the words and phrases from a foreign text may not adequately convey the intertextual relations present in that text.

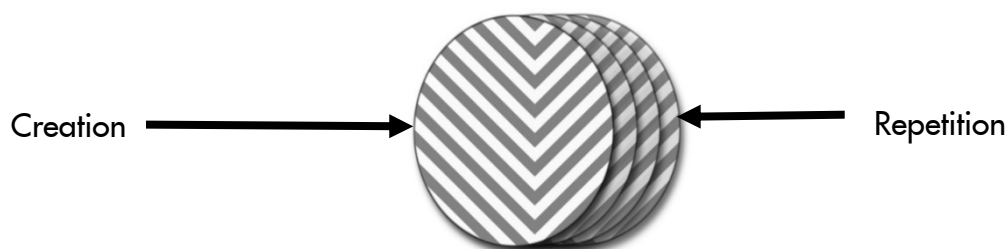
2.2 *Levels of Intertextuality*

Concerning translation, intertextuality can operate at two levels:

2.2.1 *The Local (intra-lingual) Level*

According to Farahzad (2009), at the local level, the prototext relates to all other texts in its own language. It involves replication in that it replicates the form and content of any other intertext within the source language. It is also a creation in which it differs from other intertexts. Although it leads to translation, it is not considered original, and it includes both explicit and implicit intertextual references to other texts in the source text, as illustrated in the figure below:

Figure 1: The Source Language at the Intralingual Level (Farahzad, 2009, p. 130).



The striped parts on the right show the replicated ones that situate the SL in an intralingual intertextual setting. The repeated striped parts on the left indicate the generated part that differentiate the SL from other intertexts. Nonetheless, this linear depiction of the relationship between the SL and its prior intertexts cannot be interpreted as evidence of a strictly linear intertextual connection.

2.2.2 The Global (interlingual) Level

Farahzad (2009) asserts that at the global level, the source language (SL) text is defined by its content and genre and maintains a connection with all texts across various languages through its translations. As the original, the SL text precedes all target texts chronologically, and elements of it are replicated within those translations. This temporal and textual precedence establishes an intertextual relationship between the SL text and its translations in different target languages, as depicted in the following figure:

Figure 2: Source Text and its Target Texts in Different Languages (Farahzad, 2009, p. 131)



The black circle signifies the source text. All other circles illustrate the target texts coming into various languages. The striped section signifies the intertextual features which tie the prototext text to its corresponding metatexts (Farahzad, 2009).

2.3 *AI's Role in Translation*

The role of artificial intelligence in translation studies has attracted considerable scholarly attention in recent years. For instance, Gajšt (2025) conducted a study analyzing business correspondence translated using AI tools such as ChatGPT, Claude, and Gemini. While the outputs were generally functional, the findings revealed notable inconsistencies in tone and register, underscoring the continued need for human editorial judgment in ensuring communicative appropriateness and stylistic coherence.

Similarly, Zupan, Pavličič, and Fabčič (2025) investigated the machine translation of nominal phrases in technical texts. Their results indicated that nearly 50 percent of the phrases were incorrectly translated, demonstrating the current limitations of large language models in processing highly context-dependent and domain-specific language.

Metaphorical language poses another challenge that current AI technologies are yet to resolve effectively. In a study led by Brala Vukanović (2025), student participants acknowledged the usefulness of AI tools but also encountered notable errors when interpreting figurative expressions. Despite these limitations, the study suggests that such errors can serve as valuable teaching moments when guided by a skilled instructor, thereby transforming shortcomings into pedagogical advantages.

Finally, Hassani, Malekshahi, and Davari (2025) examined the impact of AI-assisted transcreation in cross-cultural marketing, focusing on English-to-Persian brand messaging. Comparing professional translators with trained university students using GPT-3, they found that while professionals initially performed better, students who received six weeks of AI-based training eventually outperformed them. The study highlights the effectiveness of combining AI tools with structured training to improve translation quality and efficiency in multilingual marketing.

These studies emphasize the increasing role of AI in translation while revealing key research gaps, especially in handling complex literary language. Notably, how AI interprets intertextual references remains largely unexplored, offering a promising avenue for future research.

3 Method

This qualitative and comparative study investigates the translation of intertextual references from English novels into Persian, using Kristeva's (1966) theory of intertextuality as its main theoretical foundation. The research also draws on the frameworks of Barthes (1974), Kristeva (1980), and Allen (2011), who conceptualize intertextuality across literary, historical, social, cultural, political, ideological, religious, and digital dimensions (as cited in Allen, 2011, pp. 49, 82, 198, 199). In this study, intertextual references are categorized into three main types: literary, religious, and socio-cultural. To analyze translation strategies, the study employs Hatim and Mason's (1990) intertextual framework, which outlines strategies such as accommodation, adaptation, and explanation (p. 133). The primary aim of this research is to compare how human translators and GPT-4 handle these intertextual elements when rendering English texts into Persian.

3.1 Data Collection Procedure

Six English novels were selected based on their recognized literary merit and the richness of intertextual content, as noted in critical scholarship. In consultation with two literary scholars, five chapters from each novel were purposively selected to ensure a representative sample. Approximately 20 intertextual references were manually identified and categorized in each novel using established theoretical criteria. To enhance reliability, a second coder independently annotated a sample of the texts, and the results were compared. A high level of agreement was observed, confirming the consistency of intertextual identification. These were then compared with their equivalents in the Persian translations to examine the strategies employed

by human translators. The same textual segments were also translated using GPT-4. The AI was prompted with tailored instructions—for example, incorporating classical Persian literary elements or adapting content to Iranian-Islamic cultural contexts. Multiple translations were generated per segment to allow a comparative evaluation of strategy, tone, and cultural relevance.

3.2 *Corpus of the Study*

The corpus of this study includes six English novels and their Persian translations, produced both by three prominent Iranian translators—Ahmad Karimi-Hakkak, Saleh Hosseini, and Manouchehr Badiei—and by GPT-4. The novels included in the corpus—*The History of Tom Jones, a Foundling* (1749), *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* (1916), *Ulysses* (1922), *Moby Dick* (1851), *Lord Jim* (1900), and *Light in August* (1932)—were selected for their literary complexity and the richness of their intertextual elements.

4 Findings

The analysis revealed distinct patterns in how human translators and GPT-4 handled intertextual terms, highlighting both convergences and divergences in their translation strategies.

4.1.1 *Literary Intertextuality*

Literary intertextuality is best exemplified in the Persian translation of Melville's *Moby Dick* and Joyce's *Ulysses*. These novels demonstrate rich intertextual relations with other literary works.

Table 1: Literary Examples

Example 1	1. The head looks a sort of reproachfully at him, with an 'Et tu Brutel' expression (<i>Moby Dick</i> , p. 295).
Hosseini's translation	کلهٔ گوساله با نگاه شماتت‌باری گویی به زبان بی‌زبانی به او می‌گوید: «ما ز یاران چشم‌یاری داشتیم» (حسینی، ص. ۴۰۶).
Hosseini's annotation	در نمایشنامهٔ ژولیوس سزار اثر شکسپیر، وقتی که غوغاییان به سنای رُم می‌ریزند و با دشنه به جان سزار می‌افتند، آخ هم نمی‌گوید. ولی همین که

	می‌بیند یار دیرینه‌اش بروتوس، که در حقیقت پسرخوانده‌اش نیز هست، با این عوام کالانعام همدست شده است. دلش سخت به‌درد می‌آید و رو به او می‌گوید «تو هم بروتوس؟» (حسینی، پانوش، ص. ۴۰۶).
GPT-4-generated translation	نگاهش سرشار از سرزنش است، انگار می‌گوید: «من از بیگانگان هرگز ننالم که با من هرچه کرد آن آشنا کرد».
GPT-4-generated annotation	عبارت «حتی تو هم، بروتوس!»، آخرین سخنان ژولیوس سزار هنگام کشته شدن توسط بروتوس، دوست و مورد اعتمادش، است و نشان‌دهنده خیانت و غافلگیری عمیق اوست
Example 2	Honour and gifts of strangers, the friends of Everyman (<i>Ulysses</i> , p. 1200).
Badiei's translation	بزرگداشت و ارمغانها از جانب بیگانگان، دوستان «بنی آدم» (بدیعی، فصل ۷).
Badiei's annotation	در سرود هشتم اودیسه آمده است که شاه و مردم فئاسی ارمغانهای گرانبها به اولیس می‌دهند. بنی آدم عنوان نمایشنامه منظومی است و مظهر همه آدمیزادگان است که به روز حساب فرا خوانده می‌شوند (بدیعی، پیوست).
GPT-4-generated translation	حرمت و بخشش بیگانه، همدم هر آدمی است.
GPT-4-generated annotation	این جمله به مفهوم مهمان‌نوازی در اسطوره‌های یونانی اشاره دارد، جایی که احترام به غریبه‌ها ارزش مقدس تلقی می‌شد. همچنین واژه «هر انسانی» اشاره‌ای ضمنی به نمایشنامه قرون وسطایی «هر انسان» دارد.

The phrase “Et tu, Brute!” from *Moby Dick* is a literary loaded intertextual reference to Shakespeare’s *Julius Caesar*, evoking betrayal by a trusted friend. Its translation poses a significant challenge as it demands not only semantic accuracy but also cultural and emotional resonance. Using Hatim and Mason’s (1990) intertextual framework, we observe that both human translator and GPT-4 adopt the strategy of accommodation rather. They replace the original phrase with culturally resonant Persian poetic expressions, thereby preserving the pragmatic effect—shock, betrayal, emotional rupture—rather than the literal transfer.

Hosseini replaces “Et tu, Brute!” with a poetic verse from Hafez: «ما ز یاران چشم یاری داشتیم». This verse mirrors the emotional betrayal encoded in Shakespeare’s work, but filtered through the symbolic and affective registers of Persian literary tradition. Furthermore, Hosseini provides an explicit note, which both grounds the intertextual reference and bridges the cultural distance, allowing readers unfamiliar with *Julius Caesar* to grasp the context.

Similarly, GPT-4 draws on another verse from Hafez: «من از بیگانگان هرگز ننالم, که با من هرچه کرد آن آشنا کرد», which reflects the same emotional depth—a betrayal not from strangers but from someone trusted. GPT-4 also provides an explanatory note that outlines the reference to *Julius Caesar*, paralleling Hosseini’s strategy in terms of intertextual annotation. Despite GPT’s lack of intentionality or cultural intuition, the result here reflects a surprisingly successful simulated intertextual strategy.

Regarding Kristeva’s (1966) theory, the human translator and GPT-4 truly create an intertextual “dialogue” between texts. They insert texts from classical Persian literature to reflect Shakespeare’s dramatic moment, creating a layered intertextuality that allows Persian readers to feel the shock of betrayal through familiar poetic imagery. Their strategies reflect the original intertext while framing it through the lens of Iranian cultural memory. This example shows that both human and AI translations demonstrate complex intertextual mapping that extends beyond word-for-word rendering. While Hosseini’s version reflects cultural intentionality and literary awareness, GPT-4 surprisingly replicates a parallel interpretive strategy, even simulating cultural nuance.

Although the first example illustrated a surprising convergence between the human translator and GPT-4 in mobilizing Persian classical intertextuality, the second example reveals a stark contrast in their approaches—where only the human translator invokes culturally resonant poetic references.

For instance, in translating the intertextual text "Honour and gifts of strangers, the friends of Everyman", drawn from Joyce's *Ulysses*, a clear divergence appears between the strategies adopted by the human translator and GPT-4. Badiei employs the strategy of accommodation, as theorized by Hatim and Mason (1990), in a culturally resonant and intertextually rich manner. Rather than rendering "Everyman" as a literal counterpart e.g., «هر انسانی», he replaces it with the culturally embedded expression «بنی آدم», a direct reference to the canonical Persian verse by Saadi Shirazi: «بنی آدم اعضای یکدیگرند/ که در آفرینش ز یک گوهرند». This choice elevates the intertextual density of the translation. On one hand, it maintains the referential function by echoing the moral universality of the medieval morality play *Everyman*. On the other hand, it reconfigures the phrase through a familiar and emotionally charged intertext within the Persian literary tradition. Here, the translator does not merely echo Joyce or Homer, but invokes Saadi's ethical humanism to provide an affective and culturally meaningful translation.

GPT-4 renders the same line as «حرمت و بخشش بیگانه، همدم هر آدمی است». While semantically accurate and fluently rendered, it lacks the intertextual density and cultural specificity of Badiei's version. The use of «هر آدمی» as an equivalent to 'Everyman' is technically correct but fails to invoke the deep cultural echoes embedded in «بنی آدم». This comparison further illuminates a crucial distinction between human and AI intertextual creativity. While Badiei actively reconstructs intertextual meaning through culturally meaningful substitution, GPT-4 relies on lexical proximity and does not access the symbolic systems unique to the target literary tradition.

4.1.2 Religious Intertextuality

The textual analysis further reveals that the aforementioned English novels are rich in religious intertextual references. Two key examples discussed in this

context are Joyce's *A Portrait of the Artist as a Young Man* and Melville's *Moby-Dick*, as illustrated in the following table.

Table 2: Religious Examples

Example 1	To sin against Whom was a sin beyond forgiveness, the eternal mysterious secret Being to Whom, as God, the priest offered up mass once a year, roped in the scarlet of the tongues of fire (<i>A Portrait</i> , p. 114).
Badiei's translation	گناه برخلاف او گناهی بخشش ناپذیر بود، همان وجود ابدی پراسرار نهانی که کشیشان به درگاه او مانند درگاه خدا، یک بار در سال با لباسی به سرخی زبانه‌های آتش، نماز عشای ربانی می‌گزاردند (بدیعی، ص. ۱۹۳).
Badiei's annotation	گناه برخلاف روح‌القدس تنها گناهی است که هرگز بخشوده نمی‌شود و این نکته در انجیل‌های چهارگانه آمده است. فرقه‌های مسیحیان هنوز دقیقاً نمی‌دانند که این گناه چیست اما در تعلیمات کاتولیکها آن را نومی‌دی کامل از عفو الهی و رسیدن به فیض و بخشودگی می‌دانند (بدیعی، پیوست، ص. ۳۵۵).
GPT-4-generated translation	گناهی بود نابخشودنی، اگر در حق آن ذات رازناکِ ازلی و جاودان روا می‌شد؛ همان معمای پنهان که کاهن، چونان پیامبری در جامه‌ای سرخ‌فام، سالی یک‌بار در پیشگاهش آیین قربان به‌جا می‌آورد؛ سرخ پوش از زبانه‌های آتش، نشانه حضور قدسی و سوزان.
GPT-4-generated annotation	این ارجاعات بینامتنی به متون دینی یهودی و مسیحی باز می‌گردد، از جمله مفاهیمی چون گناه نابخشودنی، خداوند رازآلود، مراسم عشای ربانی، و زبان‌های آتش که اشاره به روح‌القدس در کتاب مقدس دارد.
Example 2	...to fight for their holy sepulchre (<i>Moby Dick</i> , p. 211).
Hosseini's translation	به‌خاطر مرقد مطهرشان جهاد کنند (حسینی، ص. ۲۹۴).
Hosseini's annotation	منظور از «مرقد مطهر» گوری است که عیسی را پس از تصلیب در آن می‌گذارند و پس از سه روز که به سراغ آن می‌روند، آن را خالی می‌یابند و مسیحیان دال بر عروج عیسی می‌انگارند. این مرقد بیرون اورشلیم است و نزد مسیحیان در حکم ضریح و بارگاه است. در اینجا رمز ایمان و رمز اعتقاد از آن مستفاد می‌شود (حسینی، پانویشت، ص. ۲۹۴).

GPT-4-generated translation	جهاد در راه صیانت از حرم مطهرشان.
GPT-4-generated annotation	این جمله به طور مستقیم به جنگ‌های صلیبی اشاره دارد-به‌ویژه نبرد شوالیه‌های مسیحی برای بازپس‌گیری قبر مقدس در اورشلیم. این آرامگاه در باور مسیحیان محل دفن و رستاخیز عیسی مسیح است.

The human and AI-generated Persian translations of Joyce's sentence both aim to convey the theological depth and spiritual solemnity of the original, yet they do so through differing intertextual strategies. Badiei draws on classical Persian literary intertexts, such as «اسرار نهانی» (secret mysteries) and «درگاه» (divine threshold), creating a stylistic and poetic register, reflecting Iran's mystical tradition. This choice of words, inspired by the great Persian poets—Rumi's verse «مشو ای دل تو دگرگون که» and Saadi's verse «بنده همان به که ز تقصیر / دل یار بداند / مکن اسرار نهانی که وی اسرار بداند»—resonates with the Christian reference within a culturally rich Persian-Islamic framework. This is a clear example of Hatim and Mason's accommodation, where the translator retains core elements from the source culture—like the priest and the Christian Mass—while subtly embedding familiar linguistic and poetic cues from the target culture to make the passage resonate with a Persian-speaking audience.

When prompted to consider the Iranian-Islamic cultural context, GPT-4 opted for a broader intertextual adaptation. It replaces more culturally specific Christian concepts with analogous Islamic references—such as «آیین قربان» (ritual sacrifice) in place of the Catholic Mass—and reimagines the “tongues of fire” as «نشانه‌ی حضور» (a sign of sacred and burning presence). This version is less anchored in Persian poetic tradition and more attuned to Islamic theological language. This is a perfect example of Hatim and Mason's adaptation.

In order to substantiate this claim, we can refer to another example: Hosseini uses strategy of accommodation in translating an intertextual reference to the Holy

Sepulchre. By employing the terms «مرقد مطهر» (holy sepulchre) and «جهاد» (fight), the translator exploits cultural and religious connotations in the Islamic-Iranian context. This conscious lexical choice not only preserves the religious connotation of the source text, but also recreates it in a way that is immediately recognizable and meaningful to Persian readers. To further support the intertextual reading, Hosseini adds an explanatory footnote that elaborates on the religious and symbolic significance of the Holy Sepulchre in Christian theology. GPT-4 rendered this term as «حرم مطهر», which is to some extent similar to Hosseini's translation. By contrast, its rendition «بجنگند» conveys the general meaning of "fight," and lacks the specific cultural concept presented in Hosseini's «جهاد». GPT-4 also provides an explanation, illuminating the religious context of the Crusades.

4.1.3 Socio-Cultural Intertextuality

The analysis also reveals that the aforementioned novels contain a significant number of socio-cultural references. This concept is effectively evident in Fielding's *Tom Jones* and Conrad's *Lord Jim*. In the following section, we examine how human translators and GPT-4 approached the translation of these intertextual elements.

Table 3: Socio-cultural Examples

Example 1	Which have been therefore recommended by an eminent critic to the sole use of the pastry-cook (<i>Tom Jones</i> , p. 101).
Karimi's translation	از همین روی منتقدی والامقام آنها را صرفاً در خور پیشخوان قناد می‌داند (کریمی حکاک، ص. ۹۳).
Karimi's annotation	درخور پیشخوان قناد: اشاره طنزآمیز فیلدینگ به رسمی است که در بسیاری کشورهای غربی تا اوایل قرن حاضر رواج داشت، و در جای جای کشور ما هنوز هم معمول است: اوراق کتاب‌های باد کرده را به مغازه‌های قناد و بقال و دیگر کسبه می‌فروختند تا شیرینی و سایر کالاها در آن پیچیده شود. جاناتان سویت نویسنده انگلیسی، منظومه‌ای به طنز دارد به نام «ابیاتی در مرگ دکتر سویت» که در جایی از آن کتابفروش درباره

	آثار او می‌گوید: «آثارش را دوشنبه پیش، همراه با یک لنگه کتاب دیگر، فرستادم برای قناد!» (کریمی حکاک، پیوست، ص. ۷۷۷).
GPT-4-generated translation	که به همین دلیل، منتقدی گفته تنها کاربردش تو شیرینی‌فروشی و کاغذ پیچیه.
GPT-4-generated annotation	این متن حاوی رابطه‌ای بینامتنی است که با بهره‌گیری از مفاهیم شرقی نوعی برهم‌نهی فرهنگی و معنایی ایجاد می‌کند.
Example 2	...as though his migrating spirit were suffering exceedingly from that unforeseen-What d'ye call 'em?- avatar- incarnation (<i>Lord Jim</i> , p. 96).
Hosseini's translation	...انگار روح مهاجرش از آن-چی بهش می‌گین؟-تجلی-حلول پیش‌بینی نشده به عذایی سخت گرفتار است (حسینی، ص. ۱۴۶).
Hosseini's annotation	مبحث آواتار یا نزول حق در عالم محسوسات...متوجه ویشنو بوده است...مظاهر یا تنازلات ویشنو به عالم کون و فساد بنا به سنن هندو دهگانه است... (حسینی، پیوست، ص. ۳۸۳).
GPT-4-generated translation	...انگار روح سرگردانش از این تجسد ناخواسته-چی می‌گن؟ آواتار؟ حلول دوباره؟- سخت در عذاب بود.
GPT-4-generated annotation	آواتار و تجسد/حلول بطور مستقیم به مفاهیم فرهنگی و اسطوره‌ای، به ویژه در آیین هندو، اشاره دارند

Karimi Hakkak's translation of the phrase "to the sole use of the pastry-cook" demonstrates a clear application of Hatim and Mason's (1990) accommodation strategy. By rendering this phrase as «درخور پیشخوان قناد» and supplementing it with an extensive note, the translator preserves the ironic tone and socially specific reference to outdated literature being used as wrapping paper in pastry shops. More importantly, he enriches the intertextual depth by referencing a similar satirical instance from Swift's poetry. This note explains the social reference embedded in the original text. In doing so, the translator ensures that Persian readers are not just informed, but meaningfully engaged with the social and textual layers of the original.

In contrast, GPT-4 opts for a simplified and more colloquial rendering:

«شیرینی فروشی». While this version effectively communicates the surface meaning and ironic tone, it employs adaptation, reshaping the original metaphor into something more accessible for a general audience. However, this comes at the cost of omitting deeper intertextual references, particularly the literary connection to Swift and the broader satirical tradition. GPT-4-generated annotation briefly acknowledges cultural layering but lacks the depth and specificity necessary for full interpretive comprehension. Thus, while both translations aim for cultural resonance, Karimi's translation adheres more closely to Hatim and Mason's accommodation, whereas GPT-4-generated translation favors adaptation.

Regarding cultural intertextual references, Hosseini uses a subtle strategy of accommodation to reflect the original cultural intertextuality. By choosing the Persian term «تجلی», for the term "Avatar," the translator intentionally activates intertextual resonance with Hafez's famous verse: «در ازل پرتو حسنت ز تجلی دم زد». This verse is rich in theological and spiritual connotations that are immediately recognizable to Persian readers. Therefore, just as the author (Conrad) draws on both Eastern and Western themes, the translator reflects this by grounding the reference in Eastern culture and the Persian literary system, connecting the target text with layers of culturally dynamic meaning.

Conversely, GPT-4 follows literal translation, using «آواتار» without considering target culture. Although it is superficially accurate, it lacks the depth of cultural resonance found in Hosseini's rendition.

In addition, Hosseini and GPT-4 offer a detailed explanatory annotation on the concept of 'avatar' in Hindu culture. Including this clarification helps to bridge the gap between unfamiliar cultural concepts and the interpretive framework of the target audience.

5 Discussion

This study explored how intertextual elements are rendered in literary translation, comparing the strategies employed by professional human translators and ChatGPT-4. The analysis was guided by Kristeva's (1966) theory of intertextuality and Hatim and Mason's (1990) intertextual framework. The findings reveal both commonalities and divergences in the way the human translators and GPT-4 handle intertextual references.

Professional human translators overwhelmingly employed the strategy of accommodation, as defined by Hatim and Mason (1990). Rather than translating intertextual references literally, they frequently reconstructed them using culturally resonant equivalents, often supplemented by explanatory notes to enhance the target readers' understanding. One of the most notable strengths of human translators was their deep cultural literacy, which enabled them to draw richly from the Persian literary heritage. Just as the original authors relied on earlier literary sources in shaping their narratives, translators of these works have similarly drawn upon the potential of Persian literary tradition. In many cases, the influence of canonical poets like Hafez, Rumi and Saadi can be observed in the linguistic choices and poetic expressions used by the translators. In this context, Kristeva (1969, as cited in Kourdis, 2024), describes intertextuality as "a crossing of statements taken from other texts [...] a transposition into communicative speech of previous or synchronic statements [...] which evades intersubjectivity." (p. 145). The word "transposition" more accurately captures the shift that occurs between cultural texts. Likewise, Osimo (2011, as cited in Kourdis, 2024) regards translation as "the transposition of a prototext into a metatext linking two more or less similar textocultural worlds" (p. 149).

This theoretical foundation highlights how both authors and translators construct meaning by weaving together cultural and literary references. For instance, in Faulkner's *Light in August*, the line "Moving forever and without progress across

an urn" (p. 17) serves as a striking example. This passage is an intertextual reference to Keats' *Ode on a Grecian Urn*—a Romantic poem that meditates on the paradox of eternal stillness and implied motion in visual art. In accordance with Hatim and Mason's (1990) model, the translator has not simply rendered the surface meaning of the source text, but has engaged in a deeper intertextual act by selecting a culturally resonant equivalent from Persian literature. Hosseini uses the phrase «ساکن روان», which is drawn from Rumi's poem «کی شود این روان من ساکن / اینچنین ساکن روان که منم» to capture the paradox of 'stasis in motion' embodied by Keats' urn. This literary borrowing creates a literary intertextuality, where the Persian reader is invited into a dialogue between Western Romanticism and Persian Sufi mysticism.

According to Farahzad (2009), this type of translation operates simultaneously at two intertextual levels: At the local (intralingual) level, it draws on a recognizable Persian text, establishing connections with other Persian moral-philosophical discourses. At the global (interlingual) level, it mediates between the Western source and Persian literary tradition.

This intertextual strategy not only preserves the literary spirit of the source text, but also enhances readability and cultural engagement for the target readers. Thus, it can be well argued that the translator's extensive interaction with their literary masterpieces can allow these works to be internalized in their translations. In other words, the evidence lends credence to the view that a translator's disposition is crucial in shaping their career as a literary translator. This is where human creativity shines through and AI language models fall short.

Furthermore, the results showed that GPT-4 was able to provide culturally appropriate equivalents in many cases, especially when given well-formulated prompts. However, unlike human translators, it largely failed to draw on the richness of classical Persian literature to convey intertextual elements. For instance, while Hosseini rendered the term "Avatar" as «تجلی»—thereby invoking an intertextual link

to Hafez's well-known verse «در ازل پرتو حسنت ز تجلی دم زد» and enriching the translation with spiritual and cultural depth—GPT-4 simply used the transliterated form «آواتار», which lacks any cultural or literary resonance. While this example underscores the limitations of AI in utilizing the potential of classical Persian literature in translations, it is worth noting that GPT-4, in a limited number of instances, did draw on elements of classical Persian literature. However, such occurrences were sporadic and lacked the consistency, depth, and intentionality typically observed in human translations.

In addition, the findings indicated that the human translators often used paratextual strategies including footnotes and appendices to explain intertextual and cultural elements. These explanatory notes were in line with Hatim and Mason's (1990) explanatory strategy, enabling the translator to clarify ambiguous references without disrupting the flow of the narrative. However, as Toledano-Buendía (2013) warns, excessive or poorly contextualized notes may disrupt the narrative and distract the reader. Similarly, Landers (2001) points out that lengthy footnotes can “destroy the mimetic effect” of literary texts (p. 93). The findings of this study show that the human translators carefully balanced the use of notes and appendices—reserving appendices for longer clarifications—to enhance reader understanding while preserving literary immersion.

Interestingly, a similar approach can be applied when working with AI tools. With appropriate prompts, AI tools like ChatGPT can be instructed to generate either short footnotes or extended appendices, offering users control over the form and depth of the explanatory content. This flexibility allows for tailored outputs based on specific translation goals and audience needs.

It is also important to note that the comparison between human and AI translation faces contextual limitations. Human translators typically operate within structured publishing environments, benefiting from editorial support and revision

opportunities. In contrast, AI systems like GPT-4 generate immediate outputs without the opportunity for iterative refinement. A more balanced evaluation might involve allowing multiple AI-generated attempts or placing human translators under similarly constrained conditions to better assess relative performance.

Although various researches have been conducted to investigate the accuracy of AI tools or the challenges of cross-cultural translation, very few have specifically examined the role of intertextuality in translation, particularly in comparative studies between human translators and AI tools. The present study made an attempt to fill this gap by providing empirical insights into how intertextual competence manifests differently in humans and GPT-4.

The results of this research confirm that human translators still have a distinct advantage in managing literary and intertextual elements due to their cultural literacy, poetic sensitivity, and ability to creatively accommodate texts. However, the ongoing progress in AI language models suggests that with appropriate training and refinement, these tools may eventually reach a higher level of intertextual sophistication required for nuanced literary translation.

In the age of AI, human translation may evolve into a more deliberate and rare art form—a slow and gentle journey. Books translated with care and cultural depth are likely to grow in appeal. Literary translation is inherently reflective, analytical, and creative, requiring nuanced choices: this word or that? Fidelity or freedom? The rise of AI presents a new dilemma: Should we translate from scratch, or revise what AI provides?

On an optimistic note, the coexistence of AI and human translators can be mutually enriching. While human translators are challenged to refine their practice, AI systems improve through exposure to high-quality human data. This evolving relationship calls for a new form of literary literacy—one that acknowledges both the limitations and the potential of AI generated translation in the literary domain.

6 Conclusion

This research explored the Persian translation of intertextual elements in six English novels by both human translators and the AI model GPT-4, based on Kristeva's (1966) intertextual theory and Hatim and Mason's (1990) framework. The results indicated substantial similarities and differences. Human translators revealed deep engagement with the intertextual references. In many cases, they employed accommodation and explanation strategies, drawing upon classical Persian poets to enrich their translations. In this context, they functioned as cultural mediators, effectively reconstructing the intertextual networks of the source texts within the target language.

GPT-4, meanwhile, utilized adaptation and explanation strategies to render intertextual items. While it demonstrated notable similarity to human translators in some respects, it struggled to incorporate classical Persian literature in the translations. Its use of literary rich expressions was limited and inconsistent—marking a key distinction between AI-generated and human translations. Additionally, GPT-4 required highly specific, context-aware prompts to generate appropriate equivalents, highlighting the critical role of human agency in achieving high-quality translations, particularly for complex intertextual and culturally embedded content.

Integrating classical Persian literature into translation practice has significant implications across linguistic, cultural, and educational domains. This integration not only enhances the expressiveness of translations but also preserves the cultural and linguistic heritage of the target language. In the context of globalization and growing linguistic homogenization, such practices help resist cultural erosion and reaffirm Persian identity in modern discourse. In educational contexts, this approach supports curriculum development and encourages learners and translators to engage with classical texts as dynamic sources of linguistic and creative potential.

Ultimately, this study emphasizes the importance of intertextual awareness in both translator training and AI language model development. Since intertextuality is a central feature of literary texts, improving AI's ability to manage such complexity would enhance the literary and cultural fidelity of its translations. This perspective opens new directions for future research in translation studies, comparative literature, and cultural sustainability.

References:

- Allen, G. (2011). *Intertextuality*. Routledge.
- Barthes, R. (1974). *S/Z* (R. Howard, trans.). Hill and Wang. (Original work published 1970).
- Brala Vukanović, M. (2025). Translating (metaphors) in the age of AI: Opportunities, challenges, and implications for the EFL classroom. *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*, 22(1), 185–201. <https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.22.1.185-201>
- Conrad, J. (1996). *Lord Jim*: An authoritative text (T. C. Moser, Ed.). Stanford University Press.
- Conrad, J. (1996). *Lord Jim*. (S. Hosseini, Trans.). Niloufar. (Original work published 1900). (In Persian).
- De Nooy, J. (1998). *Derrida, Kristeva and the dividing line: An articulation of two theories of difference*. Garland Publishing.
- Farahzad, F. (2009). Translation as an intertextual practice. *Perspectives: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, 16 (3–4), 125–131. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09076760802547462>
- Faulkner, W. (1982). *Light in August*. Chatto & Windus. Retrieved from [Digital Library of India Item 2015.124648](#)
- Faulkner, W. (2021). *Light in August*. (S. Hosseini, Trans.). Niloufar. (Original work published 1932). (In Persian).
- Fielding, H. (1982). *The history of Tom Jones, a foundling*. Universal Offset Printers.
- Fielding, H. (2007). *The history of Tom Jones, a foundling*. (A. Karimi Hakkak, Trans.). Niloufar. (Original work published 1749). (In Persian).
- Fowler, D. (2000). *Roman constructions: Readings in postmodern Latin*. Oxford University Press.
- Gajšt, N. (2025). Applications of AI-driven tools in translating and drafting commercial correspondence – A Slovenian-English perspective. *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*, 22(1), 153–170. <https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.22.1.153-170>
- Hatim, B., & Mason, I. (1990). *Discourse and the translator*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315846583>

- Hatim, B. & Mason, I. (1997). *The translator as communicator*. Routledge.
- Hassani, G., Malekshahi, M., & Davari, H. (2025). AI-powered transcreation in global marketing: Insights from Iran. *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*, 22(1), 203–221. <https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.22.1.203-221>
- Joyce, J. (1996). *A portrait of the artist as a young man*. (J. Belanger, Ed.). Wordsworth Classic.
- Joyce, J. (2001). *A portrait of the artist as a young man*. (M. Badiei, Trans.). Niloufar. (Original work published 1916). (In Persian).
- Joyce, J. (1980). *Ulysses*. Planet Pdf. Retrieved from <http://www.planetpdf.com>
- Joyce, J. (2002). *Ulysses*. (M. Badiei, Trans.). Niloufar. (Original work published 1922). (In Persian).
- Kristeva, J. (1980). *Desire in language: A semiotic approach to literature and art* (T. Gora, A. Jardine, & L. S. Roudiez, Trans.; L. S. Roudiez, Ed.). Columbia University Press. (Original work published 1966).
- Kourdis, E. (2024). Kristeva's impact on translation and the interplay of intertextuality, transposition and intersemiosis. *Acta Nova Humanistica*, 1(1), 143–159. <https://doi.org/10.33919/ANHNBU.24.1.9>
- Landers, C. (2001). *Literary translation: A practical guide*. Multilingual Matters.
- Melville, H. (2012). *Moby Dick*. Arcturus Publishing.
- Melville, H. (2015). *Moby Dick*. (S. Hosseini, Trans.). Niloufar. (Original work published 1851). (In Persian).
- Neubert, A., & Shreve, G. (1992). *Translation as text*. Kent State University Press.
- Schäffner, C. (2012). Intercultural intertextuality as a translation phenomenon. *Perspective: Studies in Translation Theory and Practice*, 20(3), 345–364. <https://doi.org/10.1080/0907676X.2012.702402>
- Tahmasbi Boveiri, S., Nejadansari Mahabadi, D., Shahnazari, M., & Afrouz, M. (2025). The essential role of intertextual awareness in English literary translation: A case study of Saleh Hosseini's works. *Iranian Journal of Translation Studies*, 23(89), 25–43. <https://dorl.net/dor/20.1001.1.17350212.1404.23.1.2.2>
- Venuti, L. (2009). Translation, intertextuality, interpretation. *Romance Studies*, 27(3), 157–173. <https://doi.org/10.1179/174581509X455169>
- Zhang, W., & Zhao, N. (2015). Analysis of the translators' social and psychological trends from the perspective of intertextuality. *Journal of Language Teaching and Research*, 6 (1), 157–162. <http://dx.doi.org/10.17507/jltr.0601.19>
- Zupan, S., Pavličič, Z., & Fabčič, M. L. (2025). Machine translation of independent nominal phrases in technical texts. *ELOPE: English Language Overseas Perspectives and Enquiries*, 22(1), 171–184. <https://doi.org/10.4312/elope.22.1.171-184>