

# **Italicization of Translated Korean Literature and Korean Diasporic Literature**

## **A corpus-based study of the decision-making of translators and original authors**

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**ABSTRACT:** The present study takes a corpus-based approach to compare ten Korean novels translated into English with another ten Korean diasporic authentic novels written in English to explore differences in the use of italics between translated and non-translated literary texts. The focus is placed on how foreign words are italicized, since they represent the identity, history, and collective memories of Koreans as the interface between translated Korean literature and Korean diasporic literature. Especially since italics as a typographical device is seldom used in the Korean language, the italicization of foreign words also serves to reveal the style and decision of translators and their differences with original writers. Against this backdrop, the present study aims to see (a) if translated Korean literature and Korean diasporic literature exhibit significant differences in the use of italics; and (b) how the choices of original authors and translators differ in italicizing culture-specific and other foreign words. The present study employs Newmark's (2001) typology to categorize culture-specific items (CSI) of foreign origin into six subcategories, while adopting Nord's (2018, 1997) notion of phatic and expressive functions and developing other emerging categories to explain the italicized use of foreign words whose meaning is rather culturally universal but whose direct transfer in italicized form do convey cultural connotations.

The results of the analysis show that the most italicized category among all categories of italicization is foreign words, while the most notable difference is observed in emphatic italics. In the italicization of foreign CSIs, no significant difference is found except in one subcategory, while the lack of consistency

in Romanization is noticeable in both corpora. As for non-CSIs, the use of phatic/expressive and foreignizing italics is significantly predominant in the non-translated corpus, reflecting the relative freedom of original authors to express a sense of otherness and diasporic identity. The present study provides unique insight on how the use of italics in foreign words elucidates the different styles and decisions of translators and original authors, but it will need to be complemented with a closer look into sentences containing these instances and a further review on the original texts of the translated corpus.

**KEYWORDS:** translated Korean literature, Korean diasporic literature, italics, foreign words, culture-specific items, corpus-based approach

**논문초록:** 본 연구는 코퍼스 기반 접근법을 활용하여 영어로 번역된 한국 소설 10편과 영어로 집필된 한국 디아스포라 소설 10편을 비교 분석함으로써 번역 문학 텍스트와 비번역 문학 텍스트간 이탤릭체 사용 양상의 차이를 탐구한다. 본 연구는 외국어 어휘에 대한 이탤릭체 적용에 초점을 두고 있는데, 이는 외국어 어휘가 한국 번역 문학과 한국 디아스포라 문학의 접점으로서 한국인의 정체성, 역사, 집단적 기억을 대표하기 때문이다. 특히 이탤릭체는 한국어에서 거의 사용되지 않는 타이포그래피 장치이기에, 외국어 어휘에 대한 이탤릭체 적용은 번역사의 문체와 의사결정, 그리고 번역사와 작가 사이의 차이점을 드러내는 역할을 하기도 한다. 이에 따라 본 연구는 (a) 한국 번역 문학과 한국 디아스포라 문학이 이탤릭체의 사용에 있어 유의미한 차이를 드러내는지, 그리고 (b) 문화특정성을 가지는 외국어 어휘와 그렇지 않은 외국어 어휘에 대한 이탤릭체 적용에 있어 번역사와 작가의 선택에 어떤 차이가 나타나는지를 알아보려 한다. 본 연구는 뉴마크(2001)의 분류를 채택하여 외국어에서 유래한 문화특정항목(CSI)을 6가지 하위범주로 구분하는 한편, 노르트(2018, 1997)의 친교(phatic) 및 표현(expressive) 기능을 도입하고 새롭게 확인되는 기타 범주를 개발하여 의미 자체는 문화보편성을 띠지만 이탤릭체 형태의 직접 전이 시 문화적 함축의를 가지는 외국어 어휘의 이탤릭체 활용 양상을 설명한다.

분석 결과 이탤릭체 적용의 전체 범주 중 이탤릭체 사용 빈도가 가장 높은 것은 기대한 바와 같이 외국어 어휘인 반면, 가장 눈에 띄는 차이는 강조 용도의 이탤릭체 사용에서 관찰되었다. 외국어 문화특정항목에 대한 이탤릭체 적용에서는 1개 하위범주를 제외하고 유의미한 차이가 발견되지 않았으나, 두 코퍼스 모두 로마자 표기의 일관성 결여가 뚜렷하게 나타났다. 문화특정항목이 아닌 외국어 어휘의 경우, 친교/표현 및 미국화 기능을 가지는 이탤릭체 사용이 비번역 코퍼스에서 유의미하게 두드러졌으며, 이는 타자성과 디아스포라의 정체성을 표현하는 데 있어 작가의 자유도가 상대적으로 높다는 점을 반영한다. 본 연구는 외국어 어휘에서의 이탤릭체 사용이 번역사와 작가의 서로 다른 문체와 의사결정을 설명할 수 있다는 고유한 통찰을 제공한다. 단, 향후 이들 사례가 포함된 문장에 대한 세부적 분석, 번역

코퍼스의 원문에 대한 추가적 검토를 통한 보완이 필요할 것이다.

**핵심어:** 한국 번역 문학, 한국 디아스포라 문학, 이탤릭체, 외국어 어휘, 문화특정항목, 코퍼스 기반 접근법

## 1. Introduction

Korean literature has long been defined narrowly as literature “written in the Korean language, *hangul*, to express thoughts and emotions native to the country” (Kim, 1931; as cited in Kim, 2022, p. 40). Until the late 20th century, its readership was generally limited to Korean speakers, with inbound translation being a predominant mode in the Korean literature market. While translations of Korean literature do date all the way back to 1892<sup>1</sup>, very few literary works in Korean were translated into English and other foreign languages<sup>2</sup>.

In the first quarter of the 21st century, however, Korean literature is undergoing dramatic change in terms of both its reach and scope. The pioneering initiatives of the Literary Translation Institute of Korea (LTI Korea) and the Daesan Foundation since the 1990s to sponsor the overseas publication of translated Korean literature—coupled with the rising global popularity of Korean content—have laid the groundwork for an ever-increasing number of Korean literary works to be translated into foreign languages<sup>3</sup> and succeed in the global market. Shin Kyung-sook’s *Please Look After Mom*, which won the Man Asian Literary Prize in 2012 and Han Kang’s *The Vegetarian*, which won the International Booker Prize in 2016 (Cheong et al., 2021, p. 13), are key examples of how Korean literature is breaking out of the periphery of the world literary field, with translation being the driving force.

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- 1 One of the best known love stories and folk tales from the Joseon era, *Chunhyangjeon* (The Tale of Chunhyang) was translated into French under the title of *Printemps parfumé* (Jang, 2015, pp. 382-383).
  - 2 Korean literature remained largely silent in the field of world literature in the 20th century. Until the 1970-1980s, the vast majority of literary translations in Korea were inbound; during its drive for modernization, the country did not have enough capabilities or resources for outbound translation (Chung, 2022, pp. 5-6).
  - 3 From 2001 to 2023, a total of 1,972 literary works were translated from Korean to foreign languages under LTI Korea’s sponsorship, including 335 translated into English (LTI Korea, 2023).

In the meantime, the narrow, nationalistic definition of Korean literature is being challenged by the recent rise of diasporic literature. Either forced or induced to leave their traditional homelands, diasporans feature essentially mixed culture as they try to negotiate their homeland and new cultures (Barbhuiya, 2020, p. 165), and their cultural space often includes “a cross-section of linguistic play, characters that are in between languages, and texts that make use of their native and acquired tongues” (Lam, 2011, p. 307).

While Zainichi and Soviet Korean writers have made a significant mark in Korean diasporic literature, the scope of discussion for the purpose of the present study is limited to diasporic literature from English-speaking immigrants and descendants of Korean origin. Since Younghill Kang became the first Korean-American writer to gain wide visibility in the 1930s, Korean diasporic writers in the United States have produced a wide range of literary works themed around Korean history, displacement, and the formation and reconstruction of identity (Kwon & Fulton, 2020, pp. 245-246).

More recently, the second generation of Korean-American writers are enjoying greater popularity and recognition, including Min Jin Lee, who became a finalist for the 2017 National Book Award for Fiction with *Pachinko*, and Angie Kim, whose novel *Miracle Creek* won the Edgar Award for Best First Novel by an American Author (Lim, 2022). At the same time, globalization, improved mobility, and better communication technology have brought Korea and the overseas Korean communities closer, leading to greater exchanges including more translations of literary works in both directions (Kim, 2001, pp. 265-266).

The common themes explored in both translated Korean literature and Korean diasporic literature are the identity, history, and collective memories of Korean people. In English and other Latin-based languages, these elements are often represented by the use of (italicized) foreign words including culture-specific items (CSI). While the italicization of these words in Korean diasporic literature written in English clearly is the outcome of the author’s decision, the situation is more complex in the English translations of Korean literary works (where italics are not a linguistic device), hinting that the translators—not the authors—may be the key decision makers.

Then how will the respective nature of translated Korean literature and Korean diasporic literature as translated and non-translated texts affect the manifestation of CSIs and other foreign words? And how similar (and different) will be the decisions of translators and authors? By applying a

corpus-based approach, the present study aims to see (a) if translated Korean literature and Korean diasporic literature exhibit significant differences in the use of italics; and (b) how the choices of original authors and translators differ in italicizing culture-specific and other foreign words.

## 2. Theoretical Background

### 2.1 The Use of Italics

Invented by Italian humanists in the early 15th century and introduced to England in 1528, italics were initially used for entire documents (especially classic works) and long pieces of text meant to be distinguished from the main text (e.g., prefaces, indexes, notes, citations) (Simonsen, 2007, p. 872) and have since evolved into an essential and versatile device for distinguishing segments of text (Leahy, 2020, pp. 104-105).

In English, main uses of italics include key terms and phrases (often accompanied by a definition)<sup>4</sup>; titles of books, reports, webpages, periodicals, and other works; genera, species, and varieties; and the first use of a word, phrase, or abbreviation from another language that readers may be unfamiliar with (American Psychological Association, 2019, p. 170). In Korean and many other non-Latin languages, on the other hand, italics are not necessarily part of their grammatical systems, and their uses are not specified in style guides or other guidelines<sup>5</sup>.

Šlancarová (1999) developed a taxonomy for italics, which the present study has adopted for the purpose of systematic categorization. In this typology, italics are categorized into *names and titles*, *emphasis*, *meta-language use*, *foreign words*, and *miscellaneous*. The description of each category is provided in Table 1.

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4 Together with quotation marks and boldface, italics serve as important typographic devices in English for introducing terms that the writer expects will be unfamiliar to the reader. When unfamiliar terms are italicized and followed by their explanations, this prevents readers from “experiencing a moment of apprehension” as they know the terms will be explained. On the other hand, the writers may sometimes use an unfamiliar term without explaining it at all when they know the term is unfamiliar but feel its explanation is unnecessary (Farkas, 1983, pp. 369-372).

5 For instance, the 2017 Korean Linguistic Rules from the National Institute for Korean Language contain no reference to italics at all (National Institute for Korean Language, 2017).

**Table 1: Taxonomy for italics (Šlancarová, 1999, pp. 60-62)**

Category	Description
Names and titles	The use of italics for titles of written art; government reports; legal citations; fictitious characters; dramatic art; works of art; music; ships and aircrafts; and single spacecraft, satellites, and space missions
Emphasis	The use of italics for words that would be stressed if spoken; those containing the point; those in contrast to the ones expected; two words in sharp contrast; words needing thinking over to yield their full content; and the communication of unprepossessing or amusing characteristics in dialogue
Meta-language use	The use of italics with regards to words/sentences, letters of the alphabet, and numbers
Foreign words	The use of italics for single words/phrases (of Latin origin, Latin abbreviations, French, and other languages); and foreign and lexical items of foreign origin (e.g., Latinate terminology <i>in situ</i> )
Miscellaneous	The use of italics for “decorative” purposes, where the entire text is rendered in italics; “practical” purposes such as notes, prefaces, and chapter headings; and “stage directions” in drama

Among these categories, the focus of the present study is placed on the italicization of foreign words, since the treatment of these items in translated Korean literature will be best suited to demonstrate potential differences in the styles and decisions of translators and original authors.

## 2.2 Corpus-based Translation Studies and Author/Translator Styles

Coupled with the move towards a descriptive approach in the 1980s-1990s seeking empirical generalizations, the introduction of large, machine-readable corpora (Chesterman, 2011, p. 175) has revolutionized Translation Studies, giving researchers the ability to process large quantities of observable empirical data and identify patterns beyond individual idiosyncrasies. Major topics explored in Corpus-based Translation Studies include the search for translation universals and stylistic approaches to translation.

Translation universals are features that “typically occur in translated texts rather than original utterances and which are not the result of interference from specific language systems” (Baker, 1993, p. 243). Corpus-based research on potential translation universals has evolved in two directions: One focuses

on the differences between translations and their source texts (“S-universals”) and the other on those between translations and non-translated texts (“T-universals”). The latter, which is the focus of the present study, has been largely about lexical and syntactic elements, with only a few studies made on the use of italics and other typographical devices.

Stylistic approaches to translation direct attention to the “styles” of translated texts (Malmkjær, 2003) or translators themselves (Baker, 2000), as a translated text manifests the translator’s judgment<sup>6</sup> just as a source text represents the author’s (Munday, 2008a). While the author is free to make motivated linguistic choices, the translator is rather tied by components and constraints of the source text (Munday, 2008b, pp. 57-58).

One of the useful devices in analyzing translator style is the treatment of foreign words, especially in combination with the use of italics, as they constitute part of a “pattern of choice” for translators (Saldanha, 2011, p. 240). Especially when the source language has no typographical device equivalent to English italics, translators become the decision makers when it comes to “what to foreground” among various cultural concepts unfamiliar to the target readers. Placed at the foreignizing end of the continuum, the direct transfer of foreign words in italics (Leppihalme, 2001, p. 141) highlights otherness—in the same way as the use of italicized foreign words in diasporic literature embodies the hybridity and multiple identities of authors.

### 2.3 Foreign Words and CSIs in Literature

Foreign words can be defined as “word[s] or expression[s] which [are] not native to the language that records [them]” (Boot, 2010, p. 131). Dubbed “an expression of alienation itself” (Adorno, 2019, p. 210), they challenge monoglossia and thus relativize hegemonic language (Baer, 2011, p. 128). Grutman (2006) also indicates:

Tolerance or intolerance of foreign words can be taken as more than an index of ‘familiarity’ and ‘foreignness,’ of ‘Sameness’ and ‘Otherness.’ Reaching far beyond those distinctions, they lay bare the power imbalance

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6 Munday (2008a), however, points out that the translator’s voice “mixes subtly with that of the author” and will be “unnoticed unless the target is compared to its source.”

between literatures in different languages and/or from different countries (p. 24).

In literature, authors retain foreign words in their original language when these words foreground the foreign culture (Ashcroft et al., 2002, p. 63). Words often are transliterated but remain foreign, teaching the readers “the new language through the new context”; this is even more the case in diasporic literature, where “transliteration and the embedding of unexplained foreign words in the text is one of the most common and fascinating techniques” (Van Dyck, 2010, p. 5).

Many of the foreign words used in literature constitute CSIs. Understood as “concepts which are found in a given source culture but not in a given target culture” (Leppihalme, 2011, p. 126), they have been discussed extensively in Translation Studies as they often represent translation problems as sources of untranslatability. The key terminological suggestions for and typologies of CSIs are summarized in Table 2.

**Table 2: Terminological suggestions for and typologies of CSIs**

Scholar	Term	Categories
Nida (1975)	Cultural features	Ecology, material culture, social culture, religious culture, linguistic culture
Vlachov and Florin (1980)	Realia	Geographic, ethnographic, social and political, modern, historical, local, and international realia
Newmark (1988)	Cultural words	Ecology, material culture, social culture, politics and administration, and gestures and habits
Nord (2018, 1997)	Culture markers, culturemes	Cultural markers with a phatic, referential, expressive, or appellative function; ecology/lifestyle/history/cultural heritage
Newmark (2001)	Foreign and cultural words	Ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs and pursuits, and private passions

The earliest among these typologies, Nida (1975) is seen as less suitable for the purpose of the present study, since social culture may work as a catch-all category and the usefulness of religious culture may be limited while no



category exists for customs and other necessary notions. His classification also overlaps largely with Newmark (1988) and Newmark (2001).

Vlachov and Florin (1980) offer a detailed classification of realia spanning many different areas, but their definitions and boundaries seem rather unclear. Newmark (1988) has no category on customs, and “gestures and habits” may be too minor as a separate category. Nord (2018, 1997) also deserves attention as “phatic” and “expressive” functions in her functionalist typology would be useful in explaining foreign words not necessarily specific to the source culture that the authors or translators choose to transfer directly. Her blanket category “ecology/lifestyle/history/cultural heritage,” however, sounds rather simplistic and fails to deal with some essential elements covered by other typologies.

Newmark (2001) provides a more balanced classification of CSIs. Politics and government are covered in “public life,” while “social life” focuses more on the economy, welfare, education and other social aspects of our life. The vague notion of “gestures and habits” was replaced with “customs and pursuits” which better serves the purpose of the present study, and “private passions” encompass not just religions but also music, poetry, and relevant organizations.

### 3. Research Design

By building comparable corpora of Korean literary works translated into English and English literary works written by Korean diasporic writers and analyzing/categorizing the use of italics in foreign words in these corpora, the present study aims to answer the following research questions:

- a. Are there significant differences in the use of italics between translated and non-translated works?
- b. Do writers and translators make different choices in italicizing culture-specific items and other foreign words?

This section describes how the data for the corpora were selected, prepared, and analyzed, and how italicized foreign words identified in this process were categorized.

### 3.1 Data Selection

For the data set, the present study chose literary works from the 21st century, as it is in this time period that a solid tradition of Korean literary translation developed, thanks in part to LTI Korea and the Daesan Foundation. Consequently, this is also the period in which Korean literature began to garner interest from around the world.

To obtain an extensive list of Korean literary works written in or translated into English in this period, data were first gathered on Amazon.com, using the ParseHub web scraper, with the keyword “Korean literature.” The data collected include the date of publication, English title, author, editor, translator, publisher, and URL. All the items were double checked and categorized by genre, original language (to distinguish English works by the Korean diaspora), and sponsor (in the case of translated works).

The present study chose novels over poetry, drama, essays and other literary formats as novels represent a format that generally contains lengthy passages of text for study. Drama contains a high volume of dialogue and lacks description and thus would not provide a balanced data set for consideration. Poetry is characterized by a greater consideration for prosody as well as considerable use of symbolism and subtextual devices, and is thus unsuitable for the study of italicization in a corpus-based study of literature. The focus of the present study is also set on novels themed around Korean traditional culture, history, and the lives of Koreans either at home or elsewhere, where more Korean CSIs and other foreign words are likely to be found.

On this basis, a list of 20 novels was finalized to be included in the corpora. Ten of them were English novels by writers of Korean origin, and the other ten were Korean novels translated into English. All the English novels selected were written in the 21st century, and all the Korean novels were written *and* translated in the same period. The data were purposefully sampled to avoid a bias towards certain writers or translators while ensuring that the selected works cover the right topics for the purpose of the present study.

### 3.2 Data Preparation and Corpus Design

Prior to building the corpora, the electronic copies of the 20 sample texts were processed into .docx format before annotating the italics. As typographical

devices like italics are hard to annotate using Sketch Engine’s basic functions, preparations were made to facilitate later concordance searches: Using the find and replace formatting option on Microsoft Word, all italicized items were reformatted into “[italics\_XXXXXXX]” for easy search and clear distinction.

The resulting files were double checked and cleaned up to remove “false” italics (e.g., punctuation marks or spaces in italics). Then the data were compiled into a pair of English monolingual corpora named “Italics in Korean Literature: Translated” (IKL-T) and “Italics in Korean Literature: Non-translated” (IKL-NT) on Sketch Engine, a cloud-based corpus tool. A general overview of the two corpora can be found in Table 3.

**Table 3: Information on IKL-T and IKL-NT**

Category	IKL-T	IKL-NT
Tokens	894,836	1,235,079
Words	751,865	1,021,102
Sentences	60,049	83,577
Documents	10	10

The two corpora differ in word count, but the size of both is believed to be sufficient for the purposes of the analysis. The differences in word and token count were accounted for by normalizing token frequency for the respective corpora (See Section 4). The detailed profile of the two corpora can be found in Table 4.

**Table 4: Corpus profile**

Corpus	#	Year	Title	Author	Translator	Publisher	Tokens
IKL-T	1	2007	<i>The Court Dancer: A Novel</i>	Kyung-Sook Shin	Anton Hur	Pegasus Books	136,582
	2	2009	<i>Marilyn and Me</i>	Ji-min Lee	Chi-Young Kim	Fourth Estate	48,666
	3	2010	<i>Olympic Boulevard</i>	Philip Onho Lee	John Cha	Seoul Selection	77,786

Corpus	#	Year	Title	Author	Translator	Publisher	Tokens
IKL-T	4	2013	<i>Across the Tumen: A North Korean Kkotjebi Boy's Quest</i>	Young-sook Moon	David Carruth	Seoul Selection	78,200
	5	2014	<i>The Shadow of Arms</i>	Hwang Sok-yong	Chun Kyung-ja	Seven Stories Press	242,230
	6	2015	<i>The Investigation</i>	Jung-Myung Lee	Chi-young Kim	Pegasus Crime	98,871
	7	2016	<i>Human Acts</i>	Han Kang	Deborah Smith	Portobello Books	71,288
	8	2019	<i>I Met Loh Kiwan</i>	Haejin Cho	Ji-Eun Lee	University of Hawai'i Press	42,899
	9	2019	<i>Miracle on Cherry Hill</i>	Sun-mi Hwang	Chi-Young Kim	Abacus	42,381
	10	2020	<i>The Disaster Tourist</i>	Yun Ko-Eun	Lizzie Buehler	Serpent's Tail	55,933
IKL-NT	1	2009	<i>Everything Asian: A Novel</i>	Sung J. Woo	-	Macmillan	116,496
	2	2012	<i>Drifting House</i>	Krys Lee	-	Penguin	66,411
	3	2013	<i>Forgotten Country</i>	Catherine Chung	-	Hachette UK	104,024
	4	2017	<i>Everything Belongs to Us: A Novel</i>	Yoojin Grace Wuertz	-	Random House	134,937
	5	2018	<i>Free Food for Millionaires</i>	Min Jin Lee	-	Hachette UK	256,512
	6	2020	<i>The Mermaid from Jeju: A Novel</i>	Sumi Hahn	-	Crooked Lane Books	98,394
	7	2020	<i>The Kinship of Secrets</i>	Eugenia Kim	-	Bloomsbury Publishing	114,335
	8	2021	<i>If I Had Your Face: A Novel</i>	Frances Cha	-	Penguin UK	94,599
	9	2021	<i>Skinship: Stories</i>	Yoon Choi	-	Vintage	107,021
	10	2021	<i>Beasts of a Little Land: A Novel</i>	Juheon Kim	-	Simon and Schuster	142,350

The works included in the corpora were selected so as to obtain a diverse range of novels that adequately represented both translated Korean literature and Korean diasporic literature. While a single translator is represented in three works included in the translated corpus, the style and genres of these works are different enough that diversity was maintained. This was further confirmed in the analysis of the data, with each work displaying notably different characteristics in terms of the use of italicization.

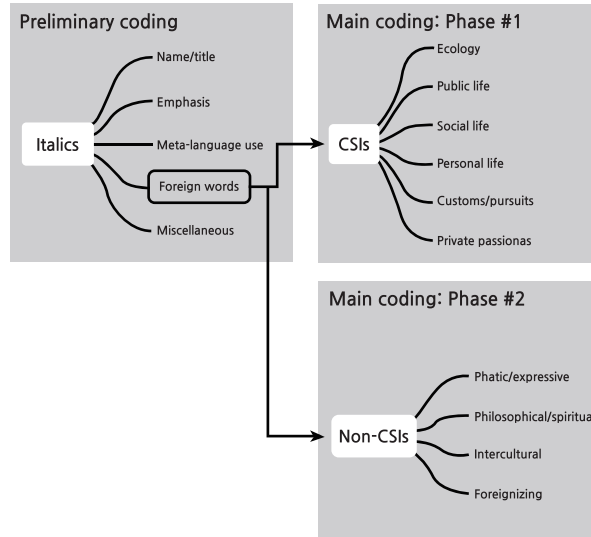
To include a text in a corpus requires written permission from the copyright owner, in this case the publishing houses for the respective novels. At the time of this writing, the process of obtaining written permission is underway.

### 3.3 Analysis

Using the lemma-based wordlist search function on Sketch Engine, a list of all italicized items (annotated with the word “italics”) was compiled in a spreadsheet form for coding purposes. For ambiguous or otherwise unclear items, character-based concordance searches were performed to look for more context.

A preliminary coding was carried out to separate foreign words from other uses of italics according to Šlancarová’s (1999) typology. The main coding process was undertaken in two steps, only on the instances categorized as “foreign words.” The first phase was to identify and categorize *culture-specific foreign words* using Newmark’s (2001) six subcategories: ecology, public life, social life, personal life, customs and pursuits, and private passions. In the second phase, all the items not fitting into this taxonomy were classified as *other foreign words*. For their subcategories, the present study started out only with phatic and expressive functions (Nord, 2018, 1997), which were initially expected to be heavily represented in the non-translated corpus, and let more emerge during the analysis to leave room for discovering new and unexpected patterns. Figure 1 provides an overview of the entire coding process and the finalized set of subcategories.

Figure 1: Coding process



As defined by Newmark (2001, p. 329), the *ecology* subcategory of culture-specific foreign words (i.e., CSIs) refers to lexical items related to the geological and geographical environment, such as *jangma* [rainy season] and *chamoe* [Korean melon]. *Public life* has to do with politics, laws, and government (e.g., *yangban* referring to the scholar-gentry class of the Joseon Dynasty), while *social life* includes words associated with the economy, occupations, social welfare, health, and education, with *chaebol* [conglomerate] and *gongsooni* [factory girl] being key examples. *Personal life* covers items related to food, clothing, and housing (e.g., *bindaetteok* for Korean mung bean pancake, *jeogori* meaning the traditional Korean jacket). *Customs and pursuits* stand for gestures with culture-specific meanings<sup>7</sup>, and sports widely enjoyed in particular cultures and associated idioms, such as cricket and football. *Private passions* are exemplified as religion, music, poetry, as well as their very different social organizations, the churches, the Arts Councils, and the poetry societies which contain them.

The subcategories for the other foreign words (i.e., non-CSIs) are mostly new and would thus need more detailed descriptions. The *phatic/expressive*

7 Prime examples of such gestures are slow hand clapping (sarcasm/disapproval) and table rapping (for communication with the spirit of a dead person).

subcategory—based on Nord’s (2018, 1997) culture markers with a phatic function and an expressive function—covers the use of language for the purpose of establishing and maintaining social relationships and for the purpose of expressing emotional states. Examples include honorifics such as *-ssi* or *-nim*; derogatory terms used in direct address such as *gaesaekki*; transliterated exclamations such as *wa* and *eomeo*; terms referencing social relationships such as *hyeong*, *nuna*, *ajeossi*, and *ajumma*; and titles denoting social status such as *jakga*.

The *philosophical/spiritual* category covers terminology relating to ideas, philosophies, and beliefs that are unique to a culture, such that a direct equivalent is unavailable in the majority of other languages and translation without additional explanation will likely lead to a significant loss in contextual meaning. A notable example in English would be *schadenfreude*, which is borrowed from the German language. In our corpus, examples include *jeong* and *palja*.

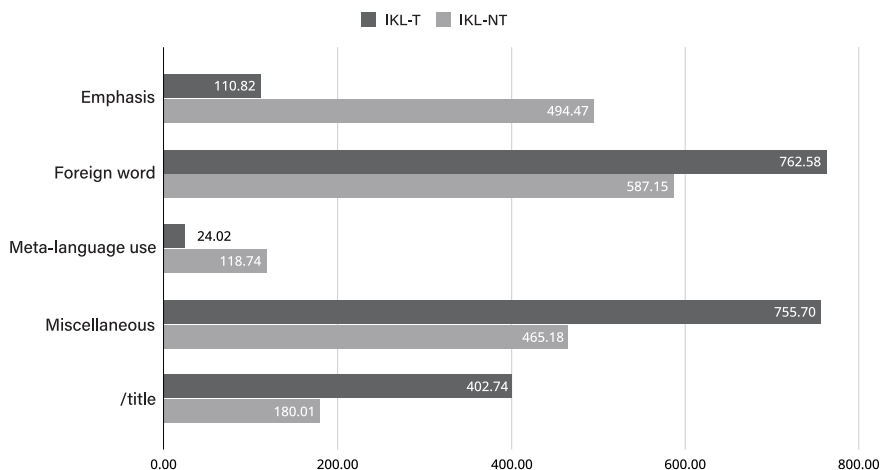
The *intercultural* category covers terms and expressions that reveal a culture’s attitudes towards other cultures. Words like *baekin* [white person] and *kho-jeng-ee* [person with a big nose], for instance, reveal different attitudes towards Caucasians.

The *foreignizing* category covers the use of transliterated language to create a foreignizing effect as described by Venuti (1995). This includes non-culture-specific lexical items that are nonetheless transliterated in the text, such as *maeum* [feelings/heart], *ihon* [divorce], and *chingu* [friend]; English loanwords that have been appropriated into Korean, otherwise known as *Konglish*; and transliterations of Korean onomatopoeia and mimetic words.

## 4. Results

The translated and non-translated corpora comprised 894,836 tokens and 1,235,079 tokens respectively. As the average token count for a work was 106,495.75, the frequencies were normalized at the number of instances per 100,000 tokens in order to better compare the results. Before discussing in detail the italicization of culture-specific and other foreign words as the focus of the present study, the general frequencies of instances of italicization will be discussed here.

Figure 2: Italics in translated and non-translated texts



As illustrated in Figure 2, the normalized raw frequency data obtained from the preliminary round of coding indicated a marked difference in the use of italics across all categories of italicization, validating the first research question. In both the translated and non-translated corpora, *foreign word* was the most italicized category. The normalized frequency of foreign words turned out to be higher for the translated corpus, but a closer examination of the data revealed a marked reoccurrence of a select few lexical items like *kkotjebi* and *rōnin* (see examples (1) and (2)), which appeared 63 and 46 times respectively.

1. When a group of *kkotjebi* went by, Yeong-dae stared at them for a long time, lost in thought. [IKL-T (1)]
2. The Japanese forces roared as they charged at the gate, guns blazing, and Hong Gyehoon, before he could even finish asking whether there was an order to assemble the Japanese troops, was slashed by the sword of a *rōnin*. [IKL-T (7)]

Aside from foreign words, the most notable, though not comparatively the largest, difference occurred in the use of italics for *emphasis* to portray the emotions, intonation, and stress in a character's speech and internal dialogue (see examples (3)-(6)). The non-translated corpus contained almost five times the number of instances when compared to the translated corpus.



This may be because the Korean language does not in general use italicization as a linguistic device, or because translators often adopt a more conservative approach (Baker, 1996, pp. 176-177), attempting to preserve the formal elements of the original text rather than adding new ones.

3. *You* are a true Parisian through and through. [IKL-T (7)]
4. I can't believe this tired woman is *the* Marilyn Monroe. [IKL-T (3)]
5. I don't even know who his bosses *are*. That's how high up this is. [IKL-NT (7)]
6. Why would anyone pray for there to be *no* hope for something as exciting as an American reunion? [IKL-NT (9)]

The frequency of *miscellaneous* and *names and titles* categories was similarly higher for the translated corpus and was influenced by the stylistic convention and content of the novels. The miscellaneous category covered the italicization of internal monologue (see examples (7) and (8)), while names and titles were associated with the titles of books, artworks, and other proper nouns mandating italicization in English (see examples (9) and (10)).

7. *How strange*, he thought, and studied the footprints carefully. [IKL-T (6)]
8. Her hand squeezing the car key until it left an indentation in her palm, thinking, *Yes, yes, I can do this*. [IKL-NT (3)]
9. On September 2, 1945, as Japan was signing the Instrument of Surrender on the USS *Missouri* in Tokyo Bay, I was staring at a parcel that had just arrived. [IKL-T (4)]
10. All Seoul had admired her in *The Story of ChunHyang*, and her photographs had been in the newspapers and the magazines. [IKL-NT (1)]

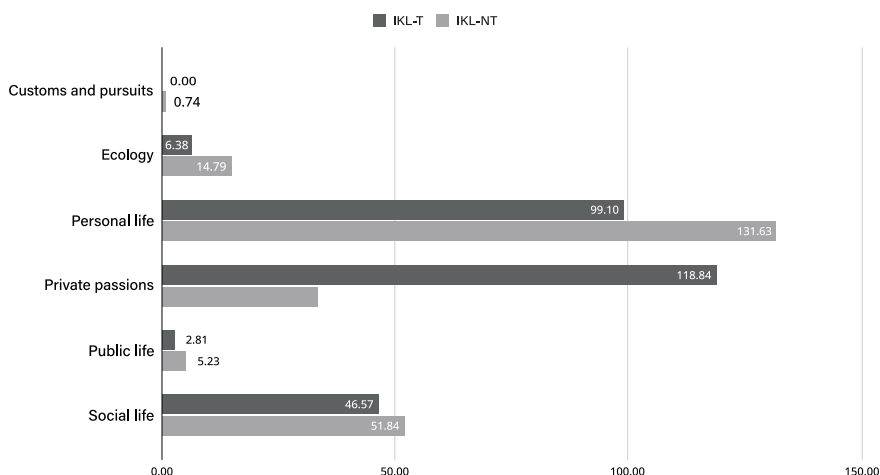
The next sections will explore differences in the italicization of culture-specific and other foreign words, and the key drivers of these differences.

#### 4.1 Italicization of Culture-specific Foreign Words (CSIs)

In the first phase of the main coding, the data in the foreign word category were examined to compare the normalized frequencies of six subcategories

for CSIs (see Figure 3). Foreign words that do not fall into these six subcategories were classified as “other foreign words” (non-CSIs) and will be discussed in the next section.

Figure 3: Culture-specific foreign words in translated and non-translated texts



With the exception of the *private passions* category, there was no meaningful difference in any of the other categories. The difference in private passions was the result of the content of a specific novel in the translated corpus, which resulted in multiple instances of CSIs relating to music and art.

11. You wrote to her, calling her *onni*, older sister. [IKL-T (2)]
12. “It’s *Umma*,” Leah said, and Casey buzzed her in. [IKL-NT (6)]
13. After knocking at the door, he heard the voice of Miss Hoa, asking in awkward Korean for him to come in: “*T’ro osipsio*.” [IKL-T (10)]
14. “*K’rae*,” she agreed. [IKL-NT (9)]

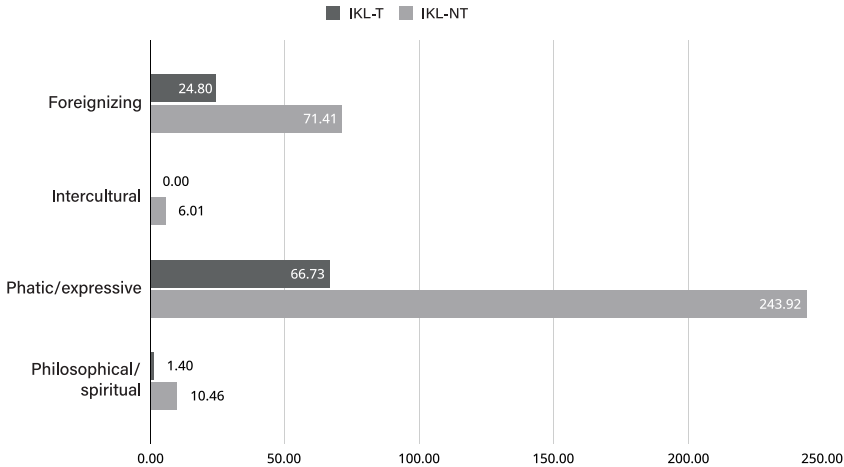
Of particular note is the lack of consistency in the Romanization of Korean across the entirety of the both corpora. The Revised Romanization of Korean, released by the Ministry of Culture, Sports, and Tourism in 2000 (Ministry of Culture and Tourism, 2000), is the official system of Romanization for the Korean language, but the works included in the corpora either do not follow the system or do so inconsistently. For example, *eonni*, the form of address used by a female towards an older female sibling is Romanized

variously as *unni* or *onni*, as in (11). *Eomma*, which is equivalent to *mom*, is both capitalized unnecessarily and likewise does not follow the Revised Romanization system in (12). Dialogue similarly follows no consistent set of rules, with notable examples such as (13) and (14).

### 4.2 Italicization of Other Foreign Words (Non-CSIs)

The second phase of the main coding, followed by the normalization of frequencies, demonstrated a considerable difference in the italicization of foreign words without cultural specificity (i.e., non-CSIs), both in pattern and frequency. As shown in Figure 4, the foreignizing and phatic/expressive subcategories occurred most frequently, and in all subcategories, italicization occurred more frequently in the non-translated corpus than in the translated corpus.

Figure 4: Non-CSI foreign words in translated and non-translated texts



- 15. That comes from her *mah uhm*, her heart and soul, her aroma, her love for me. [IKL-T (6)]
- 16. They could never be together—that much she had always understood, and she deserved to die for her sin of wanting him—but a part of her had thought that maybe this was what all the *soh-sul* books and *terebi* programs were about, a kind of pure, impossible love, and she had thought this had been her experience of it. [IKL-NT (6)]

Instances of *foreignizing* in the translated and non-translated corpora were indicative of differences in decision-making between original authors and translators. In translated works, the majority of instances were limited to the use of loan-words that mandated the use of italics, such as *hanja*. One work provided a handful of instances of foreignizing use, with a notable example being the transliteration of *mah uhm* (Revised Romanization: *maeum*), which in the context can be translated as *heart* in the sense of a person's emotions and disposition.

The non-translated corpus contained an abundance of instances of foreignizing italics, including the transliteration of full Korean sentences; transliteration of concepts that are not uniquely Korean, such as *divorce*; Koreanized English words, such as *terebi* [television] and *O'rai* [alright]; and Korean onomatopoeia. This can be understood as the original author's willingness to convey a sense of Koreanness to the target English-speaking audience, and a lack of a source text to which to be beholden.

17. Kim *chakka*. Kim the writer. [IKL-T (3)]

18. "Yobo, we can't be late," she said, her voice cracking. [IKL-NT (6)]

19. "Soo-ah-ya," said Jae-woo, making another attempt. [IKL-NT (8)]

The most notable difference was found in the multitude of *phatic/expressive* italics. While the literal meaning of these instances is rather culturally universal, their phatic or expressive uses in italicized form give them cultural specificity. In example (17), *chakka* refers to "writer," a notion that is not exactly culture-specific, but its combination of the last name "Kim" illustrates the way writers are addressed in Korean society. The direct transfer of the Korean equivalent to "honey" in example (18) also highlights the sense of otherness in the dialogue.

In the translated corpus, phatic/expressive italics were almost entirely found in a single work, and instances referencing relative social positions were rare in both relative and absolute terms. One work contained two instances of *hyeong* (an older male sibling of a male) and one instance each of *onni* (an older female sibling of a female) and *seonsaeng* (a generic honorific, often applied to teachers), and another work contained multiple instances of the title, *chakka* (Revised Romanization: *jakga*, an honorific generally used for writers). One work contained a single instance of *oppa* (an older male sibling of a female) and *nuna* (an older female sibling of a male) each. None of the other works contained

any instances of transliterated or loanword honorifics or titles.

In contrast, non-translated works were characterized by an abundance of phatic/expressive use of Korean terminology, including *unni*, *oppa*, *hyung*, *ajumma*, and *ajeossi*, as well as titles and honorifics denoting relative social distance and social status such as *sunbae*, *jang-no*, and otherwise. Each work contained multiple instances of referential terms as well as a liberal use of Korean language affixes, as in (19). This is in stark contrast to the translated corpus, where only one work used these affixes, and with considerably less frequency. Once again, Romanization remained inconsistent across all non-translated works, and similarly inconsistent in translated works.

20. It is even more meaningful than *sarang*, which is the “love,” because *jeong* is not a duty. [IKL-NT (8)]

*Philosophical/spiritual* terms were not common in either corpus, with only a single instance in the translated corpus and 16 instances spread across four works in the non-translated corpus. As described above, this category includes ideas and beliefs that are unique to Korean culture or to the East Asian cultural sphere, and as such there will be a significant loss of meaning unless the terms are transliterated. *Intercultural* use only occurred in the non-translated corpus. Instances were rare, but included examples such as *kho-jeng-ee*, a derogatory term for Caucasians.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of the analysis show a considerable difference in the use of italics for emphasis and for phatic and expressive purposes between the translated and non-translated corpora, with the latter displaying considerably higher frequencies for both. In instances where use of italics was more prominent in the translated corpus, the narrative and setting of the novels included in the corpus influenced the results. The notably higher frequencies of emphatic, phatic, and expressive italicization in the non-translated corpus can be understood as the result of a willingness on the part of the original author to flout recommendations against the use of emphatic italics and to create a sense of the “foreign.” This is in contrast with the translator, who is beholden to both the source text and a sense of caution regarding the flouting of target

text norms, lest his translations be criticized as “bad writing.”

The present study provides unique insight on how the use of italics in foreign words elucidates the different styles and decisions of translators and original authors, but its focus is primarily on word-level instances, and the context across sentences and texts as a whole was not taken into account. Also, a comparative analysis of the translated corpus and the corresponding texts will ensure a more in-depth understanding of how culture-specific and other foreign words are translated and how they differ from original writings, especially when additional explanations combined with the direct transfer of italicized foreign words are also taken into account. In future research, these will be useful complements to the approach proposed by the present study.

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