

TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL TERMS FROM URDU INTO ENGLISH: PROBLEMS AND STRATEGIES

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the translation of cultural terms from Urdu into English with a focus on problems and strategies. The main purposes were identification of major types of cultural terms in selected Urdu texts, analysis of problems of translation in English, and recommendations for the solutions of the problems. This study employed qualitative research method. Urdu short stories, novel, dramas, newspapers, speeches, and daily conversations were the sources of collection of data. For the purpose of analysis, 20 Urdu cultural terms were chosen; these were analyzed in the light of the theory of cultural translation proposed by Newmark. The results revealed that Urdu cultural terms had connection with religion, food, dress, custom, festivals, family relations, social values and traditional practices. Major problems in translation were the lack of equivalence, lack of cultural meaning, misinterpretation in context, and lack of equivalents in English. The study proposed transference, description equivalent, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent, paraphrase and explanation as effective strategies for accurate translation.

Keywords: Cultural terms, Urdu-English translation, translation problems, translation strategies, Newmark's theory.

1. INTRODUCTION

Translation is more than simply converting words from one language to another. It is also the activity of carrying over the meaning, idea, feeling and cultural values from source language to target language. Literary/cultural texts are harder to translate than other types because there are many words that are connected to a specific culture of a specific society. Urdu language is a language that has a lot of cultural, religious, social and traditional expressions. Translating Urdu culture terms into English is a difficult task for the translators as many Urdu words have no direct or exact equivalent in English.

Words and expressions that are related to the lifestyle, traditions, beliefs, customs, food, clothing, religion, social relations and values of a community are called cultural terms. According to Newmark (1988), the terms about culture can be divided into several categories: ecology, material culture, social culture, social organization, customs, activities, procedures, gestures, and habits. The classification of Urdu cultural terms is helpful in the study of Urdu language because that words are lot in Urdu texts related to Pakistani culture and Muslim society. Words like shalwar kameez, biryani, mehndi, nikah, eid, izzat and rishta have cultural significance, which could not be understood by a literal translation.

Translation of Urdu cultural terms to English is a difficult process as it is based on different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. There are a few Urdu words that have religious, family, social, customary and normal relationships. Translating word for word can cause the true meaning of these words to be lost. There is for instance "honour" or "respect" in Urdu, which can mean family honour, social dignity, moral worth, as well as "honour" and "respect". Likewise, the word rishta means 'relationship' but in a cultural context it can also be translated as a marriage proposal. According to Baker (2018), problems in translation may also appear where there is no equivalent word or expression in the target language for the word or expression in the source language.

There are various approaches which have been recommended by translation scholars to address the issues of the translation of cultural terms. Newmark (1988) recommended some ways of doing it like transference, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, paraphrase, and notes. Here are some strategies translators can use to convey the meaning of culture-specific words more effectively. In the same manner, Baker (2018) notes that when confronted with challenging cultural expressions, translators might apply the following strategies: paraphrase, loan words, explanation, and omission. When translating Urdu-English, one can use strategies like borrowing, explanation, cultural substitution, paraphrasing and footnotes to make cultural terms understandable for readers of English.

The other issue in cultural translation is also about domestication and foreignization. Domestication involves familiarizing and making the translation readily comprehensible to the intended audience, whereas foreignization entails retaining as many original cultural elements of the source language as possible. Venuti (1995) introduced these two important concepts in translation studies. Both of the strategies can be helpful in Urdu-English translation. However, if the translator goes overboard on his domestication, then the Urdu cultural identity might get diluted. Too much foreignization may result in difficulty for the English reader. Hence, the translator has to maintain the parity of maintaining Urdu cultural

identity and making the text understandable for readers of the English language.

Recent studies also indicate that cultural translation is one of the areas in translation studies that remains important. Culture-specific expressions are the source of difficulties for translators, as they are tightly linked with the social and cultural context of the source language (Khan 2021). Likewise, an (2024) asserts that domestication and foreignisation still play significant role in the translation of cultural aspects. Noor et al. (2025) discovered that cultural translation from Urdu to English can be done with care, ensuring that the meaning and cultural identity of the source text is retained.

Presence of cultural terms in selected Urdu texts is the focus of the present study "Translation of Cultural Terms from Urdu into English: problems and solution". It also examines the problems faced in translating Urdu cultural terms into English and suggests suitable strategies to solve these problems. The importance of this study is that there are numerous culture-specific words in Urdu texts which are not easily translatable in English. The study will improve the understanding of students, translators and researchers for the transfer of the Urdu cultural meanings in the English language through the analysis of these cultural terms.

1.2 Research Objectives

1. To identify the major types of cultural terms used in selected Urdu texts.
2. To examine the problems faced in translating Urdu cultural terms into English.
3. To suggest suitable strategies to solve the problems of translating cultural terms from Urdu into English.

1.3 Research Questions

1. What are the major types of cultural terms used in the selected Urdu texts?
2. What problems are faced in translating Urdu cultural terms into English?
3. What suitable strategies can be suggested to solve the problems of translating cultural terms from Urdu into English?

1.4 Problem Statement

The translation of cultural terms from Urdu to English is a critical issue as many of the Urdu words have meanings so embedded in the Pakistani society, religion, traditions, family context, and daily life. Such words are not just linguistic units, but they are components of cultural identity, social values, feelings and traditions. These terms are often translated into English and their true meaning is diminished or misinterpreted. For instance, words such as izzat, rishta, nikah, mehndi, dupatta and biryani might sound simple, but they are associated with different culture aspects which cannot be conveyed in one English word. This makes it difficult for translators, since some of these terms may have a surface meaning that is known to English readers, but lack the cultural depth from which it is derived.

This issue is becoming more relevant because if the Urdu text is not translated into English, then there will be a cultural gap between the two. If the translator translates directly, the cultural meaning can be lost and if the translator does not explain the Urdu word in the translated text, the reader may become confused. Consequently, the message, identity and beauty of the Urdu text might not be accurately conveyed into English. Hence the necessity to classify Urdu texts into main categories of cultural terms, analysis of problems encountered in their translation and the proposed solutions in terms of translation strategies. This study seeks to fill this void by examining the translation of Urdu cultural terms into English that will be faithful in both meaning and culture.

1.5 Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in the elucidation of the close bond between language, culture and translation. There are numerous religions, food, dress, festive, cultural terms, family and social values related words in Urdu. The terms are difficult to translate in an exact sense into English, there are no other equivalents. This study will enable readers to grasp the major types of cultural terms used in selected Urdu texts and how

cultural meanings can be influenced during the process of translation.

The study will be beneficial to students, researchers, teachers, and translators in translation studies. It will bring to the fore the main issues that emerge in the process of translating Urdu cultural terms into English and will recommend appropriate methods to address the issues. To keep the cultural identity of Urdu text intact without losing the essence of it to the readers of English language, the following strategies can be used. The study can also help future researchers in the field of Urdu-English translation, cultural translation and translation strategies.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

In recent years, translation studies have brought to the fore the idea that translation is not a mere linguistic activity but is also a cultural process. A translator does not merely translate from one language to another—he or she conveys meaning, values, beliefs, and cultural experiences from the source language to the target language. According to Munday et al (2022), contemporary translation studies are concerned with the link between language, culture and ideology, as well as readership. This concept is significant in Urdu-English translation because there are lots of Urdu words that are related to social life, religion, family system and customs, etc. in Pakistan. Hence, Urdu cultural terms cannot be translated into English without linguistic knowledge and understanding of the culture.

Culture-specific items are words or expressions which are essential to a culture and may not have an equivalent in another language. Borysenko et al. (2024) say that the use of culture-specific vocabulary provides socio-cultural information to literary texts and contributes to the establishment of the real atmosphere of a certain society. They found that the names of places, food and beverages, social institutions, famous people, media, education, events and other expressions related to culture can all be cultural items. It is closely related to Urdu texts as Urdu text has many culture bound words like mehndi, nikah, dupatta, izzat, rishta, biryani, eid etc. These are not just

words, but the cultural identity and social meaning.

Recent research indicates that the translation of cultural terms is not an easy task since the source and the target cultures do not always have the same concepts. Culture-specific items must be translated differently as their meanings are influenced by social, political, economic and cultural factors, Niu et al. (2024) write. This indicates that there is no universal solution to all translation issues and that one approach will not solve them all. For instance, Urdu cultural words can be explained, some may be borrowed and some may require cultural substitution. Hence, it is essential for the translator to be aware of the context of each term so as to select an appropriate strategy.

In the process of cultural term translation, one of the main problems is the non-equivalence. Certain Urdu terms may have partial English equivalents but the English equivalents might not be equally rich in culture. It can be given various different translations, for instance, *izzat* refers to “honour” or “respect,” but it could also encompass family honour, social reputation, or moral worth in Urdu culture. Likewise, *rishta* is a term that means “relationship,” but in Pakistani culture, it can also imply a marriage proposal. Katan et al. (2021) state that translators should have the ability to deal with the intercultural competences because the meanings that a word carries is most frequently a cultural one. This indicates that a translator should know what words, gestures, and expressions mean on the surface and beneath the surface in culture.

Various researchers have talked about the selection of appropriate translation strategies in the case of cultural terms. Alassaf (2024) states that the domestication or foreignization tends to depend on the intended function of the translation, the nature of the source text and the readers' needs in the target text. It is important for Urdu-English translation to understand this point. If the translator doesn't translate the Urdu words in the text and leaves them in the text without explanation then the English readers will not understand the text. But, if the translator has translated every cultural word in the Urdu text

into English, the cultural identity of the original text can be weakened. So, a balanced approach is sometimes required.

The term religious and the term social can be particularly hard to interpret due to the cultural and emotional connotations that they have. In their study of the translation of culture-specific items related to human rights in Quranic translation, Mahmoud and Almahasees (2024) reported that different strategies were employed by the translators including paraphrase, addition, descriptive equivalents, functional equivalents and cultural equivalents to clarify meanings for English readers. It is also applicable in Urdu-English translation as many words in Urdu also have religious and culturally connotative meanings like *nikah*, *dua*, *janaza*, *roza* and *eid*. Many such terms have to be explained as a simple English word might not carry over the full religious and cultural meaning of the terms.

Ghorianfar et al. (2025) investigated the culture-specific items in religious translation as well, and confirmed that Ghorianfar et al. (2025) found that the term domestication is used more often to enhance the comprehension of a text for readers. When it is possible that the target audience is not familiar with the source culture, their study indicates that, in that case, translators tend to use more reader-friendly strategies. This could be helpful to Urdu-English translation as sometimes English reader may not know the Pakistani cultural practices. To this end, methods like descriptive translation, paraphrase and explanatory notes may be useful to the reader to help grasp the meaning without losing the cultural value of the original term.

The importance of cultural terms in literary translation is significant at the consideration of conserving the beauty and identity of the source text. In his research Nasir and his associates (2023) have focused on Urdu short story translation into English, and they have pointed out that the translation of two different languages is also translation of two different cultures. According to their study, those translators who work with Urdu texts, must take care of the culture specific items as these items are involved in linking the text with its cultural context. This aspect of the present

study is closely linked to the Urdu cultural terms used in the study as these cultural terms need to be translated while preserving their meaning and culture.

In recent translation studies, the role of the translator as a cultural mediator has been emphasized. Translators make decisions based on purpose, audience, context and communication needs, as explained by Pym (2023). This is not translation which is a mechanical process, but choices and responsibility. The task for translator in Urdu-English translation is to determine whether to keep the Urdu word, explain it, substitute it with a related English word, or utilize a mixture of approaches. Such decisions impact the interpretation of Urdu culture by the English readers.

The author agrees that the strategies of loan words with explanations, cultural substitution, neutral words, and paraphrasing are effective in translating the culture-specific items in literary texts as suggested by Al-Sharif (2024). These are also the strategies which can be applied for Urdu-English translation. For instance, the word mehndi may be passed on as a loan word and the expression given as "Traditional Henna Ceremony". Likewise, dupatta can be worn and it is referred to as a long scarf worn by women in the culture of South Asia. This will help to retain the Urdu cultural term coupled with the understanding of it that would be comprehensible to English readers.

From the literature review, it was observed that cultural translation is a difficult process because there are cases where cultural terms have meanings beyond their dictionary definition. Some recent research has concluded that the translator should take into account the context, the audience, the culture and the purpose of the translation before deciding on a strategy. But still, more specialized studies of cultural terms are needed to be translated from Urdu to English. Though numerous studies are available on cultural translation in Arabic, Chinese, Ukrainian and general literary translation, yet Urdu-English cultural translation needs in-depth study due to the rich cultural, religious and social vocabulary of Urdu. So, the present study was set out to identify

the major types of Urdu cultural terms, problems encountered in their translation into English, and strategies to overcome these problems.

2.1 Theoretical Framework

The present study was based on Newmark's Theory of Cultural Translation. For this study, this theory was appropriate as the study concentrated on the translation of cultural terms from Urdu to English. Newmark (1988) has explained that cultural words are complicated to translate because they tend to be linked closely with the lifestyle, tradition, values, beliefs, and social practices of a specific community. Urdu has a lot of culture specific vocabulary terms which vary from religion to food, attire to festivals, family relations to customs to social values, etc. so Newmark's theory helped the researcher to identify and analyze these culture specific words clearly.

Newmark (1988) classified cultural terms into several groups including: ecology, material culture, social culture, social organization, customs, activities, procedures, gestures and habits. These categories proved to be helpful in this study in order to classify the Urdu cultural terms present in the selected Urdu texts. For instance, the word for biryani, roti and similar food terms can be understood as material culture and words like nikah, eid, mehndi, rishta are social, religious or customary culture terms. Thus, the theory got a proper framework to address the first research question that is of the major types of cultural terms used in selected Urdu texts.

The same theory proved useful for analyzing the issues encountered in Urdu to English translations of the terms related to culture. Newmark (1988) claimed that cultural terms are frequently problematic since the target language may not have a term that perfectly matches the source language's. This notion directly contributed to the second research question in the study. For instance, terms like izzat, rishta or dupatta are used in Urdu, but have English equivalents which may not necessarily capture the cultural connotations. Hence, Newmark's theory has enabled the reasons for non-equivalence, loss of cultural meaning,

contextual misunderstanding and difficulties with maintaining cultural identity to be explained.

Newmark's theory also gave appropriate strategies to address translation issues. He proposed some other translation methods that include transference, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, paraphrase, notes and couplets. The procedures were helpful in analysing the translation of Urdu cultural terms in English. For instance, the term mehndi might be translated as "mehndi, a traditional henna ceremony" and nikah as "an Islamic marriage contract." As such, Newmark's theory provided answers to the third research question by proposing appropriate strategies for translating Urdu cultural terms into English.

This study used the concept of the Theory of Cultural Translation by Newmark as the main theoretical framework. It enabled the researcher to find out the types of Urdu cultural terms, discuss the problems that faced during the translation of these terms and recommend the solutions to these problems. This theory has been chosen because it is directly related with the goals of the study and it gives a clear approach to study words in culture specific Urdu-English translation.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The study employed a qualitative research method, as the study was aimed at analyzing cultural terms and their meanings in translation. The aim of the study was to find different categories of cultural terms in the selected Urdu texts, study the problems encountered in their translation into English and propose appropriate translation strategies.

Data were gathered from Urdu short stories, novels, dramas, newspapers, speeches and in

everyday conversation from which words of culture specific nature about religion, food, dress, customs, festivals, family relations and social values were found. These sources were selected using purposive sampling as only relevant texts and expressions were selected based on the objectives of the study. The researcher used the theory of cultural translation proposed by Newmark for the analysis of the data. The following cultural terms were identified and grouped into material culture, social culture, customs, religious terms and social relations. The researcher analyzed the problems encountered in translation after the classification, including non-equivalence, loss of cultural meaning, contextual misunderstanding and difficulty transferring cultural identity. Finally, appropriate translation strategies were proposed, and each type of problem had a translation strategy. These strategies included transference, descriptive equivalent, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, paraphrase, and explanatory notes. The analysis assisted in demonstrating the mechanisms for the translation of Urdu cultural terms into English without losing any meaning and cultural values.

4. DATA ANALYSIS

Qualitative analysis of collected data was carried out in line with the theory of cultural translation by Newmark. Twenty Urdu cultural words were picked from Urdu short stories, novels, dramas, newspapers, speeches and everyday conversation. Based on the different cultural types, the problems of translation and appropriate translation strategies, the following terms were classified. The analysis was limited to the possibilities of these terms to be translated into English and made sense within the cultural context and identity.

Table 4. 1: Analysis of Urdu Cultural Terms, Translation Problems, and Suggested Strategies

No.	Urdu Cultural Term	English Meaning	Type of Cultural Term	Translation Problem	Suggested Strategy
1	<i>Nikah</i>	Islamic marriage contract	Religious / Social custom	No exact English equivalent	Transference + explanation
2	<i>Mehndi</i>	Henna ceremony	Custom / Festival	Cultural meaning may be lost	Transference + descriptive equivalent

3	<i>Izzat</i>	Honour / respect	Social value	English meaning is limited	Functional equivalent + explanation
4	<i>Rishta</i>	Relationship / marriage proposal	Social relation	Meaning changes with context	Contextual translation
5	<i>Dupatta</i>	Long scarf worn by women	Dress / Material culture	Partial equivalent in English	Transference + description
6	<i>Shalwar Kameez</i>	Traditional South Asian dress	Dress / Material culture	No single English equivalent	Transference + descriptive equivalent
7	<i>Biryani</i>	Spiced rice dish with meat or vegetables	Food / Material culture	Cultural food name may lose identity	Transference
8	<i>Roti</i>	Flatbread	Food / Material culture	“Bread” is not fully accurate	Cultural equivalent + explanation
9	<i>Eid</i>	Muslim religious festival	Religious festival	Needs cultural background	Transference + explanation
10	<i>Roza</i>	Fasting in Ramadan	Religious practice	“Fast” does not show Islamic context	Functional equivalent + explanation
11	<i>Dua</i>	Prayer / supplication	Religious term	“Prayer” may not fully convey meaning	Functional equivalent
12	<i>Janaza</i>	Islamic funeral prayer	Religious ritual	No exact English equivalent	Descriptive equivalent
13	<i>Baraat</i>	Wedding procession	Wedding custom	Cultural event may be unfamiliar	Descriptive equivalent
14	<i>Walima</i>	Wedding reception after marriage	Wedding custom	Needs cultural and religious context	Transference + explanation
15	<i>Dholki</i>	Pre-wedding musical gathering	Wedding custom	No direct English equivalent	Descriptive equivalent
16	<i>Saas</i>	Mother-in-law	Family relation	Meaning exists but cultural role differs	Functional equivalent + context
17	<i>Sasural</i>	In-laws’ house/family	Family relation	Cultural concept is wider than translation	Descriptive equivalent
18	<i>Chai</i>	Tea	Food / Daily culture	“Tea” may not show social importance	Cultural equivalent + explanation
19	<i>Haveli</i>	Large traditional house	Architecture / Material culture	“Mansion” may not show cultural style	Descriptive equivalent
20	<i>Panchayat</i>	Local council of elders	Social organization	No exact English equivalent	Functional equivalent + explanation

1. Nikah

Nikah is a religious and social cultural term in the Urdu language and Islamic society. It means marriage agreement that is given to a man and

woman in Islam. It cannot just be synonymous with the English word ‘marriage’ as *nikah* also carries religious, legal, social and moral obligations. The primary difficulty in translating is

that English readers may read it as marriage, and miss its Islamic meaning. Transference with explanation, like *nikah* (Islamic marriage contract), is the appropriate method.

2. Mehndi

Mehndi refers to henna as well as the traditional pre-wedding ceremony in Pakistani culture. *Mehndi* in marriage is related to songs, dance, family gathering, decoration and decoration of hands with henna on the bride. But the English word “henna” describes only the material and not the cultural ceremony. Thus, transference with descriptive equivalent, e.g. *mehndi, traditional henna ceremony before marriage* is the best approach.

3. Izzat

In Urdu culture *Izzat* is a social value. It means honour, respect, dignity, reputation and social status. The term *izzat* in Pakistani society can link with the family name, the conduct of women, their social standing and moral practices. The issue here is that one English word is not enough to capture its cultural content. Appropriate responses would include functional equivalents that explain them, like “honour” and “family reputation.”

4. Rishta

Rishta is a cultural word that means social and family relationship. It could be a relationship, kinship or a marriage proposal depending on the context. In Pakistan, *rishta* is a term that is commonly used when a family proposes to a girl or woman to marry her. The translation problem is contextual because the meanings of the same word vary in different situations. Contextual translation is the best way. For example, in one context it can be translated as “relationship,” while in another context it should be translated as “marriage proposal.”

5. Dupatta

Dupatta is a word in material culture that is in relation with dress. A long scarf or shawl for women that wear *shalwar kameez* or any traditional clothes. In many Urdu speaking societies, it is also used to convey the values of modesty, respect and femininity. The translation issue is that the translation of “scarf” is not

sufficient to convey the cultural use. Appropriate technique is transference with description, for example, *a long scarf called a "dupatta" traditionally worn by women.*

6. Shalwar Kameez

Shalwar kameez is a traditional South Asian garment, worn by both men and women. *Shalwar* is a loose trousers and *kameez* is a long shirt. It is an important part of Pakistani culture and it is worn regularly for everyday use, formal occasions, religious events etc. The issue here is that there isn't an exact English word for this dress. Transference with descriptive equivalent is the ideal approach: for instance, *shalwar kameez, the traditional garment, is a loose pair of trousers and a long shirt.*

7. Biryani

Biryani is a cultural term that relates to food. It is a rice dish which is typically flavored with spices, meat, and sometimes potatoes or vegetables. *Biryani* is deeply associated with weddings, festivals, family occasions and hospitality in Pakistani culture. The translation is the problem because by translating it as a “rice dish” it takes away the cultural and emotional importance. The best way forward is transference as *biryani* is already a well-known dish internationally. If necessary, a brief description can be included.

8. Roti

“*Roti*” is a popular food item in the Urdu speaking culture. It usually prepared from wheat flour and consumed with curry, vegetables, meat or lentils. It is a component of everyday life and a representation of essential food and living. The trouble is, to translate it directly as bread is not quite exact as Western bread is not quite the same shape, flavour and application. The appropriate approach is to use a cultural equivalent and to explain it, e.g., *roti, a traditional flatbread.*

9. Eid

“*Eid*” is a religious festival celebrated by the Muslims. There are two important Eids: *Eid-ul-Fitr*, which is after the month of Ramadan, and *Eid-ul-Adha*, which is with sacrifice. Prayer, new

clothes, family visits, food, charity and greetings are part of Eid in Urdu culture. The translation issue lies with the religious/cultural meaning not being expressed by the word “festival”. The best strategy is transference with explanation, such as *Eid, a major Muslim religious festival*.

10. Roza

The word “Roza” means fasting particularly during the month of Ramadan. Avoidance of food and drink is not the only part of the equation; it's also about religious discipline, patience, worship, and self-control. But, “fast” conveys only the primary meaning, not the Islamic context. The appropriate approach is functional equivalent and explanation, e.g., *Islamic fasting during Ramadan*.”

11. Dua

The term “dua” is a religious term which means any supplication or prayer to Allah that is made personally. It differs from formal prayers in that it may be done in one's own words at any time. Dua is also incorporated in everyday expressions, blessings and emotional situations in Urdu culture. The translation issue is that prayer doesn't necessarily make it obvious when you are praying formally and when you're praying to God personally. Functional equivalent, e.g. *“supplication”* or *“personal prayer”* is best.

12. Janaza

“Janaza” is a word in the religion and social sphere for death and funeral rites. It typically describes the prayer that is recited at a deceased Muslim's funeral. In popular usage, it can be a euphemism for the funeral march. The problem with translation is that the word “funeral” is too general and missing the meaning in the Islamic ritual. The appropriate way is descriptive equivalent, for example, *“Islamic funeral prayer”*.

13. Baraat

Baraat is a cultural term related to the wedding. It is used to describe the groom's wedding procession or the event in which the groom's family goes to the bride's side for the marriage ceremony. Pakistani culture defines baraat as a combination of music, decoration, formal attire,

involvement of the families and celebration to social interaction. The difficulty is that, Wedding procession has a simple meaning and no indication of its significance in culture. Descriptive equivalent is the best option, as in “the groom's traditional wedding procession.”

14. Walima

“Walima” is a religious and social term that is related to the wedding. It is the reception or marriage feast that is organized by the groom's family following the wedding. It's also a significant public announcement and celebration of marriage in Islamic and Pakistani culture. The translation issue is that the religious and cultural context of the word “reception” is less apparent. The appropriate approach is transference explanation, such as *walima, the post-marriage feast hosted by the groom's family*.

15. Dholki

In the Pakistani culture Pre-wedding gathering is known as Dholki. It is called so after the small drum called dholki that is played at the time of singing songs and celebrating before a marriage. This term is connected with family enjoyment and delight, with women singing, dancing, and being excited about weddings. The problem is, that there is no word for this event in English. It is best to describe what the event is, in this case, “a traditional pre-wedding musical assembly.”

16. Saas

Saas means mother-in-law. It is observed that English has an equivalent, the cultural role of *saas* in Pakistani family life is often stronger and more socially marked. Saas can be a symbol of power, family rule, expectations of home and family relationships in Urdu dramas and everyday speech. Mother-in-law is not a lexical translation problem, but a cultural problem since it may not reflect the social role. Functional equivalent with context: e.g. “mother-in-law” together with extra context if required.

17. Sasural

The house or family of a married woman's in-laws is called Sasural. In Urdu, it is a very important

cultural term as marriage is seen not only as a relationship between two individuals but also two families. The problem is “in-laws” is not an accurate expression of place, the structure of the family, and social norms associated with *sasural*. The best strategy is descriptive equivalent, such as “the husband’s family home” or “the in-laws’ household,” depending on the context.

18. Chai

Chai, in Urdu and Pakistani culture has a significant social connotation, as it translates to tea. It is given as a gift, in the family, at the office, and as a symbol of welcome. The issue is that its translation as the word “tea” might take away its cultural significance. The appropriate response is cultural explanation, that is, ‘chai, traditional milk tea, was offered as hospitality.

19. Haveli

The word *haveli* is considered to be an architectural and material culture term. It is a monumental, traditional house, typically with courtyards, wooden doors, chiseled designs, and family rooms. Generally associated with long-standing families, traditions and heritage. The issue is that “mansion” might exhibit size but may not be in the South Asian architectural style. Descriptive equivalent is best, e.g. “a large traditional house from South Asia.”

20. Panchayat

Panchayat is a social organization word. Advisory council of local elders or community leaders that advise and make decisions about social, family or village issues. The *panchayat* can hold a great deal of social status in rural Pakistani and South Asian culture. The translation issue is that “council” cannot capture the traditional role and community power of councils. The appropriate response is functional equivalent and explanation, e.g., “a traditional local council of elders.”

It concluded that Urdu cultural terms had strong linkages with Pakistani religion, way of life, social norms, food, clothing and family relationships and traditional practices. The main problems in the translation process were in non-equivalence, loss of cultural meaning, contextual

misunderstanding, and absence of direct equivalents in English. The most appropriate strategies were transference with explanation, descriptive equivalent, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent and contextual translation. Thus, the three research objectives of the study were answered successfully.

5. DISCUSSION

The analysis revealed that the Urdu cultural terms were not easy to translate into English due to the fact that many of them had more than one meaning. Words like *nikah*, *roza*, *duas* and *janaza* were associated with Islamic beliefs and practices, and could not be adequately conveyed by simple English words. Likewise, words like *izzat*, *rishta*, *sasural* and *panchayat* were related to the social values and family structure in Pakistan. These indicated that translation was not only a linguistic process, but also a cultural process.

These terms related to food and dress were more understandable than religious and social terms, as some of these were familiar to the English readers. These terms became superficially cultural when translated literally, though. For instance, *chai* can be interpreted as “tea” which was not an accurate translation of the word, because it did not account for how *chai* is also used as a symbol in hospitality and everyday social interactions. Similarly, *a dupatta* could be interpreted as “scarf,” but the term did not capture its cultural significance and association with modesty and traditional attire.

It also revealed that cultural terms of different types needed different translation strategies in the comparison. The religious and social terms had to be explained or described in translation, the food and dress terms could often be translated by transference and a brief explanation. The wedding terminology: *mehndi*, *baraat*, *walima*, and *dholki* were some of the terms which needed to be translated into descriptive equivalents for the benefit of the English-speaking reader as they were cultural activities that may be unfamiliar. As a result, the translation strategy adopted for one cultural term was not found adequate for the other. The translator was called upon to select the strategy depending on the context, meaning and cultural significance of each term.

CONCLUSION

The researchers found that the Urdu terms were closely related to the religion, traditions, food, clothing, family life, social values, and traditions of the people of Pakistan. The most significant issues in the translation of these terms into English were: non-equivalence, loss of cultural meaning, limited equivalents in English, and contextual misunderstandings. Literal translations were insufficient, since they missed the cultural context.

The study further found that appropriate approaches as transference, descriptive equivalent, functional equivalent, cultural equivalent, contextual translation, paraphrase and explanation were found to be effective in resolving these translation difficulties. Newmark's theory of cultural translation was helpful as it assisted in the classification of the cultural terms and the choice of adequate translation technique. In general, the research revealed that whenever translators maintained the cultural identity of the Urdu text while at the same time conveying its meaning to the English readers, the Urdu cultural terms can be translated better.

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