

FROM ELIZABETHAN STAGE TO URDU PAGE: ANALYZING TRANSLATION STRATEGIES IN MUNSHI IMTIYAZ ALI'S URDU RENDITION OF SHAKESPEARE'S HAMLET

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Abstract

The process of converting any literary text from one language to another is onerous. It presents challenges for the translator in the form of finding suitable equivalents for literary or poetic devices, cultural references, and idioms in the source text that are relevant to the target text. The present study investigates the role of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability in Ali's Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet. This study adopts a qualitative approach, and the method of Textual Analysis is used to analyze the source text in relation to the target text. Nida's concept of Functional Equivalence serves as a theoretical framework for the study. The findings reveal that the Urdu translation of Hamlet by Ali contains multiple challenges of translating Hamlet from English, like cultural differences between English and Urdu readers, linguistic dissimilarities between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), and the issue of translating Shakespeare's innovative language. The translator has used a number of strategies to cope with these obstacles. The three most significant translation strategies that are present in this Urdu translation of Hamlet are domestication, amplification, and untranslatability (omission). By employing these strategies, the translator tried to make the Target Text (TT) comprehensible and culturally appropriate for the target audience. The naturalness of the target text serves the functional purposes of the Urdu translation of Hamlet.

Keywords: Functional Equivalence, Domestication, Amplification, Untranslatability, Omission, Naturalness.

Introduction

Translation studies is one of the fastest-growing disciplines of contemporary academia. Translations help to bridge the gap between different languages, cultures, and societies. Translation practices make it possible for people to communicate their knowledge worldwide without the hesitation of language differences, and bridge the gap between different languages, cultures, and world views by enabling the transmission of knowledge, literary heritage, and philosophical thoughts beyond national borders

(Bassnett, 2002). Several scholars and theorists in the field of translation studies are introducing advanced theories and approaches to cope with the challenges in the process of translation. One of the most popular types of translation is literary translation.

Literary translation paves the way for widespread reading of literary works by translating them into various languages. It fosters cross-cultural communication and encourages the transference of ideas, values, and aesthetic traditions

(Lefevere, 1992). However, the process of converting any literary text from one language to another is onerous. It poses challenges for the translator in the form of difficulty in finding appropriate and equivalent expressions for literary or poetic devices, cultural references, and idioms of the source text in the target text.

Many scholars and theorists talk about the impossibility of achieving complete equivalence because of the linguistic and cultural gap between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) (Nida, 1964; Catford, 1965). To overcome the limitations and to increase comprehensibility of the TT for the target audience, the translator employs different approaches such as domestication, adaptation, and amplification that allow functional equivalence in spirit, if not in the letter of the original text (Venuti, 1995; Nida, 1964).

William Shakespeare is among the most translated authors in the world. His plays have been translated into almost every major language. His plays have also been translated into Urdu. The cultural, religious, linguistic, and historical differences between Urdu and English make it difficult for the translator to achieve full equivalence. Many Urdu translations of Shakespeare's plays employ different strategies of domestication, amplification, and adaptation to make the target text culturally appropriate. Another issue in translating Shakespeare's play is his experimental and unique use of language. It creates the issue of untranslatability.

The present study investigates the role of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability in Ali's Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Hamlet is at the top of the list of Shakespeare's most translated plays. This study adopts a qualitative approach. The method of textual analysis is used to analyse the source text in relation to the target text. Eugene A. Nida's concept of functional equivalence serves as a theoretical framework for the study.

This research is significant to comprehend the need for using the approaches of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability in Hamlet's Urdu translation. Furthermore, this study sheds light on the impact of these strategies on the target text and its functional purposes. This study also uncovers the challenges and limitations of the Urdu translation of Hamlet.

Research Objectives

This study examines the reasons behind using the techniques of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability. It also analyzes the ways of using these approaches in the target text. Furthermore, this study focuses on the results of using these strategies in the Urdu translation of Hamlet.

Research Questions

1. How did the translator use the techniques of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability in the target text?
3. What is the impact of using these techniques on the Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet?

Literature Review

Translation theorists have developed various translation theories to study the complex and manifold process of translation. Cicero (1949) emphasizes the preservation of the force and style of the language rather than pursuing a literal translation approach. Bassnett and Lefevere (2001) view translation as a source of cultural interaction. Lefevere (1992) proposes that translation is a kind of rewriting.

According to him, the source text is adapted to a particular poetics and ideology. One of the most debated issues in the field of translation studies is the notion of equivalence. Catford (1965) states, "...the central problem of translation-practice is that of finding TL equivalents..." (p. 21). Different theorists proposed different ideas about equivalence. Panou (2013) defines equivalence as "...that source text (henceforth ST) and target text (henceforth TT) share some kind of 'sameness'..." (p. 2). Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) describe seven procedures in translation practice. Equivalence is one of them. According to Vinay and Darbelnet, an equivalence is essentially cultural. For them, Equivalence in translation is the use of entirely different words in the target text to express the same condition or state of affairs as in the source text.

Catford (1965) perceives translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)" (p. 20). Catford prefers linguistic-oriented equivalence. He proposed the idea of textual equivalence. He further differentiates between formal correspondence and textual equivalence.

Newmark (1981) propounded the theories of

semantic translation and communicative translation to tackle the issue of equivalence. Semantic translation preserves the contextual meaning of the source text. However, the theory of communicative translation emphasizes the idea that the target text should communicate with the target audience or readers in the same possible way as the source text communicates with its original readers or audience. Target text should have the same impact on the target audience as the source text has on its original audience.

Baker (2011) presents another perspective on equivalence by describing different kinds or levels of equivalence, like textual, pragmatic, lexical, and grammatical equivalence. Bakers suggest that these levels of equivalences provide convenience to the translator. Jakobson (1959) talks about the impossibility of complete literal equivalence because of inter-linguistic differences. However, he argues that these limitations can be compensated for by using different strategies, like semantic shifts and loan translation.

Nida (1964) puts forward his views regarding equivalence as "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (p. 159). Nida differentiates between formal and dynamic equivalence. In formal equivalence, the focus is on the preservation of the form or grammatical structure of the source text. However, in dynamic equivalence, the preference is given to the comprehensibility of the target text for the target audience. Later, Nida re-examined his theory of dynamic equivalence and termed it "functional equivalence".

The translators use several strategies to achieve functional equivalence, like domestication. Venuti (1995) throws light on the techniques of domestication and foreignization. He states that domestication is a widely used technique in translation because it provides a reader-friendly target text. The use of domestication makes the target text understandable and acceptable for the target audience by filtering the foreign elements of the source text. In foreignization, the focus is on the preservation of the source culture and values. Venuti discourages the use of domestication and favours foreignization to achieve faithfulness in the process of translation. However, Nida (1964) prefers domestication to achieve the equivalent effect in the target text.

The target text should be natural and not foreign or alien to the target audience. Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence is a receptor-based approach.

Another significant technique is amplification. Molina and Albi (2002) expounded on different strategies of translation. According to them, amplification refers to the addition of supplementary details in the target text that are not part of the source text. This technique can be incorporated into the target text by using footnotes and paraphrasing. Nida (1964) endorses the utilization of footnotes in the translation to make the target text more understandable and readable for the target audience.

Untranslatability is an important issue in the process of translation. Catford (1965) argues that "...if the TL has no equivalent register, untranslatability may result..." (p. 90). He talks about two kinds of untranslatability. The first one is linguistic untranslatability that occurs because of linguistic differences between the ST and the TT. The other one is cultural untranslatability that results from cultural clash. Omission is an important technique to tackle the issue of untranslatability. Ivacovoni (2009) states that omission is a technique of excluding some words from the source text in the process of translation. Different researchers have used theories of equivalence to study different translated works of literature. They examine the issue of untranslatability and the use of different techniques like amplification, omission, and domestication in different literary works' translations. Khan (2021) studies Matt Reeck and Aftab Ahmad's English translation of Manto's story "Ten Rupees". The researcher investigates the use of different translation strategies to express the cultural expressions of Manto's story in English. The research uses Newmark's model. The study finds ten different translation strategies, such as transference, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, and modulation, etc., in the target text. These strategies are used by the translators to represent cultural expressions.

Asif, Zafar, Bhatti, and Naeem (2020) compare Urdu and English translations of Rumi's poem "The Song of the Reedin". The research examines levels of equivalence by using Molina and Albir's translation techniques. The study observes seven

prominent strategies: Literal translation, Transcreation, Reduction, Omission, Aspect change, Addition, and Category shift. The research concludes that the Urdu translated version is semantically closer to the source text, and the English version has incorporated different translation techniques to convey the message.

Ahmad and Shammala (2020) examine the use of foreignization and domestication in Itani's and Ali's translations of Sura Al-Nisa. The study concludes that the strategy of domestication is more prominent than foreignization in these translations. Furthermore, the study uncovers that "cultural equivalence in Itani's translation accounted for 53%, while it accounted for 47% in Ali's translation" (p. 283). In another research, Ullah, Iqbal, and Jin (2022) explore the issue of untranslatability in the Urdu translation of "The Reluctant Fundamentalist". The research employs Catford's concept of untranslatability. The study discovers linguistic and cultural tension between the ST and the TT that causes the issue of untranslatability.

Shakespeare's translated works have also been studied using different translation theories. Sadiq (2022) examines the approaches of amplification, domestication, and untranslatability in Anayatullah Dehlvi's Urdu translation of Othello. The study utilizes Nida's theory of functional equivalence. The study proposes that the use of amplification, domestication, and untranslatability facilitates the translator to lessen the strangeness between the source text and the target culture. The study further suggests that "... untranslatability is a cultural phenomenon..." (p. 33).

Pavlov (2012) investigates Pasternak's translations of Shakespeare. The study focuses on the speech individualization of characters like Claudius and Lear in Pasternak's translations. There are some flaws in his translations, like modernization, Russification, and simplification. However, these flaws are compensated for by the remarkable use of speech individualization in his translations. The study concludes that "Pasternak's gain in speech individualization would not be possible without losses in other areas" (p. 443).

Omar (2020) explores the phenomenon of stylistic amplification of conceptual metaphors in Mohamed Enani's Arabic translation of Othello. The study uses conceptual metaphor theory. The

study finds that the use of amplification helps to maintain the metaphoric content of the original text. The conceptual metaphors are "...well contextualised and flow naturally and smoothly in the Arabic language TT" (p. 69). Luong (2016) investigates Equivalence in the Vietnamese Translation of Romeo and Juliet. The researcher finds the "mixture of dynamic equivalence and formal equivalence" (p. 1). Dynamic equivalence is used to cope with the cultural aspects.

Giannakopoulou (2008) scrutinizes Angelos Vlahos' Greek translation of Hamlet by using polysystem theory and Bourdieu's concept of habitus. The study presents that the translator's habitus contributed a lot to the process of translation. Al-Amayreh (2019) compares two Arabic translations of Hamlet. The researcher identifies different strategies of translation, such as elaboration, transposition, reduction, and addition etc. Furthermore, the research concludes that the translators successfully maintained the aesthetic effects, functional features, and stylistic elements of both languages. Shihaan, Omar, Salman, and Khalaf (2009) examine the issue of translating swearwords in Hamlet's Arabic translation. The study utilizes Vermeer's Skopos theory and Venuti's model of domestication and foreignization. The study unveils multiple domestication techniques like ambiguity, generalization, de-swearing, and deletion. The translator also uses certain foreignization approaches, such as over-translation and literal translation. Furthermore, the researcher puts forward that the female translator "was more faithful to the source text" (p. 218).

The above discussion sheds light on the concepts of equivalence, domestication, amplification, and untranslatability. It helps to comprehend the utilization of different translation theories to study the issues of translation in different translated works. The above discussion shows that Shakespeare's Hamlet translations in various languages have also been studied. However, there is no significant effort to study Hamlet's Urdu translations. The present study focuses on Ali's Urdu version of Shakespeare's Hamlet to examine the role of various strategies to achieve functional equivalence.

Research Methodology

The present research is qualitative in nature. The

method of textual analysis is used to uncover the strategies of domestication, amplification, and the issue of untranslatability in Ali's Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet. The Urdu target text is analysed together with its English source text using Nida's concept of functional equivalence. Furthermore, the selected textual lines are interpreted to support the inquiry.

Analytical Framework

A highly acclaimed American linguist and theorist, Nida (1964) proposes two types of equivalence: dynamic and formal equivalence. In formal equivalence, the emphasis is on the preservation of the form or grammatical structure of the source text. However, in dynamic equivalence, the preference is given to the comprehensibility of the target text for the target audience. Later on, he re-examined his theory of dynamic equivalence and termed it "functional equivalence". He put forward his views regarding dynamic or functional equivalence as "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (p. 159).

Nida's functional equivalence theory is reader or receptor-oriented. The target text should have the same effect on the target audience as the source text has on its readers. The target text should not sound foreign to the target reader. Nida stresses the naturalness of the TT. As he says, "...a natural rendering must fit the receptor language and culture as a whole..." (Nida, 1964, p. 167). Functional equivalence can be achieved by getting a similar response from the target readers as the source text gets from its original readers. Nida's functional equivalence theory dissociates itself from traditional linguistic-oriented equivalence approaches. According to functional equivalence theory, the process of translation is not just confined to linguistic equivalence, but it also involves finding cultural and semantic equivalents in the target text.

Discussion and Findings

Ali's Urdu translation of Hamlet unravels multiple issues of translation. To cope with these issues, the translator has used some strategies. This study focuses on the three most significant strategies: domestication, amplification, and untranslatability. Different examples are selected

from the text and are discussed below:

Domestication

Domestication is a key strategy adopted by the translator to render the text more comprehensible to Urdu-speaking readers. There are several instances of this strategy in the play. Some are given below:

In Urdu translation, the different expressions of English text like Good Night, Give you good Night and Farewell are all substituted with the same expression خدا حافظ. It makes the target text intelligible to Muslim and Urdu readers. In the first act, a slang English expression 'Tush, Tush,' is translated as سب و ابیات

At another place, Horatio says, "Awake the god of day..." (p. 10). This expression is translated in Urdu as

آمد سحر کی خبر دینی ہے۔

The translator tries to make this expression culturally and religiously appropriate for the target audience by eliminating 'god of day'. There are more examples of cultural and religious appropriation, like 'O God' is translated as یا اللہ. Hamlet says to Horatio: "I pray thee..." In Urdu, it is translated as خدا کے لیے

Horatio says to Hamlet: "As I do live, my honoured lord!" (p. 18). In Urdu, it is میں قسم کھاتا ہوں۔

Hamlet says to Horatio and other guards: "I will requite your love" (p. 20). In Urdu translation, it appears as انشاء اللہ اس اخفائے راز کا ضرور دے گا۔ صلہ پہنٹ

Another expression, "Heaven will direct it" (p. 27) is translated as

خدا ہی جو چاہے سو کرے۔

In act three, Ophelia prays for Hamlet in these words: "O, help him, you sweet heavens!" (p. 65).

یا اللہ تو رحم کر اس پر

At one stage in the play, Hamlet uses a swearword "...by Saint Patrick." However, the translator removes this foreignness by culturally appropriating it as:

واللہ

In Act three, Claudius refers to the Bible's story of Cain, who killed his brother. "It hath the primal eldest curse upon't" (p. 83). In translation, the more culturally specific term is used for the target audience.

میں نے قلیل کا سا عذاب اپنے سر لیا۔

We can also find some other cultural and linguistic appropriations, like the word 'father', which is translated as

ابا جان اور والد ماجد

These words help the Urdu reader to identify Hamlet's feelings of respect towards his father. In Act 2, Polonius says to Ophelia about Hamlet, "...Mad for thy love?" (p. 39).

کیا تمہاری محبت میں مجنون ہو گئے۔

In Urdu translation, the word mad is replaced by the more familiar word مجنون to show the intensity of Hamlet's love. The phrase "God's bodykins" is translated as سبحان الله, and 'conscience' is translated as دل کا چور. In act three, the word Nymph is translated as حور. These expressions are more understandable for the target audience than literal or word-for-word translation.

We also find some instances of domestication in Act four; for example, the word 'supper' is translated as خوان دستر, and the word Cherub (biblical reference) is translated as فرشتہ. In Hamlet's letter to Horatio, there is an expression "... as much speed as thou wouldst fly death...". This idiomatic expression is replaced by another idiomatic expression in the Urdu translation to make it more relatable.

جلد جاؤ کھانا وہاں کھانا پانی یہاں پینا۔

In Act V, the word clown is translated as مزدور. Alexander is translated as اسکندر اعظم. Laertes curses Hamlet in these words: "The devil takes thy soul!"

خدا تجھے جہنم واصل کرے۔

Here, the translator domesticates this expression to depict Laertes' emotions in a more convincing way for the target audience. It emphasizes the need for a domestication strategy that stems from several factors, such as cultural, religious, and historical differences between the source audience and the target audience. The use of domestication helps to diminish the foreignness and to achieve functional equivalence.

Amplification

Amplification is a significant technique used by the translator in the Urdu rendition of Hamlet. The target text is replete with instances of Amplification. This technique is implemented through the use of footnotes, details, paraphrasing, and the addition of Urdu and Persian Poetic verses. In the first act, Marcellus says about the strict watch and tiresome duty that: "Does not divide the Sunday from the week..." (p. 8). In Urdu translation, we don't find a literal translation of this expression. The translator uses paraphrasing to reflect the strict duty of guards.

بچارے سپاہیوں پر جبر و تشدد کے آئے چل رہے ہیں۔

Hamlet's ironic statement about his mother and uncle that "A little more than kin, and less than kind" (p. 13) is translated in Urdu as:

خدا بچائے ایسے رشتہ اور ایسی محبت سے۔

This statement makes it easy for the target audience to understand the actual meaning of Hamlet's statement. Footnotes are an important part of the Urdu translation of Hamlet. The translator has used footnotes for different purposes, such as commenting on the behaviour of the characters and motives, giving details about foreign places, allusions, and unfamiliar terms. In the first act, the translator uses a footnote to explain the ironic nature of Hamlet and Gertrude's discussion. In another footnote, the translator clarifies that Wittenberg University is in Germany.

The translator has also used Urdu and Persian poetic verses to make the target text more relevant for the Urdu readers. At the end of Hamlet's first soliloquy, the translator adds an Urdu verse to show Hamlet's inner turmoil.

قید حیات و بند غم اصل میں دونوں ایک ہیں

موت سے پہلے انہی غم سے نجات پائے کیوں

In Act 2, Hamlet is describing his own miserable condition. In Urdu, the translator uses an Urdu verse to depict Hamlet's dilemma.

پہلے آتی تھی حال دل پہ ہنسی

اب کسی ہلکے پر نہیں آتی

In Act three, the translator adds a footnote below Hamlet's famous soliloquy 'To be or not to be' to tell the readers about the philosophical nature of Hamlet's debate on suicide.

In Act four, we can find some significant examples of amplification. Ophelia sings a mourning song on the death of her father in which she says: "white his shroud as the mountain snow..." (p. 101). In the Urdu translation, the translator amplified it through repetition.

اوٹھے ہوئے سفید کفن سو رہے ہیں باے

اوٹھے ہوئے سفید کفن سو رہے ہیں باے باے باے

In act five, first clown's Songs are substituted with Urdu verses. The clown sings:

"O, a pit of clay for to be made

For such a guest is meet." (p. 120)

سر مرا کل کے پچھٹائے گا

جھوٹی بھر کس کی قسم کھاے گا

کہہ کہ پاؤں سے چلے بار کے گھر

ہم جو اٹھنے لگیں سو جاہلیے گا

In Urdu, the translation of these lines provides more information that is not present in the original text. 'Hamlet' is replete with literary devices like puns on words, irony, metaphors,

and allusions. Sometimes, it becomes challenging for readers of other languages to grasp the meaning. In this Urdu translation, the use of amplification helps to achieve functional equivalence by providing additional information.

Untranslatability

Untranslatability is a major problem in this Urdu version of Hamlet. Various factors contribute to the issue of untranslatability, like differences in cultural, religious, and ethical norms between the ST and TT, and the unavailability of equivalent expressions in TL to substitute Shakespeare's artistic and innovative language. In Hamlet's Urdu rendition, some parts of the source text are either omitted or compressed to avoid the issue of untranslatability.

In act one, when Bernardo asks, "...is Horatio there?" (p. 6) Horatio replies, "A piece of him." (p. 6). In Urdu translation, Horatio's statement is reduced to a simple expression جی ہاں

This expression is used to deal with linguistic untranslatability. Another example of linguistic untranslatability is observed when Horatio says: "...Without the sensible and true avouch of my own eyes...". In TT, the translator prefers simple words to narrate this idea rather than pursuing literal translation. This statement is translated as:

بغیر دیکھے ۔
At another place, a long expression "...and the moist star upon whose influence Neptune's empire stands..." (p. 9) is substituted with a single word چاند

We also find some culturally specific terms in the source text that are left untranslated in the target text, like "Hyperion to a satyr" and 'Knight', to save the target audience from confusion. In Act three, there are many references to Roman and Greek gods and goddesses like Vulcan, Phoebus, Tellus, and Hymen. The translator has omitted these references to eliminate the foreignness.

Religious and ethical norms are another reason for untranslatability in this translation. In order to avoid offence, the translator omits some major portions from the target text. The Ghost's description of Claudius and Gertrude's relationship is completely omitted to avoid religious inappropriateness. We do not find the translation of the following passage in the target text.

"Ay, that incestuous, that adulterate beast

.....
And prey on garbage" (p. 29-30). Another

The expression "... damned incest" is omitted in the translation. In Act 2, 'brothel' is omitted from the target text because of moral concerns. Another expression, "... being a god kissing Carrion..." (p. 46), is omitted because of sexual connotation. Another statement, "Then came each actor on his ass..." (p. 54) is omitted because of its inappropriateness in the target culture. In act three, Ophelia and Hamlet's double-meaning conversation is omitted from the target text where Hamlet says: "That's fair thought to lie between maid's legs..." (p. 71).

Furthermore, the poems narrated by the First player are not part of the translated version because they contain a lot of allusions or references to historical and mythological figures. The translator doesn't add these to avoid the issue of incomprehensibility. In Act four, Ophelia's song about Saint Valentine's Day is omitted. Furthermore, one of Laertes' dialogues is omitted because of its cultural inappropriateness.

"That drop of blood that's calm proclaims me a bastard..." (p. 104)

The issue of untranslatability is quite prominent in the target text. This issue stems from different factors, such as cultural, moral, and ethical inappropriateness of the source text's content in the target culture. The issue is tackled by using the technique of omission.

Conclusion

In conclusion, we can say that the Urdu translation of Hamlet by Ali reveals multiple challenges of translating Hamlet from English, like the cultural clash between English and Urdu readers, the linguistic gap between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT), and the issue of translating Shakespeare's innovative language. The translator has used a number of strategies to cope with these obstacles. The three most significant translation strategies that are present in this Urdu translation of Hamlet are domestication, amplification, and untranslatability (omission). The use of these strategies helps to achieve functional equivalence. The use of these strategies helps in attaining the same effect of the target text on the target audience as the source text has on its readers. By incorporating these strategies, the translator tried to make the target text comprehensible and

culturally appropriate for the target audience. The naturalness of the target text serves the functional purposes of the Urdu translation of Hamlet. Ali's Urdu version of Hamlet can be further explored to study the issues of translating Shakespeare's idioms and metaphors.

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