Analyzing the Impact of Culture-Specific Terms in the Translation of *Mirat-ul-Aroos:* An Investigation into Employed Translation Strategies

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Abstract

This research article aims to identify the culture-specific terms from the English text Bride's Mirror translated by G.E. Ward (1903). This text is the translation of the Urdu novel Miraat-ul-Aroos written by Nazir Ahmad Dehlvi (1869), an Urdu novelist. This specific novel is selected by the researcher to address the research gap, as no research was conducted on the novel Bride's Mirror (1903) from this particular perspective. Identifying the culture-specific terms from an original text and translating or making those unknown specific terms a suitable part of the source text is one of the difficult tasks of a translator while translating a source text into the target text. The main purpose of this research is to identify culture-specific terms of the source language in the target text and determine the type of those terms. A qualitative research design is adopted for the research in order to investigate the impacts of cultural terms on translation. For this purpose, a textual analysis is conducted of this particular novel Bride's Mirror (1903). Eugene Nida's theory of translation from the perspective of formal and dynamic equivalence is adopted for analysis. The textual analysis is also conducted in terms of Lawrence Venuti's theory of domestication and foriegnization. After analyzing the data, it is also investigated what strategies are used by the translator in order to deal with culture-specific terms in the source text. The results showed that there are a lot of culture-specific terms of source language in the translation, such as names of food items that are symbols of the tradition of the source culture. Religious terms are also part of the text, which represents Muslim ideology, which is the core feature of Muslim society. The names of the characters are also specifically based on Muslim culture. At the end, translation strategies are also determined that were used by the translator to deal with these culture-specific terms.

Keywords: Translation, analysis, culture, specific terms, novel

1. Introduction

Culture is the identity of a nation or a country, and each country has its own culture, values, norms, and traditions that the people of the country follow. In translation studies, the term 'culture' is of high significance, and it cannot be ignored while translating any original text into the source language. Although translation is a complex process, a translator has to be very careful regarding different aspects of translation, whether it is word-for-word translation or sense-for-sense translation. It is also necessary for a translator to be aware of the culture-specific terms of the source language when he translates the text into the target language; otherwise, the translation will lose its purpose and will be considered meaningless if the culture of the source language is not conveyed properly to the audience. So a translator will not be able to translate an original text into the target text properly unless he is fully aware of the culture of the source text.

According to (Wu, 2008) "language is not seen as an isolated phenomenon suspended in a vacuum but as an integral part of culture. Some social scientists consider it the keystone of culture. On the other hand, language is influenced and shaped by culture. It reflects culture. It just likes a bridge between culture and translation, so it plays a very important role in it." He further states that intercultural awareness is highly important when we deal with a new language. Sometimes things are very easy to deal with, and we just need to patch on some grammatical and lexical items in order to bridge the differences. But on the other hand, things are more complex, and a lack of cultural knowledge influences our work in a negative way.

1.1 Statement of the problem

Identifying the culture-specific terms from an original text and translating or describing those specific terms in the source language is one of the major tasks of any translator who deals with such kinds

of written texts. The translator's own technique of dealing with such culture-specific terms determines the quality of his translated work. There are a lot of culture-specific terms in the Urdu novel *Miraat ul Aroos* (1869) by Nazir Ahmad Dehlvi, and the major concern of the researcher is to investigate the ways of using culture-specific terms in English translation *Bride's Mirror* (1903)

1.2 Significance of the research

The present study contributes to a better understanding of identifying the ways that the translator has adopted to describe culture-specific terms in his target language. It also enhances understanding regarding culture-specific terms regarding Muslim culture.

1.3 Limitation of the research

The research is limited to the English translation of only one novel. And only the first five chapters of the translated novel *Bride's Mirror* (1903) are selected as the data sample for analysis.

1.4 Research Questions

i.   What are the culture-specific terms of the source language used in the translated text?
ii. What kind of translation strategies are used to deal with culture-specific terms during translation?

1.5 Research Objectives:

i.   To find out culture-specific terms of the source language in the target text
ii. To find out the translation strategies used by the translator to deal with culture-specific terms in the target language

LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation is a difficult process, and a translator has to face various problems while translating a text into the target language. One of the major problems in translation is the need to differentiate between the cultures of different countries. For example, if a translator is translating a text into the target language, the main problem he will face is describing the culture of the source language in the target language. He has to adopt different kinds of strategies to maintain the meaning and sense of the original text. A translator who adopts a cultural approach is able to recognize that each language has cultural elements, conventions, and rules that vary from culture to culture. (Zare-Behtash & Firoozkoohi, 2010, p. 9) Culture is a major aspect of a society that cannot be ignored, and it also affects the process of translation. Although it is a complex process, the translator needs to have cultural knowledge so that he can make the translation smooth and easy to understand for the readers of the target language. It is also necessary to maintain the truthfulness of the translation in order to avoid obscurity.

Vocabulary is a major and important part of any written work. In translation, it plays a significant role, and the translator must have enough knowledge regarding language skills and vocabulary as well so that he can make the text as close to the original as possible. So, understanding language vocabulary is required for the process of translation. (Wu, 2008). A translator needs to be very skilled enough to convey the meaning and sense of the original text. He must be proficient in language skills and vocabulary as well. He must be able to recognize the emotive aspect of words. Similarly, he must have knowledge of the cultures and traditions of the source language so that he can convey the meaning and message of the original text.

Mustofa & Martina (2019) conducted a research on cultural content analysis in EFL textbooks used at SMA IT IQRA and SMKN 1 Bengkulu City. The aim of this research was to analyze the cultural dimensions displayed in the EFL textbooks and to investigate which culture was the most dominant and what the percentage of local culture was. For this purpose, two EFL textbooks were selected as data, and review documents and observations were used to collect the data. The research was based on descriptive qualitative analysis, and for analyzing the data, the researchers applied the concept of Mile and Huberman. The findings revealed that there was a difference regarding dominance in cultural types and dimensions. There were different percentages regarding local culture, target culture, and international culture. The dominance of local

culture was at its highest level, and the dominance of target culture was greater than that of international culture. And the lowest percentage was of international culture in terms of dominance in EFL textbooks. This research was limited only to the types of cultures in EFL textbooks. It should also be analyzed to see how these cultures are dominant in the EFL textbooks. In this research, only different types of cultures were analyzed. There should also be a descriptive analysis of the ways in which these cultures are dominated in the EFL textbooks. If the local culture is at its highest level, it should also be analyzed to see how the local culture is dominated in the EFL textbooks.

A study was conducted to analyze the cultural contents of English textbooks in Indonesia. Text and teachers' attitudes were analyzed from cultural perspectives. Types of culture, such as source culture, target culture, and international culture, were investigated in the study. The focus of the study was on text analysis and teachers' attitudes towards cultural presentation. Data was collected from an English textbook that was nationally prescribed for Grade 10. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the teachers who had used that textbook in the classrooms in order to investigate their attitudes towards cultural representation in the textbook. The findings showed that their textbook was dominated by Indonesian culture (source culture), followed by target and international cultures (USA, UK, Italy, and Indian). There were suggestions in the findings regarding implications for the curriculum makers, textbook writers, and English language teachers who teach culture to the students. (Sihombing & Chi Nguyen, 2022)

There was research on the depiction of cultures in the English textbooks of Mainland China and Hong Kong. The purpose of this research was to examine the cultural depiction in textbooks. For this purpose, two series of primary English textbooks were selected as a sample for the research. Kachru's model and Moran's framework were adopted to investigate the cultural presentation of the textbooks. The findings showed that both local and foreign cultures were encompassed by the textbooks. The contents of Mainland textbooks had a presentation of British culture in the inner circle, while the contents of Hong Kong textbooks focused on foreign culture, and there was a balanced presentation of various cultural aspects. The selected two series presented static cultural aspects and were not value-oriented. (Lee & Li, 2020)

Keluli (2020) conducted research on culture-specific items determined in the novel Baba Evi, written by Orhan Kemal. The research also focused on the translation strategies used by the translator while translating the novel My Father's House in order to depict culture-specific items. Newmark's categorization of culture-specific items was adapted to categorize the culture-specific items. Proper nouns were also focused on under Aixela's suggested culture-specific items. Based on a synthesis of Venuti's (2001 [1995; 1998]) foreignization and domestication procedures with Aixelá's (1996) conservation and substitution strategies, the translation of those culture-specific items was examined. The analysis showed that there were 194 culture-specific items in the source text, 31 items were based on the proper noun category, and 163 items were based on Newmark's categorization. The study also revealed that foreignization strategies were used more than domestication strategies. The translator also tried to translate 59 specific cultural items from the source text into universal signs without favoring foreignization and domestication strategies. At the end, the researcher concluded the research by adding that translators may benefit from both foreignization and domestication strategies rather than using only one for translating culture-specific items.

There was another study on the same novel, "Baba Evi," by another researcher. Two types of strategies were used by the researcher to analyze the text: one was Lawrence Venuti's strategies of domestication and foriegnization, and the other was Javier Franco Aixelá's strategies of translation for culture-specific items. The findings revealed that the translator adopted the domestication approach higher than the foriegnization approach, and it was dominant. The reason for the dominance of domestication was cultural gaps between the source text and the target text. (Mutlu, 2019) One of the spaces that the research found in both researches is that another novel can be selected for further research study, and the same theoretical framework and strategies can also be applied.

Riaz (2018) made an analysis of English translations of Manto's urdu short stories that were translated by three different translators Tahira Naqvi, Jai Ratan, and Khalid Hasan. SFL-based stylistic analysis was conducted of the selected translation specifically register analysis was adopted as an analytical model. The results showed that Naqvi followed strongly adheres to the ST style, Ratan adopted mixed method approach and also used ST Style to some extent while Hasan tried to avoid from ST style. When all the three translations were analysed comparatively, the researcher found Naqvi's translation best among other translations. Ratan's translation was more successful than Hasan's translation and Hasan's translation was the lowest among all.

A research gap that the researcher found for present study is that there is no research conducted on this particular translated novel in this cultural perspective. A lot of researches were conducted on EFL textbooks on national and international level. Researchers on novels and other literary works are also there. But the gap found by the researcher is that there is more space to analyse the literary works of the writers particularly in the field of Translation Studies in which translations of many works and their analysis is unaddressed.

3. Methodology

3.1 Research method

In this qualitative research, a textual analysis was conducted of the English-translated text *Bride's Mirror* written by G.E. Ward (1903). This is the translation of the Urdu novel *Miraat.ul.Aroos* (1869) written by Nazir Ahmad Dehlvi. The first five chapters of the English-translated novel "Bride's Mirror" were selected as the sample for the research.

The textual analysis of the text is conducted in order to know what the culture-specific terms are and how these terms are used in the English text of *Bride's Mirror* (1903) translated by G.E. Ward. The translator of the text is an English writer. The translation text that is taken as sample data is a translation of the Urdu novel *Miraat.ul.Aroos* (1869) written by Nazir Ahmad Dehlvi. Eugene Nida's dynamic and formal equivalence strategies are used for data analysis. Lawrence Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignization are also kept in mind while analyzing culture-specific terms in the target language.

According to Venuti, domestication refers to a process of translation in which the translator tries to make the translation familiar to the readers because they always feel the translated text is unfamiliar and they face difficulty while reading. So the main aim of domestication translation is to make the translation familiar and easy to understand for the readers. In this process, the original text loses its original sense and flavor of culture and other important aspects of the source language.

As far as the term foriegnization is concerned, it is a strategy in which the translator does not spoil the specific terms in the target language. It helps the translator maintain the originality of the source text. The translator does not go for sense-for-sense translation; he tries for word-for-word translation. The translator breaks the conventions of the target language to preserve the meanings of the source text, specifically some specific terms that are based on the culture, tradition, and religion of the source language.

The second theory that was focused on while analyzing the translation of the text was the strategies of formal equivalence and dynamic equivalence by Eugene Nida. The approach of dynamic equivalence refers to sense-for-sense translation that focuses on the sense and naturalness of the text. The translator does not conduct a literal translation; his main purpose is to convey the message of the source text in the target text. The translator tries to leave the same effects of the target text on the reader as they feel while reading the original text. On the other hand, formal equivalence is an approach that is based on word-for-word translation and can also be called literal translation. This approach emphasizes the structure, grammatical, and lexical aspects of the original text. This approach leads to less natural translation, in which the main focus is to maintain the structural and lexical aspects of the text.

Data Analysis

The textual analysis is conducted by keeping in mind the approaches of domestication and foriegnization described by Lawrence Venuti and Eugene Nida's approaches to formal and dynamic equivalence. After identifying the culture-specific terms, it was analyzed which approach was mostly used by the translator during translation and what the effects were in the translation.

A literal translation of word for word is known as 'formal equivalence'. The intention is to adhere to the original text as closely as possible. The source text's vocabulary, syntax, grammatical structure, and lexical details will all be retained in the translation. This assumes that the reader is aware of the linguistic and cultural background of the original work.

Considering 'dynamic equivalence', the intended audience is considered. The text is interpreted in a way that might make more sense than if it is translated literally. By maintaining the reader's response, dynamic equivalence aims to ensure that the reader's reaction to the translation is the same as the reader's reaction to the original. (Jarisch, 2021) The translator can make necessary changes to ensure that the translated material is understandable by using dynamic equivalence. The target audience frequently lacks familiarity with the original language and culture; thus, in order for idioms and references to make sense, they must be translated or explained.

The second theory that was focused on during analysis was Lawrence Venuti's approaches to domestication and foriegnization. The domestication approach focuses on sense-for-sense translation and neglects the grammatical and lexical structures of the source text. Its main purpose is to convey the message and make the text fluent and easy to understand for the target readers. On the other hand, foreignization focuses on word-for-word or literal translation, and the translator seems to be concerned about the originality of the text.

The researcher identified these culture-specific terms from the text of *Bride's Mirror* (1903) by G.E. Ward, which is the translation of the Urdu novel *Miraat-ul-Aroos* (1869) by Nazir Ahmad. The terms are selected only from the first five chapters of the novel. When the textual analysis of the translation is conducted, it is found that most of the terms are not translated into the target language. The translator puts the culture-specific terms in the target text as they are in the source text. He did not explain these terms in the text and also did not translate these terms sense-for-sense. He also did not mention any equivalent form of the specific terms that are related to Muslim culture. The translator tried to maintain the flavor and beauty of norms and traditions while translating the original text.

According to the textual analysis of the very first chapter of the novel, most of the names of the characters are appeared as the first chapter introduces the characters to the readers. Some of the names of female characters appear as nick names, like *Kimmu, Sulmati, Maulun, Basu, Banno*, and *Anna.* Their nicknames show that female characters are not given as much honor as male characters. On the other hand, female characters like *Akbari Khanum* and *Asghari* seem to be honorable elders of the family.

Male characters have full names such as *Kazi Imam Ali, Maulvi Ruhullah, Hakim Shifa-udddaula, Munshi Mumtaz Ahmad, Muhammad Kamil, and Muhammad Aqil,* and their names show their respectful status in society and professional background as well. The full names of the characters in the target text show that the translator has maintained the respect of the elders, as the original author of the novel did.

The term '*Mohulla*' is used for a small community of people. The translator used this term as it is because he wants to keep things original for the readers. In the target language, the translator could replace this term with 'town' but he did not do so because he was presenting the original life style of the people of Dehli who were living in '*Mohulla*' particularly since the setting of the novel was *Mohulla* (a small community of people).

Another prominent term that is used for a new daughter-in-law is '*Mizzajdar Bahu*' which is interesting for the readers. This term refers to a short-tempered person. The newlywed bride is very short-tempered, and

she is not very good in her temperament and has no stamina to bear things. She demands a separate home, so the writer used the term '*Mizzajdar Bahur*' for her. This term, *'Mizzajdar Bahu'* attracts a lot of readers.

A pawn casket is a box for keeping pawns in it. Eating pawns was a very popular thing in Dehli. People used to keep pawns in their mouths, not only males but females as well. The translator introduced this thing to the readers so that they could learn about the real-life style of the people of Dehli.

'Ramzan' is a holy month for Muslims that represents the ideology of Muslim society. '*Ramzan*' is one of the most significant months for Muslims. People who belong to Islam know the value of this month. So, mentioning this term in the target language shows that the translator is very concerned regarding the cultural and religious aspects of the source language.

In the textual analysis of the second chapter, most of the terms that are identified are related to the Muslim religion 'Islam'. Two major religious events, '*Eed*' and '*Baqar Eed'* are identified in the text. '*Eedgah*' is another term used for a place where Muslims offer their Eid prayers. The other religion-based terms are *'Nad Ali'* and '*Panjsura*' which are papers based on holy verses. *'Zamzam'* refers to water that is considered the most sacred form of water by the whole Muslim community. '*Hajjan'* refers to a female Muslim pilgrim who has performed Hajj and after performing Hajj people call her *'Hajjan'*. All these religious terms in the target text present the true religious aspect of Muslim society. All these terms are not changed in the target language because they are of great significance in the culture of Muslim society. One cannot eliminate religious elements from the culture of any country otherwise it will lose its originality as it is considered a core feature of any culture.

Religion plays a great role in molding the culture of a society. Most of the cultural values are related to the religion of the people in that particular society. As in Muslim culture, Islam is the core feature, and the cultural values in Muslim society are mostly based on their religion "Islam". The religious events of Muslim society, like Eid, are also part of their culture. So the translator tried to maintain the supremacy and beauty of their norms and traditions while translating the original text. '*Hammam*' is a common cultural term that refers to a place that is used for taking baths. The translator using such a common term in the target text shows that he wants to present a real picture of the people of Dehli and show the readers how the people of Dehli live their lives and what their daily happenings and routines are. He aims to make readers feel original and close to the source text.

The third and fourth chapters contain a number of culture-specific food items that are particular part of Muslims' culture, such as '*siwayan*', which refers to a sweet dish that Muslims make especially on Eid, and they also distribute '*siwayan*' among their neighbors. The other food-related terms that are part of the text are '*khichri', 'pulao', 'dal', 'khorma', 'chupattie', 'kachauris', 'kababs',* etc. Traditional food items are not translated by the translator because the translation of such terms loses the original beauty of the source text. The text tastes good if it has an element of faithfulness, and the translator is very concerned about the original taste of the text. All these food items give a traditional touch to the source text. The presence of these food items in the target text makes the reader aware of the dishes of the Muslim culture of the source language. The translator focuses on each and every aspect of the culture of the source language so that the reader can have knowledge of the culture and traditions of the people about whom they are reading the text. It is also shown to the readers that the people of Dehli were concerned about their norms and traditions. At that time, Dehli was the center of the culture, norms, and traditions of the people of the subcontinent. And it also became a center of attraction for the writers.

'*Pawn'* is again here that people in Dehli use commonly. It is basically made of leaf, and some ingredients are covered with leaf, so people do not swallow it but chew it.

The names of some characters were also there, like '*Mian Muslim'* and '*Mama Azmat'*. The word '*Mian*' is used to show the specific caste of the person in the source language. Most people use words related to their caste in their names. '*Mian Aslam'* is an example of it. The other name, '*Mama Azmat'* is used. *Azmat* is

basically the name of the character, but the 'word' mama is showing the relationship of that particular character. In the source language, the brother of the mother is called '*mama*', whereas in the target language, mama is not part of its lexical items. 'Uncle' is used for such type of relationships.

In the fifth chapter, some religion-based terms '*Panjsura', 'Nad Ali', and 'Hajjan'* are used in the target text in order to present the true religious aspect of Muslim society. These are some pieces of verse that are considered sacred in Muslim society, and people recite these verses in times of trouble and difficulty. They believe that their problems will be sorted out by doing so. A female character '*Mirun'* is new to introduce in this chapter.

After identifying the culture-based terms in the text, it is also investigated what kind of strategies are used by the translator to deal with culture-specific terms in the target text. The translator used the strategy of transliteration at the end of each page. Transliteration is a process in which the translator translates the words of the original text according to the pronunciation of the target language. The translator of the original novel also tried to give some explanation regarding these culture-specific terms in order to make the audience understand them. These descriptions are mentioned at the bottom of the pages. This technique helped the audience of the target language understand the meanings and senses of the culture of the people of the source language. As far as the specific techniques or strategies are concerned, the translator adopted Lawrence Venuti's theory of foriegnization while translating the text in the target language. According to Venuti, foriegnization is an approach that focuses on word-for-word translation. It is an ethno-deviant pressure that recognizes the linguistic and cultural differences of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad. Venuti himself flavors the foreignizing method as it is against the hegemony of English-language countries, which are exercising unequal cultural interactions and consolidating marginalization. Foriegnization avoids fluency and challenges the values of the target language culture.

On the other side, he made a word-for-word translation that was according to Nida's theory of formal equivalence. The translator actually used both formal and dynamic equivalence for translating the text, but he used the strategy of formal equivalence more than dynamic equivalence. A literal translation of word for word is known as formal equivalence. The intention is to adhere to the original text as closely as possible. The source text's vocabulary, syntax, grammatical structure, and lexical details will all be retained in the translation. By translating the material as accurately as possible, translator enables the readers to draw their own interpretations of it. It is less likely to be impacted by the translator and more likely to maintain the text's original meaning. Formal equivalence aims to avoid localization and permits un-translated idioms, allowing individuals conversant in the original language and culture to draw their own conclusions. (Jarisch, 2021)

Conclusion

On the basis of the analysis of the text, the researcher is able to answer the research questions at the end of the research. As far as the first question is concerned, there were a lot of culture-specific terms in the translation that were specifically from Muslim-cultured societies. Secondly, the nature of those specific terms is also determined in the analysis. Some terms are based on Muslim religious ideology, which is the core feature of the source language culture. Terms of religious events and their celebrations are also part of the lexical items. Similarly, the names of places and characters are also there. Last but not least, the names of their traditional food items are also adding a touch of originality to the target text. The third and last part of the analysis was to investigate the technique by which the translator has used these culture-specific terms in the target text. The very first thing that was investigated was that most of the culture-specific terms were written as they were in the source text. The translator did not adopt the strategy of sense-for-sense or free translation for describing those specific terms. Most of the culture-specific words were written in *italics* in order to make them prominent or highlighted in the text.

The translator used a transliteration strategy in which he gave the proper pronunciation of those terms in the target language so that the reader could pronounce these specific terms correctly. Although the researcher did not mention the equivalent form of these specific terms and did not go for sense-for-sense translation, he borrowed the cultural words from the target text and gave a brief description of each specific term in the target language at the bottom of each page to make the reader understand what the terms actually mean. The research can be concluded by pointing out that the translator focused on the strategy of foriegnization but not as a whole. But as far as the translation of culture-specific items is concerned, he adopted Venuti's strategy of foriegnization more than domestication because he did not change the terms in the target language and he wrote those terms as they were.

On the other hand, he also tried to convey the message to the reader of the target language in his own way of adopting domestication, in which he gave a proper description of the pronunciation of the words that were new to the target readers. But he used this approach to a very little extent. In this perspective, he was close to the domestication approach when he explained the ideas in the target context to make the readers understand, but on the other side, he focused on the foriegnization strategy while mentioning culture-specific terms of the target text, and he made translation word-for-word.

As far as Nida's approaches to formal and dynamic equivalence are concerned, the translator adopted both types of approaches, just like Venuti's approaches to domestication and foreignization. The translator was more formal in equivalence than dynamic. Ultimately, the most effective method is frequently a combination of dynamic and formal equivalency. In short, the translator used approaches of foriegnization and formal equivalence more than domestication and dynamic equivalence. He did not lose the original essence of the source text. He focused on maintaining the balance between the approaches and on the faithfulness and originality of the text.

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