

Exploring the Elements of Domestication, Amplification, and Untranslatability in the Urdu Translation of Shakespeare's Play Romeo and Juliet

Saba Tufail¹
Ali Hussain Bin Sadiq²

Corresponding Author: ssabamalik25@gmail.com

Abstract

This study explores the projection of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability in Aali JaaH's Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet. In order to remove the cultural gap between source text and target text these themes are very useful. The use of these all three themes leads towards a better understanding of the text in the target language and indicates silence of the translator in face of obscene expressions. The study points out domestication, amplification, and untranslatability within a broader spectrum of analysis. Employing the purposive sampling method, the researchers have adopted various examples, highlighting domestication, amplification, and untranslatability from the Urdu text of Romeo and Juliet. Based on the qualitative analysis, the study finds the proposed perspectives of great use since they reduce the gap among the source culture and target cultures. The foundation of this research paper is the functional equivalence model proposed by Eugene A. Nida. Moreover, it is accepted that untranslatability is a prevalent cultural phenomenon that often occurs itself based on morality and beliefs, specifically considering religion. The interpretation of sexuality and nudity in Muslim societies is undoubtedly not encouraged. Due to this, it is recommended to incorporate these techniques adopted in the literary translations to reduce isolation and unsimilarity of the texts.

Keywords: domestication, amplification, untranslatability, translation, equivalence, culture

1. Introduction

Translating a text is a challenging task as it involves the translation of some cultural specific terms and linguistic variations that require an in-depth knowledge of the target culture. Multiunit words such as idioms and proverbs can cause ambiguity if they lack structural similarity and proper understanding of the target culture. In order to reduce this ambiguity and misunderstanding, linguists introduce some strategies like domestication, amplification, and untranslatability. The translators can use these themes in order to provide a more detailed explanation and create a sense of familiarity in the text. They also help conceal the immoral and unethical expressions from the text. The current study addresses the issues of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability in the Urdu translated version of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* by the Urdu translator Aali JaaH.

An important concept in the field of literary translation is domestication. Minimizing the elements of foreignness is a primary objective of domestication in translation. It aims to replace

¹MPhil Scholar, DLC, UMT Sialkot Campus, Pakistan.

²PhD, Assistant Professor, DLC, UMT Sialkot Campus, Pakistan



the original culture with the culture of the target audience. It aids the target audience to understand as well as consider the translation acceptable.

Although the term domestication has been in use for hundreds of years, yet Venuti introduced this term in the modern sense in 1995. Nida is generally accepted as the pinnacle of domestication in the present-day trends in translation. In keeping with the views of Mark and Moira (1997), domestication indicates a particular type of translation in which the foreignness is mitigated by employing an obvious and fluid style of the foreign text for readers of the target language. Translators claim that the native representation should be incorporated while rendering translation in order to create a bridge within the source text and the target culture translation. Venuti (1995) defines domestication as "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bringing the author back home" (p. 20). Domestication proposes a meaningful way to deal with the diversity in cultures. Yuanchong (2000) clearly acknowledges the distinctions within eastern and western cultures and suggests the reinforcement of cultural concepts through domestication in translation. As per Baker (2001, p. 280), a significant number of translation scholars have maintained their efforts to discuss the *cultural turn*, which reinforces the incorporation of cultural beliefs in translation.

In the field of literary translation, amplification is considered one of the most important strategies. It helps translators highlight the underlying, hidden meanings while addressing culturally specific terms and multiple references. It improves the naturalness, beauty and splendor of translation. Translator increase the importance of the translated text by explaining contextual meaning through a variety of instances. As a result, the gap between foreign text and the source and target text is reduced as an outcome of this reader-friendly adaptability.

Untranslatability is the third important delimited technique in the field of translation studies. It is used to minimize or totally exclude nudity and sexuality related texts. Not only unethical practices but there are always some parts in the source text, which are untranslatable due to cultural diversity. According to American linguist and anthropologist Edward Sapir (1929), "no two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality" (as quoted in Korzeniowska & Kuhiwczak 1998: 28). Every society is distinct and it maintains a unique set of norms, beliefs, and customs. As a result, it can be hard to portray those different linguistic characteristics with the same degree of equivalence in other languages. In contrast to cultural and language obstacles, there are some other issues that are also worthy of discussion. It is observed that Muslim societies tend to keep taboo topics like sexual orientation, homosexuality, illegal and unethical behavior, and scathing comments regarding religious institutions under wraps. Due to morality and modesty, discussion of such interpretations is considered inappropriate and unethical.

In the current research paper, domestication, amplification, and untranslatability are examined and studied with a number of textual examples. The analysis is focused on the objectives of every translation technique along with how they influence the literary translation standard.



2. Research Questions

I: What function do domestication, amplification, and untranslatability serve in the Urdu literary translation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*?

ii. What are the benefits to incorporate these translation strategies in the literary translation?

3. Literature Review

The process of translation is a broader field of study to focus on the analysis of translation and interpretation, its practice, and theory. According to the definition provided by Toury (1995) that translation is a purposeful activity that aims at the production of a target text, which is to be functionally equivalent to a source text. Venuti describes the translation as a process in which the chain of signifiers of the source text is replaced by the target text with a new equivalent chain. This replacement is based upon translator's own interpretation (1995). This definition is more suitable for the present research paper. He further explains that translation is not confined or used only by linguists but also used by cultural studies experts, historiographers, anthropologists, philosophers etc. (Venuti, 2013). Translation must be rendered by keeping in mind a number of elements such as linguistic, cultural, political, personal, and historical components. Absence of these factors can make the credibility of translation full of doubts.

Translation of the source text does not require some majestic and bombastic words; it can be in simple day-to-day language. Martin Luther's translation of Bible(1530) was not in a refined or elitist language but in an everyday German language (Munday, 2009). It is believed that every translation is influenced by the culture of the target text as well as by the cultural background of the translator. Lotman explains, "No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture' (Bassnett 1992: 14). The use of cultural elements in translation is impossible without the incorporation of domestication, untranslatability and amplification. According to Nida (1993), in one of his works entitled "In Language, Culture and Translating", he claims that without carefully considering a culture's background, a text cannot be fully understood by the readers. Baker (1993) claims that because of different cultural settings foreign language learners consider culture a big problem for understanding the translation completely. These certain factors emphasize the importance of amplification, domestication ,and untranslatability as the beauty of language and cultural diversity cannot be understood without them.

The differences in the languages leads towards the differences in the expression of same phenomenon. There are various elements for constructing reality in different narratives across various communities. Domestication, amplification, and untranslatability are helpful in dealing with cultural and such other factors during translation. The study focuses on the projection of equivalence as the essence of the translation but non-equivalence is also a point of discussion when it comes to the translation. The major issue with the concept of equivalence is that the target text cannot be produced with equal level of similarity. It is a difficult task to provide the equal degree of equivalence that is required for a potential translation process. As a consequence, it enhances the importance of amplification, domestication, and untranslatability in translating a text.



Equivalence provides a theoretical basis for the translation process but it's been criticized for a variety of reasons. Some researchers negate the idea of complete equivalence. Lian (2006) is of the view that because of the cultural differences, linguistics variations, and ideological changes, language is considered to be a complex and complicated entity. It is claimed that the concept of absolute equivalence in translation does not exist. According to the views of Zhong (2012) translation is an amalgamation of different languages and various cultural elements. The concept of equivalence is to some extent problematic. It is difficult to measure the degree and kind of sameness, which is required in equivalence. Similarly, Liu (2012) claims that certain geographical situations create various cultures and as a result different people have different views about the same phenomenon. There are certain concepts, which vary from culture to culture, leading towards cultural differences. Peter (2001) explains that due to the lack of cultural background knowledge, it is difficult to comprehend translation completely. Due to the cultural elements, translators are unable to render translation in a complete sense of sameness.

Cultural elements and linguistic variations play a crucial role in the process of rendering translation. It is believed that culture can be both a hindrance and a gate towards a better understanding of translation. It is necessary to have a good understanding of the target culture before embarking on the translation of the source text. There has been much debate on such issues regarding translation.

Nida (1975) is of the view that translation is a natural process, which unintentionally occurs in the language of the reader. He refers to this translation process as the greatest quality of approximation. His view related to equivalence is a dynamic one, opposite to the conventional methods of translation process.

Sadiq and Ayyaz (2023) hold that in order to connect the source and target cultures the use of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability is highly recognized and enormously helpful in translation. In Pakistani culture where there the taboo concepts are not encouraged, the translator can use these strategies to add necessary material, reduce foreignness, and avoid the unethical depictions in the target text. They point out that the use of these strategies in the literary translation makes the text understandable and enrich the stylistic features of the translation for readership. Moreover, without the supporting phrases or words, the originality of the translation is reduced and it provides a passive look of discourse.

Translatability and untranslatability has been a topic of debate for various scholars and it goes ahead to the present time. Farman Ullah, Iqbal and Jin (2022) examine different issues, which become hindrance while translating source text into the target text. They state that there are many problems leading towards untranslatability like style, semantics, syntax, vocabulary grammar etc. But their focus is on semantic problems. They claim that the variations between source and target text at the lexical and syntactic level become a reason of untranslatability. Their analysis reveals that the cultural and linguistic differences, such as cultural perception, religion, and other Taboos, etc. between Pakistani and Western societies sometimes cause untranslatability. That is why during translation, the translator needs to have a proper knowledge and understanding of the



target language's cultural and linguistic differences and he should be able to replace or reduce the unethical depictions in the translation.

The depiction of reality varies from culture to culture and from language to language as Sapir-Whorf hypothesis claims that different linguistic societies have different ways of realizing, interpreting and depicting reality (Gorlee, 1994). It is not possible to portray one concept as it is in the target language. It requires some changes due to the cultural, linguistic, and geographical variations. Similarly Sapir (1956) claims that no two languages are similar enough to explain the same social reality in a similar way. Every culture has different cultural concepts and languages does not sharing a one-to-one relationship.

Translation of one text into another makes it comprehensive for the target readers but it is a complicated process. It includes the specific cultural terms, persons, institutions, customs, traditions, and habits, which are not understandable for the target audience. While focusing on the validity of these strategies in translation, Baawaidhan (2016) claims that domestication is a useful strategy to overcome the cultural and language barriers but foreignization is better than domestication. He takes foreignization as the most pervasive cultural strategy and considers domestication only as a secondary strategy.

Similarly Jami (2014) points out that domestication causes the omission and discursive abridgement in the translation. It makes the text distorted and causes mistranslation. Sometimes, instead of reducing unfamiliarity with the cultural differences, it causes confusion. Due to the cultural variations, it makes the translation challenging for both the translator and the reader.

For translation process, equivalence has provided theoretical foundation, yet it has also been criticized for multiple reasons. Snell-Hornby (1988) claims the concept of equivalence as asymmetric, directional, subject-less, unfashionable imprecise and ill-defined. She points out that equivalence is a baseless concept in the translation process. Translation can be rendered without considering the element of equivalence. Hornby (1995) claims that translation equivalence cannot be viewed in absolute symmetry. However Catford's (1965) concept of equivalence is considered more abstract and general. He proposes a distinction between textual equivalence and formal correspondence (Ionita, 2020). He claims that textual equivalence refers to the process where any target language text can be considered equivalent to a source language text on a certain occasion.

A similar view is presented by Xiabin (2005) who claims that equivalence in translation is necessary, but not in its absolute mathematical sense. Translator should consider the equivalence in translation as it creates a sense of familiarity between source and target text. However, he also claims that equivalence is not necessary in its complete form or absolute sense.



The present research addresses deep cultural issues in the Urdu literary translation while capturing their sensitivity and pointing out the solution. The current study fills the research gap in the sense that the elements of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability have never been probed in the Urdu translation of Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet* to the best of researchers' knowledge and available literature. It also intends to investigate whether translation and equivalence are correlated and the use of domestication, amplification and untranslatability lead towards a better understanding of target text. It is anticipated that translator can reduce foreignness and can create a sense of familiarity in the translation by incorporating these strategies and the element of equivalence in translation. Translation without equivalence changes the meaning of the source text and leads the reader towards confusion. Cultural variations make the translation a challenging process. Language and cultural concepts vary from culture to culture. By incorporating these strategies, the translator can make the target text comprehensive, expressive and understandable for the target audience.

4. Theoretical Framework

Eugene A. Nida's model of Functional Equivalence is used as a theoretical framework for this particular research. Functional equivalency can be summarized as that just as the readers of an original text can understand and appreciate the text in the same manner the target readers should be able to comprehend and value the translation (Nida, 1993). While talking about the translation process, Nida (1964) proposes four parameters to explain the demands of a good translation. Firstly, it must be coherent. Secondly, it requires to capture the vitality and style of the original. Thirdly, it should exhibit a natural and effortless mode of expression. Fourthly, it should convey a comparable response. By considering these fundamental concepts, the researchers investigate what lies behind the depiction of amplification, domestication, and untranslatability in the Urdu literary translation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

With regard to equivalency, Venuti (2000) observes that Nida provides three distinct suggestions regarding relatedness and relevance. In the first case, both languages and cultures can be identified. In the second scenario, the languages are different but the cultures are almost identical. In the third case, when a translator notices an obvious distinction between the languages and cultures, it creates a serious problem in rendering translation. This has an impact on the present research topic. These problems lead towards the use of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability.

Translation can be challenging due to linguistic variations and lack of proper knowledge of the target culture. Due to these reasons, translators change the message to the target culture's context through the use of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability, based on how complicated the texts are. As a result of cultural and linguistic variations, translators have to create a link between the target and source culture through the use of domestication and amplification while rendering translation. The primary objective of the current research is to pinpoint sensitive cultural concerns in the translation of Urdu literary works, address them, and provide a solution with textual examples.





5. Methodology

The researchers have selected a few lines from *Romeo and Juliet* along with the Urdu translation to investigate the delimited perspectives by employing a qualitative method. The Urdu translation of *Romeo and Juliet* was released at the online platform (www.urdupdfbooks.com) by Aali JaaH in 2014. All the five acts of the play have been studied in order to find out the representation of amplification, domestication, and untranslatability, using purposive sampling technique. The analysis is divided into three parts. Each part's translation between English and Urdu has been studied through the lens of Nida's model of functional equivalence. Each phrase in the data has been examined according to the underlying translation strategies. With the contextual material, the translators' constraints have also been analyzed.

6. Textual Data and its Analysis

In this section, the examples of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability are provided from the text. Each section attempts to provide a comprehensive knowledge of the concerning translation techniques.

6.1. Domestication Projected in the Urdu Translation

Domestication is used to lessen the reflection of the source text on the target text. This strategy helps the researchers to bridge the gap between the source and target readers. Domestication is considered a cultural reflection to help the translator give the target text a tint of their culture. It is regarded as a beneficial step towards understanding and appreciating the translation. It creates a sense of similarity regarding text among its readers. The diversity among different cultures can be meaningfully handled through domestication. The following examples highlight the element of domestication and its impact on the translation:

6.1.1. Gregory: No, Marry; I fear thee!

The word أله is used among the Muslims and والله (by God) is considered a word that Muslims use as a swear word. Using الله (by God), the translator tries to reduce the cultural differences and increases a sense of similarity among the readers of the target text. The word 'Marry' is an interjection originated as a common oath in the Middle Ages and stands as a reference to Jesus' mother. The Urdu version projects an example of amplification by using تمهاری کسی بات سے نہیں. The translation of Marry with والله (by God) depicts the use of domestication. This translated version contains more detail than the source text to help the readership understand the target text more easily.

6.1.2. Romeo: Wouldst thou withdraw it? For what purpose, love?

refers to wrong and immoral behavior. In Muslim society, it refers to the vicious person, a person who rejects the presence of Allah Almighty and Islamic beliefs. In the source





is used in the sense of a withdrawal from a promise. In order to make the target text familiar, the translator has used this word to make it more comprehensive.

6.1.3: Juliet: Therefore, pardon me.

Here the use of الله معاف كرے (May Allah forgive us!) is an indication towards the Islamic concept of begging for forgiveness from Almighty Allah instead of using words like Mary, Jesus Christ etc. The translator has used the word الله to reduce the cultural differences in the target text.

6.1.4. Juliet: Sweet, good night.

The concept of خدا کو سونیا is particularly used in the Muslim context for the loved ones. Instead of using the word-for-word translation, the translator has translated the text with a touch of cultural elements. The involvement of cultural aspect in the translation of target text decreases the foreignness from the text.

6.1.5. Juliet: Then, dreadful trumpet, sound the general doom.

In the Urdu translation, the compound word صور قيامت and simple word اسرافيل has been used to refer to the Archangel who will blow his trumpet on the day of Judgment in order to call the people at one place. The use of these words reduces the element of alienation and cultural differences from the target text and facilitate the readership as well.

6.1.6. Romeo: Do thou but close our hands with holy words.

The word عقد a synonym for the process of نکاح a characteristic of Muslim culture. In non-muslim countries, there is no such concept. Their concept of marriage is quite different from عقد Here the use of such words highlight the unique characteristics of the Muslim culture.

6.1.7. Friar Lawrence: Benedicite.

Here the words سلامت and سلامت represent the expressions of indigenization. The words خدا and are used to make the meaning more clear and transparent in the minds of the target audience.

6.1.8. Juliet: Saints do not move, though grant for prayers' sake.





The concept of ζ is quite clear as it refers to the true path, the easiest way for guidance in Islam. Here it works as a way towards better understanding of the concept explained. By incorporating domesticated words in the translation, the translator tried to make the concept clear in the minds of the readers.

6.1.9. Romeo: Farewell. Thou canst not teach me to forget.

The Urdu translation of 'Farewell' has been rendered with خدا حافظ!, which is another example of domestication. During the time of seeing off someone, the Urdu-speaking Muslims use the words like غدا حافظ!. By using this word, the translator accommodates the understanding of the reader.

6.2. Amplification Projected in Urdu Translation

Amplification refers to a translation technique in which the translator provides a more detailed explanation bearing in mind the context of the discourse. This is used in order to make the target text more clear and comprehensive for the understanding of its recipients. The following examples are expected to highlight the use of amplification in the Urdu translation of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet*.

6.2.1. Abram: No, better.

The given extract is an example of amplification. It provides additional information to connect the previous and present text. This sentence is quite short in its original form but in the translated version, it contains detailed information. The Urdu translation ببين ميرا آقا آپ كے آقا سے ببتر ہے makes the idea clear for intended readers about what is being talked about. Here the amplification helps the readers to clarify textual analysis. By giving additional expressions, the translator provides a simple and clear picture of what is discussed here.

6.2.2. Gregory: Say "better".

Without the element of amplification ,a better understanding of this extract is quite difficult. The words, 'Say "better" are translated as نبیں یہ کہیے کہ ہمارا آقا آپ کے آقا سے بہتر ہے which gives additional information about the incident. The respective sentence can be translated into Urdu with different meanings to distort the original meaning of the source text. Here the technique of amplification expresses the emotions of servants about their owners. The addition in the explanation completes the meaning of the original text.

6.2.3: Sampson: Yes, better, sir.





Addition of the contextual meaning in the Urdu translation of the given extract makes the text meaningful. The feelings of Sampson are beautifully illustrated in the translated version. The translation اس میں ذرا شبہ نہیں کہ ہمارا آقا آپ کے آقا سے بڑھیا آدمی ہے creates a sense of completeness. It makes the reader aware about the cultural similarity and lessens the text alienation.

6.2.4: Lady Capulet: A crutch, a crutch! Why call you for a sword?

6.2.5. Juliet: Yet let me weep for such a feeling of loss.

The Urdu translation of this line is a projection of Juliet's emotions towards Taybelt. The literal translation of the given extract would have been different but the use of amplification has elevated the Urdu translation. The addition of يو بهائى ثانى بلث اتنے ياد آتے ہيں has made translation realistic and coherent.

6.2.6. Mercutio: O calm, dishonorable, Vile submission! Allastaccato carries it away.

The Urdu translation of the given lines is an example of both amplification and domestication. The use of the word سلامت روى are used to minimize the foreignness of the text. It intends to reduce the element of strangeness and the cultural differences. The detailed description of the given extract makes it comprehensive and vivid for the readership.

6.2.7. Enter three or four citizens with clubs and partisans.

In the Urdu translation of the given line آدمی اس دنگے فساد میں شریک ہونے آ is an additional information about the incident and a good example of amplification. It reveals contextual information about the enmity between two families and a further involvement of the citizens in the rivalry. The translator explaines the contextual background and information in the under discussion Urdu translation.



6.2.8. Enter Prince Escalus with his train.

The use of Urdu words like خدام وحشم has increased the importance of and glorified the Urdu translation. It creates amplification in the demonstrative way of translation. It helps the reader to understand contextual meanings. Words, given in the target text, are used to remove and reduce foreignness from the text after translation.

6.2.9. Benvolio: I'll know his grievance or be much denied.

In the rendered translation, the Urdu text is full of amplification. It is a detailed explanation of the source text to lessen the cultural differences for the target readership. The initial part of the sentence 'I'll know his grievance' is translated into میں ان سے پوچھوں گا کہ کیوں آپ اس قدر غم زدہ اور امر is full of additional information. The second part, 'or be much denied' is translated as افسردہ خاطر رہتے ہیں! which demonstrates amplification. This sentence would could been translated into a much shorter sentence but the translator makes it a full detailed explanation to avoid any misunderstanding and alienation from the text.

6.3. Untranslatability Projected in Urdu Translation

There are many reasons behind the untranslatability of a text. This may include the inherent differences between languages, nuances of expressions, and the cultural contexts. Some languages can easily be translated but some contain complex layers of meanings, which cannot be rendered into direct one-to-one translation. There are two certain reasons for untranslatability defined by Catford (1965) which are cultural and linguistic. One reason for untranslatability is the presence of the elements of sexuality and nudity-related scenarios, which make the translation immoral and inappropriate. The same case is with the extracts given below. They are filled with certain examples of sensuality, which makes translation unethical. It is the responsibility of the translator to make text readable by keeping in view the age, gender, and culture of the readers. It becomes difficult for the translator to render translations of the obscene expressions. The sentences given below are examples of untranslatable texts.

6.3.1. Romeo: It is my soul that calls upon my name.

How silver-sweet sound lover's tongues by night,

Like softest music to attending ears.

6.3.2. Romeo: (Taking juliet's hand)

If I profane with my unworthiest hand This holy shrine, the gentle sin is this: My lips, two blushing pilgrims, ready stand To smooth that rough touch with a tender kiss

6.3.3. Romeo: O then, dear saint, let lips do what hands do.



They pray, grant thou, lest faith turn to despair.

6.3.4. Romeo: Then move not while my prayer's effect I take. (He kisses her)

Thus from my lips, by thine, my sin is purged.

6.3.5. Juliet: Then have my lips the sin that they have took.

6.3.6. Romeo : Sin from my lips?

O trespass sweetly urged! Give me my sin again.

(He kisses her)

6.3.7: Juliet: You kiss by th' book.

6.3.8: Juliet: To help me after! I will kiss thy lips.

Haply some poison yet doth hang on them,

(She kisses him)

To make me die with a restorative.

Thy lips are warm!

The translation of the extract given above is not encouraged due to the religious and cultural point of view. Additionally, the educational system is mostly based on opposite genders so as a result translation of such kinds of passages is not suitable during the deliverance of lectures. While rendering translation, translators avoid the extracts, which include sexuality and nudity related passages. Moreover, the cultural gap does not support such kinds of translations especially Pakistani culture. In short, untranslatability deals with immoral and unethical expressions let the reader decipher the implied meaning.

7. Conclusion

The presence of socio-cultural and linguistic factors in the target text makes the process of translation complex, difficult and challenging one. In order to face this challenging task, the projection of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability fulfills the needs of the modern era. Translators use domestication, amplification, and untranslatability to glorify the stature of rendered translation. These strategies become helpful in reducing the foreignness and alienation from the text by removing cultural differences, making the text comprehensive for the readership, and avoiding the inappropriate, unethical, and immoral expressions in the target text. By avoiding sexuality and nudity and incorporating details and sameness in the target text through the use of domestication, amplification, and untranslatability, translators can provide a better understanding to the readership.

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