

A STUDY OF CULTURAL ADAPTATION IN ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF NAZIR AHMAD'S MIRAT-UL-UROOS

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Abstract

This study examines cultural adaptation in the English translation of Nazir Ahmed's *Mirat-ul-Uroos* using Mona Baker's translation strategies framework. Employing Mona Baker's translation strategies at word level through comparative textual analysis of cultural components, expressions, religious alliterations, figurative language, and culturally specific references in the source text and its translation. The strategies are generalization, neutralization, cultural substitution, paraphrasing (using related words/non-related words), loan word (with or without explanation), omission. The analysis explores the instances of cultural adaptation, which specific translation strategies are employed to bridge cultural gaps, and how translators maintain cultural authenticity and emotional resonance for the target audience by adaptation. Findings reveal that the translator predominantly utilized translation strategies, making the text accessible to English readers. Cultural substitution, paraphrasing using related words, and loan words(with /without explanation) are the strategies are the most frequently used in the translation. The study concludes that translation strategies are necessary for effective cultural adaptation. By successfully maintaining cultural authenticity while guaranteeing the target audience's comprehension and emotional involvement, the translator made a significant contribution to translation studies.

INTRODUCTION

Translation is a process in which the translator transfers the meaning of a text from one language to another language. In the process of translation, a translator is bound to the text and he has to translate the text without showing his presence in the translation process. But according to some scholars, it is impossible for the translator to avoid his presence in the translation. A translator is also an additional creator and author.

Sometimes translator's lexical choices made may result in a change in the discourse of the translation.

In translation, there is "sense for sense" and "word for word" translation. The emphasis in both instances was on translating academic, reputable materials, like literature. The "word-for-word" approach introduced a foreign SL way of thinking and speaking in an attempt to mimic

the original's structure whereas "sense for sense" aimed to replicate the original text.

Text in one language is replaced with text in another during the language-reforming process of translation. According to this definition, translation is the process of working with language. For this reason, he explains that translation is the process of substituting text in one language for documentary content in another (Catford, 1965).

An "adaptation" usually contains omissions, rewritings, maybe additions, but will still be recognized as the work of the original author, where the original point of enunciation remains. This is similar to Dryden's classic definition of "paraphrase" (Julie Sanders, 2006).

Adaptation in Translation Studies refers to the process of modifying a text during translation to ensure it resonates with the target audience while maintaining the intended meaning, function, or emotional impact. It often involves significant changes to linguistic, cultural, or contextual elements of the source text, allowing the translation to be more accessible, relatable, or effective in the target culture.

Literature frequently acts as a bridge between cultures by encapsulating the essence of communities and showcasing the values they hold to the outside world. Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat-ul-Uroos* (The Bride's Mirror), published in 1869, is an innovative Urdu novel and the foundation of South Asian literary tradition. It was one of the first novel in Urdu that intended to cultivate readers about social reform, explicitly regarding women's education, family dynamics, and morality. The novel is about the lives of two sisters: Akbari and Asghari: presenting contrasting perspectives on domestic virtues and responsibilities.

This study aims to investigate the areas of text where the cultural adaptation has been done by the translator in Nazir Ahmed's novel 'Mirat-ul-Uroos'. With its culturally expressive text, the novel offers the rich area of investigation of how translator managed the cultural authenticity and emotional nuances of the source text and the understanding of the target audience. The model used to frame this analysis is the translation

strategies as developed by Mona Baker. This model consists of eight translation strategies that seeks to establish an integrated approach to how meaning is modified in translation to satisfy the requirements of the target audience.

RESEARCH OBJECTIVES:

- To identify the instances of the adaptation in the English translation of Nazir Ahmed's "Mirat-ul-Uroos".
- To study patterns of adaption in Nazir Ahmed's "Mirat-ul-Uroos".
- To examine the translation strategies employed by the translator in Nazir Ahmed's "Mirat-ul-Uroos".

RESEARCH QUESTION:

- What are the instances of the adaptation are used in Nazir Ahmed's "Mirat-ul-Uroos"?
- What translation strategies does translator employ to adapt culturally specific elements for English-speaking audiences?
- How does translator retain cultural authenticity and emotional resonance in the target text by adaptation?

Literature review

Linguists have expressed varying perspectives on cultural adaptation and its relationship with language, highlighting its significance in translation and cross-cultural communication. Nida (1964) emphasizes that language is deeply rooted in culture and that translation requires cultural adaptation to ensure equivalence in meaning. He introduced the concept of dynamic equivalence, which focuses on conveying the intended message in a way that resonates with the target audience's cultural background. Lefevere (1992) also pay attention to the power dynamics in translation, suggesting that cultural adaptation is often influenced by ideological and political factors. According to him, translators have a significant influence on how literary and cultural narratives are shaped, which occasionally results in the originating culture being distorted.

Newmark's insights are particularly significant when it comes to cultural adaptation. He understands that because languages and their cultural contexts are so intertwined, literal translation may not always be accurate. To provide an accurate and significant translation, translators must take contextual variations, idiomatic terms, and cultural equivalency into account (Newmark, 1991). The significance of translation processes like transference, naturalization, and functional equivalence which aid in modifying culturally particular phrases and concepts for the intended audience is also covered by him.

In contrast, Venuti (1995) criticizes excessive cultural adaptation, and promotes the concept of foreignization, which preserves the cultural distinctiveness of the source text even at the expense of reader familiarity. He argues that homogenization is the result from over-domestication of texts, limiting exposure to variety of linguistic structures and worldviews.

Vinay and Darbelnet (1995) describe adaptation as common method when exact equivalent does not exist. It is defined as the strategy to create the situational equivalence, making the target text more culturally relevant and comprehensible to the target readers.

Fedora (2015) stated in "an analysis of procedures in translating cultural words" that there is a cultural difference between the source and target languages when translating cultural terms. It results in change of the meaning of cultural words when they are translated into the target language. The cultural adaptation is done because translator tried to introduce new culture to the target audience.

Jiang (2018) in his study "A study on the application of paraphrase strategy in the translation from Chinese to English", a fictional novel 'Farewell: Departing for "Downunder"' from Six chapters from my life "down under" written by Yang Jiang is taken to examine how the paraphrase strategy is used. According to the study, the paraphrasing technique is an explanatory translation used to tackle unequal difficulties at the word levels.

Naghdi & Eslamieh (2020) in "Bakerian Non-equivalence Translation Strategies in Novel vs Short Story: The Case Study of Matilda vs Landlady and Other Short Stories" contrasted the different English source texts (novel and short stories) with their target Farsi texts in order to quantitatively examine how frequently Baker's translation technique is used. The study demonstrates that the translation using loan words with explanation is employed in both texts but most frequently used in short stories.

Hassani et al (2022) in "Strategies to deal with Non - Equivalence at Word Level in Subtitling: With Special Reference to English Subtitling of the Selected Sinhala Films". had chosen four Sinhalese films: Macam by Prasanna Vithanage, Bæddēgama by Lester James Peries, Dhīvarī by Salinda Perera, and Stūtiyi Naevata Enna by Sumith Rohana. The Sinhalese dialogues were compared with their English subtitling and analyzed the text by using Mona Baker's translation strategies. As per the findings, the use of general words, translation by omission are the strategies that are most used. the least commonly used strategies are paraphrasing using related and non-related words.

Rousseau et al. (2021) in "Translation and cultural Adaptation of the Ages and Stages Questionnaires (ASQ) Worldwide: A Scoping Review", there were worldwide translation of ASQ questionnaires as reported by numerous authors. According to the survey, 37 different cultural adaptations were identified in 29 languages and 27 countries.

Issian (2024) in "Cultural adaptation in literary translation: A comparative study of Translated novels", the novel "Virgin and the Gipsy" is compared with its three different translations by different translator. The source text is in English and the target text is in Arabic. The findings reveal that adaptation represents the vital role in translation. Translator shows more interest in cultural adaptation because while translating the text from one language into another, there is the huge difference in both language and the culture (Issian, A.O.,2024).

Akool (2025) in "cultural adaptation in translation" talked about the how cultural

adaptation modify the content beyond literal translation. The translation memory software was used to analyze the promotional videos that how cultural adaptation had been done. In findings, it is concluded that cultural adaptation is not only the complementary aspect of the translation but it effects the customer behavior, brand perception and market success.

Theoretical framework: Mona Baker's Translation strategies at word level

According to Cruse (1986), words or utterances can have four primary meanings: elicited meaning, presupposed meaning, expressive meaning, and propositional meaning. The absence of a word in the target language that conveys any kind of meaning from the source language vocabulary is a fundamental issue in translation. This type of translation issue arises when a term or phrase has no similarity in the target language. This translation problem is lexicalized as non-equivalence at word level by Mona Baker (1992, 2011). In the book *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation* (Baker, 1992, 2011), she suggests the following eight strategies

1. Translation by using more general words:

This tactic uses terms in the target language that have almost the same meaning as the phrase in the source language and also contain lexical items that are equivalent. In this strategy, the translator attempts to pinpoint the words in the target language which is equivalent to the source text. In this instance, the particular word in the source language is replaced with a more general word or superordinate.

2. Translation by a more neutral or less expressive word

it is the strategy in which translator use the terms that are less expressive when there is no propositional word present in the target text. It replaces the source text's expressive words with neutral words. It is used to reduce the emotional resonance and negative connotation of the words and make the text acceptable to the target audience. When there is no precise expressive

counterpart in the target language, selecting a word with less emotional or expressive impact

3. Translation by cultural substitution

Swapping of a culturally distinctive item for one that is well-known to the target population and has a comparable impact. Although the propositional meaning is absent from the target language, the target audience is going to be affected in the same way. In this strategy, culturally specific references in the source text which do not have propositional meanings are being replaced with equivalent concepts from the target culture to have the familiar impact. This makes the text more relatable and understandable to the target audience.

4. Translation using a loan word or loan word plus explanation

Adopting a word directly from the source language, occasionally with a brief explanation is inserted. It preserves the source language's cultural specificity by borrowing terms, often additional with or without explanatory notes. These words are related to specific cultural. This strategy is used by translators when they don't find the equivalent word in the target language. it may also include the 'buzzwords' that are only utilized in the specific context or at particular time.

5. Translation by paraphrase using a related word

This strategy expresses the meaning of a words in different words during the translation process. Baker (1992, p. 74) points out that it is the most common strategy for translation "when a match cannot be found in the target language or when it seems inappropriate to use language in the text" due to the stylistic differences between languages. It can be considered an effective way to convey the intended message in the source language. Additional knowledge or information is inserted in the target text to simplify the meaning or give context not explicitly stated in the source text. For suppose adding a footnote or phrase to decode a culturally specific terms/words. It intensifies comprehension for readers unacquainted with the source culture or context.

By applying this strategy, the influence of the words and its cultural significance will dismiss when there is no equivalence between the two languages (Baker, 1992, p. 74).

6 Translation by paraphrase using an unrelated word

It is strategy that decreases culturally charged or controversial content in the source text to make it acceptable for the target audience. It modifying language or concepts that possibly be politically or culturally sentimental in the target culture. The form and perspective of a message in source text has been changed in target text. In the strategy, same meaning is conveyed but the grammatical structure, vocabulary, and point of view that might vary that suits the target audience.

7 Translation by omission

When there is no adjacent word or equivalence to the original, or when the meaning of the words may not be smoothly paraphrased due to the stylistic contrariety, then the text may be entirely omitted in the TT. It is not an often used strategy in Translation Studies as the purpose of the author in ST ought to be roughly translated into the TT.

8 Translation by Illustration

This method entails communicating the missing components through visual aids. Without using long explanations, translators might give a better grasp of the source text by displaying the actual object or idea. This technique guarantees that the translation stays brief and clear while also assisting in avoiding over-explanation. For the sake of the translated text's clarity and brevity, a physical entity that is referenced by a signifier in the source text but does not exist in the target text can be depicted. This technique is rarely employed in translated texts, which may be why Baker (2011) lists it as the final translation technique for handling non-equivalency at the word level.

Data analysis

In this part, the English translation of Nazir Ahmad's *Mirat-ul-Uroos* is analyzed to quantitatively study instances of cultural adaptation and the use of Baker's translation strategy for dealing with maintaining the cultural authenticity and emotional resonance at word level in two different literary genres. For the following translation strategy, no result was found: translation by Illustration.

Translation by using more general words:

In the following examples, extracted from *Matilda*, the translator has used more general terms in the English text of *Mirat-ul-Uroos* which has similar implications, connotations or effects.

Example 1

Source text

مرد جو باپ ہوتے ہیں کوئی مزدوری اور محنت سے کماتے ہیں، کوئی پیشہ کرتے ہیں

In target text

Men who are fathers earn money some by the roughest manual labor.

Translator used the term "roughest manual labor" instead of the dictionary meaning that is "wages" in order to avoid overloading the translation with difficult concept.

Example 2

Source text

پٹاری کے گرنے کا غل سن کر سامنے کے دالان سے سانس دوڑی آئیں

Target text

On hearing the clatter of the box falling, her mother-in-law came running from the saloon on the opposite side.

The translator used the more general and understandable word "box" that simply convey the meaning to the target audience. The word "box" is the broad category of storage container having different material and shape and easily understood globally.

Translation using less expressive or neutral words:

Example 1

In source text

انسان کی زندگی میں سب سے اچھا وقت لڑکپن کا ہے۔ اس عمر میں آدمی کو کسی طرح کی فکر نہیں ہوتی

Target text

The best time of all in a man's life is that of childhood.

At that age he has no kind of anxiety.

The word 'anxiety' is used by the translator which is the deeper or more intense kind of uneasiness which can include fear and restlessness. Translator used this term so that the target audience understand the debilitating condition that can significantly impact daily life.

Example 2

Source text

اب تم کو ایک لطیف قصہ سناتے ہیں جس سے تم کو معلوم ہو گا کہ بے بنری سے کیا تکلیف پہنچتی ہے

Target text

And now I am going to tell you an amusing story, which will show you what kind of troubles are brought about by a bad education.

Translator used the word 'bad education' because it is more neutral and less expressive. It is less negative and meet the expectations or cultural norms of the intended audience.

Cultural substitution

Example 1

Source text

لڑکے مدرسے میں بیٹھنے کے بعد بھی مدتوں تک بے دلی سے پڑھا کرتے ہیں اور بہت دنوں میں ان کی استعداد کو ترقی ہوتی ہے

Target text

While boys are waiting to be sent to school many years of their life are practically lost.

Example 2

Source text

ایک کا دل میٹھے چاولوں کو چاہتا ہے دوسرے کو بھنی مونگ کی کھجڑی چاہیے۔

Target text

One person has a fancy for sweetened rice, while another wants browned khichri.

Example 3

قورمہ کھانا منظور ہے، پانچویں کو پر بیڑی کھانا حکیم نے بتایا ہے

Target text

One person has a fancy for sweetened rice, while another wants browned khichri* and a third demands pulao and a fourth is bent on having khorma? while a fifth has been prescribed a low diet by the doctor's order.

These words are replaced according to culture of western society so that it would be more understandable to the target audience.

Translation by using loan words with or without explanation

Example 1

Source text

جب بچہ اتنا سیانا ہوا کہ وہ کھجڑی کھانے لگا مان، دودھ بالکل چھڑا دیتی ہے

Target text

when the child is old enough to begin eating khichri/ the mother leaves off nursing it altogether

Example 2

Source text

ہمارے ملکی دستور اور رواج نے پردہ نشینی کو عورتوں پر فرض و واجب کر دیا

Target text

Public opinion and the custom of the country have made a retired life behind the purdah obligatory and incumbent upon women

Example 3

Source text

محله میں جو آدمی بازاری طور کے رہتے ہیں

Target text

Whatever people there are of the commonest sort living in the mohulla. With explanation(Our nearest equivalent to 'mohulla' (which is spelt in the English fashion) is 'ward'; it means a collection of houses in a city known by one name.)

Example 4

Source text

لطیف کھانا پکاتی تھی کہ جس کو دیکھ کر بھوک بھاگ جائے، سالن پکاتی بد رنگ، بد مزہ نمک ڈالا تو زہر اور کبھی

Target text

And as for the sauce, (WITH EXPLANATION: The sauce(salan) would be made of green vegetable), it was as nasty to look at as to taste. If she put any salt in, there was enough to kill one, and at other times it was a tasteless fluid.

Translator uses the loan words that retain the culture authenticity of Asia. These are not only the loan words, the emotional, cultural and social connotation of Asian culture. Translator tries to introduce the new culture to the target audience so that they are able to have the knowledge of other culture.

Translation by paraphrase using related words

Example 1

Source text

اے عورتو! تم مردوں کے دل کا بہلاؤ ان کی زندگی کو سرمایہ عیش ان کی آنکھوں کی باغ و بہار ان کی خوشی کو زیادہ اور ان کے غم کو غلط کرنے والیاں ہو

Target text

Oh women! you are the joy of men's hearts, you are the source of all the happiness in their lives, you are the delight of their eyes, you are they who multiply men's pleasures and beguile their pains.

Example 2

Source text

لیکن اصغری ہمیشہ آپا کا ادب کرتی

Target text

And yet Asghari invariably treated her elder sister with respect.

Translator rephrases it that evokes the hierarchy, elegance, and formality present in the source text.

And target audience will also understand the emotional nuance conveyed in source text.

Translation by paraphrase using non-related words

Example 1

Source text

جب مرغی کے بچے بڑے ہو جاتے ہیں وہ ان کو پروں میں چھپانا چھوڑ دیتی ہے، اور جب بچے چل پھر کر اپنا پیٹ بھر لینے کے قابل ہو جاتے ہیں، مرغی کچھ بھی ان کی مدد نہیں

Target text

When a hen's chickens grow big, she leaves off hiding them under her wings, and as soon as they

run about, and are able to fill their own crops for themselves, the hen does not give them any assistance

Example 2

Source text

عقل ہو یا سلیقہ آدمی سے آدمی سیکھتا ہے، مرد لوگ پڑھ لکھ کر عقل و سلیقہ پیدا کرتے ہیں

Target text

Knowledge, whether it be theoretical or practical, is transmitted from one human being to another. Men do acquire both kinds of knowledge by a literary education.

Translation by omission

Example 1

Source text

شیخ سعدی نے گلستان میں عورتوں کی وجہ تسمیہ میں بھی ان کی خدمت پیدا کی ہے

Target text

One poet has even found an excuse for maligning them in the etymology of the word which means woman.

Example 2

Source text

عورتوں کے مکر کی مذمت قرآن میں موجود ہے۔ ان کید کن عظیم مرد لوگ عورتوں کی ذات کو بے وفا مانتے ہیں۔

ان کید کن عظیم

Target text

There is a passage in the Qur-an condemning the wiles of women: Verily, as to your deceit, it is appalling? Men take it for granted that the female sex is not trustworthy.

Discussion

The translation of non-equivalence at the word level is a difficult translation challenge. Among the many translation-related fields, literary translation is the one that emphasizes this issue the most, and it is particularly important for translating novel.

The findings of this study on the cultural adaptation occurs in the English translation of Nazir Ahmed's novel 'Mirat-ul-Uroos', investigating how translation strategies negotiate between preserving cultural authenticity and emotional resonance for the target audience. The

novel, an innovative work in nineteenth-century Urdu literature, encapsulates firmly entrenched cultural, moral and religious values and norms and represents the Northern Indian Muslims society of that time. Through textual analysis, this research has identified the instances of adaptation- extending from the preservation of culturally specific aspects to the domestication of culturally foreign concepts so that the uniqueness of the source text is maintained (Venuti, 1995). This chapter analyzed these findings with reference to the theoretical framework, emphasizes their implications for translation studies and offers directions for future research. Aguado-Giménez and Pérez-Paredes (2005) proposed that an increased linguistic distance between languages correlates with the enhanced efficacy of Baker's strategies.

This study sought to analyze the application of cultural adaptation in the English translation of Nazir Ahmed's *Mirat-ul-Uroos*, concentrating on how the translator handles expressive language, social conventions, and culturally bound terminology, and employ to make the source text accessible and easy to interpret by the target text who are unknown to the culturally specific thoughts or concepts of another culture. The findings revealed that the translator do the adaptation. The reason behind the adaptation is that the target audience easily read and understand the text and the natural flow is maintain, also it arouses the same response as the original text (Nida, 1964).

The translation strategy involves the significant modification to the source text to make sure that it is suitable to the target audience (Bastin, 2000). The translation strategies that translator used to adapts the culturally specific elements for the target audience. The Mona Baker's translation strategies are used by translator to maintain the cultural adaptation. Cultural substitution, loan words with or without explanation, these strategies are predominantly employed while the generalization, neutralization, omission, paraphrasing using related or non-related words are the strategies that are employed less frequently.

Through careful adaptation that strikes a balance between the preservation of the original culture of source text and the target audience's accessibility, the translator of *Mirat-ul-Uroos* in English maintains cultural authenticity and emotional resonance.

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