Probing Swearing Expressions in the Urdu Translation of Hamlet

Bukhtawer Aqeel[1]

Ali Hussain Bin Sadiq[2]

Corresponding Author: bukhtaweraqeel8@gmail.com

Abstract

This research delves into the challenging endeavor of interpreting Shakespeare's swear words, with a particular focus on terminology that is interwoven with religious motifs in Hamlet. The research looks at MunshiImtiazi Ali's translation of Hamlet into Urdu using Lawrence Venuti's foreignizationand domestication techniques. Employing in-depth analysis of descriptive method, it discusses how the translator carefully balances taking into account religious sensitivities with respecting ethnic peculiarities. Purposive sampling is used for data collection and the qualitative approach for the investigation a thorough understanding of translating swear words linked to religious beliefs. This research adds to academia the complex interplay between linguistic and cultural elements in literary translation and offers valuable details on the challenges encountered while translating swearing utterances.

Keywords: Domestication, foreignization, cultural nuances, swear words

Introduction

People worldwide can converse and understand one another's cultures by employing translation efforts. Consequently, it promotes global communication and intercultural understanding. Therefore, Translation is a challenging process that calls for qualified translators to handle cultural differences between the target and source languages. Many linguistic gems include fable swear words, which are not only loaded with boldness but also have deep cultural and religious connotations. Particularly in a case such as MunshiImtiazi Ali's Urdu translation of Hamlet, interpreting these utterances requires a careful swap between respecting the sensibilities of the intended audience and maintaining the accuracy of the original piece of writing.Occasionally laced with references to religion, swear words offer Hamlet an additional layer of complexity. It evokes to look at the treatment of religiously charged swearing in the Urdu-speaking world, taking into account its unique theologian and cultural context.

An array of scholars have attempted to characterize swearing and offer categories for its many forms, purposes, and semantic domains. As to Ljung's (2011) definition, swearing is defined as "an expression meant to call upon an ethereal power to cause harm or vengeance to an individual or object" (p. 311). He lists three different types of swearing: name-calling, ceremonial insults, and disagreeable suggestions. These types demonstrate how swearing is a stereotyped behavior used to express intense feelings via the utilization of harsh language.

[1]MPhil Scholar, DLC,UMT Sialkot, Pakistan.

[2]PhD, Assistant Professor, DLC, UMT Sialkot, Pakistan.

The categorization of swearing is based on the fact that it is a form of objectionable speech, along with profane language, foul speech, nasty phrases cursing, abusive speech, terrible language, and crude language. Although it may sometimes be funny, offensive language is often used to belittle, mock, and degrade another person. In interpersonal interactions, swearing and other derogatory terms are growing increasingly prevalent. These are socially and/or morally incorrect public depictions of everyday phrases, gestures, and behavioral signals. For instance, one of the most criticized uses of verbal abuse is vulgarity, which is a category of profanity that contains words like "bloody."

In addition, the particular term 'Swearing' can be used and identified in numerous linguistic perspectives, such as in pragmatics (Jay &Janschewtiz, 2008), semantically (Goddard, 2015), psychological linguistics (Pinker,2007) and concerning society and language-sociolinguistics (Hagen, 2013). The perspective of swearing in accordance with Andersson and Trudgill (1990) defines, the language used to share thoughts; refers to anything that is condemned in the swearer's culture and not meant to be regarded literally. They proposed four different sorts including: insulting, cursing, comic, and supplementary swearing. Comic swearing is mostly used to elicit conversation while insulting swearing only holds the purpose of intentional damage. However, both are aimed toward the person receiving it.

Cursing is used to indicate psychological feelings such as wrath, impatience, or happiness, and supplemental swearing is unique to each person's speech (p. 61). When the word is used to curse, the literal and referential meanings are gone. Instead, it is utilized emotionally to communicate feelings and attitudes (1990:53). To be defined as swear words, words must be used figuratively and have prohibited aspects.It is especially difficult to distinguish between mild profanity and slang when the latter is employed in an abusive setting. Along with it (pinker, 2007; Stapleton, 2010) associated swearing with genital, religious, and sexual themes too. Crystal (2003) distinguishes three types of language: obscenity, blasphemy, and profanity. "obscenity, which involves the expression of indecent sexuality - 'dirty' or 'rude' words; blasphemy, which shows contempt or lack of reverence specifically towards God or gods; and profanity, which has a broader range, including irrelevant reference to holy things or people," says Crystal.

Swan (2005) divides English swearwords into three categories based on semantic areas.1. Christian-related words, such as Christ's and God's names.2. Words associated with sexual action, such as fuck, balls, and so on. 3. Some terms pertaining to the expulsion of bodily wastes, such as piss, crap, and so on.Furthermore, another critic Beebe (1995) acknowledged two types of swearing: logical and non-logical. These are related to a claim, which is a declaration that has two possible outcomes: it can be true or untrue; it cannot be both. By following these two sorts Swan (ibid) labels swearing into five distinct categories: Abusive, purgative, passionate, social, and sacrilegious. Some examples to support them: old bastard, where have you been? For heaven's sake. Every community is distinct and has its own set of beliefs. John Catford (1965) makes the argument that "since every language is formally (unique) and formal correspondence is, at best, a rough approximation, it is clear that the formal meaning of SL (source language) items and TL (target language) items can rarely be the same" (p. 36). However, according to equivalency, the interpretation of swear words is not possible.

In the context of translating, swear words related with religious convictions, the conflict between domestication and foreignization emerges as a significant axis determining how cultural and linguistic components are negotiated in the translation process.

Research Questions

i.   What role do Lawrence Venuti's foreignization and domestication techniques play in the Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet's swear words?
ii. How can incorporating these translation techniques help the target audience have a better awareness of cultural nuances?

Literature Review

Translation of swear words has been described as a tricky problem, with cross-cultural variances in swearing. The translator should consider this, as well as how the researchers perceived them. There have been research on the role and rendering of swearing terms or words in many languages. This emphasizes how swear words have been used from many researchers' perspectives. Shihan (2019) takes on the difficult task of translating swearwords into Arabic, focusing on the translation procedures used by two Arab translators, Kiwan (female) and Jabra (male). The study categorizes swear words based on their taboo status, non-literal meaning, and ability to express strong thoughts and viewpoints, as defined by Andersson and Trudgill (1990). They say that a careful balancing act between the authenticity of the source text and cultural expectations of the target audience is required, particularly when it comes to swear words.

Aboob (2018) investigates the translation of swearwords into Arabic from a culturally specific perspective. It incorporates some important strategies, such as direct translation, calque, globalization, cultural substitution, equivalence, and the function of deletion. All help to demonstrate how a translation carefully negotiates cultural adjustment with original text fidelity to introduce ideas to the Arab world.

Likewise, another multifaceted study by Alquraishy and Saadiya (2009) examined swearing holistically by integrating different factors; interpersonal traits, semantic categorization, and linguistic evaluation of swear words. Many opponents take part in the research to strengthen the argument by offering instances of various forms of crude language.Montague, for example, relates swearing to an emotional release mechanism, similar to a child's cry as a physiological purpose (Montague, 2001:67). As established by Kidman (1993) and Swan (2005), swearwords are symbolic phrases with meaning that extends beyond their literal meaning.

Studies show that based on how the individual feels, swearing may be aggressive, calming, social, forceful, or immoral. The study sheds insight into grammatical, semantic, and psychological elements of this language's practice, which contributes to our knowledge of its significance in literature. The subtleties of swearing expose a complex network of social norms, emotions, and language.

In actuality, Al-Saidi, Salman, and Khalaf (2022) interpret swear words based on the vocal responses of incensed individuals. The results show that sarcasm, or mock impoliteness, is the most often employed strategy. The lack of parallels with previous research and the examination

of society's quirks and contextual factors further constrain the study's application. They defined swearing as the use of banned language to convey a person's emotional state to a target audience.

Swearwords shed a spotlight on the effect they have on audience participation and characterization portrayal, claims Sarnika (2018). The fact that these words have a variety of uses, ranging from humorous to hostile, highlights how well they may convey complex feelings and circumstances to readers of the narrative. Swear words linked to mental illness function as both comedy devices and expletives, while those connected to the prohibition of culture, religion, or affirmation add elements of legitimacy and reliability.

Wu (2021) notes that while swear words have been toned down in Chinese; "the significance of concentrating on methods to maintain the spirit associated with the authentic terms" is still important, as opposed to just eliminating the offensive language. The fundamental notion and feeling persisted even if the swear words were toned in the Chinese adaptations.This means that even if there are changes, the audience will be able to understand the overall idea.

Although the translation challenges surrounding swearwords have been extensively researched in the past, the chosen topic of examining the religious sensitivity of swearwords related to religious beliefs provides a new perspective. Although Shihan (2019) and Aqeel ShehabAboob (2018) investigated cultural issues, they did not specifically address religiously sensitive utterances; rather, their focus was more general. The proposed study narrows the topic and provides a unique perspective on the cultural complexities of translating sacred language from (ST) to (TT) by focusing on swearwords related to religious beliefs. The current study differs from previous research in that it has a narrow emphasis, filling a research gap by providing a more nuanced understanding of the problems in interpreting religiously sensitive content.

Methodology

Selected lines from Shakespeare's Hamlet and their Urdu translation by MunshiImtiazi Ali, published by Humdam Electric Press, Lucknow, are examined in this study using a qualitative methodology. In order to fill a research gap on the cultural nuances of translating sacred language, the study focuses on the purposive sample technique to obtain the distinct perspective of translating swear words associated with religious convictions. Using descriptive method, the investigation examines how religious sensitivity is handled during translation using Lawrence Venuti's "foreignization" and "domestication" techniques of translation. A single thorough part looks at the translations into English and Urdu and breaks down the underlying techniques MunshiImtiazi Ali used to translate religiously sensitive material. The study also recognizes and addresses the difficulties in accurately communicating sentiments with religious overtones. The integration of contextual material from the play and cultural background enhances comprehension of the translator's choices.

Theoretical Framework

The American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti's concept of the domestication and foreignization paradigm has been applied to the analysis of textual content from the Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Hamlet. Arguments over these two strategies domestication vs. foreignization have been around for an extended period. However, before the late 1950s and early 1960s, as an increasingly methodical and linguistically focused strategy for the

investigation of interpretation began to develop, the focus was centered on the level of the language (Munday, 2016).

With the advent of the cultural shift in the 1970s, an entirely new perspectivehas been brought to bear on the discussion. As Wang Dongfeng (2002) stated " the long-running conflict between literal translation and free translation might be understood as linguistically lessened through the opposing translation strategies of domestication and foreignization with continuing cultural and religious nuances." (p.24).

From this perspective, literal and liberal translation may occasionally overlap with domestication and foreignization, but they are not interchangeable terms. One can use the degree of foreignness in a translation's language or culture to determine whether it is domesticated or foreignized. There are two approaches to dealing with the linguistic form: literal translation and liberal translation.

However, domestication and foreignization are concerned with the two cultures; the former refers to substituting the target culture for the source culture, while the latter means maintaining the distinctions between the two cultures. Domestication and foreignization only occur when linguistic presentation and cultural connotation differ.

Each of the cultures is the subject of domestication and foreignization, though the first type refers to displacing the source culture with the culture being targeted, while the other alludes to preserving the differences between both cultures. Only in situations where language representation and cultural meaning diverge can provide both strategies domestication and foreignization.

Venuti (1994) contends that the first approach is "an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bring the author back home,"whereas the second approach is "an ethnodeviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural distinction of the foreign text, transferring the reader abroad." Overall, foreignization is the process of creating an intended text that purposefully defies target customs by retaining some aspects of the original's foreignness, whereas domestication generally refers to the kind of translation in which a clear, proficient procedure is employed that reduces the distinctive qualities of the foreign text for readers of the target language.

However, both cultures become the result of two distinct processes: domestication, which occurs when language presentation and cultural significance diverge, and foreignization, which retains the distinctions from the source culture and refers to the replacement of the source culture with the target culture. Bilingualism is not nearly as crucial as biculturalism in the opinion of Nida (1993), for successful translation since concepts can only be comprehended in reference to the societies within which they are used. Translators have never had an easy time bridging cultural disparities between their source and target languages.Translators must create links and fill in gaps to talk about the meaning of swear words with readership in the target society due to linguistic and cultural disparities. This study aims to explore important cultural issues related to converting Urdu literature, recognizing the complexity of these issues, and offering workable answers.

Textual Data and its Analysis

The research focuses on statements about religious views and the nuances of swear word interpretation. The study meticulously chooses samples from Hamlet, highlighting instances of language difficulties and cultural quirks to navigate this difficult terrain. The method, which uses the notion of Lawrence Venuti as a framework, focuses especially on striking an appropriate equilibrium amid domestication and foreignization. The carefully selected lines, which come from a variety of acts and circumstances, are all numbered precisely so that readers and future researchers may investigate the play's specific context.

Swearing Expressions in the Urdu Translation

Polonius: By the mass, I was about to say something: where did I leave? (Act 2, Scene1)

والله، میں کچھ کہنے کوتھا۔ آ خری بات میں نے کیا کہی تھی؟

Although "mass" refers to the Catholic Mass, the phrase "by the mass" in the excerpt has a religious meaning due to its archaic usage. It is not considered vulgar or derogatory language. Although it is obscure by the target culture, it is employed as an exclamation or term akin to saying "By the Lord" or "By God" in English society. It has no equivalent in the target language.

In Muslim culture, the word " الله " is used as a swear word (والله by God). By employing the tactic of "replacing items or expressions that are culturally specific with items from the target language that do not have the same propositional meaning." It lessens the cultural disparities among the audience and takes readers' comprehension into account.

To ensure clarity for the intended recipient, the translator translated it using a word that has the same meaning as he swears by "Allah." He thus met the expectations of target text readers rather well. This indicates that the spirit of the source text was sacrificed in order to achieve the domestication.

Horatio: Before my God, I might not this belief without the sensible and true avouch of mine own eyes (Act1, Scene1)

باخدا میں اس کو دیکھے بغیرباور نہیں کر سکتا تھا۔

In an effort to more closely align the meaning with everyday idioms in the target language, the Urdu translation aims to convey the meaning. In the Urdu-speaking cultures, the expression " باخدا میں" (meaning "By God") is a common way to express a solemn oath or affirmation in a more straightforward and idiomatic way. Therefore, by using an expression that is linguistically and culturally familiar to the Urdu-speaking audience, the translator has chosen a more domesticated method in contrast to the foreignization strategy, which keeps the foreign aspects.

Hamlet: Yes, by Saint Patrick, but there is strange. (Act1, Scene5)

والله ضرور ناگوار گزریں۔

Here, in this example the translator has employed a domestication strategy, replacing the reference to Saint Patrick in the Urdu version with" والله " ("by Allah"). In the target culture and society," والله " is a more direct and culturally comfortable way to make a pledge or declaration in

an Urdu-speaking environment. The translator has tried to balance the remark more culturally suitable for the Urdu-speaking audience by substituting a commonly used word in the target language for the religious allusion.

Hamlet: Unhandme, gentlemen. By heaven, I'll make a ghost of you (Act1, Scene4)

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بس مجھے چھوڑ دو تمھیں خدا کی قسم چھوڑ دو ورنہ میں تمھیں ہلاک کرڈالوں گا۔

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The interpreter followed the foreignization approach by maintaining allusions to cultural and religious subjects from the original text by retaining the concept of heaven (خداکی قسم or By heaven) in the Urdu translation. Nevertheless, the translator has added more idioms and colloquialisms to the Urdu statement at the same time. A more straightforward and often-used expression in the Urdu language that expresses the emotion of being liberated or set free is "بس مجھے چھوڑ دو" ("Unhand me").

By keeping the connection to religion while changing the language's syntax to render it more fitting and applicable to the Urdu culture, it appears that the translator reached an understanding. This method seeks to preserve the spirit of the source language and cultural background while making the translated work comprehensible and available to the target audience.

Hamlet: By the lord, Horatio,
this three years I have took note of it (Act 5, Scene1)

<div dir="rtl">

ہوریشیو، خدا جانتا ہے۔ تین برس میں کچھ عجیب بات دیکھتا ہوں۔

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In the mentioned example, the translator has chosen the foreignization strategy by keeping a reference to the Lord where the source text (By the Lord) is preserved in the target text as (خدا جانتا ہے). The cultural and theological allusions found in the original English text are preserved in this way. A more literal translation of "this three years I have taken note of it" would be "تین برس میں کچھ عجیب بات دیکھتا ہوں." The translation could not be an exact replica of the English phrase, even though it keeps the chronological component. Nonetheless, this alteration is typical in translation, particularly when idiomatic or temporally relevant statements are being conveyed.

In general, the translator's strategy seems to strike a balance between foreignization and cultural relevance by preserving the religious allusion and offering an accurate translation in Urdu.

Horatio: Not I my lord, by heaven (Act1, Scene5)

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میں باخدا ہرگزنہیں۔

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The translator has utilized a foreignization technique in this case by leaving the reference to heaven ("باخدا" or "by heaven") in the Urdu text. This preserves the cultural and religious references found in the original English text.

"Not I, my lord" constitutes the literal rendering of "میں باخدا ہرگزنہیں" Using the foreignization technique, the translator maintained the literal significance and form while incorporating the religious context.This method seeks to preserve the spirit of the original work while giving Urdu readers an understanding of the intricate cultural and religious allusions woven within the English language. While the rendered version might appear more official or antiquated than typical Urdu expressions, it nonetheless conveys the essence and accent of the original remark.

Ophelia: By heaven, thy madness shall
be paid with weight till our scale
turn the beam. (Act 4, Scene5)

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قسم ہے اس ذات کی دیکھ تو تیرے جنون کا کیسا بدلا لیتا ہوں۔

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Swear words are important in this translation because they show how deeply Ophelia feels and how serious her response is. The approach used in this instance falls more compatible with the domestication process. It highlights the significance of translating strikes an emotional and cultural chord with the Urdu-speaking readers. The translation keeps the religious meaning while using a more casual speech to assist in rendering it both culturally and linguistically identifiable. Even though this is a foreignization tactic.

Hamlet: Swear by my sword (Act 1, Scene5)

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میری تلوار کی قسم کھاؤ۔

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The translation upholds the cultural and metaphorical importance of swearing by one's weapon by keeping the direct allusion to the sword. By retaining the historical and contextual weight associated with the original English expression, this decision gives the translation more legitimacy. This is consistent with a foreignization method because it maintains the unique symbolic components of the original text.

Hamlet: Shall we toth' court? For, by my fay, I cannot reason (Act 2, Scene2)

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کیا دربار چلیں گے؟ آپ کے سرکی قسم اب مجھے زیادہ بخشنے کا دماغ نہیں۔

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The translator translated it as "آپ کے سرکی قسم" (By my faith) in Urdu while preserving the original phrase "by my fay." This follows a foreignization strategy by preserving the historical and cultural allusion. "Now I cannot reason more, is the colloquial equivalent of "I cannot reason," which is translated in target language as "مجھے زیادہ بخشنے کا دماغ نہیں"

The intended meaning is retained even if the translation may not be exact because it conveys the feeling of being less capable of formulating an opinion or reason. The translation often strikes a compromise between literal modification and foreignness, preserving specific linguistic as well as cultural details while making sure that the message is expressed effectively in its intended language.

Conclusion

Through the analysis of the translations of swearwords, with a special focus on religious sections, this work reveals a nuanced interplay among foreignization and domestication in MunshiImtiazi Ali's Urdu rendition of "Hamlet". Venuti's notion provides an efficient framework for comprehending the motives for translations. The analysis identifies cases of domestication in which intricate cultural elements are removed from the original text to make it more readable in Urdu.

On the other hand, foreignization stores purposefully some foreign components and maintains the allusions to culture and religion that are found in Shakespeare's original work. The present investigation lays the groundwork for future investigations into the difficulties involved in translating religious texts by focusing on certain language situations. These insights, which

highlight the interaction of language, culture, and religious sensibility help us better comprehend the difficulties involved in translating literary works as translation studies expand.

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