



The Role of Honorifics in the Urdu Translation of Shakespeare's Othello

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Abstract

This study explores the elements of honorifics in the Urdu translation of Shakespeare's play Othello, which was translated by Anayatullah Dehlvi. Honorifics are the linguistic elements that are used to show reverence, respect, and politeness. It is mostly related to social status and social hierarchies. This research aims to identify the elements of honorifics in Othello and the factors that affect their language choice, their impact on linguistic interaction, social interaction, dominance, and hierarchies in conversations. The work is framed within Levinson's theory of politeness, which highlights the usage of honorifics in the play. In the paradigm of qualitative research, descriptive method is used to analyse the data following purposive sampling technique. The research concludes the intricate ways in which honorifics shape the language, social dynamics, and all the power structures that are depicted in the narrative of Othello.

1. Introduction

Honorifics are the linguistic elements that are employed in communication to express consideration, amiability, or custom toward others. They refer to the manner in which the speaker addresses or refers to the specific person. Different honorifics are used in different cultures and languages to denote social status, wealth, or advancement. Different writers give their own different views on honorifics. Brown and Gilman (1960) state that honorifics are linguistic elements used to signal social relationships between speakers, indicating the relative social status of the interlocutors. By using various titles, the speaker can count the social distance or relationship between oneself and the addressee.

Furthermore, Matsumoto (1988) considers that honorifics are the linguistic strategies used to convey respect, politeness, and social distance between individuals during communication often involving specialized vocabulary, grammar or speech patterns. This philosophy differentiates individuals on the basis of social relations keeping in mind the syntax structure. Kasper (1990) describes that honorifics as part of politeness strategies within cultures, highlighting their role in managing social relationships and the asymmetrical power dynamics between speakers.

Levinson (1983) gives his concepts on honorifics by adding that these are linguistic devices used to signal respect, politeness, and social status often influencing the dynamics of interpersonal communication. Ide (1989) defines that honorifics as linguistic markers that encode social relationships and asymmetrical power and structure within a culture, shaping verbal interactions. Searle (1969) also adds some meanings in it as a part of speech acts, highlighting their role in per formative language that not only communicates but also performs social actions ,like showing deference or respect.

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Ervin-Tripp (1972) discusses honorifics in the context of sociolinguistics, portraying them as linguistic resources used for maintaining social harmony and expressing social identity. Lakoff (1973) views honorifics as a part of a system of politeness markers, emphasizing their role in linguistics rituals that affirm social roles and relationships between speakers. These interpretations from various authors collectively emphasize the significance of honorifics as linguistic tools that signal respect, social hierarchies, and politeness strategies within different cultural contexts.

Honorifics are the semantic elements that are used to show regard, dignity, and politeness. Politeness is its most important element. Many researchers have produced their works on politeness in different languages most importantly in Japanese and Korean languages as the standardized version of these languages spoken in Tokyo and Seoul.

Depending on social context, Levinson (1983) classifies honorific forms into two main types, which are further subdivided into other categories. Recipient honorifics are words or expressions added before an individual's name to demonstrate their societal position, calling, or different qualities. Models incorporate Mr., Mrs., Dr., Teacher, Your Highness, and so forth. Referential honorifics are phonetic components used to extend regard or yielding to an individual or gathering being referred to in discussion or composing. They frequently appear as titles (like Mr., Mrs., Dr.), honorifics (like Sir, Ma'am), or explicit terms indicating regard (like Your Excellency, Your Honor). These phonetic markers fluctuate across societies and are utilized to convey good manners, custom, or regard towards people or gatherings. Speakers might use humble honorifics to allude to themselves in a humble manner. This is frequently done to show lowliness or respectfulness. For instance, in English, we use Sir/ Madam, Mr./Mrs./Ms., Miss/Mister. These are the words to show courtesy, status, and humility towards someone. In certain societies, occupation-based honorifics are utilized to recognize individuals in light of their profession. For instance, specialists might be referred to as "specialists" or "Mr. Dr."

It is critical to take note that the utilization of honorifics can fluctuate extraordinarily from one culture to another and, surprisingly, within individual cultures. Understanding various kinds of honorifics and how they are utilized can help the users impart them successfully and recognize other.

The objective of this research is to highlight the elements of honorifics in Shakespeare's play Othello with reference to its Urdu translation and to find the elements, which effect their choice of language.

1.1. Research Questions

The following research questions will be enquired in the current study:

- i. What is the role of honorifics in Shakespeare's Othello with reference to its Urdu translation?
- ii. What is the effect of honorifics in the literary translation?

2. Literature Review

Many researchers have scrutinized honorifics in multiple languages for example in Korean language, Chinese, Japanese, Javanese, English and many more. Yassi and Sukmawaty (2021) entitled "The use of Honorifics in English and Buginese with special reference to

Bone Language: A Comparative study” mention the use of Honorifics in English and Buginese language by using a specific dialect Bone. This research aims to clarify that how people by living in their natural habitat interact with each other.

Furthermore, Rahayu (2014) named “Comparison of Honorific Language in Javanese and Japanese Speech Community” which clearly defines the concept of Honorifics in both speech communities by using their special languages like Basu Karme in Javanese and Keigo in Japanese. This research explain honorifics in terms of its principle. It also describes how the position of honorific language changes for both for speaker and hearer for the sake of showing reverence and politeness.

Additionally, a study done by Al-Rawi (2018) named as “A Pragmatic Study of English Honorific Forms” shows that honorifics is the way to show respect and politeness but what actually creates these forms and their meanings. This study focuses on clarifying the linguistic devices that represent the English honorific forms and investigating the main functions and the pragmatic meanings that these forms can express.

“Honorifics with [HON]” composed by Wang (2021) considers honorifics as the grammatical reflexes of politeness a phenomenon present in many languages. This can be illustrated with French. For one addressee, speakers use the singular pronoun “tu” for plain address (1) but the plural pronoun “vous” for polite address (2) also shows that this is grammaticalized, as this usage of the plural for politeness obligatorily triggers corresponding plural verbal agreement. This paper aims to derive their cross-linguistic distribution and interpretation without [Hon], an analytical feature present since Corbett (2000).

Another research is done by Ku (2014) entitled “Korean Honorifics: A Case Study Analysis of Korean Speech Levels in Naturally Occurring Conversations” describes the hierarchical social status of people and social interaction by using forms of sentences and final suffixes attached to verbs and adjectives. They also explain the interpersonal relationships between the participants e.g., vertical distance (gender, age) horizontal distance (the degree of intimacy) which shows the complexity of the use of speech levels.

A research paper of “Stereotypes and register of honorific language” by Agha (1998) consists of six chapters, followed by a conclusion. It states that honorific registers are formally discrete but functionally stratified systems, in a sense that an apparently bounded set of linguistic forms allows language users to calculate many concrete aspects of the pragmatic context of language use. In the middle three sections, it discuss a number of reasons where different patterns of honorific usage are valorized and ranked in themselves, and stereotypically associated with different types of language users. While in conclusion, it summarizes the implications of these issues for the study of honorific language.

Irvine’s (1998) work “Ideologies of Honorific Language” states that all sociolinguistic systems provide some means of expressing respect (or disrespect) but not all the elements have grammatical systems. This paper compares several languages-Javanese, Wolof and Zulu plus a little focus on ChiBemba with regard to honorific expressions and the social and cultural frameworks relevant thereto. The question that he explored is that whether one can identify any special cultural concomitants of linguistic systems in which the expression of respect is grammaticalized.

Another researchers named as Bagchi and Kumar’s(2023) work “A Critical Analysis of Honorification in Human Relations” focuses on the correlation between human relations and

society that how social factors are not just the reflection of obligation but the underlying acknowledgment of obligation leading to a factor of honorification. In short, this paper explores honorification as a synthesis of society, culture and human nature.

Sanghoun's(2015) research entitled "Representing Honorifics via Individual Constraints" describes the study of honorifics through individual and how it vary from person to person in language by focusing on semantic based processing. Modeling honorifics are the components of improving machine translation and anaphora resolution.

The following researches have focused on different context and languages. There is no such work on elements of honorifics in Shakespeare's play Othello and the factors that affect their language choice. In order to address that query this study is going to address the elements of honorifics in Shakespeare's Play Othello and what are those factors, which encourage them to shape up their language. This qualitative based research tells that why elements of honorifics changes from individual to individual in Othello.

3. Theoretical Framework

Well-known writers Levinson and Brown, in their pragmatic theory of politeness (1987), introduced the concept of honorification. They delve into the pragmatic aspect of honorifics, exploring how honorific systems develop and function in different languages and cultures. According to them, honorifics are linguistic markers that manage social relationships and express politeness. Many societies use honorifics to address individuals of higher social status or to show respect towards others. The usage of honorifics can vary based on factors such as age, gender, social hierarchy, and cultural norms.

Levinson's theory suggests that honorific systems are deeply intertwined with social dynamics, playing a crucial role in maintaining harmony and social order. By using honorifics, individuals can navigate complex social relationships and demonstrate appropriate levels of respect. Studying honorifics provides insights into the cultural values and social structures of different communities, helping us understand how language reflects and shapes social interactions.

This theory relates to the elements of honorifics in the play "Othello." This five-act play presents considerable evidence of honorifics, varying from individual to individual based on context. The Urdu translation of the play by Anayatullah Dehlvi vividly portrays honorification and politeness. Levinson and Brown extended the idea of "face" introduced by Goffman in 1967, defining it as the public self-image of a person. They also focused on its types: positive face (desiring to be liked and appreciated by others) and negative face (independent and free from every imposition). These categories are evident in the dialogues of the characters throughout the play, particularly in the character of Iago. The researcher aims to present all possible evidence showcasing honor and politeness in the play using Levinson and Brown's theory of politeness.

4. Methodology

The researcher employs a descriptive qualitative method to scrutinize the data through purposive sampling. The Urdu translation of Shakespeare's play "Othello," translated by Anayatullah Dehlvi and published in 2009, serves as the source for this study. Extracts are gathered from all acts of the play, and the analysis focuses on elements of honorifics, such as kinship terms, titles, and respectful pronouns, using Stephen C. Levinson's theory of

Politeness as a conceptual lens. This research aims to gather non-numerical data based on genuine facts, considering the limitations and liberties of the translator.

5. Textual Data and its Analysis

In this section, the researcher has Provided textual examples of honorifics. Each section attempts to provide the comprehensive knowledge about the specific translation technique. Act and scene number of every extract has been given for further future research and effectiveness.

As introduced earlier , honorifics are the semantic elements that are used in conversation to show respect, concern, and politeness towards others. It goes with social hierarchies and social status of people during conversation. They might be titles, kinship terms and profession-based honorifics. The purpose of this research is to highlight these elements that are not explicit in the source text. In the following, there are diverse examples which highlight the use of honorifics in the Urdu translation of Othello.

5.1. Iago: Now Sir, be judge yourself

Whether I in any just term affined
To love the Moor. (act1, scene1)

ایاگو: اس حالت میں جناب خود ہی یہ خیال فرمائیں مجھے اس مراکشی سے اُنس یا تعلق کہاں تک ہو سکتا ہے۔

In the above excerpt, honorification is evident, emphasizing the respect given to the reader. The use of اس حالت میں جناب خود ہی یہ خیال فرمائیں underscores a sense of courtesy and reverence. In the source text, the word “Sir” serves as a title, showcasing respect towards others. Elements of honorifics are typically conveyed through formal language, elevated vocabulary, or specific cultural references that carry a sense of honor and esteem. Moreover, the paragraph suggests that the Urdu word (مراکشی) could be considered an element of honorifics if employed in a formal language or used with respect and admiration. This implies that the choice of words and language in communication plays a crucial role in expressing honor, respect, and formality, contributing to the dynamics of interpersonal relationships.

5.2. Iago: O, sir content you;

I follow him to serve my turn upon him

We cannot all be masters, nor all masters can not be truly follow'd. (act1, scene 1)

ایاگو: یہ بالکل درست ہے مگر میں بھی اپنے مطلب کا یار بن کر اُس کی ما تحتی کر رہا ہوں یہ تو ظاہر ہے کہ ہم سب افسر نہیں ہو سکتے اور نہ سب افسر ایسے ہوتے ہیں جن کی ما تحتی خیر خواہی کے ساتھ کی جاتی ہو۔

In this extract, there are words that denote elements of honorifics. In the source text, two words, “Sir” and “Masters,” are present, while in the target text, یہ تو ظاہر ہے کہ ہم سب افسر نہیں ہو سکتے اور نہ سب افسر ایسے ہوتے ہیں جن کی ما تحتی خیر خواہی کے ساتھ کی جاتی ہو۔ These words truly define honorifics in the play. The way of addressing the master is different from the Urdu text. The word افسر is mostly used for a person higher in rank or position. In order to convey the real meaning of honorifics, the translator tries to explain it according to the source text.

5.3. Roderigo: Signior, is all your family within? (Act1, scene1)

روڈریگو : صاحب آپ کے بال بچے سب گھر میں ہیں۔

In the source text, the word “Signior” is a title placed in the recipient’s honorifics at the beginning of a name as a sign of aristocratic status. In the translation, the word صاحب is used

in place of the word which is “to manifest honor, respect”. This term is used as a mark of respect for a person in a higher professional position or as a greeting, when addressing old people. Another aspect highlighted in this paragraph is the richness and variety of the Urdu language, which has incorporated the influence of many regional dialects. This multifunctionality of the word صاحب is made possible by this linguistic diversity, since the word implies its flexibility in any situation, be it job-related or other, including the respect and honor towards certain people. The choice of honorifics used in language may be very powerful, for they play a role in the tone and the flow of the communication and in expressing cultural peculiarities and social hierarchies.

5.4. Roderigo: Patience, good sir (act1, scene1)

حضور ذرا صبر و تحمل سے کام لیجئے۔

In this cited translation, politeness is demonstrated through the use of humble honorifics which are expressed in حضور ذرا صبر و تحمل سے کام لیجئے. Therefore, the language speaks about calmness and respect for the individual who is being addressed. Personality trait is expressed with the tone that shows politeness, in the person's attitude to other people. The word حضور plays a pivotal role in this context. It is not merely a term of respect but a versatile honorific used for multiple reasons. In this instance, it becomes the most suitable term to address the person, infusing the communication with a wholehearted consideration. The choice of honorifics in language contributes significantly to the nuances of interpersonal communication, shaping the dynamics of respect and courtesy.

5.5. Cassio : what's the matter

Iago: My Lord is fall'n into an epilepsy. (Act 3, scene 4)

کاسیو: کیا حال ہے؟

ایاگو: آقا کے دماغ کو گرمی چڑھ گئی ہے۔

The given lines depict the self-image of Iago, representing referential honorifics آقا as well as the positive face of Iago by showcasing his likability through praising others. The honorific factor is evident in Iago's use of the title in the Urdu translation آقا for Othello. This address form expresses respect, highlighting Othello's higher social rank and adding an element of honor and formality to their communication. Shakespeare, a master of honorific language, excelled in conveying power dynamics and character relationships.

5.6. Iago: I mock you! no, by heaven.

Would you would bear your fortune like a man! (Act3, scene 4)

ایاگو: حضور بھلا میری مجال گستاخی کی ہو سکتی ہے؟ کاش حضور اپنی اس تکلیف کو مردانہ ہمت سے برداشت کرتے

The Urdu translation of “by heaven” is حضور that serves as an example of honorifics, where Iago uses respectful words for his master or lord. The linguistic choices made by characters throughout the play shape their language and describe their social status. Moreover, the use of the direct form of the second-person pronoun, “you,” to refer to Cassio, rather than employing a more formal title such as “Sir” or “Captain,” can be interpreted as a deliberate choice by Iago to remove honorifics and thus express his contempt or lack of respect towards Cassio. While English lacks direct honorifics, in the Urdu translation, the word حضور is used, indicating a high level of respect and admiration for the master. Shakespeare skillfully conveyed power relations and relationships between characters through the presence or absence of honorifics.

5.7. **Emilia:** Madam, here comes my Lord.(act2,scene3)

ایمیلیا: لیجئے وہ آقا تشریف لا رہے ہیں۔

This is an example of status-based honorifics, where Emilia addresses her Madam about her lord. It illustrates Emilia's lower status, evident in the Urdu translation where she uses words like آقا for "lord." Their language adapts to the context. Emilia addresses Desdemona as "Madam," an honorific term conveying respect and acknowledging Desdemona's higher social status, adding a formal and respectful tone to their conversation. The translated text آقا reinforces the higher status and kinship of Othello.

5.8. **Cassio:** Madam, I'll take my leave. (act2, scene3)

کاسیو: اب میں حضور سے رخصت ہوتا ہوں۔

This is also an instance of status-based honorifics, revealing characters higher in status. Certain words are repeated, emphasizing the politeness and respect ingrained in their behavior towards their masters. In Cassio's statement, the element of honorifics is evident in his use of the term "Madam," and in the Urdu translation, حضور is employed when addressing Desdemona. This honorific showcases his respect and deference towards her as a woman of higher social status, adding a touch of formality and politeness to their conversation.

5.9. **Othello:** Most patent, grave and reverend seignior's,
My very noble and approved good masters
That I have ta'en away this old man's daughter,
It is the most true, true, I have married her.(act1, scene3)

اوٹھیلو: معزز و باوقار متین و واجب التعظیم اراکین مجلس،

میرے شریف و مہربان آقاؤ! یہ بات کہ میں اس بڑھے کی بیٹی کو اپنے پاس لے آیا بلکل درست اور صحیح ہے میں نے اس سے اپنا عقد کر لیا ہے۔

The given example exhibits occupation-based honorifics, with Othello, the master, considering others as his masters. The Urdu translation's word choice معزز اور میرے شریف و مہربان آقاؤ reflects Othello's address to the individuals present as "Most patent, grave and reverend seigniors, my very noble and approved good masters." This word choice in Urdu underscores Othello's respect and deference towards the people he is speaking to. Through these honorifics, Othello acknowledges their higher social status and demonstrates his politeness and formality in addressing them.

5.10. **Cassio:** Good ancient, you are welcome

Welcome, mistress.

Let it not gall your patience, good Iago.(act2, scene1)

کاسیو: ایساگو آپ کا آنا مبارک ہوا اور اے خاتون آپ کا کرم فرمانا بھی ہماری خوش قسمتی ہے کہ حضور کا شرف حضوری ہمیں حاصل ہوا۔

The elements of honorification are clearly evident in the translation as اے خاتون آپ کا کرم فرمانا The politeness in the characters' behavior and their demonstration of respect reflect their concern and regard for each other. The careful selection of words according to the context is also emphasized. Additionally, characters use respectful language and titles like "good ancient" and "mistress" حضور کا شرف حضوری to address each other, conveying a sense of respect and politeness within the context of the play.

5.11. **Emilia:** Good morrow, good lieutenant: I am sorry

For your displeasure; but all will sure be well.(act3,scene1)

ایمیلیا: نائب صاحب کو آرام۔ مجھے بھی سخت صدمہ ہے کہ آقا آپ سے ناخوش ہو گئے۔ آپ گھبرائے نہیں۔

There are common expressions used in the translation, and the repetition of these words mirrors the context of the play. In this instance, the translation shifts towards depicting a personal relationship, specifically a husband-wife dynamic. The use of نائب صاحب as an example of honorifics reflects this personal acquaintance between the characters. Emilia's greeting in the excerpt from "Othello" illustrates the use of honorifics in English. She addresses the lieutenant as "good lieutenant آقا، نائب صاحب demonstrating respect and acknowledging his higher rank. This honorific adds a polite and courteous tone to the conversation.

5.12. **Cassio:** Bounteous madam,

Whatever shall become of Micheal Cassio,

He's never anything but your true servant.(act3,scene3)

کاسیو: میری فیاض و مہربان بیگم مائیکل کاسیو کا جو دہبہ بھی چاہے ہو مگر وہ حضور کا ہر حال میں مطیع اور تابعدار رہے گا۔

In this excerpt, Cassio's positive face is evident as he seeks to portray a positive self-image that he believes others appreciate. The speaker's manner of addressing, specifically in the line from "Othello," where Cassio refers to Desdemona as "bounteous madam میری فیاض و مہربان" reflects a well-mannered and respectful approach. Cassio employs the honorific "bounteous madam" to address Desdemona, expressing not only respect but also gratitude towards her. The use of the honorific In Urdu حضور enhances the expression of respect and deference in Cassio's communication. The phrase میری فیاض و مہربان بیگم further emphasizes Cassio's positive regard for Desdemona, portraying her as generous and kind. Overall, this linguistic choice contributes to the tone of humility and gratitude within the dialogue, showcasing Cassio's respectful and positive interaction with Desdemona.

5.13. **Cassio:** The duke, does greet you, general (act1,scene)

کاسیو: ڈیوک نے حضور کو سلام کہا ہے۔

In the provided example, the choice of language and the use of honorifics depend on the specific situation within the play. The politeness observed in the lines ڈیوک نے حضور کو سلام کیا ہے indicates a level of respect, and this falls into the categories of both occupation-based and status-based honorifics. Cassio's address to Othello as "general حضور specifically illustrates a form of honorific used based on Othello's occupation and status. By using the term (حضور general), Cassio is showing respect for Othello's higher rank and position, acknowledging his authority. This linguistic choice not only reflects the character dynamics within the play but also serves to convey the politeness and formality expected in such interactions, considering the social structure and hierarchy.

5.14. **Desdemona:** I thank you, Valiant Cassio

What tidings can you tell me of my lord.

ڈیسڈیمونا: کاسیو میں تمہاری شکر گزار ہوئی۔ یہ تو کہو میرے آقا کی کیا خبر ہے؟

This exemplifies situation-based honorifics, where the speaker uses the word آقا to meet situational needs. In this context, آقا is not used for status purposes but rather as a title to express respect towards a third person. Conversely, Desdemona acknowledges Cassio's bravery and employs the honorific "valiant" to convey her respect for him. The translation of

the text facilitates the identification of various elements used by the playwright, making it an effective approach to delve into the source text and uncover its key components.

6. Conclusion

Honorifics, often used as titles for jobs, have counterparts in other languages through suffixes and prefixes, a linguistic expression absent in the English language. The use of honorifics in language serves to express respect without ambiguity. The Urdu translation of the source text simplifies the identification of major elements of honorifics, making it efficient for readers without encountering hurdles. This qualitative-based research aims to highlight the expression of honorification in the Urdu translation of Shakespeare's Othello. It delves into the factors influencing linguistic choices, recognizing that language usage varies according to context and individuals. The researchers strive to pinpoint these variations. This research is effective for readers seeking insights into elements of politeness, social hierarchy, and social status with reference to the English honorifics and their Urdu translation. Utilizing this technique in literary translation aims to unpack stylistic features of various languages and enhance readers' understanding.

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