A Study of Cultural Propositions in the Urdu Translation of *The Alchemist*

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to show how cultural items of source text in terms of domestication and foreignization technique have been translated in the target text in the translation of the novel entitled 'The Alchemist' by Paulo Coelho translated by Muhammad Zaki Kirmani in Urdu. Translators may find it difficult to translate cultural concepts in a way that the intended readers will comprehend. The cultures of both languages should be recognisable to translators (i.e. source and target languages). The novel was originally written in Portuguese entitled as 'O Alquimista' by a Brazilian author, Paulo Coelho in 1988. Later, it was translated in English entnitled 'The Alchemist' by Alan R. Clark in 1992. The methodology used in this study is Venuti's theory of foreignization and domestication. The translation model by Peter Newmark (1988) is applied in combination with Venuti's theory. He proposed 5 domains for culture-specific items. 17 translation procedures were applied and among these only 13 were found. The most used procedure was modulation and least used was through-translation. The researcher has collected and analysed the culture-specific items based on both models. There are 110 culture-specific items highlighted and discussed in this study.

Keywords: The Alchemist, Lawrence Venuti, cultural translation, foreignization, domestication, Paulo Coelho.

Introduction

Background

The history of human civilization is clear evidence that language and culture are deeply interdependent on one another. Both language and culture were equally required for humans to develop writing and modify human communication to create a civilised society. With the development of different languages and cultures, people began to attain knowledge through foreign languages. For this purpose, the technique of transferring concepts and ideas from one language to another, today known as translation, has emerged as a new subfield in the area of linguistics. While translators played their role in translating books from one language to another, linguists also came into the debate to analyse and justify the right way to translate as translation is not just about transferring words from one language to another, rather it is a process of critical transfer of culture, beliefs, norms, social and political ideologies from one language to another (Wang, 2014).

Translation as an outcome of a linguistic-textual function acts as the process of converting a text from one language to another language. The translation is impacted by linguistic conditions and elements in addition to textual linguistic functions (House, 2015). According to Das (2005, p. 7), "the translator must create a balance between keeping close authenticity to the source and absolute freedom from it." For any translator, striking this ratio has never been simple. Venuti (1995) holds that translation is the uneasy conciliation of two distinct, occasionally opposing sets of cultural judgments. Since translation is a challenging process, the translator's job becomes equally challenging. The process of translation involves the decoding of one message from a sequence of signifiers given by the foreign author and the encoding of a corresponding message in another chain presented by the translator. House (1977) added that the objective of any translation is to recreate the idea that the source text seeks to convey using the context-specific linguistic and cultural elements of the source text. According to her, the

translator should perform cultural filtering and ensure that the translation quality is balanced. For the audience to believe that the translated material is the original, the translator must change the cultural components of the source text and transform them into the cultural characteristics of the target text. Changes in the language, text, and speech levels may occur concurrently. However, novel translation has always proven to be a tricky process because it requires the translator to apply a large amount of expertise in numerous translation-related fields (Mozaheb et al., 2021). Translation, according to Nord (2001), involves contrasting cultures. The translation is defined as the "act of rewriting" a source text to suit specific requirements set out by the receiving side and doing so in the language used by the target cultural context (Lefevere, 1992). According to Abbasi et al. (2012), bilingual and bicultural translators are required to transfer culture from one language to another. The culture from which a language is spoken determines how easy it is to grasp it (Morgan & Cain, 2000). However, all cultures are distinct, so it might lead to misunderstandings when someone with a different cultural background uses a language from another country (Sepora et al., 2012). For instance, something that is normal or valuable in one country might be taboo in the other country. Furthermore, according to Lawrence Venuti (1998, p. 240), the translation strategy "involves the fundamental tasks of picking the foreign content to be translated and establishing a technique to translate it."

Paulo Coelho is a famous Brazilian writer honoured with the Guinness World Record Award and many other international awards. His first novel was *The Pilgrimage* published in 1984. It was his first autobiographical book but he didn't receive any recognition. He became a renowned writer after the publication of *The Alchemist* in 1988. In 74 countries, it was at the top of the list of bestselling books. *The Alchemist* was his second novel which has about 65 million copies sold in more than 150 countries (Shinde, 2020; Stefani, 2014). The point of view in The Alchemist is a third-person omniscient view. Some of its descriptions and words have been beautifully translated, which helps to make up for some of its translation drawbacks (Mozaheb et al., 2021).

The novel is a story of a young Spanish boy, Santiago, who had a dream of finding treasure in the pyramids of Egypt. He goes on a long journey to make his dream a reality. His quest for treasure eventually becomes a spiritual journey full of life, growth and faith.

There are many versions of both translations by other respected translators, however, the researcher had selected Clarke's version as it is the most famous English version of O' Alquimista. As for the Urdu version, the researcher had selected Zaki's version as it is well-known and considered the latest version as it was published in 2019. The English version is composed of two parts and forty-five sections and an epilogue at the end. The first part contains thirteen sections. The second part of the novel contains thirty-two sections. The Urdu version is also divided with the same pattern as the English version but with a slight difference which is the translation of the epilogue as the forty-sixth section at the end of the novel. Other than these two sources, more data was gathered from digital books and journal articles on the World Wide Web.

Research Objectives

The study is aimed at the following objectives:

1. To find out the cultural elements transferred from English to Urdu in The Alchemist.
2. To analyse the cultural influence of the source text (English) on the translated items in the target text (Urdu).

Research Questions

The study is aimed to answer the the following questions:

1. What are the culture-specific elements transferred from English into Urdu in The Alchemist novel?
2. How does the culture of the source text influence the translated items in the target text?

Significance of the Study

The research holds a significant impact in the field of linguistics especially in translation studies as it aims to conduct in-depth research on the English-translated version of The Alchemist in Urdu language. This study also contains beneficial information for Pakistani linguists who have an interest in or want to conduct further research in the field of translation studies. Furthermore, this study will help researchers in finding out the research gaps in this study which they can use for conducting their research.

Literature Review

According to Kuleli (2020), literary translators may be encouraged to perform a more thorough retrospective reading to analyse those cultural elements that are foreign to their own cultures when the intensity of cultural elements in a literary text rises. Therefore, translators not only translate texts; rather, they translate cultures. This major shift in the realm of translation studies is introduced as the term, "cultural turn". The cultural shift from the 1980s to the 1990s influenced translators' decision-making skills and made it easier for them to balance between different cultures. This demonstrates the practical relevance of the cultural shift in the field of translation studies in addition to its theoretical aspect. The cultural shift in translation studies encompasses not only the importance of translating cultural aspects into a new culture but also the function that translation plays in the transmission of cultures. Literary translation aids in understanding the outside world (Brooks, 2017). It is clear that the process of translation is the transmission of knowledge between two languages. This shift occurs between languages as well as between cultures. Culture and translation are interdependent on one another (Sepora et al, 2012).

Al Saleh (2018) conducted a research on the translation analysis of the English version of the religious book 'Islamic Guidance' translated by Muhammad Abul Quasem, originally written in Arabic by Mohammad Al-ghazali. Al Saleh evaluated the translation procedures by Peter Newmark. The focus of his study was to analyse how the translator has applied Newmark's translation procedures and how these procedures helped the translator in translating the source text into the target text in a natural and accurate manner. According to his study, 16 out of 17 translation procedures were applied by the translator. Moreover, the significance of source oriented and target oriented translation procedures was highlighted. Obeidat (2019) conducted a comparative research on two English versions of Awlad Heratina, a famous Arabic novel written by Naquib Mahfooz. He applied Venuti's theory of domestication and foreignization to find and analyse the translation of Arabic collocations from Arabic to English by two English translators. In the results of this paper, Al Saleh proposed that foreignization was highlighted higher than domestication in the translation process.

Muren (2020) carried out a study on translation of culture-specific items in the book "The Name of the Wind" written in 2007 by Patrick Rothfuss. The researcher applied three translation procedures in his study; Eirlys Davies' (2003), Aixela's (1996) and Venuti's (2008). The focus of this study was to analyse the culture-specific items from English into Norwegian. The Name of the Wind is based on a fantasy world in which most of the culture-specific terms are unreal. Therefore, the researcher aimed at finding out these fantasy based culture-specific items. According to the findings of this study, the culture-specific items were translated according to their relevant cultures.

Translation Procedures by Peter Newmark (1988)

There are several models proposed by linguists for translation. Some of the most famous are by Javier Franco Aixela and Peter Newmark. Peter Newmark proposed 17 translation procedures for the translation of culture-specific items. Including the literal translation, following are the 17 translation procedures proposed by Newmark (1988):

Cultural Equivalent

Replacing a culturally distinctive object with an equivalent item from the culture of the source text into the target language is known as a cultural equivalent. By substituting a culturally acceptable term, the translation is meant to be more accessible and recognizable to the intended audience. In simple terms, the translator replaces the culture-specific item from the source text if its equivalent already exists in the target language.

Through-Translation

In this procedure, the translator literally translates the culture-specific item from the source text into the target text. Through-translation is mostly used for common collocations or names of international organisations such as UNESCO (United States Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization). This procedure falls under the domain of foreignization as it directly translates the culture-specific item from the source text into the target text.

Literal Translation

When a translator translates the culture-specific item from the source text into the target text in word-for-word order, then this procedure is known as a literal translation. As its name suggests, this procedure literally translates the words from the source text. Newmark (1988:70) believes that literal translation is a basic procedure in the field of semantic and communicative translation but if the translation level goes beyond the word level, then literal translation is not suitable in that case.

Transference

When a word is translated from source text to target text with few changes in the word to make it more comprehensible for the target readers, the technique is called transference. The translator uses this technique when only translating the word is not enough for target readers and they might not get the complete idea or meaning of the word from source text to target text.

Shifts or Transposition

This procedure involves the process of changing the grammatical structure of the when culture-specific items from the source text into the target text. Translators may use this procedure when a literal translation of the source text would be awkward for the target readers

Descriptive Translation

Descriptive translation involves the process of adding more details in the target text for the culture-specific item from the source text. This procedure helps the translator when only translating the culture-specific time is not enough. Providing more details for the culture-specific word helps the target readers easily understand the ideas or terms of the source language. This procedure lies under the domestication domain as the translator adds details in the target language.

Translation Label

Translation label is the translation procedure which is used to introduce new terms from the source text into the target text. The translator covers the new term with inverted commas. It shows the target readers that the culture-specific term is being introduced in the target language and further improvements may be needed in future. In this procedure, the term may sound unfamiliar to the target readers but it also gives a sense of foreignness in the target text. This procedure comes under the domain of foreignization as it introduces new terms from source text to target text.

Functional Equivalent

To replace a culturally distinctive object with a functionally comparable item in the culture of the target language, regardless of the precise shape or look being different, a functional equivalent is used. By adjusting the unique cultural features, the goal is to generate a similar functional result in the target culture. When a phrase in the source language lacks a direct cultural equivalent in the language of the target text but has a related object or concept that fulfils the same goal, the term is said to have a functional equivalent.

Expansion or Reduction (Deletion)

Sometimes, the translator intentionally avoids translating some particular culture-specific items and moves forward in translating the text. This technique of not translating the culture-specific item from source text to target text is known as reduction (deletion).

Synonymy

If there is no exact word in the target language that matches the culture-specific marker from the source text, then the translator uses a synonym in the target language for that culture-specific item from the source text. This procedure is known as synonymy.

Compensation

The translator uses the compensation technique when the culture-specific item from the source text lacks the equivalent words in the culture of the target text. The translator adds more

words for a better explanation of the culture-specific item from the source text into the target text.

Naturalisation

This procedure involves the process of making changes in the word of the source text to make the word look natural in the target text. First, the translator makes changes in the pronunciation of the culture-specific item from the source text according to the settings of the target language. After that, the translator makes morphological changes so that the foreign word may fit into the cultural and contextual aspects of the target text.

Recognized Translation

Recognized translation refers to the process of translating internationally recognized terms of institutions and specific fields as they appear in the source text. The translator makes no changes and uses the already existing terms used by other translators.

Modulation

In the procedure of modulation, a translator changes the meaning of the text while preserving the original content or essence of the source text. Modulation may even change the tone and perspective but avoids compromising the true message or information that is to be transferred from source text to target text.

Paraphrase

Paraphrasing is the procedure of explaining the meaning of the culture-specific term of the source text into the target text. This procedure is like descriptive translation but with more details.

Couplets

Couplets as translation procedure refers to the process combining two or more than two translation procedures. For example, combining naturalisation and cultural equivalent to translate a term from a source text.

Notes

Notes are the additional information about the culture-specific item that is introduced in the novel and might be unfamiliar to the target reader. Therefore the translator applies this procedure when necessary

Categorization of Culture-Specific Items by Peter Newmark (1988)

Peter Newmark, in his book *A Textbook of Translation* (1988) has proposed five domains for categorisation of culture-specific items in translation. He divided them into five main categories: gestures and habits, social culture, social organisations, ecology, and material culture domains to better understand and compare the nature of both source and target language. With these domains, the researchers get to better understand and compare the content and perspective of both source and target language. He further explained the sub-categories of each domain which have been mentioned below:

Ecology:

The domain of ecology contains the elements of nature around us both living and nonliving. It includes plants, animals, mountains, plains and local winds.

Material Culture:

This domain covers all the culture-specific items related to garments, food (eatables), houses, and means of transport (car, bike, rikshaw, etc.)

Social Organisations:

This domain consists of organisations in society (political, religious, administrative and artistic) and concepts and ideas.

Social Culture:

Social culture includes work (human labour) and leisure activities (entertainment, sports and hobbies.

Habits and Gestures:

All the non-verbal language such as gestures, signals, habits, facial expressions etc. falls under this domain.

Methodology

The nature of this study is qualitative. This research has been conducted in the light of Peter Newmark's (1988) categorise of the culture-specific items and the procedures of translation proposed by Peter Newmark.. Two books have been selected for translation analysis of the novel Alchemist which was originally written in Portuguese by a Brazilian writer, Paulo Coelho entitled *"O' Alquimista"* in 1988. English and Urdu versions have been selected for translation analysis. The English text is selected as the source text and the Urdu text as the target text. The author of the English text is Alan R. Clarke published the English version of the novel in 2002. In 2019, Muhammad Zaki Kirmani translated the English version of the novel. For analysis of items, Gem Practical Combined Dictionary (Badakshani, 2004) and Oxford dictionary were selected. For data collection, both source and target text were analysed and the culture-specific items were identified. The researchers found these culture-specific markers by following the domains proposed by Peter Newmark (1988) such as cultural, religious, and ecological points of view.

Data Analysis

The extracted culture-specific items were qualitatively identified and evaluated, emphasising the difficulties the translator encountered and the methods employed to express the intended meaning of the source text. The translator has translated the proper names, which represent the first category in Newmark's classification of culture-specific items by applying naturalization procedure. For example, Melchizedek is the name of the king of Salem (Jerusalem in the modern day) whom Santiago meets in Spain. His name 'Melchizedek' (Clarke: 20) is altered in the target text as 'ملک زیک' /Malik Zek/. In the culture of the target text, 'Malik' is one of the names of a caste which people put before their names. For this, target readers would get

confused and assume that the King was from the Malik caste and his name was Zek. Moreover, in the culture of the source text, the character holds a significant role in Christianity which is not clearly shown in the target text. In another example, the target text, the name Fatima is translated into 'فاطمہ' in Urdu by applying naturalization procedure. Another character's name Joseph is also naturalized in target text into its accepted term 'یوسف'. In an other instance, the name 'Saint Santiago Matamoros' is translated as 'سینٹ سانتیاگو'. The translator has applied the procedure of literal translation. In Christianity, a saint is a holy person and highly honoured in a society. The translator removed the term Matamoros.

The translator has translated the terms of food and clothing, which represent the second category in Newmark's classification of culture-specific items. The translator's religious values may have had an impact on the reasoning behind this translation. The translator may have used different words that have similar implications but do not have the same cultural connotations as 'شراب' does in order to maintain cultural suitability while also rendering the translation more accessible to the target readers. The word wine in the source text is translated as 'پانی' which means water. This is an example of modulation since the translator has used the Urdu term 'پانی' (pani) which means 'water', instead of translating the exact word 'wine' (sharab) from English into Urdu.

Another word "sandwich", a foreign food item has been borrowed in source text because this food item has no origin in the target culture . Moreover, this food item represents the culture of the source text which is the main reason for the translator to use its recognised translation in the target text. Translating culture-specific food items creates a foreign environment and helps target readers in learning about cultural foods of the source language. The term 'Arabian clothing' has been deleted from the target text which represents the clothes in the culture of Tarifa, the city where the boy was staying. The translator did not transfer this information even though this information does not contain inappropriate words, but rather the actual information has been deleted for no apparent reason.

The translator has applied the procedure of cultural equivalence for some terms. Turban is a head-dress cloth around the head, which is mostly worn by villagers. The word used for a

turban is 'صافہ' which is also a head cloth worn around the head. The word 'نقاب' is used in place of veil in the target language. Both words have the same meaning but are used in different contexts. The term 'monk' is translated as 'سفید ریش بزرگ' which refers to an old man with white colour beard. The translation procedure used here is also modulation.

In another example, the translator translated the word bar as 'قہوہ خانہ' which means cafe in the source text. He changed the word bar into 'چائے خانہ' meaning tea house in the source language both times the same word has been translated through the translation procedure of compensation. vThe translator has translated the term 'بیکری' to bakery by applying a recognised translation procedure, using the recognized term for the source item bakery. The term 'printing press' which has been translated as 'چھاپہ خانہ' . The procedure of literal translation has been applied here..

The source term "laboratories" is a place where researchers conduct experiments for scientific studies. The translator used the procedure of functional equivalence for 'laboratories' and translated this word into two words 'تجربہ گاہیں'.

Spain is a country located in southern Europe. In the target text, the translator has replaced the country name with its area, Andalusia. Andalusia is a large field of Southern Spain with nature and civilization. Here, the translator has used the procedure of modulation as Andalusia is a part of Spain. The second largest continent of the world is Africa . Santiago travels to Africa to see the ancient pyramids. The term used for this source text is 'افریقہ' . The translator has used the procedure of recognized translation as the term is widely accepted.

Tarifa is a small town in Spain where Santiago meets the merchant and his daughter. In the target text, Tarifa is translated as 'طارفہ'. The translator has applied the procedure of transference. El Cairum is known as Cairo in the modern world. In the target text, it is translated as القرم. Alkarram is an Arabic term for Crimea or the Crimean peninsula. The recognized term in Urdu for El Cairum is 'القاہرہ'. Whereas, the recognised term in Urdu for Cairo

is 'قائرہ' or 'قابرہ' . However, the translator applied none of the above; rather he used the procedure of naturalisation and translated El Cairum as 'القرم'. Egypt is the country where Santiago travels to see the ancient pyramids. It's translated as 'مصر'. Here the translator has used the procedure of recognised translation as this term is also widely recognised in the target language. The procedure of recognized translation is applied in the examples 5 to 9.

The source item 'Urim and Thummim'have been translated as black and white stone. Here the translator has used the procedure of modulation. He changed their names according to their appearance as one stone was white and one was black. In another instance, when the stones were mentioned again by the Englishman the translator applied the procedure of transference and translated their names without translating them into the target language.

Revolver is a weapon like a gun with a revolving cylinder on one side. In the source text, the Englishman keeps his revolver all the time because it helps him in trusting others. For translation, the translator has used the transference procedure and translated the term as 'ریوالور'. Here the source term is delivered in foreignization. There is a word for gun in Urdu which is بندوق . Here the translator has applied the procedure of transference.

There asre some culture-specific markers that fall under the domain of ecology. The translator translated the sycamore into 'انجیر کا درخت' which means a fig tree that is the cultural equivalent of a sycamore tree in the target language. The translator used the word 'باغ' for the source term 'orchard' by applying the translation procedure of cultural equivalence in which the source item has a cultural equivalent in the target text. An orchard is a garden with trees of the same or different fruits. Similarly, in the target language, bagh, a garden with plants or trees, is the same as orchard in the source language.

In another example, the translator has added additional information in the target text, he changed the source phrase as 'اندلس میں بڑی بڑی چراگاہیں'. The term 'بڑی' means big or large which is not mentioned in the source text. Here the translator has applied descriptive equivalence. In

descriptive equivalence, the translator adds extra information in the source phrase or item or word for the target readers to understand the target text more easily or to make the text more accessible and comprehensible.

Falcon is a type of bird which the deserters use for hunting. In the target text it has been translated as 'عقابوں' . The translator has used the procedure of shift or transposition. Because in the source text, the term Falcon is singular but in the target text it is falcons, plural form of falcon. The back translation of the target text is 'I'm feeding those falcons' whereas the source text was 'feeding my falcon'. In the source text, the alchemist had only one Falcon, but in the target text the target readers receive the information that the alchemist has more than one falcon which is mistaken.

In another instance, 'falcon' is translated as 'عقاب' meaning eagle in the source language. Here the translator has applied the procedure of modulation. The right word for falcon in the target language is 'شاہین' . Both eagles and falcons belong to the same family but differ in size and other features. Among hawks, eagles and kites, falcons are the smallest in size and are preferred by Arabs for hunting preys.

Culture-specific item related to social professions and human labour are also present in the text. A shepherd is a person who looks after a flock of sheep. As observed in the target text, the translation term for shepherd is 'چرواہا' , a person who keeps and feeds a flock of sheep. Both shepherd have the same function, taking care of sheep. The 'merchant' has been translated as تاجر which is the same as the merchant in the background. So, there is no change in both examples as the translator has applied the procedure of functional equivalence.

The word priest has been translated into three different words on three different occasions. Santiago tells about his parents' wish to become a priest. Here the translator changed it into راہب . In other example , the translator changed the word 'priest' into 'پادری' which refers to priest. At another place 7, the translator changed the word "priests" into عابد which refers to "worshipper".

Some terms demonstrates social, artistic, political and religious organisations, ideas, customs and activities. Helvetius, also known as Johann Friedrich Schwitzer, was a Dutch alchemist born in 1625. He also succeeded in becoming an alchemist by transforming lead into gold. Helvetius is also mentioned by the Englishman in the novel. However the translator didn't translate this name which could be informative for the target readers. The reason may be that the target readers are not well aware of these alchemists and might have disturbed the flow of reading. However, informative content has been compromised here.

The Holy book Bible has been translated into its literal translation 'بائیبل' . In the target text, the Islamic name for the Bible is 'تورات' /. This Holy book was revealed to Prophet Musa (AS). Here the translator has used the procedure of transference because it is a holy book and it is widely recognized as the Bible. Therefore the translator has used the already existing translation of this source word to help the target readers learn about the name of this holy book in the source text. For the source item seminary, the translator has used a synonym which is 'مکتب' which means school. In the source language, a seminary is an institution in Christianity where children go to learn Catholic beliefs and practices.

The term 'good morning' has been translated as 'صبح بخیر' which means good morning in the target language. The translation procedure used here is functional equivalent. Santiago addresses a woman as 'ma'am'. In the source language, ma'am is a short form of madam, a vocative noun, which is used to address a female to show respect and politeness. In the target language, the translator used the term 'خاتون' which refers to 'a lady' in the target language.

Some terms represent the culture-specific markers of gestures and habits. The translator has translated the source item pray into 'منتر'. Here, the translator has used the synonym to translate the source item, making the target text comprehensible for the target readers. In the target text, 'upset' is translated into 'شرمنده' which refers to an expression of embarrassment or remorse. Both expressions display different expressions yet the translator chose to translate

'upset' as 'embarrassment'. The actual meaning for upset in the target language is پریشان' which refers to the feeling of being worried or upset.

Conclusion

The aim of this study was to highlight and analyse the culture-specific items of the novel *The Alchemist* from English into Urdu. For this purpose Kirmani's Urdu version for target text and Clarke's English version for source text were selected. The translator makes an effort to retain the essential elements of the original tale while using various translation techniques to make the material more understandable and culturally suitable for the Urdu-speaking readers. For overall analysis, foreignization and domestication were taken into consideration. For detailed analysis, 17 translation procedures by Newmark were applied. Proper names are not included in Newmark's translation model however, the nature of this study required the addition of proper names as they are also a part of a culture. There are a total of 110 culture-specific items found in this research. After analysing the culture-specific items from both versions of the novel, the results show that the usage of domestication is higher than foreignization . In foreignization, transference is the most used translation procedure and through-translation is the least used of the total frequency. Whereas, in domestication, modulation is most used and the least used is synonymy and functional equivalent. 13 out of 17 translation procedures by Newmark were applied by the translator.

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