**RESEARCH ARTICLE**

CULTURAL AND STYLISTIC ISSUES IN TRANSLATION: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF FAIZ AHMAD FAIZ'S GHAZAL *DIL MEIN AB YUN TERE BHOOLE HUWE GHAM AATE HAIN* BY AGHA SHAHID ALI AND SHIV K. KUMAR

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ABSTRACT

Translation is the process of transferring text from one language to another, bridging linguistic and cultural gaps to improve comprehension and communication across diverse audiences. It is more than just transferring words; it is an art form that entails transmitting the content, tone, context, and nuances of the original work. In case of poetry, translation is complicated because of rhythm, wordplay, and metaphorical depth in the poem. Poetry translation is an artistic endeavour that aims to bridge linguistic and cultural gapes while preserving the poem's distinct voice and mood. The study presents an overview of the cultural and stylistic issues, principles, and possibilities associated in Urdu-English literary translation. It investigates several translation theories and approaches that are often employed in Urdu-English literary translation with regard to the poetry of Faiz Ahmad Faiz. Due to linguistic complexities, cultural nuances, and poetic expressions, translating the poetry of renowned Urdu poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz into English poses lot of difficulties. Faiz's poetry, known for its subtle metaphors, deep emotional resonance, and cultural nuances, provides many challenges to translators, who must navigate not only to transfer the literal meaning of the source text but also to focus on the cultural and stylistic integrity of the source text. This study explores how Agha Shahid Ali and Shiv K. Kumar approach these problems, highlighting the differences in their translation strategies, diction and poetic style.

Key words: *Poetry Translation, Foreignization, Domestication, Cultural And Stylistic*
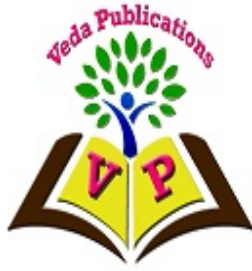
INTRODUCTION

Translation studies, particularly in the field of poetry, play an essential role in developing cross-cultural understanding, preserving literary history, and facilitating the interchange of ideas across linguistic boundaries. Poetry, with its rich vocabulary, complex metaphors, and cultural references, confronts translators with unique challenges and difficulties. Roman Jacobson, in his article, "On Linguistic Aspects of Translation" (1959) classified translation into three possible types: (i) intralingual (ii) interlingual and (iii) intersemiotic. He defines and distinguishes the following types as follows:

1. Intralingual translation, or *rewording* (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language)

2. Interlingual translation or *translation proper* (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language).

3. Intersemiotic translation or *transmutation* (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of nonverbal sign systems).(23)

While discussing the interlingual translation, Jacobson is of the opinion that there is no full equivalence when translation occurs between two languages. He states, "On the level of interlingual translation, there is ordinarily no full equivalence between code-units, while messages may serve as adequate interpretations of alien code-units or messages" (114). Thus, it can be concluded that there is always a loss of meaning when the translation occurs between the source language and the target language.

CULTURAL CHALLENGES AT THE LEXICAL LEVEL

Translating cultural concepts is difficult because it goes beyond simply translating words from one language to another. Language and culture are closely entwined, therefore understanding the background, principles, values of the culture in which a language is embedded is necessary when translating cultural notions. A translator must be intimately familiar with both languages—the source language and the target language. He should be fluent in both languages, and the words should be responsive to his directions. The translator should not only provide the lexical equivalent of words but also consider the socio-cultural context. Language never functions as a mechanical sound system because every word carries connotations, associations, and literary references. Renowned academician and poet from Kashmir, Rehman Rahi mentions the translational process briefly in an interview, stating that equivalency is impossible and emphasising the translator's agency as a result:

> If you look for the meaning of a word in dictionary, you will have the definition there but without the emotional meaning and without its cultural background… In the dictionary you will find equivalents, but emotionally and culturally words are different. For example, in Kashmiri when someone sees a young girl and says, "*yeha che katej heish bolaan* now try translating this Kashmiri expression into English. Will you say 'she speaks like a swallow!' Or will you say in Urdu — "*yae ababeel ke tarah boltee hai"!* So it completely distorts the

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meaning and it even becomes derogatory" (Rahi 2014).

It could be difficult to translate certain cultural words since they might not have exact equivalents in other languages or cultures. Translators employ a variety of strategies to address this cultural untranslatable issue, including transference, naturalisation, cultural equivalency, description, equivalent, analysis, deletion, addition, domestication, foreignization, paraphrasing, glosses, reduction, and synonyms to clarify cultural terms in their translations. To properly express meaning and context to the intended audience, translators must take into account the source text's context, content, and cultural nuances when selecting an approach to reach out the text.

TRANSLATION OF CULTURAL WORDS

There are numerous culturally-specific phrases that are unique to one culture and may appear strange to others. If these cultural words are not properly translated, the message may be misunderstood by the target readers. Therefore, a translator needs to be fully aware of and comprehend both cultures in order to translate ideas from one to the other. Poetry translation is a challenging task that calls for not only linguistic proficiency but also creativity, critical thinking, and cultural sensitivity. The translator must first study the original material to ascertain its underlying meaning before adapting it for the intended readership. Renowned American translation theorist Lawrence Venuti has extensively examined the significance of power and cultural dynamics in translation. He popularised two essential translation strategies, "domestication" and "foreignization",

which provide linguistic and cultural direction. According to Venuti, Domestication refers to "...an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values, bring the back home," while as foreignization is "...an ethno deviant pressure on those (cultural) values to register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text, sending the reader abroad" (1995, 20) Domestication, in general, refers to the type of translation in which the translator uses a clear, fluent style to reduce the strangeness of the foreign text for readers of the target language, whereas foreignization refers to the creation of a target text that purposefully violates target conventions by retaining some of the original's foreignness. When dealing with terms that carry significant cultural and historical meaning, the process becomes even more complex and difficult because cultural words often have nuanced meanings and connotations that are unique to a given region and may not have direct translations in other languages. In order to effectively express the meaning and impact of the original text, translators must consider the context, purpose, and audience of their translation before selecting the best translation technique.

FORM AND STRUCTURE OF A GHAZAL

Ghazal is one of the most prominent forms of Urdu poetry, consisting of a series of couplets called *shyrs*. Each *shyr* in a ghazal presents a complete thought and idea. According to the *Feroz-ul-lughat* Urdu dictionary, the literal meaning of ghazal is to talk about women or womanly things (913). This interpretation highlights the ghazal's thematic focus on love, romance, and the complexities of human

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emotions in relationships. In his comprehensive study on the evolution of the Urdu ghazal in India, Gopi Chand Narang believes that, "when we think of the Urdu ghazal, the following words come to mind: Elegance, mindfulness, a surreptitious mystical feeling, density of thought, a solid system of denotations and connotations, passionate imagery, innate musicality, and rich beautification of meaning"(3). Ghazals are known for their lyrical beauty, emotional depth, and ability to express complex emotions succinctly and effectively. The ghazal is the heart of Urdu poetry, offering writers the largest possible canvas on which to express their creativity because of its intricate structure, profound emotional relevance, and lyrical beauty. Translation of ghazal is extremely significant activity for several reasons, including helping to transcend cultural, linguistic, and historical gaps, allowing a wider audience to access, comprehend, and appreciate the rich literary history of this poetic form.

CULTURAL ANALYSIS OF THE GHAZAL

The ghazal *Dil mein Ab Yun Tere Bhoole Huwe Gham Aate Hain* portrays a vivid imagery and a complex array of emotions. Faiz illustrates how forgotten sorrows reappear in the heart, akin to lovers reuniting in *Kaaba*. This comparison evokes a sensation of longing and reunion. The imagery of stars gradually glowing one by one as he approaches his destination conveys a literal and metaphorical journey towards a desired end. The line "*merī manzil kī taraf tere qadam aate haiñ*" (157), describes the beloved's steps as they get closer to Faiz's destination and is a symbol of optimism and expectation. Overall, Faiz masterfully stitches together themes of love, longing, spirituality, and earthly pleasures in this ghazal. The ghazal begins as:

dil meñ ab yuuñ tire bhūle hue ġham aate haiñ

jaise bichhḌe hue kaabe meñ sanam aate haiñ

ek ik kar ke hue jaate haiñ taare raushan

merī manzil kī taraf tere qadam aate haiñ

raqs-e-mai tez karo saaz kī lai tez karo

sū-e-mai-ḳhāna safīrān-e-haram aate haiñ

(Faiz, 157)

Agha Shahid Ali Translates this as:

The heart a desecrated temple

in it all statues of you broken

Those forgotten sorrows

my memories of you return

gods abandoned by their worshippers

One by one by one

the stars light up the sky

In steps with them

you approach me in the dark

your final destination

Tonight increase the pace

with which the liquor is poured

Oh tell the drummer to play a breathless beat

Worshippers have abandoned the mosques

they're coming here to the wine house (Ali,13)

Shiv K. Kumar translates as:

In my heart now well up your long-forgotten sorrows

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as though some forsaken idol returns to the *kaaba.*

One by one the stars are coming close to my destination.

Pep up the tempo of the wine-dance, let the music swell to its crescendo—

to the tavern come the emissawries of the haram.(Kumar,76)

The beginning of the ghazal sets the tone of enduing pain of separation and longing. The poet depicts how long-forgotten sorrows reappear in his heart, evoking the image of lovers reunited in the abandoned *Kaaba*—a sacred place of reunion. Faiz is at the moment recalling those memories which he seemed to have forgotten long ago. This moment is special for Faiz, as the arrival of his beloved is going to happen. The poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz has used many words in this ghazal which are culturally embedded with meaning. For example, the words, *kaaba, sanam, mai-ḳhāna* and *safiran-e-haram* have been used by the poet, which are deeply associated with two different cultures. For instance, in the first example the word *kaaba* has not been translated by Agha Shahid Ali, which affects the target text, and Shiv K. Kumar has retained it as "*kaaba*" in the target text but fails to explain it further in the footnote or glossary. The word *Kaaba* is a sacred structure in Islamic culture that is placed in the heart of the Masjid al-Haram mosque in Mecca, Saudi Arabia and it holds a great religious significance in Islamic tradition as the House of Allah. Thus, given the context of the poem, the word has a significant relational and cultural meaning. Agha Shaid Ali skips the word *kaaba*, which affects the context of the source text, resulting in a loss of meaning in his

translation, whereas Shiv K. Kumar employs the foregnisation strategy, in which he retains the word as *Kaaba* in the target text, keeping the culture of the source text alive, but fails to explain its meaning in the footnote or endnote for the target readers for further understanding.

In the second example *sanam* has been translated as "statues" by Agha Shahid Ali and "idols" by Shiv K. Kumar. The word *sanam* is used to refer to an idol, object of worship, or beloved in a various cultures and languages, including Arabic and Urdu. Agha Shahid Ali offers "statues" which are representations that are sculpted or carved from a variety of materials that highlight the human form and artistic artistry. In contrast, Shiv K. Kumar offers "idols" which are sacred images used for worship or devotion. His choice of translation emphasises the religious and devotional significance. "Idols" have a more strongly associated religious meaning than "statues". The choice between these two translators is based on the desired context as well as the source text's depth of meaning and understanding.

In the third example, the word *mai-khana* also poses a challenge for both the translators as Agha Shahid Ali transcreats it "wine-house". It effectively portrays the spot where wine is served. Shiv K. Kumar, however, translates it as "tavern" which is a more comprehensive term that connotes a more relaxed or social atmosphere and a wider variety of alcoholic beverages. In a border context, the compound word *Safiraan-e-haram* may allude to an ambassador or a well-respected member of the Muslim community who upholds and advocates the principles, teachings, and customs connected to the Grand Mosque, or Masjid al-Haram, in Mecca. As a

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result, the word holds religious and cultural importance. Agha Shahid Ali used the paraphrasing technique to explain the term *Safiraan-e-haram* rather than providing an equivalent or retaining it. He translates it as "worshippers have abandoned mosques", which does not convey the cultural significance of the word. His translation appears to place more emphasis on worshippers than on ambassadors and mosques than on Haram. Shiv K. Kumar employs the foregnisation technique, in which he retains the term *Haram*. He appropriately translates it as "emissaries of the haram". This translation effectively preserves the meaning intended in the source text, although the word is not explained in the footnotes or endnotes. The choice of these translators is determined by the desired level of specificity and their understanding of the source text. The ghazal's ending is heart-breaking because the poet Faiz Ahmad Faiz is happy to meet his beloved but realizes that she would be leaving shortly. However, he pleads the *Shab--furqat* (night of separation) to hold off and not come too soon. He is aware that these will make his heart hurt. As he says:

Aur kuchh der na guzre shab-e-furqat se kaho
Dil bhī kam dukhtā hai vo yaad bhī kam aate haiñ
*(*Faiz 157*)*

Agha Shaid Ali translates as

It is the night of waiting

Tell her let no more time elapse

This pain of longing may dull

Already my memory is beginning to blur

At any moment I may forget her (Ali, 13)

Shiv K. Kumar translates as:

Tell the night of separation to hold itself awhile,

for the heart now aches less and remembrance too is faint.(Kumar,76)

Despite his excitement at being with his beloved, Faiz acknowledges the brief duration of their meeting, knowing that she will soon depart. His plea to delay the night of separation is a desperate attempt to hold onto their ephemeral happiness longer and avoid the inevitable sadness that comes with saying goodbye. Faiz is acutely aware that each moment spent together will leave new memories in his heart, adding to the already heavy burden of bittersweet memories. He therefore prepares himself for the suffering that would unavoidably ensue while also basking in the beauty of the moment, demonstrating the depth and complexity of his feelings in the face of love and loss.

STYLISTIC ANALYSIS OF THE GHAZAL

The form of the ghazal is based on the five *shyrs*, in which the poet has preserved the music of thoughts and euphony in the ghazal. It contains numerous poetic devices such as imagery, metaphors, similes, alliteration, symbols, and cultural terms. These devices create a challenge for the translators. Each *shyr* is followed by rhyme and refrain, adding musicality to the ghazal. The rhyming words like *gham*, *sanam*, *qadam*, *haram*, *karam*, *kam* and the refrain such as *ate hain*, *ate hain* has been used to impart a pleasant euphony in the ghazal. TLT1 translator transcreates these words as, "Sorrows", "Statues", "Steps", "mosques", "nt" and "blur". This translation imparts the content of the words but fail

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to create any musicality in the target text. Hence TLT1 translator has attempted to convey the sense of the words in the target text.

TLT2 translator translates these words as, "sorrows", "idol", "footfalls", "Haram", "oblige" and "less". These words also do not retain any musicality in the target text. As a result, both translators focus on translating the content rather than the form of the ghazal. It is a difficult job to translate both content and form of a ghazal simultaneously. Loss is unavoidable in the process of translation, especially when translating an Urdu ghazal. Poetry translator should take care to retain the poet's form as close to the original as possible in his/her translation. Anisur rahman says that, "It may not be quite fair to demand of the translator the exact reproduction of the rhythmic design, or the prosodic patterns as in the source text, yet he would do better in recreating an illusion of this predominant rhythmic rush" (170). Translation is important for more than just language accuracy; it also helps to preserve cultural history, facilitate cross-cultural interaction, and promote worldwide interchange of ideas.

CONCLUSION

The comparative analysis of Agha Shahid Ali's and Shiv K. Kumar's translations of Faiz Ahmad Faiz's ghazal *Dil mein Ab Yun Tere Bhoole Huwe Gham Aate Hain* highlights the intricate interplay between linguistic choices and cultural contexts in the process of translation. By analysing specific cultural words of the source text, creates a great challenge for the select translators. It is clear that each translator grapples with the challenge of preserving the cultural richness and significance of the source text while

translating it into the target text. Agha Shahid Ali follows an approach of paraphrasing and sometimes deletes the words which results the loss of meaning in the target text. On the other hand, Shiv K. Kumar tries to preserve the culture of the source text, but lacks further explanation for the non-native readers. As a result, this comparative study highlights the difficulties and complexities involved in translating poetry across cultural and linguistic boundaries, highlighting the necessity for translators to carefully balance between fidelity to the source text and accessibility for the target audience. This study reveals how cultural context, poetic style, and personal interpretation shape the translation process, influencing how Faiz's poetry is received and understood across the English-speaking world. Finally, the study emphasises the difficulty of translating literary works that are strongly rooted in certain cultural and linguistic traditions, as well as how both the translators maintain the balance of staying true to the source text while also making it resonate with a new audience.

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