

## The Bridges and Barriers of Translation: When story travels between Languages

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### ABSTRACT

The transfer of the stories across linguistic borders is at the heart of the world literature's creation and the circulation. When the stories across linguistic borders they are the subject to a series of transformations the includes the meaning, structures and the cultural reception. Therefore translation is more than a linguistic transfer, it involves a complex interrelation of interpretation, negotiation and re-creation that can be shaped by the historical circumstances, the power structures and the cultural standards. This paper explores how the stories transform when they cross linguistic borders, through a two-sided understanding of the translation as both the bridge for dialogue between cultures and the obstacles in the reshaping or restraining of its source. Translators are seen as cultural meditators because their choices strongly affect how a story is read and valued.

Drawing on theories of the world literature, this article examines loss, gain and shift in translated literature, with emphasis on the negotiations of cultural, idiom and narrative voice in the target language ( TL ). It also takes into account the role of translators as a cultural intermediary, whose decisions and choices impact the global trading and reception of the literature. Through this investigation of case studies in the world literature, the project demonstrates how translated tales are endowed with new significance, readers and lives beyond their original linguistic surroundings. This movement allows stories to connect with the new readers in different cultural environment. Finally, it goes to indicate that the travel of stories from one language to another is a continuous process, where stories continue to change and live in new forms.

**Keywords** – translation, cultural transformation, linguistic borders, cultural negotiation, narrative voice

### INTRODUCTION

This Topic talks about what happens when the stories move from one language to another through translation. When a story is translated it does not stays exactly the same, It's meaning, style, and the way readers understand it can change a story. This happens because every language has their own culture, expressions and ways of thinking. Translation is not about changing words from one language to another. It is a creative process. The Translator has to interpret the story, make choices and sometimes they have to adjust so that the readers in another language can understand the story. History, culture and power relations between languages also influences how a story is about to translate.

This study explains translation in two ways. First, it works as a **BRIDGE**, it helps how the stories reach new readers and cultures. Second, it can also act as a **BARRIER**, because some meanings, emotions or culture ideas may be lost, changed or misunderstood. It focuses on cultural references, expressions and the author's voice, and how these are handled in the new language. This paper also looks at what is lost, changed during translation, gained new meanings and new audiences after translation. The introduction states that the paper focuses on what is lost (some meanings may disappear), changed (some parts may be altered), gain (new meanings and new readers are added) in the translation.

Translation also plays an important role in deciding which stories become widely known and which remain limited to their original languages. Publishers, markets and literary institutions influence what gets translated and promoted, because of this the translation is connected to power structure, where some languages and cultures dominate global literary being shared while others remain less visible.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

The scholars of Translation Studies have long examined of how stories have transform as they move across languages, cultures, and the historical contexts. Translation is no longer understood as a just linguistic substitution but as a complex cultural, an ideological, and interpretive practice.

- I. The early theoretical foundations were laid by **Walter Benjamin (1923)** in "The Task of the Translator," where he introduces the idea of translation as he gave a text an "afterlife." According to the Benjamin, the translation allows literary works to transcend their original linguistic boundaries, an emphasizing continuity and the transformation rather than exact replication.
- II. **Roman Jakobson (1959)** further has expands this understanding by distinguishing between an intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic translation. Jakobson's discovery that "there is no full equivalence between code-units" highlights the inevitability of the loss and the reinterpretation when stories move between languages. This linguistic limitation foregrounds the translator's creative role in meaning making.
- III. Moving toward the audience oriented approaches, **Eugene Nida (1964)** introduces a concept of the dynamic equivalence, which prioritizes producing a similar response in the target audience over the literal accuracy. This approach is particularly remarkable in the cross cultural storytelling, where the translators must mediate between differing cultural norms, the belief systems, and the narrative expectations.
- IV. The cultural turn in The Translation Studies is strongly connected by **Susan Bassnett (1991) and André Lefevere (1992)**, who argue that the translations are formed by the ideological, political, and the literary systems of the target culture. Lefevere's concept of rewriting suggests that the translated texts are often altered to align with the dominant cultural values, leading to shifts in the theme, tone, and the characterization. This perspective reveals how the translation can be function as both a bridge for the cross culture and a process of control.

- V. Complementing this systemic approach, Itamar **Even-Zohar's (1990)** The Polysystem Theory positions translated the literature within the larger literary system of the target culture. He argues that the translations can occupy either a central or the peripheral position, influencing how foreign stories are received and redefined. This theory helps explain why certain translated narratives gain importance while others remain under represented.
- VI. After colonial translation theory introduces the ethical and the political concerns into the topic of discussions of the cross-cultural storytelling. **Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (1993)** highlights that the translator's responsibility toward the under represented voices, warning against the cultural incorporation when texts from non-Western traditions are translated into the leading languages like English. Her work is particularly connected in the Indian multilingual context, where the translation often mediates between the interpose languages and global readerships.
- VII. In the Indian literary framework, **A.K. Ramanujan (1999)** the supporter for context sensitive translation, highlights that the stories are deeply rooted in the cultural memory, oral traditions, and the social realities. He argues that the translation involves bargaining rather than the transfer. The idea naturally changes as they travel across the linguistic boundaries.

Overall, the existing scholarship shows that when a story is travel between languages they go through such transformation shaped by the limits of languages, the cultural contexts, power relations, and the translator choices. The literature set up the translation as a dynamic space where the meaning is bargained rather than transferred, making it both a bridge for the multicultural dialogue and a barrier that reshapes the narrative identity. This body of work provides a basic foundation for examining translated stories within the framework of the world literature.

## OBJECTIVES

1. To examine how literary stories change when they move from one language to another through translation.
2. To Analyze the translation as both a bridge and a barrier in cross-cultural storytelling.
3. To study the role of translators as cultural connectors in world literature.
4. To identify the loss, gain, and shift of meaning in translated literary works.
5. To investigates why some languages and literatures gain global visibility while others remain unheard.

## HYPOTHESIS

NULL HYPOTHESIS (H<sub>0</sub>)

H<sub>01</sub>: Translation don't bring any sort of significant change in the meaning, style, or structure of literary stories when they move from one language into another.

H<sub>02</sub>: The Translation only functions as a balanced linguistic process and they do not act as a bridge or a barrier in cross-cultural storytelling.

H<sub>03</sub>: Translators do not play any active role as cultural connectors and have no significant influence in the view of translated literature.

H<sub>04</sub>: There is no significant loss, gain, or shift of meaning in literary works after the translation.

H<sub>05</sub>: Power structures and language dominance do not influence the global visibility or transfer of translated literature.

#### ALTERNATIVE HYPOTHESIS (H<sub>1</sub>)

H<sub>11</sub>: The Translation to another language can change its meaning, the style, and the structure of the literary stories.

H<sub>12</sub>: The Translation helps to connect to the different cultures, but at the same time it can restrict certain cultural meanings.

H<sub>13</sub>: The Translators plays a key role in shaping translated literature, as their choices strongly affect how the readers understand and respond to the text.

H<sub>14</sub>: The Literary translation involves a clear loss, gain, and shift of meaning in the tlanguage.

H<sub>15</sub>: Power relations between languages significantly affect which literatures gain global visibility and which remain unheard.

#### RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study follows a **Textual and Observational** research methodology. It is based on **theoretical analysis and In-depth understanding** of translated literary texts within the structure of world literature and translation studies. The research **does not involve statistical data or numerical hypothesis testing**.

The hypotheses are examined through the study of **translation theories**, scholarly works, and selected examples from translated literature. The Concepts such as loss, gain, shift of meaning, cultural negotiation, and narrative voice are analyzed using the ideas of theorists like Walter Benjamin, Roman Jakobson, Eugene Nida, Susan Bassnett, André Lefevere, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, and A.K. Ramanujan.

Secondary sources such as **books and research articles** form the primary data for this study. The findings are interpreted qualitatively to understand how the translation functions both as a bridge and how they connect cultures and as a barrier that reshapes literary meaning.

## CASE STUDIES

### Case Study 1 – Gitanjali: Translation as a Bridge and a Barrier

Rabindranath Tagore wrote the “Gitanjali” originally in Bengali language. When the content of the story is deeply rooted with spiritual values and emotions towards the nature and culture. Rabindranath Tagore translated the “Gitanjali” from Bengali to English language when his work gained universal attention and then contributed to the introduction of Indian literature across the globe. Regarding such a view, it is very clear and markedly identified among the reviews of the translated content of Gitanjali that the translated version of Rabindranath Tagore does not directly align and synchronize with the content of his originally written version of Gitanjali. Many cultural values and rhythmic values have been changed and redefined in the content of the story as translated by Rabindranath Tagore. The translated version of Gitanjali is therefore associated and rooted towards universal spiritual values; however, it does not depict and convey the cultural values as written in the Bengali version of his story.

This case study proves the hypothesis of the interplay of gains and losses of meaning in translation. This case study establishes the fact that in translation, one deals with loss, gain, and shifts of meaning. While Gitanjali gained international recognition and a new set of readers, there was a cultural transformation of the work, which also underlined the translator's task of negotiation between languages and literatures.

### Case Study 2 - Folktales from India: Cultural Negotiation in Translation

Translations of Indian folktales in the hands of A.K. Ramanujan can serve as another illustrative case of how stories tend to change in translation, passing from one language to another. A connection of Indian folktales to oral culture, local traditions, and regional beliefs is evident. When translating, the author had a choice of either substantiating cultural content or adjusting, or rather transforming, the content of the tale for the new audience of English speakers, even in cases when the content of the tale, as cultural, might seem mysterious or unknown to the audience.

Within this case study, the significance of a translator as a cultural connector is highlighted, particularly as a result of the selection made by Ramanujan, which had implications for cultural understanding on a global scale, demonstrating that the embrace of a tale is, in effect, a re-creation of it in a new cultural space.

## FINDINGS

The qualitative analysis of the translation theories and selected case studies tell us that translation has a complex and innovative role in the movement of the stories across languages and cultures. The study clearly illustrates that written translation does not stay as a neutral or mechanical transfer of words; instead, it involves critical changes in meaning and style, including cultural expression.

The findings indicate that translation often leads to loss, gain, and shift of meaning. Translation of Rabindranath Tagore's Gitanjali suggests that though the English translation brought the text before a global

audience and received international recognition, several cultural, iterative, and emotive overtones of the original Bengali version were enhanced. This confirms that translation naturally reshapes the original text in shape and supports the substitute hypothesis of meaning transformation occurring during translation.

The study finds that such translation acts as a bridge and a barrier. The translation bridges the gap and enables stories to travel across their linguistic boundaries, reaching out and creating a new set of readers across cultures. As a barrier, however, sometimes limits or even reorganizes cultural meanings, sometimes resulting in imperfect misinterpretations or even shortening of complex cultural attributes. The dichotomy is very evident in both case studies.

Thirdly, it is evident from the research that it emphasizes the importance of the translator as a cultural mediator. For example, the selections and choices made by the translator, such as the choosing of words, cultural changes, tones, etc., play a significant role in how the reader receives or explains a read text. For instance, A.K. Ramanujan's translations of Indian folktales.

Lastly, the study affirms the impact of power structures and language supremacy in the circulation of global literature. Literature in more supreme languages, like English, has a broader level of visibility compared to literature in less supreme languages. This affirms the position of translation in culture and ideological power relations.

In sum, **the findings reject all the null hypotheses, but the alternative hypotheses were supported**, proving that translation "remarkably transforms literary stories and that translation plays an active role in the world literature.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations are suggested to improve the practice and understanding of literary translation in the context of world literature:

1. **Greater Cultural Sensitivity in the Translation-** The translators need to pay proper attention to the cultural references, idioms, and their expressions so that the cultural essence in the original text can be maintained.
2. **Recognition of Translators as Cultural Mediators-** The Translators are no longer seen simply as a language transfer artists rather it is seen as cultural interpreters who affect the uptake of translated works of literature.
3. **A Transparent Translation Practices-** The Translators may include some notes, or explanations to guide the readers for better understanding cultural decisions.
4. **Academic Focus on Translation Studies-** Future research must comparative the analysis of various translations of a text to understand the various impacts of translation strategies on its interpretation and understanding.

## CONCLUSION

This study has found that translation is not only a linguistic activity but a thoroughly cultural, creative, and identical process that recasts stories as they are transferred from one language to another. In the process, the translated literary works are found to be undergoing a constant process of transformation, which involves loss, acquisition, and changes in terms of meanings, styles, and cultures. This study also brings to center stage the translator as a significant role player in the process of translation, where the translator emerges as a cultural connector whose intervention is found to have a direct bearing on the reception of literary works.

This study also points to the power of potent relationships in translation, wherein the supremacy of languages frames the presence of world literature. Thereby, translation does not only become a literary activity but also a political and cultural practice that determines which stories are to be heard across the globe. Thus, the conclusion of the study emerges as the stories of translation between languages are found to be undergoing a vibrant and dynamic process of settlement and re-creation; rather than being static, the stories continue to live a new life in a different verbal and cultural landscape.. The notion of translation as bridge and barrier sheds light on the importance and richness of world literature, and the critical function of translation in creating intercultural dialogue.

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