



Cultural Issues in the Gujarati Translation of Edgar Allan Poe's Selected Short Stories

By

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Abstract

The act of translating is mostly cultural in nature. Language serves as a tool for translation, and a language's relationship to its culture cannot be broken. A translator has several difficulties during an interlanguage translation, particularly when it involves translating a work of literature. Finding cultural equivalence is foremost among these. A further difficulty is choosing the right strategy for translation, or approach. The Gujarati translation of Edgar Allen Poe's short stories, including The Masque of the Red Death, is evaluated critically in the current paper regarding the difficulties in translating cultural differences. The terms employed in translation studies, such as equivalence, literal and liberal translation, domestication, and foreignization, have been handled with caution for this purpose because they primarily concentrate on the cultural aspects of the translation process. However, the article's main focus is on the reader's experiences reading the material in both its Gujarati target language and its English source language.

Keywords: Language, Culture, Translation, Equivalence, Domestication, Foreignization.

Introduction:

The practise of translation is quite old. It was previously described as both ideal and literal. As time went on, various changes occurred. Two significant turns have already occurred: the cultural turn and the language turn. It is currently under technical development due to technological improvements in the 21st century, although it is still not entirely dependable. There haven't been many translation-related problems resulting from its methods. Translators have always been plagued by cultural difficulties. An extensive amount of cultural ethos is present in literary works of art. Since a literary work of art is mostly culture-specific and the languages lack equivalents or substitutions that are compatible, the translator must overcome a number of difficulties while translating the text from one language to the other. He must fulfill the demands of both the ST author and the TT recipient.

The Raven is Edgar Allen Poe's most well-known poem, and some book lovers may have read The House of Usher or The Tell-Tale Heart, two of his most acclaimed works. Poe produced up to 67 short stories during the course of his brief 40-year life, which dealt with murder, retribution, physical and mental torment, and many other ills like the practise of burying alive people and other illnesses like the plague and TB. It is believed that the inspiration for numerous short tales and novels in contemporary literature came directly from Poe. Many of Poe's writings were disapproved of by readers and society in his own day simply because they were too grotesque and horrible. The majority of people won't know that Poe also created a tonne of excellent stories about pirates hiding wealth and thinking about maritime voyages because this article is just about his most well-known works. Additionally, tales like Poe's "The Murders in the Rue Morgue" and "The Purloined Letter" are considered the early pioneers of contemporary detective fiction.

In the opinion of the translator of this text, Mr. Nilay Pandya, "I discovered that as I read through these seemingly unremarkable stories, I was enthralled by the various mysteries and subtleties they



contained. Except for kids, all readers can be persuaded by these tales. The essential prerequisite is that it be shallow or above. The reader must carefully consider each word after the previous reading. It's said that the language of Poe's stories conceals a secret. These novels offer a brand- new kind of nourishment for any reader who enjoys literature, one that may completely reignite their intellectual appetite." Further he said that, "During the translation, every word of the original author was carefully translated in order to retain the deep meaning behind it, as well as the author's feelings and story flow. The translator has taken special care not to overshadow the original author at any point in any story, so that readers can access the original author's thoughts, feelings, and imagination." The first section provides a historical overview of the development of translation studies as a discipline, as well as an explanation of the concepts and strategies associated with translation studies. Section II compares the source-language (English) and target-language (Gujarati) versions of selected short stories of Edgar Allen Poe. Section III discusses the researcher's experiences as a reader of the SL and TL texts.

The paper is structured into three parts. The history of translations in Gujarati language came to be studied is surveyed in Part I, which also explains the terms and methods, associated with the field as well as history of translation into Gujarati language. Selected short stories by Edgar Allen Poe are studied in Section II using a comparative analysis of their English and Gujarati texts. The experiences of the researcher as a reader of the SL and TL texts are presented in Section III.

I. History of translation in Gujarati Language:

One of the earliest languages spoken in northern India is Gujarati. Its roots date back further than those of the English language. Both England as a country and English as a language had not yet developed in 1165, the year of the earliest recorded Gujarati work. Long before the first acknowledged English poet, Geoffrey Chaucer (1340-1400), began to pen in England, Gujarati had a plethora of poems to serve. Out of the 22 official languages and 14 regional languages that are spoken in India, Gujarati is an Indo-Aryan language, part of the Indo-European family. It is widely spread and spoken throughout the Indian state of Gujarat. In the context of different references that we could get from history, it was said that its origin can be traced as late as the 12th century A.D. This language is simple and relatively easy to learn. The Gujarati language can be divided mainly into three periods.

1. The Old Period (Apabhramsa) :
2. The Middle period (15th 17th Cent.):
3. Modern Period (After 17th Cent.):

When we discuss Gujarati language literature, the earliest literature survives only in oral tradition and can be traced back to the great religious egalitarian named Narasinh Mehta. He has devoted his whole life to Krishna. The Bhakti Movement originated in South India. It has a great influence in Gujarat, too. In Gujarati, there is hardly any translation history. It only appears, if at all, as a footnote in the volumes of Gujarati literary history published by various organisations and institutes. In terms of Gujarati literary history, it mostly serves as a brief list of translations that took place throughout the relevant era. A few haphazard attempts have been made to compile a catalogue or bibliography of translations in different books. Additionally, there is no justification for these translations in these publications. It is only a collection of translations organised by date. Once more, the idea is that people who read such a bibliography will understand history. Unfortunately, there isn't



much information available regarding Gujarati translation history. Up until now, it has been assumed that the task is complete as long as someone gathers the data. It is a widely held belief among Gujarati literary historians that data suffices to draw conclusions on translation history. This is why they have just listed translations rather than explaining or commenting on them. The translation of the Gujarati scriptures was influenced culturally by unlikely or lesser-known translators such as Meghani, Mahadevbhai Desai, etc.

By the end of the 19th century, Gujarati had its first book, *Karan Ghelo* (1866), written by Nandashankar Mehta; its first social novel, *Sasu Vahuni Ladai* (1866), written by Mahipatram Dave; and its first substantial full-length novel, *Saraswati Chandra* (1898), written by Goverdhanram Tripathi. During the first half of the twentieth century, Gandhi ruled almost every aspect of life in India in general and Gujarat in particular. The eloquence and involvement of Gandhian thought can be seen in social, political, educational, and religious aspects of society; Gujarati literature is not an exception.

Gandhi affected all major Gujarati authors, including K. M. Munshi, Jhaverchand Meghani, Dhoomketu, Sundaram, Umashanker Joshi, Ishwar Petlikar, and many others, both widely recognised and undisclosed. On the other hand, most of India's and the world's best literature has been translated into Gujarati. This trend had two main causes. The Gujarat Vernacular Society was founded by A. K. Forbes, who was appointed as an assistant judge in Ahmadabad by the East India Company, with the great assistance of Gujarati poet Dalapatram. The society's main goal was to safeguard old Gujarati inscriptions and print them in order to create a forum for publishing Gujarati-language works. As a result, the Gujarat Vernacular Society was one of the earliest source materials for translation into Gujarati, with an "imperial transaction." Even after a century and a half, the society is still active, publishing original works and translations into Gujarati under its new name, Gujarat Vidya Sabha.

An adaptation of Shakespeare's *The Taming of the Shrew*, named *Nathari Firangiz Thekane Aavi* in Gujarati, was presented by a Parsi theatre troupe at Andrews Library in Surat in 1852. Hansa Mehta translated two Shakespearean plays into Gujarati: *Hamlet* and *The Merchant of Venice* (1897–1955). Mansukhlal Zaveri translated *Hamlet*, a well-known novel by William Shakespeare. *Julius Caesar* had been translated by Bhanji Gokul Parekh in 1874. In addition, there are numerous Shakespeare translations available. *Othello*, *Macbeth*, *The Merchant of Venice*, and *As You Like It* were all translated by Jayant Patel. *Richard III* and *Macbeth* were both translated by Jaswant Thakar. Shakespeare's 159 sonnets were translated by Mohamed Rupani in 1977. Shakespeare was also translated by Mansukhlal Zaveri, Krushnashankar Vyas, and Nalin Zaveri. Mark Twain's *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn* was translated by Dhirubhai Patel. Sumanchandra Shah has translated *Waiting for Godot* and Dostoyevsky's *The Meek One*. *The Old Man and the Sea* was translated by Ravindra Thakor.

Before looking deeper into the cultural issues raised by the translation of selected short stories by Edgar Allen Poe, it is essential to first examine some underlying trends in current Gujarati translation processes. There have been an astounding number of important and well-known works translated into Gujarati from English and other European and Indian languages. The majority of this translation activity, however, has been unidirectional, which means that the number of texts translated from English into Gujarati is incredibly small when compared to the number of texts translated from other European languages into English via Gujarati. In our hearts, we would bemoan the translation flow becoming one-way. Only a small portion of the great ocean of English literature has, however, been able to reach Gujarati through translation despite these crucial and essential efforts. It is crucial to recognise these efforts, but it's just as crucial to monitor the accuracy of the translations. Because



translations convey the original language and culture in a different language, it is crucial to monitor these representations, particularly in the modern era when there are very few English-Gujarati translations compared to the large body of Gujarati literature.

- II. "The Masque of the Red Death," originally published as "The Mask of the Red Death: A Fantasy," is a short story written by Edgar Allan Poe in 1842. The plot revolves around Prince Prospero's attempts to avoid a deadly plague known as the "Red Death" by hiding in his abbey. He, along with many other wealthy nobles, hosts a masquerade ball within the abbey's seven rooms, each of which is decorated in a different colour. A mysterious figure disguised as a Red Death victim enters and makes his way through each of the rooms, interrupting their revelry. Prospero is killed after confronting this stranger, whose "costume" contains nothing tangible inside it; the guests are also killed.

Poe's story follows many Gothic fiction traditions and is frequently analysed as an allegory about the inevitability of death, though some critics advise against an allegorical reading. Many different interpretations have been presented, as well as attempts to determine the true nature of the titular disease. The story was first published in Graham's Magazine in May 1842 and has since been adapted in numerous forms, including a 1964 film starring Vincent Price. Poe's tale adheres to numerous Gothic fiction conventions and is frequently seen as an allegory on the certainty of death, even though other critics caution against such an interpretation. There have been numerous attempts to determine the true nature of the named ailment as well as numerous distinct interpretations. Poe adopts many conventions of traditional Gothic fiction, including the castle setting, in "The Masque of the Red Death," which is directly influenced by the first Gothic novel, Horace Walpole's *The Castle of Otranto*. Now let us examine the cultural difference in the story as below:

The Title:

The story's title serves as the first point of departure in the Gujarati translation. A character in "The Masque of the Red Death" shows up at a "voluptuous" masquerade ball disguised as a Red Death victim and it turns out to be the Red Death after all. But really, isn't it a very snappy title? Don't you want to continue reading to learn what the "Red Death" is and how to recognise it? Poe originally titled the story "The Mask of the Red Death," which you might find fascinating. This makes the ball less important than the mask or costume that the Red Death is wearing to the ball itself. Even though it's simply a question of a few letters, we much prefer the second title. The short story "The Masque of the Red Death" exploits the image of the terrible Red Death as its antagonist. The term for title in the translated text is "Lal Mot," which omits the statement of dread and falls short of producing the same impact as was conveyed in the source language text. Death is associated with the colour "white" in Gujarati culture. In Hindu tradition, the colour white is a representation of purity and is worn to remember the deceased and their family. While the source text's use of the colour "red" conjures images of terror and gothic culture.

Some cultural words like names of person, place and food:

It may be challenging to translate cultural allusions into the target language, such as names of people, cuisines, and festivals. Because of this, translators must determine how to adapt the meaning or purpose of the source text into the target text by taking into account the approach to translating a text that contains a number of cultural terms that must be accurately translated. Like in many of Poe's writings, the introduction of names adds to the symbolic economic background of the tale and raises a



different set of metaphorical possibilities. For instance, Prospero, whose name denotes financial success, uses his money to fend off the Red Death's invasion. Poe's suggestion that a certain kind of economic system is doomed to failure may also be represented by his retreat to the safety of an aristocratic mansion. In the hierarchical relationship between Prospero and the peasantry, Poe illustrates the injustice of a feudal system in which the aristocracy controls the wealth while the poor suffer. Due to the fact that feudalism was widespread in the fourteenth century, when the true Bubonic Plague ravaged Europe, this usage of feudal iconography is historically accurate. In the Gujarati translation of the story, Prospero is referred to as Prinsa prōspērō. In Gujarati culture, these kinds of proper names are typically nonexistent. Therefore, it's probable that it doesn't arouse the readers' original perception of taste.

Ballet Dance: Ballet is a kind of theatrical dance in which the *danse d'école*, a rigorous academic dance discipline, is blended with additional creative aspects like music, costumes, and set design. Ballet is another name for the academic method. Unlike traditional ballets, where dance is at the centre of a performance, the soundtrack, lighting, costumes, and story become the essence of the show. Dancers interact with the light, creating mesmerising shadows, and their actions perfectly illustrate the narration in the story. Therefore, we can conclude that sometimes translators fail to infuse the minds of the readers with the same culture, as demonstrated by the Gujarati translation of the source language text, where the word used to describe "ballet dancers" is " ," which is not an accurate depiction of the ballet dancers. The cultural barrier between Gujarati and English can be seen in this instance.

Masquerade Ball : The Carnival season in the 15th century included masquerade balls, which featured increasingly elaborate allegorical Royal Entries, pageants, and triumphal processions honouring marriages and other dynastic events of late mediaeval court life. Many people dress up and wear masks to a masquerade ball, also known as a *masque ball*. Music and dancing are typically present at a masquerade ball. These after-hours activities are for enjoyment and celebration. The translation's intended audience may not be acquainted with the notion of a mask. As the target language reader's culture differs from that of the source language content, the translation thus does not accurately reflect the original flavor. It could be challenging for Gujaratis to envision or replicate the imagery of the mask ball dance simply because they are only familiar with their own traditional dance, known as "Garba."

Hernani: In "The Masque of the Red Death," a short story by Edgar Allan Poe, Hernani is employed to convey the grandeur and elegance of Prince Prospero's masquerade. In *Les Misérables*, Gillenormand critiques Hernani. Because the translated text is intended for readers who can only read the target language, any historical context or historical references used by the translator must be described. The reader might not understand the text's meaning if it weren't done; therefore, it might as well be done. Victor Hugo wrote the play *Hernani*, which is described in this English text. If the reader is unfamiliar with the play, the description of it will seem dull to them, and they won't be able to relate to the text. Because they are unfamiliar with the play, Gujarati readers also find it challenging to relate it to English culture.

III The cultural ethos' sense and candour have cheerfully been traded for the use of the target language, target content, and target receivers. However, this may have been prevented by taking into account the Indian recipients of the non-English speakers. Additionally, there are numerous occasions in the target language text where the culturally distinctive elements of the source language have been preserved. The ramifications contained in the prophetic wisdom of Schleiermacher's visionary mix of domestication and foreignization methods are as follows:



these two paths ['moving the reader to the author' and 'moving the author to the reader'] are so very different from one another that one or the other must certainly be followed as strictly as possible, any attempt to combine them being certain to produce a highly unreliable result and to carry with it the danger that writer and reader might miss each other completely" (Lefevere 1977: 74).

The target language would have retained the text's core cultural ethos if the foreignization translation approach had been used. The translated work would have been more enjoyable to read if the culturally specific elements had been preserved, even at the sacrifice of the candour and decorum of the target language rules.

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