Translation And Gender: A Critical Analysis Of Urdu Translation Of Shina Proverbs

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to unveil the way Shina society has discursively constructed gender roles through the translation of Proverbs. It also explores the influence of gender ideology on the process of translation and the choices of transitional strategies made by the translator while translating proverbs. The study analyzes 18 proverbs; responsible for gender dichotomy, selected from the book "شناسینو مشتگ" (Golden Saying of Shina Language) by Iqbal (2011). The study has taken Feminist Critical Discourse Analysis as a research perspective. The researcher has employed Farahzad's Model (2009) of Translation Criticism, as research methodology. The findings reveals that in androcentric Shina society, women’s economic dependence is their main handicap and they are considered incapable, reliant, dependent, submissive, quarrelsome, greedy, bad character, discourteous, deceptive, coquettish, unfaithful, cunning, subordinate, trouble, dim witted, emotional, gullible and untrustworthy in the society. The study also reveals that the ideology of the translator greatly influences the process of translation. This research will be a contribution to the existing research on gender studies of Shina society in particular and Translation Studies in general. In addition, this study will contribute to sensitizing Shina society, especially men, to limit themselves from exploiting women. Moreover, readers of the study are expected to develop an attitude of not involving in discrimination against women.

Introduction to shina society

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Gilgit-Baltistan is the land of linguistic diversity. Dani (2001, p.52) states, “The Northern Area of Pakistan (Gilgit-Baltistan) shows the most intricate patterns of language in the whole country”. There are more than ten languages spoken in this region and Shina is the major language spoken in, Gilgt, Astore, Chilas, Nagir, Gizer, some parts of Baltistan, kohistan of Khyber pakhtunkhwa, some parts of Azad Kashmir, occupied Kashmir and india as well. “According to Linguistic survey of Pakistan about 1.3million people speak shina language in different valleys of Gilgit Baltistan. As, Shina society is an oracy based society where spoken discourse has central importance. In this society, proverbs are commonplace. They are accepted as outcomes of the experience and wisdom of their ancestors. Therefore, they are widely practiced in this society. Present study concentrates on the Urdu translation of Shina proverbs that are responsible for gender imbalances and asymmetry in the society.

**Delimitation**

There are 302 proverbs in the book, “Shina Soeno Mishtay Mori” (Golden Saying of Shina Language) compiled and translated by Iqbal (2011). The research has delimited to 18 proverbs, which are responsible for gender construction in Shina society, taking Feminist perspective of gender construction.

**Research objectives**

Following are the main aim and objectives of the research:

- To investigate how Shina society discursively constructs gender role through translation of Proverbs.
- To inquire the intrinsic motives behind using gender inclusive proverbs.

**Research Questions**

- How does the Urdu translation of Shina proverbs reflect Shina society as patriarchal society?
- What are the latent motives of gender biased proverbs?

**Conceptual Framework**

**Social Function of Language**

Language is a complex phenomenon. Anthropologists consider it as a cultural behavior while socio-linguists term it as a social practice. Language is ubiquitous; It is everywhere, in our thoughts, dreams, relations and communication and even in
our prayers. “The fact of the matter is that the real world is, to large extent, unconsciously built upon language habits” (Sapir & Lee, 1929, p.174).

We human beings feel superior to animals and birds not because we possess different thumbs or we can walk while erecting up. We are superior because we have the ability to think and speak.

Human beings do not live in the objective world alone, nor alone in the world of social activity as ordinarily understood, but are very much at the mercy of a particular language which has become the medium of expression for their society (Sapir & Lee 1929, p. 443).

Adjei (2013) states that language is used to create the social world. The role of language cannot be denied. It is not only constituted but also constitutive.

**Language as Discourse**

According to Fairclough (1989) discourse is “ways of representing aspects of the world- the processes, relations, and structures of the material world, the ‘mental world’ of thoughts, feelings, beliefs and so forth, and the social world” (p.124). He says that language is a social practice and it has a close association with power.

**Gender and Discourse**

Gender is a social decision and this decision of society makes someone a man or a woman (Estliden, 2010). It means that gender is not natural or by birth. Beauvoir (1949) states, “Sex is biologically determined while gender is something that is socially constructed” (p, 4). It means gender is socialized and it is constructed through social practices. Cameron (1998) states, “Gender is salient because it is a social construct and something we do in interaction not something based on nature and biology” (P, 290).

**Gender, Language and Translation**

“Language and translation certainly are sources for legitimizing the status quo or for subverting it; tools for gender oppression or liberation” (Olga, 2012). Language is not a neutral act. It is political in nature as it helps to produce, mediate and perpetuate or challenge existing power structures. The same kind of function is performed by translation as language does. He further articulates that translation and women both have been treated inferior in the past. The translation is inferior to the original and women are regarded as inferior to males. Renowned feminists Beauvoir (1949) explored the relationship between translation and woman. She states that the gendering of translation reflects the asymmetrical relations between men and women, as both struggle for power and domination of one gender over the other. “Translation is a discursive practice that forms and transforms gender identities and helps to reconsider the notion of sexual difference” (Federici &
Leonardi, 2012, p.2). This reveals that translation itself is a form of language and it works in the same way in the construction of realities and identities and also challenges those constructed identities. In her study, Beauvoir (1949) states that since translation is connected with women its scope has widened. Both weak forces combine to struggle for power and authority. This similarity of being weak made them interdisciplinary. Later translation as a tool was used to empower women. It became a voice for the voiceless or mute and oppressed group of the society.

**RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

This paper follows the qualitative approach of the research. To highlight gender discourse, the Three-Dimensional Model based on critical discourse analysis (CDA) by Farahzad’s Model (2009) has been adopted as a research methodology. This model is based on the notion of intersexuality; it investigates the relationship between meta-text and proto-text on three levels i.e. textual, paratextual, and semiotic.

*Figure 02 shows the graphical representation of Farahzad's Model of Translation Criticism.*

![Figure 02: Farahzad's Model (2009) of Translation Criticism](image)

**DATA DISCUSSION**

The researcher has taken data from the book “Shina Soeno Mishtay Mori” (Golden Saying of Shina Language) Iqbal (2011). The author has compiled and translated proverbs into Urdu language. However,
there are 302 proverbs but present study analyzes only 18 proverbs which cause gender imbalance in society.

### 4.1 Micro Level

**Extract. 1, (Iqbal 2011, p.38)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.T</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>آجی زمرک بابوبن بابوزمرک کوگ. لش</td>
<td>کی یتنی کہ لیے باب، باب.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Translation: To beat mother there is father but there is none to beat father.

Interpretation: When there is an absolute authority and no one is there to control him then such proverbs are articulated. It there is father to ask mother but there is none to ask father.

The extract has been taken from the preface book on Shina proverbs “Shina Soeno Mishtay Mori” (Golden Saying of Shina Language) by Iqbal (2011,p 38). The text has ideational, interpersonal as well as textual meaning. In translation women have been declared as subordinate and men have been used as authoritative. The word, ammi kipitaie (to beat mother) matlaq ul anan (absolute authority) maan, ghar (Home) baap (father) are ideologically important. It reflects the position of women in Shina society.

The translated text reflects the position of men in Shina society where they are, matlaq ul anan (absolute authority). This implicates the patriarchal ideology of Shina society where men have all powers to take decisions while women are powerless, helpless, reliant, and dependent on men.

This Translated Text analysis reflects the position of women as subordinates and men are absolute authority which is destined by the patriarchal society. This shows that, in Shina society women are treated as subordinate and sometimes they become victims of violence and oppression of their husbands. As a wife, a woman has to bear all this violence because she is subordinate to him and if she (wife) commits any mistake or shows any disobedience, her husband possesses all rights and authority to beat her. The Shina society maintains this patriarchal structure through proverbs and their translation where men are at the pinnacle of patriarchal structure and women are at the lowest stair. This hierarchy and imbalance, in Shina society, that has been maintained through various tools and translation of proverbs is the
most effective tool to validate this ideology. This translation of proverbs not only produces and maintains patriarchal ideology but also strengthens and continues the same because translator belongs to male strata of the society which creates and sustains this dichotomy. The text is a true reflection of Shina patriarchal society where men are considered as an absolute authority and they have to make decisions at home and outside home. As heads of their home, they possess all the powers and exercise this authority and they are not answerable to anybody even if they commits any mistake or do something wrong, lakinghar may baap say kon pochay gha. (There is no boss to ask father). It also reflects status of men as compare to women in shina society. A Woman, as a wife is treated as subordinate that cause her exploitation. It can be observed in translated text that man (husband) can even beat her because he is authoritative, baap ki pitae kay liey koi nahi. Here, a man acts as an agent in the proverb while woman is passive and an object. Khoshsaligh (2013) states, “every text is prone to be ideologically manipulated and translators' implicit mediation has to be expected”.

Extract. 2, (Iqbal 2011, p.41).

| Translation: The blood of two sotans (two wives of a person) never mixes in the river. | T.T: مطلب: ایک مرد کی دو بیویاں آپس میں سوکن کبھی نہیں ہوسکتی۔ Wives of a person can never be united. |
| Interpretation: Two sotan (two wives of a person) can never be united. | بوسکتا |

The translator uses subjunctive mood. The words, Sotan (relation between two wives of a person is termed as sotan) as subject, and in kay darmiyan itafaq nahi ho sakta, نہیں بوسکتا کے درمیان کبھی اتفاق (can never be united) is predicate. It is ideologically important.

The analysis of the text shows the behavior of the text that implicates certain ideology. Shina culture considers woman, belligerent and quarrelsome. The sotan’s nature has been related to khoon. اخون. (blood will never mix in the river). It shows that two wives of a person can never be united. This also shows that women are considered cantankerous and they do not tolerate each other.

It reveals that women possess abhorrence for each other. In patriarchal societies like Shina, bad qualities of women are highlighted and good qualities are concealed.
Although men also fight with each other yet only women, especially of sotans, (two wives of a person) have been exposed.

Extract. 3, (Iqbal 2011, p.56).

The translator has used word widow as subject and the predicate states negative traits of women. The words, hirso tama حرص وطمع (greediness) Islam اسلام and azad آزاد (free), both are ideologically important.

Shina society is deeply rooted in patriarchal norms where women are considered inferior to men. They are described by their negative traits and they are not given freedom. They are considered greedy and their freedom may cause disastrous impact in a society. The translator quotes religion but he does not give any reference to justify it. Islam has given distinct and eminent position to women in the society as mother, sister, wife, daughter and it has never made restrictions on women exclusively. And for women are rights over men similar to those of men over women. (Quran 2:228).o mankind fear your lord who has created you from a single soul, then from it created its mate and from these two spread the countless men and women(Quran 4:1 we created you from the male and female and have made nation and tribes that you may know one another. Indeed the most noble of you from Allah’s perspective is whosoever has the most Taqwa (the most righteous of you. (Quran 39:13). Secondly, the concept of freedom used by the translator is also ambiguous as translator has not clarified his concept of freedom and what does he mean by saying اسلامی رو سے عورت کو عورت کے کسی حصے میں بھی آزاد نہیں. جہڑنا جاچیۓ if he means freedom in terms of veil. Islamic teaching and commandments on veil are not confined to women. It is for both strata of the society and Islam has exhorted on both men and women to observe veil. In Shina society, a widow is not only considered greedy but also treated as a bad omen and unlucky.
In Shina society, when a woman becomes a widow, she is considered to be bad omen and unfortunate, she is looked down upon by the society and her actions are observed critically. She is considered voracious, tma or hirs ziada hoti hay (greediness). This text reflects the way a widow is treated in Shina patriarchal society. The translated text reflects patriarchal ideology of translator which influenced him.

**Excerpt. 4, (Iqbal 2011, p.64)**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.T.</th>
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<tr>
<td>Women have no religion</td>
<td>ترجمه: عورت کا کونی منصب نہیں</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interpretation: It is said because of women’s nature. As they are easily influenced by the new environment and adapt to it.</td>
<td>مطلب: عورتوں کی خاصیت کی وجہ سے کبھی جاتا ہے کہ وہ جلد بھی کسی کے نئے ماحول سے متاثر ہوکر اس میں ذہن جاتا ہے.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The proverb has covert meaning. The use of lexical choices i.e. Naey mahol (new environment), khusosyt خاصیت (characteristic) wratoon،(women) mutasir متاثر (influence) a and translational choices are also ideologically important.

Shina society is embedded in patriarchal customs where men are at the pinnacle of hierarchy while women are at the lowest step of the ladder of patriarchy. Women do not have even the freedom to choose their own religion. They are supposed to adopt the religion of their husbands. They show a flexible attitude and coup accordingly.

This text has tremendous ideological implications. Women are not even given the right to decide the religion of their own choice. Her husband decides her religion. The translator tries to justify patriarchal norms by accusing women as by default they are easily influenced and impressed by the new environment, awratoo کی خاصیت کی وجہ سے کبھی جاتا ہے. (it is told just because of the nature of women) In fact, women have no authority to decide their religion. They adopt religion of their parents until they are at parents’ home when married their religious ideology is decided by her husband. They are bound to follow the religion of their husbands. This shows the position of women in Shina society. It also reflects the position of translator and his lexical and translational choices that further strengthen constructed discourse against women in Shina society.
It seems derogatory term against women. The Words, awrat (woman) and kamaqal, کم عقل (dim witted) are ideologically important. In Shina society women are considered dim witted. They are not involved in decision regarding the matters; both domestic and well as social. It is deemed that they are incapable of taking decision making. They lack sagacity and wisdom to handle any situation. This shows that the society is profoundly rooted in patriarchal norms where women are regarded as inferior to the psychologically and intellectually.

**FINDINGS**

In response to the first question, data were analyzed and investigated to determine the role of translation of proverbs in construction of gender asymmetry in Shina society. The analysis of data revealed that Shina society creates hierarchy and imbalance through various proverbs and its translation.

Shina patriarchal society considers women as incapable. It is thought that their suggestions are not fruitful. (Iqbal, 2011, p.49)

Translation: A helpless poor woman who remains confined to home. She is economically dependent on her husband as wife. (Iqbal, 2011, p.15)

Translation: There is no source except her husband. She is
receiver, object and passive. (Iqbal, 2011 p.15)

Translation: She deserves all kinds of facilities. She has to accept her husband as king. She is supposed to act as a slave and accept his order (Iqbal, 2011 p.16).

Translation: It is obligatory on wife to accept her husband as crown of her head and head of family. She must not show disobedience except in religious obligation. Her status is not more than a slave in Shina society (Iqbal, 2011 p.17).

Translation: Two person’s prayers are not accepted, firstly, the slave who is runs away from his master’s home. Secondly, the woman who shows disobedience to her husband. In fact, Shina society socialized a girl to become women. It shows that gender is socially constructed not fixed or natural (Iqbal, 2011 p.17).

Translation: If you expect courteous behavior from your daughter-in-law and good cooking, teach your daughter to be good cooks. She is not treated as inferior to male (husband) but some time she becomes victim of physical violence on her and she accept it as subordinate (wife). (Iqbal, 2011 p.38)

Translation: To beat mother there is father but there is none to beat father.

Men are considered absolute authority and they are not answerable to anybody. (Iqbal, 2011 p.38)

Translation: When there is an absolute authority and no one is there to control him then such proverbs are articulated. It means that there is father to ask mother but there is none to ask father. Shina patriarchal society consider woman quarrelsome. (Iqbal, 2011 p.41)
Translation: The **bloods** of two sotan (two wives of a person) will never mix in the **river**.

As a divorce woman, she is looked down upon by the men and no one agrees to marry her (Iqbal, 2011 p.42).

Translation: marry a woman who has become widow twelve times but never marry a **divorced** one. She is considered bad charter, discourteous and bad tongue (Iqbal, 2011 p.42).

Translation: Women are usually divorced because of their **bad tongue**, **discourteous nature** and bad character.

Shina, the male dominant society, considers women as unfaithful(Iqbal, 2011 p.44).

Translation: Two things can never be yours. Therefore, don’t trust any **unfaithful woman** and second an **adopted child**. She is treated as contaminate thing and associated her with very humble creature like lice. She had to do work even when she is pregnant or soon after delivery of child (Iqbal, 2011 p.49).

Translation: Do not call two **women** for **work** (a) A woman who has lice in her head (b) A woman who has given birth to a child.

In Shina patriarchal society, wives are younger and less educated as compared to their husband. This disparity causes her subordination in Shina society (Iqbal, 2011 p.51).
Translation: It is also mustahab (to see her before wedlock and it is mustahab that wife must be younger than her husband and it is also mustahab that wife must be less educated and low in status than husband. Otherwise, she will not bow before her husband and will not remain fidel to him. In Shina patriarchal society, women are expected to act as subordinate and follow men (Iqbal, 2011 p.55).

In Shina andocentric society, women are considered greedy (Iqbal, 2011 p.56).

Shina society, believes that women can easily be tempted and they (wives) have to accept religion of their men (husbands) (Iqbal, 2011 p.64).

In Shina patriarchal society, she feels fear and uncertainty. Even mother of several children is apprehensive that she maybe divorced at any time so she feels homelessness as a wife (Iqbal, 2011 p.64).

In Shina society, the character of women is judged before marriage but there no criteria for men to judge them before marriage (Iqbal, 2011 p.12).

Translation: Always notice following
The proverbs selected for discussion and analysis reflects negative traits of women that they are helpless, burden, emotional, reliant, bad tempered, greedy, cantankerous, quarrelsome, unfaithful, lack ability to govern, coquettish, dim witted, inconsistent, source of sorrow, gullible. This patriarchy is sustained through the Urdu translation of proverbs that is one of the most effective devices to strengthen patriarchal norms. In this system, men dominate women and they decide their destiny. Once she gets marry, she is considered property of her husband, who governs her as a demi god. She has to accept even the sect or religion of her husband as the proverb (Iqbal, 2011 p.64) states. In this society, patriarchal norms favor men in decision making and governing at home and outside home.

CONCLUSION WITH RECOMMENDATIONS:

The study was sought to unveil the way society discursively construct gender role through translation of proverbs. To achieve this objective, the researcher had adopted Farahzad’s Model (2009) of Translation Criticism as a methodology, to achieve aims and objective of the thesis. The data was discussed after meticulous examining the source text and translated text. The data discussion revealed that Proverbs are part of language that causes gender imbalances in Shina Society. Translation of proverb is very effective for creation of asymmetrical relations in Shina patriarchal society.

Shina society is deeply rooted in patriarchal norms where gender disparities are common. This gender inequality not only creates dichotomy but also become cause of exploitation of women in Shina society.

The findings revealed that in androcentric Shina society, unlike men, women are considered, incapable, helpless, reliant, dependent, passive, inferior, cantankerous, quarrelsome, greedy, bad charter, discourteous, bad tempered, unfaithful, subordinate, burden, dim witted, gullible, emotional and untrustworthy. The study also revealed that the ideology of the translator greatly influenced the process of translation that was reflected through translational choices i.e lexical, grammatical and illustration of translated text. This research gives critical insight regarding gender in Shina society. It is contribution to research on gender studies of Shina society in particular and translation studies, cultural, women studies, and gender studies in general. There is a dire need to reform shina language. Such proverbs which create discrimination and schism on the basis of gender need to be discouraged. There is a dire need to deconstruct existing proverbs and construct
such proverbs and stories which truly define the role and status of women in the society. Role of Government, religious scholars social thinker is decisive in this regard. Every concerned institution and individual needs to play role to create gender balance in the society.

REFERENCES


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