



CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING PASHTO NON- LITERARY TEXT INTO ENGLISH: A CASE STUDY OF 'JWAND BADLAWUNKI Khabary' (LIFE CHANGING TALKS)

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Abstract

This study examines the challenges of translating Pashto non-literary text into English, focusing on Noor Muhammad Ahmadzi's Jwand Badlawunki Khabary (Life-Changing Talks). Using Nida's dynamic equivalence (sense-for-sense) theory, the research identifies linguistic, cultural, and structural difficulties and explores effective strategies. Through qualitative analysis of selected passages, the study shows that literal translation often produces unnatural and unclear results, while dynamic equivalence helps preserve meaning, cultural nuance, and readability. The findings highlight the need for translators to adapt sentence structures, handle repetition thoughtfully, and convey moral and cultural messages appropriately. This research extends the application of Nida's theory to non-literary texts and emphasizes the importance of cultural and linguistic awareness in Pashto-English translation.

Keywords: *Dynamic Equivalence, Nida, Non-Literary Text, Pashto-English Translation, Translation Challenges*

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1. Introduction

Translation is the process of transferring written or spoken words from a source language into a target language. It is the replacement of words from one language into another language with the same message (Ali and Imran, 2023). Similarly, translation is not only the procedure of converting the words of one language into another language but also a complicated process that includes an understanding of the ideas, cultures, and societies of both source and target languages (Munday, 2022). Related to this, translation studies as a subject focuses on various types of texts, such as literary and non-literary texts, and how they are translated. Translation studies have been identified as an important area of study. Both literary and non-literary translations are important branches of translation studies.

On one hand, literary translation refers to the process of changing the written works of one language into another language with the preservation of artistic and stylistic attributes. The written works of the source language in the target language can be novels, plays, and poems. This type of translation emphasizes tone and the cultural context of the original work (Fiveable, n.d.)

On the other hand, non-literary translation refers to the translation of written or spoken facts, ideas, events, reality, and documents from the source language into the target language. This type of text is based on the world of facts, reality, information, and events. It is functional and informative; the purpose is to convey the message accurately and correctly. It also consists of legal documents, business reports, technical manuals, and scientific articles (Newmark, n.d.). However, both literary and non-literary texts face many challenges when they are translated from one language into another.

In addition, the challenges of literary translation have been categorized into three parts such as linguistic, cultural, and human challenges. Linguistic challenges include sentence structures, word meanings, sounds, and the use of language in context. Similarly, cultural challenges are the presence of words, phrases, and even ideas that do not have equivalent words in other cultures. So, it becomes very difficult for a translator to express the message of one language into another language. Finally, human challenges in literary translation are the dominance of one language over another, insufficient training systems for translators, and the negligence of the government in this field of study (Yousef, 2012). Connected to this, Non-literary translation also faces various challenges when the message of one language changes into another language.

Furthermore, challenges in non-literary translation comprise linguistic and cultural competence, structural differences, machine translation, and cultural terms. Anyway, linguistic and cultural competence, structural differences, machine translation, and cultural terms are those challenges that can be overcome when a translator is familiar with the above challenges and has knowledge about source and target languages (Barrer, 2019). Pashto literary and non-literary texts also face challenges when they are translated as a source text into the target language.

The current study aims to find out the challenges faced by Pashto non-literary texts in translating them into the English language. The study translates and analyzes Pashto non-literary text, “Jwand Badlawunki Khabary”, to explore the challenges faced by Pashto non-literary texts in translation. The study applies Nida’s approach of sense-for-sense translation.

1.1. Research Objectives

The current study tends:

1. To identify the challenges in translating Pashto Non-literary Text into English:
2. To examine the impacts of differences in the translation process.
3. To evaluate the effectiveness of Nida’s sense-for-sense translation approach in addressing the challenges of translating Pashto non-literary text into English.

1.2. Research Questions

1. What are the challenges faced by Pashto non-literary texts in translating into English?
2. How do differences in translation impact the process of translation?
3. How can Nida’s sense-for-sense translation approach help in overcoming challenges in translating Pashto non-literary text into English?

2. Literature Review

Several studies have been conducted on Pashto literary and non-literary texts into English.

Khan et al. (2021) conducted their research on ‘a study of English translation of Pashto poems’. The researchers investigated the use of metaphors as being profoundly connected to Pashtun culture. They stated that many metaphors change their meanings (or

lose them) because sometimes the English language cannot express the same expressions. The direct translation of Pashto metaphors is a complex process. They found that translators make use of cultural equivalence and literal translation as basic strategies in translation to address challenges in translation. Similarly, they translated the metaphors word-for-word or searched for similar metaphors in the English language. They concluded that the rapid use of metaphors in the source text (in Pashto language) is due to cultural and social differences, and meanings are conveyed in Pashtun society in indirect and metaphorical ways.

Similarly, Muhammad, Khan, and Zaheer (2023) carried out their research on ‘An Analysis of (Pashto Idioms) Translation from Pashto into English’. Their study revealed that more idioms have been used in the Pashto language as a source text due to social and cultural distinctions, as idioms are used in that society to convey an indirect message. It was found that idioms have both denotative and connotative meanings in both Pashto and the English language. The similarities in idioms are universal, acceptable, and exist in all languages on account of the broader concept of idioms. Sometimes, idioms have the same concepts and meanings in both languages. Moreover, translating one language into another is the most complicated process; sometimes, translation in the target text does not convey the desired meaning as it does in the source language on account of cultures, values, and norms. They concluded that translation is a field of study that creates confusion and challenges for translators. More attention and understanding are required when idioms are translated. Additionally, idioms and proverbs are common in translation. Proverbs often do not translate directly from the source language into the target language. They are translated indirectly like idioms.

In this regard, Khan, Rauf, and Imran (2023) have analyzed Pashto proverbs and their English equivalents. They discovered that proverbs do not directly translate from one language into another; they carry historical and cultural context. To convey the intended meaning from the source language into the target language, cultural and historical understanding are important. Their study prioritized sense-for-sense translation in the translation of proverbs instead of literal translation. They concluded that both literal and sense-for-sense translations have been used in translating proverbs from one language into another. That is why translating one language into another based on one approach is challenging. There will be no natural flow in the target text if one approach is adopted.

In addition, Ahmad, Iqbal, and Irfan (2020) have examined ‘the various deforming tendencies in the selected poems of Abdul Ghani Khan’s poetry translated into English by Imtiaz Ahmad Sahib Zada’. They found many challenges in translating Pashto poems into English. They called those challenges by the name of deforming tendencies. They found

that the meaning of a phrase sometimes leads to misunderstanding due to semantic shifts. Secondly, syntactic change in the sentence avoids natural flow and originality in the translated text. Thirdly, the musicality, rhythm, and melody of the poems are not preserved. They conclude that the above challenges affect the natural flow, originality of meaning, and musicality in the translated poems. They suggested that translators should be careful to maintain the original meaning, rhythm, and artistic quality of poetry in the target text.

The current study aims to find out the challenges faced by Pashto text in translating into the English language. The study translates and analyzes the Pashto non-literary text “Jwand Badlawunki Khabry by Noor Muhammad Ahmadzi to explore the challenges faced by Pashto texts in translation. The study will apply Nida’s approach to translation. The focus of this study will be on sense-for-sense transition. This study will also explore the strategies for the improvement in translation.

2.1. Rationale of the Study

Pashto is considered one of the major languages in the world. It is spoken dominantly in Afghanistan and Pakistan. It has a significant role in the media business and communication (Wala, n.d.). Despite its significance, Pashto literary and non-literary texts face challenges when they are translated as a source text to the target language (Barrer, 2019). Moreover, Pashto language contains unique grammar, borrowed vocabulary, various dialects, and cultural aspects; understanding these aspects is important for a translator to ensure accuracy and fidelity in translation. Similarly, certain proverbs and idioms in the Pashto language do not have a direct translation, but they need a meticulous interpretation. It also has a lack of articles, differences in sentence structures, and the sentence starts from right to left as compared to other languages. This study identifies various challenges in Pashto language translation and explores strategies for the improvement of accuracy and comprehension. As noticed in the previous studies, both literary and non-literary texts have been analyzed in translation studies, such as metaphors and translation: a study of English translation of Pashto poems (Khan, Khan and Iqbal, 2023), proverb: an analysis of translation from Pashto to English (Khan, Rauf and Imran, 2023), translation from Pashto to English: An Analysis of deforming tendencies in the English translation of Abdul Ghani Khan’s poetry (Ahmad, Iqbal and Irfan, 2020), but there is no research on the topic ‘Challenges in Translating Pashto Non-literary Text into English: A Case Study of ‘Jwand Badlawunki Khabari’. This study brings novelty by finding the challenges and strategies in Pashto translation into English. In previous studies, only proverbs, idioms, metaphors, and novellas have been analyzed. This study analyzes

the entire non-literary text, which is totally different from other research in translation studies.

2.2. Research Limitations

Despite its significance, this study has different limitations. First, the focus of the study is limited to the non-literary text ‘Jwand Badlawunki Khabary (Life Changing talks) by Noor Muhammad Ahmadzi. It does not analyze other Pashto non-literary texts. Second, the study only applies Nida’s Sense-for-Sense Translation Approach; the study overlooks other approaches in translation studies. Third, the study analysis is limited to the analysis of the researcher only; other researchers can come up with other theories and analyses. Lastly, the study focuses only on one dialect; all dialects are not included.

2.3. Research Delimitations

Certain delimitations have been set to manage and maintain the scope of the study. The study examines only one non-literary text of the Pashto language; other non-literary texts of Pashto are excluded. Moreover, it applies only a single approach of Nida’s sense-for-sense translation; other theories are not applied to the study. Similarly, the study delimits to explore challenges and differences related to Pashto into English translation only. The researcher has selected some text based on the understanding of the readers.

3. Research Methodology

The present study is qualitative. The qualitative method is utilized in order to collect non-numerical data, such as text, video, and audio, for a better understanding of expressions, ideas, and opinions. It can generate new ideas for research and gather in-depth insight into it (Alamgir, Waqar, and Haq, 2023).

The present study will analyze the challenges in translating Pashto non-literary text ‘Jwand Badlawunki Khabary (Life Changing Talks) by Noor Muhammad Ahmadzi into English. The study will investigate how Pashto non-literary text is translated into English with original maintenance, the cultural significance of meaning, and how sense-for-sense translation is helpful as compared to other approaches of translation. The study will not only identify the challenges but will also find out the strategies to overcome challenges in translation from Pashto into English. The study will apply Nida’s sense-for-sense translation approach, also known as Dynamic Equivalence, to examine the significance of sense-for-sense translation, challenges, and strategies in translation from Pashto into English.

Nida's sense-for-sense translation approach, or dynamic equivalence, focuses on the natural flow of the text and the original meaning. It emphasizes sense-for-sense translation instead of word-for-word translation. It is because word-for-word translation focuses on structures and avoids natural flow and original meaning in the target text (Nida, 1964).

Moreover, the study will examine three kinds of aspects in the text in detail:

1. Linguistic challenges: The study will analyze structural differences between English and Pashto language and their impacts on translations. The following differences will be deeply explored, such as morphological, syntactic, and lexical challenges.
2. Cultural and Contextual Barriers: The study will investigate the ways of translating cultural expressions and idioms into English and strategies for the preservation of intended meanings from the source text into the target text.
3. Translational Strategies: The study will evaluate valid strategies in translating Pashto text into English based on Nida's sense-for-sense translation approach to overcome challenges in translation.

To sum up, based on Nida's sense-for-sense translation approach, the study will contribute to the field of translation studies to examine, investigate, and find out cultural, linguistic, and translational aspects in the selected text in translating Pashto into English to maintain the original meaning and overcome challenges.

3.1. Research Gap

Literal and non-literal texts have been examined and translated from Pashto into English in previous studies (Ali & Imran, 2023). Few researches have been conducted from Pashto literature into English, such as metaphors and translation: a study of English translation of Pashto poems (Khan, Khan and Iqbal, 2023), proverb: an analysis of translation from Pashto to English (Khan, Rauf and Imran, 2023), Translation from Pashto to English: An Analysis of Deforming Tendencies in the English Translation of Abdul Ghani Khan's Poetry (Ahmad, Iqbal and Irfan, 2020), particularly using sense-for-sense translation, but there is no research on the topic 'Challenges in Translating Pashto Non-literary Text into English: A Case Study of 'Jwand Badlawunki Khabari. This study will bring novelty by finding the challenges and strategies in Pashto translation into English. In previous studies, only proverbs, idioms, metaphors, and novellas have been analyzed. This study will analyze the entire non-literary text, which is totally different from other research in translation studies.

4.Data Analysis

په هر مجلس او هر چيرته چي کيني د هغه مجلس خبري په بل مجلس يا بل خای کي مه وايه لکه څنگه چي يو څوک په امانت ډول تاته يو څه درکړي، د هغه څيز ساتنه پر تا لازم دی همدرانگه د بل چادر از او خبرو ساتل هم پر تا امانت دی. (صفحه 3)

Translation

When you sit, whether in a meeting or elsewhere, do not share the conversation of one gathering in another. As someone entrusts you with something as a trust, you must safeguard it; similarly, you are also responsible for guarding their words and secrets.

Analysis

The translation is based on sense-for-sense translation and aligned to Nida's sense-for-sense translation. The translation conveys the original message of the source text into the target language. To keep natural flow in the target text, the translator avoided repetitive words in translation, such as څيز ، خبری ، مجلسونه (gathering, conversation, something). Repetition is one challenge in Pashto translation into English. According to Nida's theory of translation, repetition must be avoided during translation to maintain natural flow in the text.

ناکامی دا نده چي ته خپل هد ف ته ونه رسيږي بلکي ناکامي هغه ده چي هيڅ هد ف ونلري.-(صفحه 11)

Translation

This is not failure when you fail to achieve your goal, but the real failure is when you do not have any goal.

Analysis

The above sentence preserves the original meaning and transfers the intended meaning. The sentence has been translated sense for sense instead of word for word due to the preservation of original meaning. In this sentence, the word “ناکامی” (failure) has been repeated and not omitted. Here, the repetition is for the sake of emphasis, stress, and emotional weight in the message. According to Nida's Theory of sense for sense translation, if the repetition or emphasis is to impress the readers, then the translator has to maintain it in the target text.

د ضايع شوي وخت په خاطر پېښماني لا نوره هم دوخت ضياع ده (صفحه 14)

Translation

Regretting over wasted time is also the waste of time.

Analysis

From a linguistic perspective, the structural difference can be seen in the two languages. In the above sample, we see that there is a repetition of the two words (e.g., (وخت ضياع... وخت) in the Pashto language; the repetition is for the sake of emphasis, however, if it does not affect the meaning in the target language, then the repetition is skipped. If it affects the original meaning, then it is included. For example, in English, the repetition reduces the natural flow of the sentence, and the sentence seems awkward. Anyway, to keep the original message and emphasize, the repetition was not skipped. According to Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence, a translator should focus on the meaning and its effect instead of the original structure and the copy of exact words.

که ته یو نارینه ته ښوونه وکړي ته یو انسان پوهوي ، خو که یوې ښځې ته تعلیم ورکړي ته یوه کورنۍ پوهوي. (صفحه 24)

Translation

If you educate a man, you educate a single person; if you educate a woman, you educate an entire family.

Analysis

The word 'person' has been used for translation instead of 'human'. The word 'person' clearly represents man only, while the word human represents both male and female. The word 'person' reflects the original message and preserves the intended meaning of the source text. Similarly, there is no semicolon in a Pashto sentence, but in the English translation semicolon is important for the clarity of meaning. It shows that the structural and grammatical changes of the Pashto language are different from English. Moreover, cultural and moral value is retained in this translation. Education is the duty of everyone for the development of a society. This reflects the cultural sensitivity encouraged by Nida's sense-for-sense approach, which prioritizes the effect and relevance of the message for the target audience. According to Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence, the effect of the source text is important to be felt in the target text.

د جگړې د لارې سوله راوستل یو بې معنا کار دي. (صفحه 30)

Translation

Bringing peace through war is meaningless.

Analysis

As per Nida's dynamic equivalence theory (1964), the function of the translator is to bring about in the target language the nearest natural equivalent of the source message, giving preeminence to meaning and effect rather than literal structural equivalence. Nida posits that the translation should seek equivalence of response rather than form equivalence alone so that the target audience receives and feels the message in much the same way as the original audience.

In this case, rendering the Pashto expression "د جگړې د لارې" literally into "by the way of war" would have created an unnatural and stilted English wording, perhaps diluting the message. The use of the idiomatic expression "through war" conforms to Nida's principle of maintaining naturalness and intelligibility in the receptor language while keeping intact the message intended.

In addition, Nida stresses that cultural and moral messages within the source text need to be conveyed in forms that appeal to the target audience. The translation can maintain the moral criticism of attaining peace through violence — a culturally relevant as well as universally applicable message — using simple and understandable language.

غلط هدف ته درسيډو دپاره نيك عمل - (صفحه 45)
كول بي معنا كار دى

Translation

To achieve the wrong target by doing a good deed is meaningless.

Analysis

The structure is arranged according to the structure of English grammar. However, to grasp the natural flow and intended meaning, here the same structure of the Pashto language has been adopted. Nida's Theory of Dynamic Equivalence focuses on natural flow for clarity. On the other hand, from a cultural and contextual perspective, the moral lesson that good actions lose their value if aimed at the wrong objective is universal, and the translation effectively conveys this message to the target audience. Moreover, the translator avoided a literal word-for-word rendering like "for reaching a wrong target to do good deeds is meaningless", which would sound awkward. Instead, the translator prioritized meaning and rhetorical effect, which is consistent with Nida's advice to focus on the equivalence of response rather than the form.

5. Discussion and Findings

The examination of the translated passages from Jwand Badlawunki Khabary proves the validity and usability of Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence (sense-for-sense) principle in combating the linguistic and cultural issues faced while translating Pashto non-literary text into English. The following discussion consolidates these outcomes, discusses how they confirm or advance earlier research, and identifies the contribution of this research to translation practice and theory.

The findings yield insight into how linguistic difficulties mostly occur due to structural and morphological differences between Pashto and English. An example is the frequent occurrence of repetition for emphasis in the source text ("ناکامی ... ناکامی"), which would be redundant and awkward (if translated literally) in English. According to Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence principle, where meaning and effect matter, rather than form, the translator retained repetition if the purpose was rhetorical, and suppressed it if it was a case of readability. This is by Barrer's (2019) comment that structural and stylistic variations across languages naturally call for reorganization of sentence components and removal of repetition in order to ensure naturalness in the target language.

Similarly, in these sentences where Pashto lacks articles or adheres to right-to-left syntactic structures, the translator paraphrased the sentences according to English grammar, and they maintained the understanding that was intended. This is an application of Nida's (1964) "natural equivalence," where the translator achieves the closest natural wording in the target language, while not distorting the message of the source. Ahmad, Iqbal, and Ullah (2020) state that such syntactic adjustments are not only common but also required to attain fidelity and fluency in the translation.

The results also show that the text has important cultural and moral implications, including highlighting honesty, the importance of education for women, and the impossibility of attaining peace using violence. Cultural factors cannot be precisely offset in a literal sense (Nida 1964). For example, in the translated sentence "که ته یو نارینه ته ... بنوونه وکړي" (If you educate a man...), the translator replaced culturally appropriate equivalents and added punctuation (i.e., the semicolon) to try to better convey the overall intended meaning without losing the moral of the statement. This is in line with Nida's contention that equivalence of effect—how the intended audience receives the message—is before formal correspondence.

In the same way, in translating idiomatic and ethical phrases such as "د جگړې د لارې" "سوله راوستل یو بې معنا کار دي" (Bringing peace through war is meaningless), the translator

did not go for a literal translation ("by the way of war"), which would be stilted, but instead opted for "through war". This is echoed by Nida's (1964) focus that a translation should be meaningful and understandable in the target culture and language, even if doing so means abandoning the surface structure of the original. Muhammad, Khan, and Ullah (2022) also pointed out the difficulty of translating culturally rooted idioms and the need for interpretive approaches to maintain their effect.

The translation methods witnessed in this research confirm the efficacy of dynamic equivalence in the translation of non-literary texts. In contrast to literary texts, whose aesthetic elements are frequently given the highest priority, non-literary texts require functionality, accuracy, and clarity (Newmark, n.d.). However, the analysis shows that even a non-literary text possesses cultural and rhetorical nuances that are amplified from meaning-to-meaning rendering. For example, the translation of "د ضایع شوي وخت په خاطر" (Regretting over lost time is also the loss of time), demonstrates how dynamic equivalence allows the translator to change word order and sentence structure while keeping to the moral of the original text.

This is in line with Khan, Rauf, and Imran (2023), who contended that neither cultural equivalence nor literal translation is enough but that translators must use flexible strategies that capture both meaning and impact. In this research, Nida's dynamic equivalence method allowed such flexibility as it allowed the translator to meet fidelity to the source and readability and acceptability in the target language (Ali & Imran, 2023).

This study expands the use of dynamic equivalence from the literary writings (poetry, proverbs, and idioms) researched in previous studies (Ahmad et al., 2020; Khan et al., 2021) to an entire non-literary text. It indicates that non-literary texts are also not exempt from cultural and rhetorical difficulties and are equally helped through a sense-for-sense method. As Munday and Vasserman (2022) pointed out, translation is not only a linguistic transfer but also a communicative act involving sensitivity to the expectations of the target audience.

In addition, the results indicate that strict insistence on formal equivalence can misrepresent meaning, create unnatural sentences, and distance the reader, problems that Nida (1964) attempted to solve by introducing his dynamic equivalence model.

The findings highlight the need to train translators to know when to leave cultural items intact and when to translate or reorder them. For Pashto-English translation, this means not just linguistic information but also knowledge of cultures and sensitivity to rhetorical purpose. As Ullah, Bibi, Ali, and Bibi (2023) noted, translators who rely on

literal or machine translation alone frequently miss the subtlety and spontaneity that dynamic equivalence accomplishes.

The discovery also accentuates the applicability of Nida's theory to religious and secular texts alike, showing that it is adaptable and still valuable in current translation practice (Waheedi, 2020).

6. Conclusion

The present study examined the difficulties of translating Pashto, non-literary text into English, using Noor Muhammad Ahmadzi's Jwand Badlawunki Khabary (1972) as a sample text. Then it assessed how the analysis could potentially be solved by referencing Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence (i.e., sense-for-sense) approach. Translating Pashto into English presents challenges that can be linguistic, cultural, structural, etc. The study evaluated how to overcome obstacles while simultaneously maintaining the meaning and effect of a source text. The study identified that Pashto to English translation, regardless of whether the text is literary or not may present significant hurdles from a linguistic perspective, as there are differences in the structure of sentences; there are morphological difficulties; the order of word elements can be challenging; and there is often more Emphasis planned through Repetition, not just at the word or phrase level, but at the level of Completeness or Totality of ideas expressed in the text. Cultural challenges of meaning also arose, particularly the concepts of Morality, as implied or expressed culturally in this text. A literal translation of the text into English did not succeed in expressing Meaning in an English pedagogical context: Literal translation did not convey Meaning that clearly expressed an educational, professional context of learning. Although each of these modes was either meaningless or unnatural in a phrase-for-phrase translation, Nida's use of sense-for-sense proved to work in planning a message that conveyed the Meaning in such a way as to ensure the Text's understanding was as meaningful, culturally related, and natural to the target audience! After examining the selected excerpts, it became clear that retaining repetition, revising word choices, restructuring sentence structures, and interpreting cultural concepts-all consistent with Nida's principle of equivalence of effect led to a more faithful and reader-friendly translation. The translator's selections have shown the necessity of considering the reader's knowledge and emotional response above the strict following of form.

6.1. Limitations and Recommendations.

While this research confirms the use of dynamic equivalence, it only tested one text and one methodology. Future research may test different models using dynamic

equivalence, for example, Skopos theory or functional equivalence. It may also be beneficial to compare dynamic equivalence with results that emerge from machine translation (e.g., Ullah et al., 2023).

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