

Translational analysis of the Urdu and English Translated poetry of Parveen Shakir



Muhammad Ahmad M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, NCBA&E University Bahawalpur

Rafia Bilal M.Phil Scholar, Department of English, NCBA&E University Bahawalpur

Dr. Muhammad Arfan Higher Education Department (Collegiate Wing) Punjab, Pakistan
Lodhi samaritan_as@hotmail.com

Abstract: Translation is a kind of cross-linguistic, cross-cultural and cross-social communication. As a kind of communication, main purpose of translation is nothing but to maintain equivalence between Source Text and Targeted text. Source text and targeted text equivalence maintained by translator with respect to different domains such as literary, pragmatic and cultural but it is not as easy as someone thinks. It comprises of multiple layers of unstated meanings and contexts that are at play in literature, especially in poetry. Hence, the study aims to conduct a quality analysis of translated work of Parveen Shakir poetry of only 10 poems as sample from whole population through literary, pragmatic and cultural analysis that is translated by Naima Rashid in 2019 and a published work by the name of “Defiance of the rose”. An integrated framework of analysis used in the light of different theories of translation for analysis of equivalence between source text (Urdu poems) and English translated text at different level. Thus, to appreciate the aesthetics of poetry and translation, current study not only highlighted the literary, pragmatic and cultural features of Source text and Translated text, but also lead to a sensible conclusion that unveils the ‘Partial to distal equivalence’ present between source and translated text. It was also found that Literary and pragmatic features are ‘distally equivalent’ to some extent, nevertheless cultural features are ‘partially equivalent’ between ST and TT. The study concludes with the findings that translator has well justifiably translated the Urdu origin poetry of Parveen Shakir.

Keywords: Translational Studies; Literary; Pragmatic equivalence; Cultural equivalence; Parveen Shakir’s Poetry

1. Introduction

Parveen Shakir, a distinguished Urdu poetess, is celebrated for her evocative and introspective poetry that resonates deeply with readers both in Urdu-speaking regions and around the globe. As her work garnered international acclaim, the necessity for translations into various languages, including English, became paramount, facilitating cross-cultural engagement with her art. This research aims to explore the concept of literary pragmatics within the context of English translations of Shakir’s poetry. It will focus on

the notions of equivalence and the differences that arise during the translation process, delving into the complexities involved in rendering her verses into English. By examining how pragmatic elements are preserved or altered in translation, this study seeks to illuminate the intricacies of conveying Shakir’s unique voice and emotional depth. Many previous studies, such as Shafiq (2019) exploration of the poet’s voice, emphasize the challenges faced in translating Shakir’s works. Bhatia’s analysis further highlights the critical importance of

maintaining the integrity of the poet's voice and the implications of translation choices on the pragmatic dimensions of her poetry. Additionally, Yamini & Abdi (2010) provided a critical evaluation of the English translations by Tahir-Kheli, scrutinizing how the nuances of Shakir's poetry are either conveyed or lost in translation. Their work underscores the necessity of preserving the rich pragmatic elements that define her original Urdu texts. Through this research, we aim to deepen our understanding of the complexities inherent in translating Parveen Shakir's poetry, ensuring that her profound artistic contributions continue to resonate across linguistic and cultural boundaries.

1.1 Background of the Study

Parveen Shakir, a renowned Pakistani poetess, has made a significant impact on Urdu poetry, particularly in the realm of love poetry. As a female Muslim poet, she emerged as a powerful voice for Pakistani women, articulating their experiences and desires during a tumultuous era marked by martial law under Zia ul Haq. Her poetry serves as an intimate dialogue with both herself and her cultural context, resonating deeply with readers. As her popularity soared, the demand for translations of her work into various languages, including English, became increasingly crucial for reaching a broader global audience. Research by Niknasab & Pishbin (2011) highlighted this growing interest, emphasizing the challenges inherent in translating poetry—specifically, the need to capture the intricate nuances, imagery, and cultural references embedded in the original text. Recent studies, such as those by Rashid (2019), delved into literary pragmatics, focusing on how language, meaning, and context interact in literary texts. This field is vital for understanding how pragmatic elements like metaphors and cultural allusions shape the emotional impact of poetry. Translating Shakir's work involves a delicate balancing act of preserving the aesthetic qualities of the original while making it accessible to new audiences. Pallavi & Mojibur (2011) and Alwazna (2017) stressed the importance of maintaining the poet's voice and the challenges translators face in

achieving equivalence; not just linguistically but also in terms of style and cultural significance. Locher & Sidiropoulou (2021) pointed out the need for focused research on the specific challenges of translating Shakir's poetry, as existing literature often overlooks this area. The complexities of poetic translation necessitate a thorough understanding of both linguistic and cultural intricacies, as well as the ability to recreate emotional resonance in the target language. In another study, Igwedibia (2018) explored these challenges through the lens of literary pragmatics, aiming to illuminate how translators can preserve the beauty and depth of Shakir's work. Ultimately, the process of translation is multifaceted, involving the transformation of the original text into a new linguistic and cultural context while striving to retain its essence. This intricate endeavor underscores the critical role of translation studies in bridging cultural divides and enhancing the appreciation of Parveen Shakir's profound contributions to literature especially in poetry.

1.2 Rationale of the study

The essence of poetry often lies in its original form, where the pleasure and delicacy of the words resonate deeply with readers. However, when translated into English, much of this richness can diminish, creating a gap in the authentic emotions conveyed by the poet. Understanding contextual, cultural, and pragmatic meanings is crucial; without grasping these elements, the true message of the poet remains elusive. Parveen Shakir, a renowned Pakistani poetess, captures themes of feminism, love, and the struggles of life in her work, which is a source of immense pleasure. Yet, the translations into English often fail to convey the full depth of her poetry. The significance of pragmatics and cultural understanding becomes paramount in appreciating her verses fully. Poetry shared readiness enhances its readability across cultures, enriching its beauty and depth. Therefore, research into the pragmatics and cultural nuances present in the English translations of Shakir's poetry is essential. This study aims to explore these critical aspects, guided by specific objectives and research

questions that address the challenges of translating her profound work.

1.3 Research Objectives

1. To explore the literary difference between the Urdu and English translated poetry of Parveen Shakir.
2. To identify the pragmatic aspects of the Urdu and English translated poems of Praveen Shakir.
3. To find out the Cultural related facts of Praveen Shakir poetry have found a meaningful Substitute in the translated version of Praveen Shakir poems.
4. To analyze the literary, Pragmatic and cultural similarities between Urdu and English translated poetry of Parveen Shakir.

1.4 Research Questions

1. What are the literary equivalence and difference between the Urdu and English poetry of Parveen Shakir?
2. How similar the Pragmatic aspects of the Urdu poems of Praveen Shakir have been dealt in English translation?
3. To what extent the culture-related facts of Parveen Shaker poetry have found a meaningful substitute in the translated version of Praveen Shakir poetry?
4. How do literary, Pragmatic and cultural similarities reflect the form and content in the selected source and translated text.

1.5 Significance of the Study

Parveen Shakir's poetry is renowned for its profound emotional depth and aesthetic beauty, making the analysis of its translation into English crucial for preserving these qualities. This preservation allows a wider audience to appreciate her artistry while also capturing the cultural nuances inherent in Urdu literature, thereby fostering cultural exchange between Urdu and English-speaking communities. Investigating the translation strategies employed reveals the challenges translators face, equipping them to maintain the authenticity and

essence of Shakir's work. Furthermore, this research significantly enhances the field of translation studies, particularly in literary pragmatics and poetic translation. It sheds light on the complexities of translating poetry, addressing the difficulties of maintaining equivalence and the impact of cultural and linguistic differences. By exploring how translation choices affect the reception and interpretation of Shakir's poetry in English, the study offers valuable insights for translators and publishers, ultimately facilitating better approaches to future translations with regard to poetry especially.

2. Literature Review

Translation Studies is a field focused on the theory, description, and application of translation (Baker, 2010). The Oxford English Dictionary (2011) defined translation as "the process of converting words or text from one language into another." Translational study introduced by Alexander Fraser Tytler, George Campbell, Roman Jakobson, Lawrence Venuti, and André Lefevere challenged traditional approaches to translation and contributed to cultural debates. It delves into their theories and approaches, such as Tytler's concept of domestication, Campbell's work on translating the Four Gospels, Jakobson's classification of translation, Venuti's "ethics of difference" and the concept of foreignization, and Lefevere's observations on cultural mapping in translation (Lefevere, 2016).

Translation studies encompass various theories aimed at understanding the translation process. Skopos Theory, developed by Hans Vermeer, emphasizes that translations should be guided by their intended function for the target audience, shifting focus from the source text to the purpose behind the translation. This functionalist approach aids in analyzing translation methods, particularly in contexts like online news articles, where understanding the skopos is crucial for effective communication (Jabir, 2006). Poly system Theory, introduced by Itamar Even-Zohar, posits that literature exists within interconnected social systems, influencing translation strategies based on the status of translated literature within a given culture. It

highlights the dynamic role of translation, which can vary depending on whether a literature is emerging or facing a crisis (Tianzhen, 2023). Davidson's Theory of Translation emphasizes the relationship between interpretation, meaning, and truth, advocating for the "principle of charity" to ensure coherent translations. Davidson also addresses the indeterminacy of translation, acknowledging that exact linguistic equivalences are often elusive, and stresses the importance of context and holistic understanding in the translation process (Rawling, 2023). Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS) focuses on analyzing translations, as they exist, without imposing value judgments. Developed by scholars like Gideon Toury, DTS examines the norms and contextual factors influencing translation practices, providing insights into how translations reflect and shape cultural identities (Hermans, 2019). The equivalence theory of translation seeks to establish a balance between the source text and the target text, emphasizing the importance of conveying the original text's meaning and effect in a culturally and linguistically appropriate manner. It encompasses various types of equivalence:

1. Linguistic Equivalence focuses on finding corresponding expressions in both languages, ensuring accurate representation of vocabulary, grammar, and syntax.
2. Textual Equivalence aims to maintain the style, tone, and register of the original, producing a similar effect on the target audience.
3. Functional Equivalence emphasizes preserving the communicative purpose of the source text, considering its context and intention.
4. Cultural Equivalence involves adapting cultural references and idiomatic expressions to ensure relevance and understanding in the target culture.

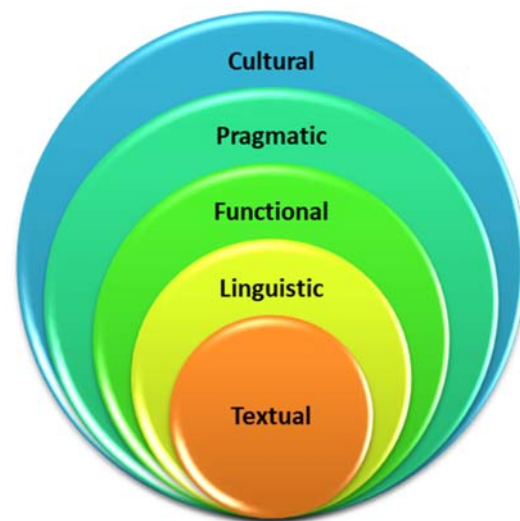


Figure 1: Types of Equivalence

While achieving complete equivalence in all aspects may be challenging, the theory guides translators to strive for high-quality translations (Panou, 2013). The concept of equivalence, as articulated by linguist Nida, highlights the need to navigate linguistic, cultural, and textual distances—variations that can complicate the translation process. Translators employ strategies such as paraphrasing, cultural adaptation, and reordering information to bridge these distances and effectively convey the source text's meaning in the target language. Overall, equivalence theory underscores the complexities of translation, balancing fidelity to the original with the necessity of cultural and contextual adaptation. In the field of translation studies, the concept of "distance" refers to the degree of separation or divergence between the source text (ST) and the target text (TT) in terms of linguistic, cultural, and communicative elements. The notion of distance plays a crucial role in shaping the translator's decisions and strategies when transferring meaning from one language and culture to another (Kawano et al., 2018).

Equivalence in translation is essential for accurately conveying the meaning, style, and tone of the source text in the target language, facilitating effective communication across languages and cultures. It preserves meaning, which is crucial for legal, technical, and academic texts, while also considering cultural nuances to maintain sensitivity and avoid

offense (Yinhua, 2011). A good translation reflects the original's style and tone, ensuring natural flow and accessibility for the target audience. In legal contexts, equivalence is vital for maintaining accuracy and legal weight. It also plays a significant role in branding and marketing, ensuring messages resonate across cultures (Beal, 2020). In literature, equivalence preserves the emotional and artistic qualities of the original text, enabling meaningful cross-cultural exchanges. Literary Equivalence involves conveying the same meaning, style, tone, and effect of a literary work (Alwafai, 2015). This complex task requires capturing nuances and cultural references (Nataliya, 2016). Translators face the choice between literal and liberal translations; the former focuses on exact wording, while the latter captures the essence and style (Baylarova, 2023). Techniques for achieving literary equivalence include transposition, modulation, cultural adaptation, compensation, free translation, transliteration, and literal translation.

Cultural Equivalence is crucial for retaining cultural information in translations, especially in literary texts (Buden et al., 2009). It involves analyzing language structures as cultural elements. Newmark describes culture as the way of life of a community, emphasizing that each language has distinct cultural characteristics. Bassnett (2013) noted that language and culture coexist, with linguistic concepts being part of a broader translation process. Cultural barriers can arise from lexical and pragmatic differences (Tabakowska, 2013), and translators act as bridges between cultures. Pragmatic Equivalence focuses on how language is used in real-life contexts to convey meaning beyond literal interpretations (Baker, 2006). Hatim (2014) emphasized understanding the purposes of utterances, leading to translation theories that prioritize functional approaches. Pragmatic equivalence involves implicatures and avoidance strategies, with House (2017) asserted on the importance of situational context in achieving functional equivalence. Khan & Bughio (2012) highlight the emerging role of pragmatics in linguistic analysis, noting its

interconnectedness with cognitive linguistics and discourse analysis, addressing complexities in translation.

A research on the semantic, pragmatic, and cultural transplanting aspects of the original and translated texts conducted by Wazir & Lodhi (2020) revealed that the expressiveness and sagacity of meaning are more apparent in the source text as compared to the targeted text. In another study, Ajmal et.al. (2024) indicated the cultural distance between source poetic text of Allama Iqbal and its translated text where the form sometimes lack the absolute meaning of the Urdu original poetic text. The source text has more essence than the translated version, and the translated text is regarded as having less essence than the source text. This is because the reader's true perception of the poetry in Urdu is not further present in the translated form of that text, and the source text's real essence is never present in it. Further, Tulkin et al. (2022) investigated the translation of Zahiriddin Babur's poetry into Russian by the competent specialist of Uzbek ancient literature Minevich Lev Penkovsky, as well as the unique discriminations of the translation process. The author emphasized the translator's attention to retaining form and content unity in the translated work, which correctly portrays the original in Russian. They remarked on Penkovsky's ability to reconstitute poetic components like as relief, sound symbolism, and classic rubaiyat rhymes. As a result, the translation conveys the rubaiyat's core theme, the lyrical hero's innermost emotional state, and historical facts. Furthermore, Penkovskiy has employed numerous artistic techniques and sources, such as repetitions, rhyme, rhythm and metaphors to effectively translate Rubais.

3. Research Methodology

The research employed a qualitative approach using an exploratory framework to investigate linguistic, pragmatic, and cultural equivalence in the poetry of Parveen Shakir. This method allows for a detailed examination of the complexities involved in translating her work, focusing on the nuances present in both Urdu and English (Wazir & Lodhi, 2020). The population of the study includes all the poetry of

Parveen Shakir that translated into English. The accessible population is provided by "Defiance of the Rose," which includes Shakir's original poems and their English translations by Naima Rashid in 2019. Sampling involved selecting 10 Urdu poems for a focused analysis, while data collection utilized primary texts and secondary sources to enrich the exploration. Validation of tools was ensured through expert feedback and

systematic data analysis, ultimately contributing to a comprehensive understanding of the poetic elements and cultural themes in Shakir's work.

3.1

Content Analysis Framework

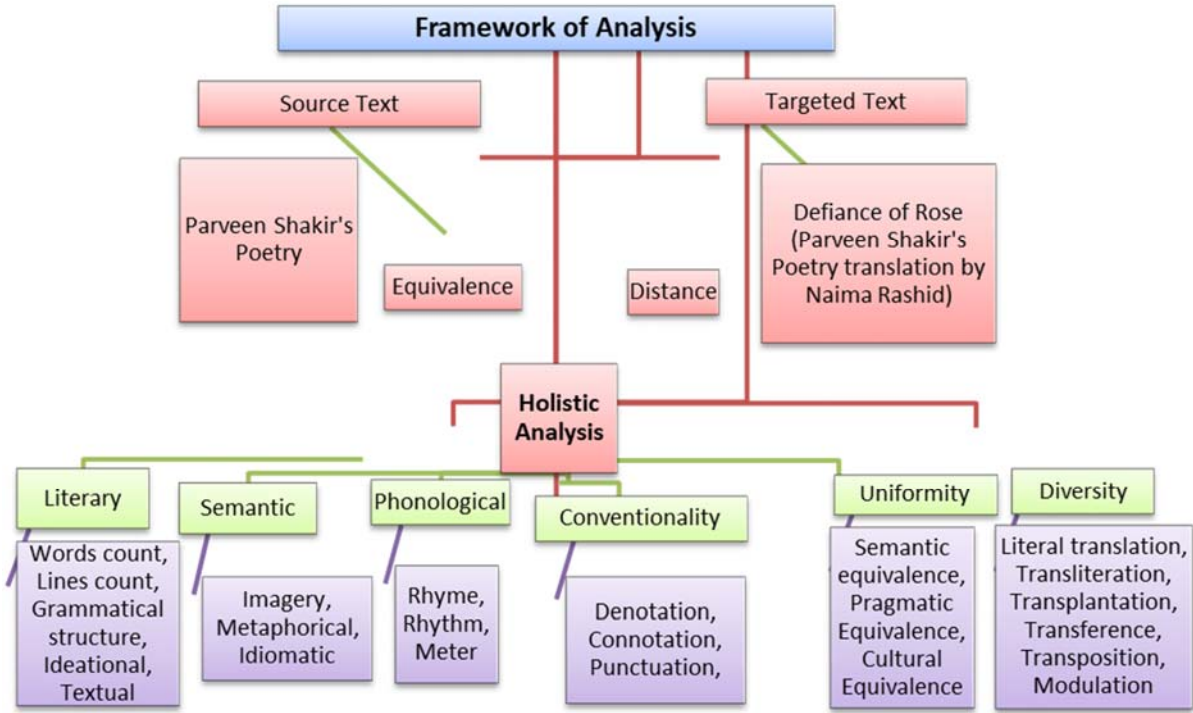


Figure 2 Framework of Analysis

3.2 Research Procedure

The researchers followed a systematic research procedure to analyze Urdu poems by Parveen Shakir and their English translations. Researcher selected 10 poems of Parveen Shakir's poetry in Urdu and their English translations through purposive sampling technique. The sample was determined to consider the cultural, linguistic, and pragmatic nuances present in the selected poems. Consequently, the study performed a detailed comparative analysis of the original Urdu poems and their English translations.

Examine the literal, pragmatic, and cultural equivalence and distance between the two versions. Identify instances where the translation successfully captures the essence of the original poem and where it falls short in conveying cultural nuances and poetic elements. In addition, cultural contextualization Explore the cultural, historical, and social contexts that influence the interpretation and translation of Parveen Shakir's poetry. Investigate how the cultural distance between Urdu-speaking and English-speaking audiences affects the reception of the translated poetry. The following table demonstrates the level of analysis.

Table 1: Level of analysis

Level of Analysis	Literary	Semantic	Phonological	Conventionality	Uniformity	Diversity
Elements	Words count, Lines count, Grammatical, Ideational, Textual	Imagery, Metaphorical , Idiomatic,	Rhyme, Rhythm, Meter	Denotation, Connotation, Punctuation	Semantic Equivalence , Pragmatic Equivalence , Cultural Equivalence	Literal Translation, Transliteration, Transplantation, Transference, Transposition, Modulation

4. Findings and Discussions

1. Literary Differences: The analysis reveals a nuanced interplay between the source texts (STs) and target texts (TTs), displaying a range of translation strategies. There is a blend of partial to proximal equivalence, with significant variations in word count and structural elements, indicating a thematic rather than strictly linguistic approach to translation.

2. Linguistic and Structural Equivalence: The study identifies proximal equivalence in linguistic elements, with many similarities in sentence and phrase structures. However, grammatical equivalence shows partial alignment, as subtle divergences in linguistic choices reflect the translators' balance between fidelity to the original and adaptation to the target culture.

3. Ideational and Textual Equivalence: The translations maintain proximal equivalence in central themes and ideas, with instances of strategic substitutions and selective omissions that enhance coherence while adapting to cultural contexts. This flexibility allows for a rich conveyance of meaning, although some textual features exhibit distal equivalence.

4. Imagery and Metaphorical Language: Both STs and TTs consistently employ similar types of imagery, with TTs sometimes expanding or adapting imagery for cultural relevance. This results in distal equivalence in imagery, while metaphorical language shows proximal equivalence, effectively capturing the original's conceptual associations.

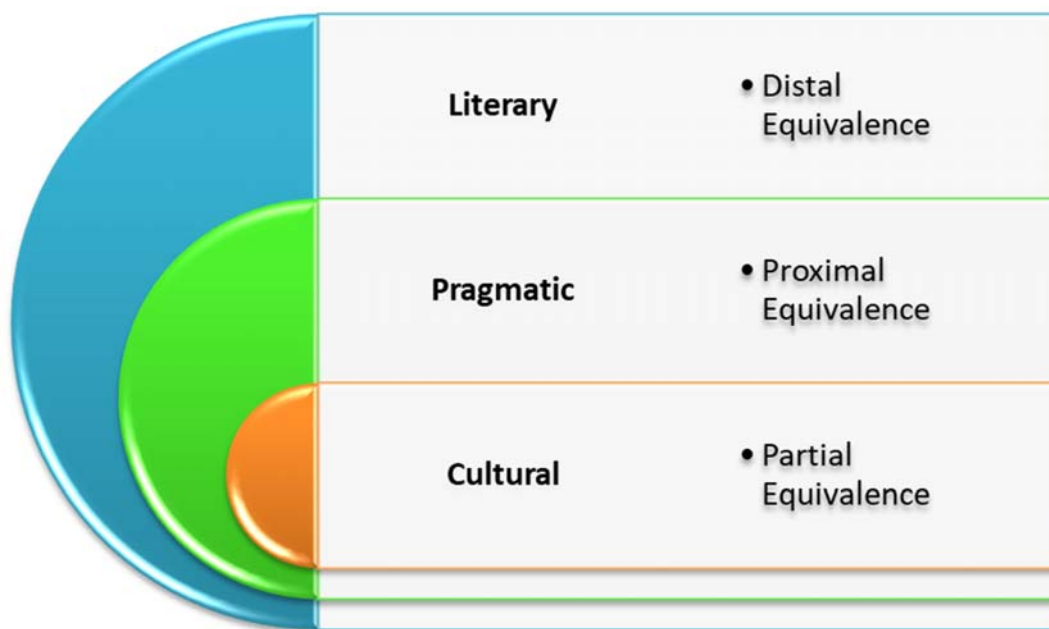


Figure 3. Findings of Equivalence

5. Idiomatic Expressions: The analysis indicates partial equivalence in idiomatic expressions, where translators often use alternative phrases to convey similar meanings, reflecting cultural nuances. Some idioms may be lost or adapted, highlighting the translators' skill in navigating linguistic differences.

6. Rhyme and Rhythm: The translated text (TT) exhibit remarkable variation in rhyme schemes and rhythmic patterns, with a tendency to enhance the poetic quality compared to the STs. This results in partial equivalence in rhythm, with some rhythmic devices introduced in the TTs that are absent in the STs.

7. Metrical Patterns and Prosody: The analysis reveals a range of metrical patterns, predominantly iambic, with variations indicating a sophisticated handling of prosodic differences between Urdu and English. This results in both partial and distal equivalence in meter.

8. Denotative and Connotative Meaning: The TTs capture both denotative and connotative meanings of the STs, achieving distal equivalence. Challenges in translating poetic nuances highlight the complexities of maintaining lyrical integrity.

9. Punctuation and Stylistic Choices: There is a predominant partial equivalence in punctuation usage, reflecting different stylistic conventions between the languages. Translators exercise discretion in punctuation to convey intended emotional resonance.

10. Cultural Equivalence: The translations exhibit distal equivalence with cultural references, incorporating relevant contexts while acknowledging some cultural elements may not fully transfer. There is a mix of semantic and inter-semiotic transference, indicating a thoughtful approach to cultural nuances.

Table 2: Summary of the findings at each Level

Category	Sub Category	Status
Literary Level	Words count	Partial Equivalence
	Lines Count	Distal Equivalence
	Grammatical Structure	Partial Equivalence
	Ideational	Proximal Equivalence
	Textual	Distal Equivalence
Semantic Level	Imagery	Distal Equivalence
	Metaphor	Proximal Equivalence
	Idiomatic	Partial Equivalence
	Rhyme	Partial Equivalence
	Rhythm	Partial Equivalence
	Meter	Distal Equivalence
Conventionality	Denotation	Distal Equivalence
	Connotation	Distal Equivalence
	Punctuation	Partial Equivalence

Uniformity	Semantic Equivalence	Distal Equivalence
	Pragmatic Equivalence	Proximal Equivalence
	Cultural Equivalence	Distal Equivalence
Diversity	Literal Translation	Partial Equivalence
	Transliteration	Distal Equivalence
	Transplantation	Proximal Equivalence
	Transference	Partial Equivalence
	Transposition	Partial Equivalence
	Modulation	Partial to Distal Equivalence

5. Justification of the Research Questions

Parveen Shakir's poetry has been extensively analyzed for its literary and linguistic intricacies, yet comparative studies between her original Urdu texts and their English translations remain limited (Peters, 2016; Gul & Afridi, 2022). Scholars like Peters (2011) and Kiran (2017) have noted that differences in literary features between Urdu and English translations are common. Igwedibia (2018) emphasized the challenges of preserving the aesthetic qualities and emotional resonance in translation, while the role of literary pragmatics is crucial in understanding the contextual meanings and cultural references in her work (Pallavi & Mojibur, 2018). Additionally, the effective translation of cultural elements is essential for maintaining authenticity (Anjum, 2016). Despite existing research on literary aspects, there is a notable gap in systematically examining the pragmatic and cultural dimensions of Shakir's poetry in translation. This study aims to explore these literary, pragmatic, and cultural similarities and differences, contributing to a deeper understanding of translation practices and the preservation of poetic integrity across languages (Rahman et al., 2023; Litualy et al., 2022). Ultimately, insights from this research can guide

future translators in effectively conveying the essence of culturally rich literary works.

6. Conclusion

The study reveals that the translations of Parveen Shakir's poetry reflect a rich tapestry of approaches, showcasing varying degrees of equivalence in word and line counts, grammar, and textual features between the source texts (STs) and target texts (TTs). The TTs demonstrate a strategic flexibility in employing translation techniques such as substitution and omission, resulting in enhanced poetic features like rhyme and diverse metrical patterns, which may not be as pronounced in the STs. While maintaining a proximal equivalence in pragmatic intent and emotional resonance, the TTs effectively capture the intended meanings and nuances of the STs. Culturally, the translations exhibit distal equivalence, incorporating relevant references while acknowledging that some specific nuances may not fully transfer. The translators skillfully navigate these challenges, employing semantic and intersemiotic strategies to convey cultural aspects. Despite the successful preservation of central themes and vivid imagery, the analysis indicates that both STs and TTs achieve partial to distal equivalence due to inherent challenges in translation, including structural differences and cultural interference. Overall, the findings underscore the nuanced and multifaceted nature of the translation process, balancing fidelity to

the original with accessibility for the target audience.

7. Recommendations

1. Researchers should conduct a similar comparative analysis on a larger corpus of Urdu and English translated poetry, including works by other prominent Urdu poets. This would provide a more comprehensive understanding of the trends and patterns in literary translation between the two languages.
2. Future researchers may investigate other aspects of equivalence, such as stylistic, rhetorical, or emotional equivalence, to gain a more holistic understanding of the translation process and its impact on the target text.
3. It is suggested to examine and compare multiple English translations of the same Urdu poems to identify the nuances and variations in preserving pragmatic and cultural elements.
4. It is also suggested to conduct empirical studies that involve interviews, think-aloud protocols, or observation of the translation process to gain a deeper understanding of the decision-making and challenges faced by Urdu-to-English literary translators.
5. Future researchers may extend the comparative analysis to include translations between Urdu and other languages, such as Hindi, Persian, or European languages, to identify common patterns, challenges, and best practices in literary translation. They may further investigate the implications of this study for the training and education of literary translators, particularly in the context of Urdu-to-English translation.

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