Translating Feminist Identities: A Critical Discourse Analysis of Urdu Translation of Brown's Work 'The Dancing Girls of Lahore'

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Abstract

The present paper focuses on the construction and production of gender identities through discursive mechanisms during the process of translation. It also attempts to focus on the various discursive strategies used by the translator in the phenomenon of translation. The data comprise Louis Brown's book 'The Dancing Girls of Lahore' and its Urdu translation by Pakistani male writer and translator Dr. Naeem Tariq. The theoretical and conceptual framework for the present research is based on three dimensional model by Farahzad (2012) in the light of Critical Discourse Analysis. The data related to feminist discourse in both the source text and the target text is selected through the purposive sampling technique. The analysis of the present paper reflects the position of the translator through his lexical and grammatical choices in the process of translation. The findings of the present study reflect the position of male translators and expose the socio-political structure of Pakistani patriarchal society. This study provides various dimensions to explore feminist translations for future researchers.

Keywords: Translation, Gender, Feminist Translation, Feminist Discourse, Farahzad's Model, CDA, Discursive Strategies

Introduction

According to Simon (1996) language can be used by the translators at various levels of terminology and concepts to alter the impression of domination. The feministic issues in the phenomenon of translation can be viewed in the form of re-writing in the particular socio-cultural context and a translator's subjectivity is always implicated by the process of rewriting (Zhongli, 2015). According to Niranjna (1998), readers and translators face problems in reading, comprehending, and translating feminism as a discourse of emancipation. To read such feminist discourses, readers and translators need to understand the linguistic and cultural norms of the source language. To use new terms, concepts, and language for women needs various innovative ways to deal with translation-related challenges. Translation is part and parcel of human language. So, a translation has a reflection of its translator's language. Therefore, it is seen that there is a close connection between translation and gender (Fairus & Fauzi, 2017). In the beginning, the phenomenon of gender was the focus of the social sciences, but later on, the very term entered in the fields of literature and language and translation. It was noticed that language is not simply a medium of communication, rather, it is a manipulative tool (Flotow, 1991). In this regard, different questions arise that how do men and women use language? How are they different in using different communicative roles? How does the gender of men and women play a significant role in the construction and manipulation of realities? How are they represented in conventional language? How are gender differences reflected through language? (Carter, et al, 1997).

Men and women are important parts of society. They play a very significant role in the developed civilization. They are actively involved in various fields of life. In the context of Pakistani society, the system is patriarchal in its nature where men have dominant status in terms of power and control and roles of women are fixed and oppressive. This patriarchal attitude and the dominance of men change the position of women in society and the different fields of life. They are different in their

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roles but at the level of dominance, the fact remains the same that men are in power and control. The relationship between power and dominance is presented through language. Language plays an important tool to reflect the dominant position of males in society (Shafiee-Sabet & Rabeie, 2011).

Language is a key thing in the manipulation of social realities. As Spender (1980) says that language is the basic means of classification and ordering of the world. Foucault (1984) is of the view that the use of language is male-oriented, and it is gendered. The subjectivity of a woman is presented through language. The matter of language is the key issue in French Feminist Criticism. Translation is considered as a female language (E-chou, 2013). Gender and Translation or feminist translation have a significant contribution to respond the linguistic dominance from patriarchy. It also plays a vital role in establishing the subjectivity of women. Flotow (1991) discusses the importance of issues related to gender in translation by focusing on how the body of a woman is interpreted, manipulated, and translated. To deal with the issues of power and dominance in 1970, a movement started which is called feminism According to Beasley (1999), feminism is a quite complex term due to its orientation and diversity. Goodman (1999) views feminism as an awareness or recognition of the socio-cultural suppression of the women, the powerless and inferior strata of the society, and a movement to resolve such issues. Beasley (1999) comments that it is considered a rebellious activity. Poovey (1988) considers that there are many feminisms. Krolokke (2005) and Rampton (2008) say that the feminist movement can be divided into three waves with a particular focus. The first wave started in the late nineteenth and early twentieth century. Its main concern was politics. The second wave emerged from 1960 to 1980. The focus of the second wave was to raise the voice for women's emancipation. It was radical. The third wave emerged in the mid1990s, which was more focused on multiplicity and diversity in the lives of women. In Europe, this movement is referred to as 'new feminism' to deal with the issues of subordination and violence against women (Zhongli, 2015). All three waves are interconnected and cannot be viewed independently.

According to Showalter (in Barry, 2002) Feminist translation can be described in terms of shift of focus. It is deeply related to the shift of focus from 'andro-text' (the books which are written by men) to 'gyno-text' (the books which are written by women). Feminist translation, particularly, emerged during the translation of experimental and radical feminist writings of the 1970s in North America and Western Europe. According to Flotow (1997), the experimental feminist writings are significantly based on the themes of domesticated, weak, subordinated, and objectified female body. Jones (1981) claims (in Zhongli, 2015) that in feminist writings women (mothers, daughters, wives, and prostitutes) are described and presented stereotypically, culturally, and historically as sexual objects for men. Guild (1992) is of the view that feminists find the existing language as an inadequate way to describe the body of a female in 'writing the body and 'writing through the body'. In patriarchal societies language is constructed and used for and by men. It is usually failed to express the experiences of women in society. According to Flotow (1997), radical feminists created new words and constructions to eliminate the conventional patriarchal language. They also destroyed the dominant discourses of cultural control and representations (Chamberlain, 1998). She considers that it has led to the practice of feminist translation, and the role of the translator highly political.

To express and reflect the position of the translator in the translated text, language plays a key role. The translator plays a significant role in the representation of the gender identities in the translated texts. Discourse is a very significant term and plays its important role in the construction of identities. In Focauldian's (1984) term, the very concept of discourse is closely linked with the phenomenon of power, where power is not in the sense of physical control or possession of something, rather, it is produced and exercised discursively through the construction of identities. In this regard, critical discourse analysis (CDA) has a close connection with ideologically motivated context, and it can be expressed that social realities are produced discursively. The masculine interventions and power relations play an important and crucial role in the process of translation.

Methodology

The present study is a critical analysis of Brown's book "The Dancing Girls of Lahore" and its Urdu Translation"*Lahore ki Nartakiyan* لابور کی نرتکیاں"by Dr Tariq. The selected examples are analyzed by employing Farahzad's (2012) three-dimensional model in the light of CDA. It provides the theoretical and methodological framework for the analysis. This model helps to analyze the data on textual, discursive, and social levels, where the linguistic choices, translator's value judgments, and its social implications are observed. This model plays a significantly important role in investigating the

ideological implications during the process of translation. Farahzad's (2012)'s focus is to deal with the power relations while translating a text from ST to TT. She explains that CDA is based on the stance that every use of language is ideological. In this term, the act of translation is ideological and the translator plays a role of an agent in this act.

The present study mainly focuses on the fact that how gender identities are constructed in the process of translation. In the present study, the author of the source text tries to raise the voice of women and their marginalized, oppressed, and suppressed status in the Pakistani patriarchal society. She discusses the struggle and hard journey of the women of *Heera Mandi,* but the male translator translates the text according to his masculine ideology. By keeping in mind the translation of feministic identities and the position of the translator, the present study tries to answer the following research questions:

- How does language replicate the position of male translator while translating feminist identities in Urdu translation of Brown's work 'The Dancing Girls of Lahore'?
- What are various discursive ways an Urdu translator uses to construct the feminist identities in Urdu translated text of Brown's work 'The Dancing Girls of Lahore'?

It is due to the scope of the research only five extracts are taken for analysis and are presented in tabular form. It is supposed that the major findings of the data under discussion can be generalized to the other extracts when taken on the same parameters.

Data Analysis

The source text is about the life of the women of the *Heera Mandi* (A place for prostitution). Brown discusses various hardships, miseries, struggles of the women, in general, and the women of the *Heera Mandi*, in particular. She tries to highlight the issues and problems of the Pakistani patriarchal society. She tries to raise the voice of women, but the translator, who is a male member of the patriarchal society, suppresses this voice through his discursive strategic decisions in the process of translation. This section of analysis deals with the various examples from the texts which carry gendered orientation.

Extract 1

ST	TT
Jamila has no children, in South Asia this is calamity (Brown, 2005, p.75)	جمیلہ کا کو ئ بچہ نہیں ہے۔ جنوبی ایشیا میں عورتوں کے بچے نہ ہونا بد قسمتی ہے (Tariq, 2012, p.84)

Extract 1 shows that motherhood is considered the supreme pride for a woman in the patriarchal society, otherwise, she has to face severe pressure, rejection, and hatred from the family as well as society. Motherhood is considered a critical milestone in the life of a woman after marriage. In a Pakistani patriarchal society, women face severe societal pressure to have children after marriage. In a patriarchal society, motherhood is considered very important in the very first year after marriage to secure the position in the family and the society. Women who have children in the early years of their marriage, gain a status in the hierarchy of family, and they are given some importance in the family. There are various kinds of stereotypes for women in patriarchal societies. They are considered weak, subordinate, and powerless because of their body and their gender roles. In the Pakistani patriarchal society, childlessness is considered a stigma and a stereotype for women. It is not acceptable in the family as well in society. If a woman does not have children, it is thought of as a failure according to societal norms and standards. In a patriarchal society, childlessness is considered a disaster as far as social consequences are concerned, because, to have children is viewed as to hold a strong bond between husband and wife. In this case, a woman does not have children, she has to face emotional, mental, and physical harassment and torture from in-laws. She is considered unlucky and a big failure. Childless women are threatened in various ways. In Pakistani patriarchal society, it is considered the sole responsibility of a woman, and she is blamed for childlessness, and man is free from this pressure. In this extract, the patriarchal attitude of the translator is very much clear with his discursive strategy that in patriarchal societies the experience of infertility is very unusual for men. It is a matter of fate and destiny only for women. Women face various psycho-social consequences as far as childlessness is concerned.

Extract 2

ST	TT
Women must be chaste daughters, faithful wives, and celibate widows---<u>good women whose sexuality is under tight control</u> (Brown, 2005, p.58)	عورتوں کو پاکباز بیٹیاں، وفادار بیویاں، اور تجرد پر کار بند بیوہ ہونا چاہیے(Tariq, 2012, p. 69)

In extract 2, the source text author describes the social obligations for women of Pakistani patriarchal society. In the above translation, the translator translates only this line 'Women must be chaste daughters, faithful wives, and celibate widows' as ' عورتوں کو پاکباز بیٹیاں، وفادار بیویاں، اور تجرد پر کار بند بیوہ ہونا چاہیے' and he omits the line '---good women whose sexuality is under tight control'. This strategy of omission reflects the ideological decision of the translator. In the source text, he explains the criteria of the good women that only those women are considered the socially normal being who perform the role of a wife, daughter, or widow under the control of men of the society as their guardian. The choice of the words of the translator depicts his masculine ideology. Here in the above translation, the tone of the translator is quite authoritative as he seems to instruct the women that they should be faithful to their husbands, they should be obedient daughters for the name and honor of their family. The omission of the text shows the translator's position and his interest that according to him women are not controlled by men in the society rather they are rightly treated when they carefully perform the assigned roles. This extract shows the patriarchal expectations towards women in a more symbolic way. It shows a strong paternal protection and attitude and societal expectations towards women in terms of faithful wives and obedient daughters. In patriarchal societies, the girl as daughter is expected to carefully obey the set norms of the family and in most of the cases, she is considered as a fear as far as the reputation of the family is concerned. Girls are kept away from all the things which make them against familial practices and values. Here in the translation, the omission of the underlines lines depicts the patriarchal mentality of the male translator. He is trying to establish the reality in the minds of the readers that all the societal norms and values which are set in the patriarchal society are actually in the favor of the women. He tries to convey the message that women are kept at home and not controlled just for the sake of their safety and security and males are mere their supporters and protectors. He also tries to clarify the patriarchal societal expectations from the women that they should be faithful and obedient in every role which is assigned to them in the society.

Extract 3

ST	TT
"Maha is lucky to have a legal marriage: <u>most women in Heera mandi never experience such a thing</u>" (Brown, 2005, p.14)	پھر بھی مابا اس لحاظ سے خوش قسمت ہے کہ وہ کسی کی قانونی بیوی ہےکیونکہ ہیرا منڈی کی زیادہ تر عورتوں کو نام کا شوہر بھی نصیب نہیں ہوتا (Tariq, 2012, p. 29)

Extract 3 is about the main character of the book, *Maha*, and her life. *Maha* is a married woman in *Heera Mandi*. She is being portrayed as a member of the minorities and suppressed strata of the patriarchal society. In this extract, the translator has tried to portray the true image of a woman in the Pakistani patriarchal society. In the translated text, it is quite clear that the translator has added certain information as far as the social status of a woman in a patriarchal society is concerned. The translator has tried to portray the weak and dependent identity of women in society. This extract reflects that a woman who has a marital relationship and has a male as a husband in her life is considered the lucky woman in society. Through the language, the translator, being a powerful member of the society, has tried to establish the reality that man is responsible for giving the prestigious status in the society. In a patriarchal society, every woman is dependent on the presence of a man in her life to consider herself khush *naseeb* or up to the set standards of the society. In the context of the main character of the book *Maha*, she is considered the luckiest woman because she has a legal relationship with a man which is a quite unusual thing for the women of *Heera Mandi*. As the women of *Heera Mandi* cannot enjoy the prestigious status of a married woman in a patriarchal society. Here, the translator has established the reality through the construction of women's identity as oppressed, suppressed, marginalized, and weak in the society of male dominance. It is the powerful strata of the society, which is responsible for the construction of gender identity in the society. Here, women are being portrayed as a dependent entity, who can only be fortunate enough if they have a legal relationship with a man. This is the only criteria to judge their luck and destiny. In this way, the

discursive choices of the translator reflect his position in society. Here, the decision in the form of addition, shows that it's highly ideological. The translator's discursive decisions give the readers a particular dominant position to read and comprehend the text, the way he wants to do. It is clearly stated that the translator's lexical choices and discursive strategies depict his ideological decision in the process of transmitting the source text (ST) realities into target text (TT) realities. This translation reflects that the Pakistani patriarchal society gives a considerable authoritative status to the men, where man is the protector of a woman. This shows the powerful position of men in Pakistani patriarchal society.

Extract 4

ST	TT
"The traditional, <u>intensely patriarchal culture</u> of the subcontinent exploited the kanjar women, but this older system of prostitution provided an element protection that is missing in the newer, more vicious structures of the Lahori sex trade" (Brown, 2005, p. 45)	برصغیر کے روایتی کلچرنے کنجر عورتوں کا استحصال کیا ہے۔ لیکن طوائف گیری کے قدیم نظام نے تحفظ کا عنصر مہیا کیا۔ جو نئ اور زیادہ منحوس لاہور کی سیکس مارکیٹ کی ساخت میں عنقا ہے۔ کنجر سوسائٹی میں بوڑھی عورت کا ایک مقام ہے کیونکہ وہ اس چھوٹے سے گھر کا انتظام سنبھالتی ہے (Tariq, 2012, p. 57)۔

In extract 4, the translator translates the expression 'intensely patriarchal culture' as '*rwayti culture*'. Here, it is clear that he has tried to substitute the term with a term that does not convey the voice of the author of the source text. As the source text author has targeted the intensely patriarchal culture where women face severe exploitation in terms of their roles and rights, but the translator himself belongs to the same patriarchal culture, that is why he uses the substituted term. The translator tries to defend the position of males in the society that they are the protector for the women, and they are not the reason for any sort of exploitation. This kind of attitude towards women shows that women are helpless, weak, and poor strata of the society who face exploitation because of their oppressed status. The translator tries to show that this humiliating treatment is not because of the patriarchal society, rather, it is due to their marginalized position in the society. In this way, he tries to convey the message to the readers that patriarchal society is not responsible for such a humiliating attitude towards women. He tries to justify his position in the male-dominant society. The translation strategy of the addition in the extract under discussion reflects the typical societal attitude towards women in a patriarchal society that women should look after the household chores only then they can have respectable status in the society. کنجر سوسائٹی میں بوڑھی عورت کا ایک مقام ہے کیونکہ وہ اس چھوٹے سے گھر کا انتظام سنبھالتی ہے . This translated line shows that the translator assigns and describes the roles and responsibilities of women in Pakistani patriarchal society. This translation depicts the dominant position of the male translator. It is an addition in TT from the translator's side which is highly ideological. In the process of translation, when a translator adds or omits something this indicates his/her ideological decisions in the act of translation. In this extract, this addition shows the traditional expectations from women in Pakistani patriarchal society. Here translator defines the role of women that they are supposed to manage all the household chores and activities.

Extract 5

ST	TT
"It endows her with <u>status by association</u>: These children haven't been fathered by an unknown client" (Brown, 2005, p.17).	اس تعلق نے اس کے سماجی رتبے کو اور بھی بڑھایا ہے اور وہ فخر سے بتاتی ہے کہ یہ بچے لاوارث یا کسی گمنام گاہک کی اولاد نہیں ہیں چاہیے (Tariq, 2012,32)

In extract 5, *Maha* discusses her marital status that she is a wife of a man named *Adnan*, who is her legal husband and they have legal children. Here, the source text doesn't express any of such thoughts, which the translator tries to express in the translation. "It endows her with <u>status by association</u>" as اس تعلق نے اس کے سماجی رتبے کو اور بھی بڑھایا ہے اور وہ فخر سے بتاتی ہے . This addition in the target text shows the typical patriarchal attitude of the male translator. According to this attitude and belief, a woman cannot be considered happy, complete, and successful until and unless she is a married woman. On the other hand, men in the Pakistani patriarchal society have the authority to make decisions, and a woman can feel proud if she has a man in her life as her husband. Here, the translator tries to convey the role of men in the society that they have the strength and abilities to run a family and enhances the respectable status of women in the society, which the women can proudly discuss their relationships with men in the society. In this extract, the translator tries to convey the

idea to the readers that women don't have their identity rather, they are known in different roles. In this extract, the identity of the women is being reflected in their relation or association with men as husband. The translator's lexical choices are highly ideological. He tries to explain that in a patriarchal society, a woman accomplishes herself if she is married. Here, the passive and dependent image of a woman is being described. All the women in a patriarchal society are supposed to follow societal standards and norms. The translator's dominant ideology is visible when he establishes the reality that in patriarchal societies women are considered miserable without their men. In patriarchal societies, a woman needs to have a man as a husband in her life, if she wants to enjoy a respectable status in the society.

Discussion

The analysis of the current study shows that gender identities play a significant role in the process of translation. The translator plays a very crucial role as far as the construction of the meaning is concerned. The analysis of the present paper shows that language plays an instrumental role, and reflects the ideological position of the translator. The present study reflects that the language which is used for the women by the male translator can tell the readers about his patriarchal mentality that he is the by-product of Pakistani patriarchal society. As far as the target translated text of the present study is concerned, it can be stated that it is a product of man's language, and it is observed that translation depicts the ideology of its translator. The source text of the present study is written by keeping in mind all the sufferings, miseries, and problems in the life of women in a gender-determined world. It focuses on the status of women and tries to give insight to the readers about various aspects of women's lives in Pakistani patriarchal society. Various studies describe the subordination of women as the inferior position of women in society and see subordination as the powerlessness, oppression, and discrimination in the society. The subordination of women is a status where the men dominate women (Beauvior, 1974 & Millet, 1977).

The author of the ST tries to raise the voice of the women and break the hegemonic patriarchal attitude of the society while deconstructing the language. In the translation of Brown's work, the translator conveys the message of the text according to his patriarchal ideological stance and does not give a faithful insight to the readers about the social conditions and status of the women in the Pakistani patriarchal society. Here, the role of the translator is very important as he is supposed to give insight and emancipation to the readers regarding the experience of the women in the Pakistani patriarchal society, but he is the powerful member of the same societal structure so he didn't convey the message as it is. In the present study, the translator uses various lexical choices to construct the identity of women in Pakistani patriarchal society and establishes the reality in the minds of the readers that women are weak, oppressed, suppressed, dependent, subordinate and helpless creatures. The translator uses the strategy of omission and addition very frequently throughout the process of translation which reflects his ideological decisions in the construction of the identity of women in the target text.

Conclusion

In a nutshell, it is concluded that this study provides an insight into the construction of identity and the role of the translator in the process of translation. The present paper highlights the position of the male translator who is the by-product of patriarchal society. He tries to construct the image of the women discursively by choosing various lexical and ideological choices during the process of translation. This research contributes to further understanding that how gender ideologies shape the experiences of men in Pakistani Patriarchal society, and it also provides a lens that gender plays an important and crucial role in the construction of identities in the process of translation.

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