The Strategies for Overcoming Cultural Untranslatability:
The Case of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora*

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Abstract

The aim of this study is to show the cultural untranslatability of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora* (1910) by analyzing the translation of the novel by W.W Pearson. Both the source and translated texts are studied using the content analysis method keeping the central motif in mind. The present research paper finds that *Gora* is so deeply rooted in Bengali cultural issues, that the translator has faced immense difficulties in making those cultural substances familiar to the target audience. The translator has used some strategies for overcoming cultural untranslatability such as borrowing and naturalization, definition, addition, substitution, transliteration, cultural equivalence, omission, etc. but in spite of the use of these strategies, the translation remains at a distance from the source text. However, the translator has mostly employed one approach, but on rare occasions he has utilized more than one, for example, transliteration with addition or definition, to give the intended audience a clear understanding of what is being said.

Key words: Cultural Untranslatability, Culture-specific items**,** Cultural Classification, Foreign Translator, Translation Strategies.

1. Introduction

Translation of literary texts is much more complicated than that of non-literary texts. Equivalence—notably cultural equivalence—is less significant in a non-literary text. But a literary text presents challenges because it simultaneously deals with language and culture when translated. Furthermore, it is assumed that language is culturally produced. Each culture has individual 'culture specific' words, and it is not easy to get the textual and literary equivalent materials of the source language in the target language. Therefore, a translator should have sound knowledge of both languages and cultures. Nonetheless, due to linguistic and cultural differences, the translator may encounter difficulties during the translation process. Finding out a proper equivalent for the source language substances in the target language becomes difficult. J.C. Catford addresses this situation as "Translation fails—or untranslatability."[1] It is often described as an attribute of a text or any substance in

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1 J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation: An Essay in Applied Linguistics*, 5th impr, Language and Language Learning 8 (Oxford: Oxford Univ. Press, 1978), p. 94.

one language for which no equivalent text or substance can be identified in a target language. In this case, Catford proposes that if the target language does not have the pertinent equivalent, the linguistic and cultural components of the source language should be given priority.[2] It happens for many reasons, and a bi-lingual and bi-cultural translator can use various translation strategies to overcome this problem. However, there are two types of untranslatability: linguistic and cultural. Linguistic untranslatability happens when the linguistic aspects of the source text cannot be appropriately replaced in the target language. Cultural untranslatability appears "when a situational feature, functionally relevant for the Source language (SL) text, is completely absent from the culture of which the Target language (TL) is a part."[3] It instigates from the cultural gap between source culture and target culture. More specifically, it may appear and create a significant problem in rendering culture-specific items while translating literary text. Hence, the present study mainly focused on cultural untranslatability and the strategies taken by the translator to overcome the problem.

The present article is corpus-based qualitative research using the content analysis method to find out mainly the translation strategies employed by W.W. Pearson to overcome cultural untranslatability in Rabindranath Tagore's classic work, *Gora.* Two specific objectives have been set in order to achieve the main objective: to demonstrate how W.W. Pearson, a foreign translator, dealt with the Bengali culture-specific items and: to assess the approaches used to overcome cultural untranslatability. In this regard, both primary and secondary sources were conducted to attain the main objective. The study has used the Bengali culture-representative classic novel *Gora* (1910) by Rabindranath Tagore and its English translation, *Gora* (1924) by W.W. Pearson, as primary sources.[4] It preferred to employ books, journals, and other online and offline materials pertinent to the topic as secondary sources. Since the study compares cultural issues, both the source and target texts underwent a careful investigation utilizing the translation methods suggested by academics. First, the Bengali culture-specific items and their English substitutions were extracted from both texts. Then, the untranslatable cultural items were identified based on their classifications. Side by side, the translation strategies to overcome the cultural untranslatability in the translation process were observed. Finally, a suggestion is made regarding which translation procedures are best suited to dealing with cultural

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2   Ibid.
3   Ibid., p. 99.
4   Rabindranath Tagore, *Gora* (Dhaka: Kakoli Prokashoni, 2016); W.W. Pearson, *Gora* (New Delhi: Rupa Publication, 2002).

untranslatability. The researcher has chosen the transliteration approach from Bengali to English expression, employing diacritical marks, which is becoming more prevalent in Bangladesh. In addition, in the analysis, the main text refers to *Gora* S (source text), while the translated text stands for *Gora* T (translated text).

1.1 Culture-specific Items and their Classifications

In literary translation, culture-bound words or notions take priority. Scholars have attempted to identify and classify cultural components from diverse angles because they differ from other lexis. For instance, Peter Newmark addresses this term as 'cultural words'.[5] In contrast, Mona Baker prefers to identify it as 'culture-specific concepts'.[6] Similarly, Nida adopts the term as 'culture-bound issue'.[7] At the same time, Aixela has popularly introduced this issue as 'culture-specific item'.[8] Despite the various names, scholars seem to agree on the same fundamental idea when it comes to cultural issues, namely that when there is a cultural focus, there is a translation problem because of the cultural distance or gap between the source language and the target language, which leads to cultural untranslatability. Regarding the classification of culture-specific items, Eugene A. Nida (1996), has categorized it into five groups; ecology, material culture, religious culture, social culture, and language (linguistic culture).[9] However, Peter Newmark (1988) has highlighted the more straightforward categorization of 'cultural words' such as ecology, which includes flora, fauna, winds, seasons, and weather; material culture, which denotes food, drinks, clothes, houses, and towns; social culture, which comprises work and leisure; organizations, customs, activities, procedures, and concepts all of these issues cover cultures related to political and administrative, religious and artistic; and gestures and habits.[10] It is notable that Eugene A. Nida and Peter Newmark have both identified cultural terminology with nearly identical concepts. Nida's categorization of culture-specific objects, excluding linguistic culture, is examined in this study.

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5   Peter Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation* (New York: Prentice-Hall International, 1988), p. 94.

6   Mona Baker, *In Other Words: A Coursebook on Translation*, Third edition (Abingdon, Oxon ; New York, NY: Routledge, 2017), pp. 20-42.

7   Eugene A. Nida, "Linguistics and Ethnology in Translation-Problems," WORD 1, No. 2 (August 1945), p. 196, https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.1945.11659254.

8   J. F. Aixela, Culture-Specific Items in Translation. *Translation, Power, Subversion,* Alvarez, R. and Carmen-Africa Vidal, M *(*eds.). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters, 1997, pp. 52–78.

9   Eugene A. Nida, "Linguistic and Ethnology in Translation Problems," in *Language in Culture and Society,* ed. Dell Hymes (New York: Harper and Row Publisher, 1996), p. 196.

10   Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*, p. 96.

1.2 Strategies for Overcoming Cultural Untranslatability

It is crucial to have a clear understanding of the translation methods, procedures, and strategies. According to Newmark, "translation methods relate to whole texts" while "translation procedures are used for sentences and the smaller units of language."[11] In the other sense, related to rendering culture-specific issues, translation procedures deal "with a particular element of culture."[12] On the other hand, translation strategies refer to "the choice of the procedure best suited for a particular act of communication."[13] In fact, translation strategies are typically summarized as the procedures that lead to the best resolution of a translation problem.

Some procedures provided by scholars are available for overcoming this problem, namely cultural untranslatability. Peter Newmark (1988) proposes the following translation procedures: transference, naturalization, cultural equivalent, functional equivalent, descriptive equivalent, synonymy, through-translation, shift or transposition, modulation, recognized Translation, compensation, componential analysis, reduction and expansion, paraphrase, etc.[14]Vinay and Darbelnet reformulated the procedures as mentioned earlier into 'seven basic translation procedures', i.e., adaptation, calque, equivalence, modulation, borrowing, literal translation, and transposition.[15] However, apparently, the best-known taxonomy articulated by Vladimir Ivir is the review and the summarization of the set-procedures mentioned above. They are seven in number: borrowing and naturalization, definition and paraphrase, literal translation, substitution, lexical creation, addition, and omission.[16] Translators in dealing with cultural untranslatability or 'unmatched elements' choose one strategy or more than one strategy for mitigating the translation problem. The present research was conducted mainly by Ivir's translation procedures with some adaptations tailored to render Bengali culture into English.

2. Analysis of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gora* and Its Translation
2.1 Ecological Untranslatability

The ecological features directly relate to every aspect of nature, e.g., flora, fauna, wind, plains and hills, weather, season, other geographical concepts, etc.[17] More

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11   Ibid., p. 81.
12   Vladimir Ivir, "Procedures and Strategies for the Translation of Culture," in *Translation Across Cultures*, ed. Gideon Toury (New Dehli: Bahri Publications Ltd, 1987), p. 117.
13   Ibid.
14   Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*, pp. 81-91.
15   J.P. Vinay and J. Darbelnet. "Translation Procedures." Readings in Translation Theory. Ed. A. Chesterman. Loimaa: Finn Lectura, 1989, pp. 61-69.
16   Ivir, "Procedures and Strategies for the Translation of Culture," p. 117.
17   Newmark, *A Textbook of Translation*, p. 96.

specifically, they are the products of nature that existed in the world without human intervention, and those ecological elements vary from place to place. However, in some cases, the equivalents of culture-specific items of the source culture are not matched in the target culture. Even the detailed descriptions of those items might be inappropriate or not provide contextual meaning. The following strategies are taken while translating the ecology-based culture-specific items.

2.1.1 Substitution Strategy

Flora, the integral part of ecology, is enormously observed and well known in the source culture. It plays a vital role representing aboriginality that cannot be transmitted properly to the target culture. Incapacitating this untranslatability, the translator has used 'substitution' strategy. For instance, *tagar phul* (*Gora* S, p. 26) is a small white flower with special significance in Hinduism and rituals. Its scientific name is *Tabernaemontana* belonging to the Apocynaceae family found in Asia, Africa, Australia, North America, South Africa America, and many oceanic islands.[18] The translator has replaced this flora with 'white flower' (p. 20) considering commonness of colour significance.

Another example of floral ecological element is '*bōrō dhān*' (*Gora* S, 120). Having no equivalent in the English language, it becomes untranslatable. *Boro* is a seasonal variant of paddy in Bangladesh known as a winter paddy. The *Boro* season begins after the *Aman* season ends. This paddy season lasts from early autumn to mid-summer.

The translator has substituted this paddy by its nature of harvesting as 'an early crop' (*Gora* T, 79). His translation is: '…the cultivators had managed to reap an early crop…'

Season having its place in the ecology varies from place to place. For example, *grīṣmakāl* (*Gora* T, p.11), equivalent to the English as Summer, comprises Baishakh and Jyaistha (mid-April to mid-June), the hottest of the four temperate seasons, occurring after spring and before autumn.[19] This season is made equivalent in *Gora* T by nature as 'in the hot weather' (p. 9) following the substitution strategy.

2.1.2 Transliteration Strategy

The ecological substance, *kēẏā phul* (*Gora* S, p. 30), the English name 'Thatch Screwpine,' is a white colour fragrant native flower found in South and Southeast Asia. It appears in the Bengali month of Ashar and Shravan. This rainy flower is

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18 *Encyclopedia of Flora and Fauna of Bangladesh,* Vo. 6, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2008, s.v. "Apocynaceae."

19 *Banglapedia,* Vo. 12, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2012, s.v. *"Season."*

considered to be the queen of the nights. The scientific name of this flower is *Pandanus tectorius.* Here the translator has used the transliteration strategy, i.e., '*Keya* flowers' (*Gora* S, p. 23). It seems he remains faithful to the source text by urging the target reader to move towards the source culture.

2.1.3 Omission Strategy

In the translation of *Gora*, the translator has made an omission while rendering some native flowers that may not be found in the European context. For instance, *kṛṣṇacūṛā* (*Gora* S, p. 42) or Krishnacura is a large flowering plant whose scientific name is *Delonix regia* of the Caesalpiniaceae family. This red flower blooms in the spring (April to June) in Bangladesh.[20] Again, *Kunda phul* (*Gora* S, p. 215) is a native species of the Indian subcontinent. Its scientific name is *Jasminum multiflorum* in the family Oleaceae. Its English name is Star jasmine, Downy jasmine, Indian jasmine.[21] In Indian mythology, it is held to be especially sacred to Vishnu.

2.2 Untranslatability of Material Culture

Material culture-specific items e.g., food, drinks, cloth, transport, house, etc. signifying the local colour and atmosphere of any specific society different from other societies have played a significant role in the source text. The translator always has to face difficulties conveying the proper message to the target audience attributable to the distance culture and lack of proper equivalents of the source culture in the target culture (hence the cultural untranslatability). However, to overcome the problem, translator has sought different strategies.

2.2.1 Borrowing and Naturalization Strategy

The translator has borrowed some common Bengali cultural instances in English, which have been naturalized as a part of regular English vocabulary. For example, *śāṛi'* (*Gora* S, p. 15) is a traditional Bengali woman's loincloth. Similarly, *luṅgi* is also a traditional Bengali man's outfit used by both Hindus and Muslims on the lower part of the body in the Indian subcontinent. It is one of the most widely used comfortable clothing in Bangladesh and India. In the like manner, *dhuti* (*Gora*, S, p. 36) is a Bengali Hindu man's cloth also worn on the lower part of the body. It is widely used as comfortable clothing in the Indian subcontinent. However, the translator has rendered the Bengali terms, e.g., *śāṛi, luṅgi,* and '*dhuti*' from the source text and naturalized those objects next in the whole text as 'sari' (*Gora*T, p. 12), 'lungis' and 'dhuti' (*Gora* T, p. 28). The custom of wearing those Bengali garments is

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20 *Encyclopedia of Flora and Fauna of Bangladesh,* Vol. 5, s.v. "Caesalpiniaceae."
21 Ibid., "Oleaceae."

peculiar to the Western culture but the repeated using has made those items familiar to the target audience as the cultural clothing of the Eastern part.

2.2.2 Definition Strategy

The object, *'kaṭaki jutā'* (*Gora* S, p. 36), is a cultural substance that is a locally made shoes from the Cuttack district of Orissa. The Bengali elite class wore these shoes as a matter of aristocracy. But it is unfamiliar to the English society, and this term has no translation equivalent in the target culture. The translator used the 'definition' strategy when he rendered the term 'country-made shoes' (*Gora* T, p. 28).

Similarly, *nāmābalī* (*Gora* S, p.99) is a cloth inscribed the names of Hari, Rama, and Krishna. Wearing this cloth, the Brahmins perform their sacred rituals and religious activities. The translator has represented this culture-bound object as 'a scarf inscribed with the names of the gods' (p.65), following the definition strategy to be understandable to the target audience.

2.2.3 Lexical Creation Strategy

The device *damru* (*Gora* S, p. 63), or regional name *dugdugi*, is a small two-headed musical instrument made of wood with goatskin drum heads at both ends. A string tied in the middle of the shell with two small iron balls or lead is wrapped around both yarn ends. When the instrument is moved rapidly in one hand, the small balls hit the skin, making sounds like *dug dug*. Due to this phonetic feature, its regional name is *dugdugi*. This musical device is common throughout the Indian subcontinent. It has a spiritual appeal in Hinduism since it is known as the instrument of Lord Shiva, associated with Tantric traditions.[22] The musical instrument 'drum' (*Gora* T, p. 45) has been transported to compare the aforementioned device.

2.2.4 Transliteration and Addition Strategy

Another untranslatable culture-specific item is *gaṅgā mṛttikār chap* (*Gora* S, p. 36), that literally means 'the mark of Ganges soil' that is called tilak considered to be the sacred soil marked on the forehead of the Brahmins. The Ganges is regarded as the consecrated river and has a socio-religious impression in the Hindu culture that cannot be understandable to the Western culture. The translator has used two strategies; 'transliterate' (Ganges) and 'addition' (a caste-mark) combinedly 'a caste-mark of Ganges-clay' (28).

2.2.5 Omission Strategy

The translator has consciously omitted some Bengali culture-specific term without disrupting the natural flow of reading. For instance, *pāñjābi* (*Gora* S, p. 125) is

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22   *Banglapedia* s.v. *"Dugdug",* Vol. 5, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2012.

apparel usually used by the Bengali male in the Indian subcontinent. It has loose sleeves extending to the palms of the hands. Again, some food items unavailable in the translated texts may be unfamiliar to the European context, e.g., *kābāb* (*Gora* S, p. 38). Actually, kebab is a variety of cooked meat dishes in the Indian cuisines. For the first time, Mughals introduced this delicious food item in the Indian sub-continent. But in India, Bangladesh, Pakistan, and other Muslim countries, a Kebab is recognized as a wide variety of grilled meat dishes.[23] Another object related to material culture omitted in the translated text is *śatarañji* (*Gora* S, p.189). Shataranji is a traditional handicraft reflecting the Bengali cultural values found in the Rangpur region of Bangladesh. Its history is several hundred years old. Formerly, it was one of the symbols of the aristocracy and nobility of the people of this region, used for mainly floor mats and some other purposes.[24]

2.3 Untranslatability of Social Culture

Social culture comprises work, profession, customs, habit, class, caste, kinship, and many issues belonging to a specific nation. All issues are observed in both source texts and their equivalence in the translated texts. Since social customs, values and stratifications differ from place to place, it is an impediment for the translator to get a substitution of those issues. The following strategies have been taken to overcome the cultural untranslatability in the target text.

2.3.1 Borrowing and Naturalization Strategy

The lexical item *bāul* (*Gora* S, p. 7) is a group of people who practice sacred rites. They also perform devotional songs known as Baul songs found in Bangladesh and West Bengal.[25] Similarly, *yātrā* (*Gora* S. 124), is a traditional part of the famous folk drama and basic culture of Bangladesh and West Bengal "combining acting, songs, music, dance characterized by stylized delivery and exaggerated gestures and orations."[26] It has played an immense role as the medium of entertainment for mass people in the past. Both terms have been borrowed from the source culture and later gradually naturalised in the target text as 'Baul' (*Gora* T, p. 6) and 'Jatra' (*Gora* T, p. 82).

2.3.2 Definition Strategy

In Hinduism, *satīlakṣmī* (*Gora* S, p.14) is a "virtuous housewife" who brings fortune to her husband by any means and always follows her husband's words.[27] This term is

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23   Milan Datta, *Bangalir Khadyakosh,* First Edition (Kolkata: Dey's Publishing, 2015), p. 81.
24   *Banglapedia*, "Shataranji.", Vol. 13, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2012
25   Ibid., s.v. "Baul."
26   Ibid.,s.v. "Jatra."
27   Radha Chakravarty, *Gora* (Trn.), (India: Penguin Books, 2009), p.11.

defined in the translated text as 'the pure, right-minded Lady' (p. 10), which makes the target audience understand about the family-culture of the Hindu society.

2.3.3 Substitution Strategy

Some addressing socio-lexical terms are substituted since they are absent in the English culture. For example, *mēsomaśāi* (*Gora* S, p.45) is an addressing word related to the kinship that refers to maternal uncle, i.e., husband of mother's sister. The term 'uncle' (*Gora* T, 34) has appeared in the translation to make the target reader understand the same relation. In the same manner, the term *śrī* (*Gora* S, p.10) is used in the Indian subcontinent and Southeast Asia in terms of polite address equivalent to the English "Mr."[28] On the other hand, 'Master' (*Gora* T, p.7) as a prefixed title regards to "a way of addressing politely a boy who was too young to be called 'Mister'."[29] The translator has replaced this culture-bound term with the aforementioned English substitution.

2.3.4 Transliteration Strategy

The untranslatable phrase, *brāhmasamāj* (*Gora* S, p.13) is an example of socio-cultural organization. The Upanishad-based monotheistic reformist movement of the Hindu religion introduced by Raja Rammohun Roy is known as Brahma *Sabha* (1829). The intelligentsias of this community were the 'forerunners of Indian modernization' who played a rebellious role "against the Hindu tradition whose community has come to be known as the Brahmo Samaj (1843)."[30] The translator has restored it as 'Brahmo Samaj' (*Gora* S, p. 10) in the translation.

2.3.5 Omission Strategy

The culture-specific item, *jāmāiṣaṣṭhī* (*Gora* S, p.34) or Jamaisasthi is a traditional Bengali cultural festival celebrated by the Hindus. Generally, it is observed on the sixth day of Shukla Paksha in the *Jyaistha* month of the traditional Bengali calendar. This festival originated ages ago as a part of a woman's socio-religious duty to make intense bondage of son-in-law with the in-laws. It is also a vow performed by the mother-in-law to please *Shasthi*, the goddess of children, who will bless her daughter to be pregnant.[31] The primary purpose of *Jamaisasthi* is motherhood procreation. The

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28 *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary*, 8th ed. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010), s.v. "Shri."

29 Leslie Dunkling, *Dictionary of Epithets and Terms of Address* (New York: Routledge, 2012), p.109.

30 David Kopf, *The Brahmo Samaj and the Shaping of the Modern Indian Mind* (Princeton, N.J: Princeton University Press, 1979), xiii (preface).

31 Apala, "Jamai Sasthi Palan Karar Pradhan Uddesya Ki (What is the main purpose of celebrating Jamai Shashti)", *Anandabazar,* May 25, 2020, https://www.anandabazar.com/, accessed on 25-01-2022.

social significance of this festival in Bengali Hindu society is undeniable. This festival is celebrated with great enthusiasm, mainly in families with a newly married daughter. However, the above-mentioned instance is considered cultural untranslatability since it is deeply imbedded into Bengali Hindu culture and no translation equivalent is found in English due to the cultural gap. The translator has intentionally used omission strategy without any interruption.

2.4 Untranslatability of Religious Culture

Religious culture includes religious beliefs, activities, performances, different types of worship, names of the deities and their connotative significances, etc. Translators always worry about making the target reader understand the religious issues by rendering the equivalents of the source culture.

2.4.1 Borrowing and Naturalization Strategy

The religious term, *bēdamantrē* (*Gora* S, p. 63) is an example of cultural untranslatability. According to Hindu believe, Vedas are the sacred Hindu scriptures traditionally have come from the Supreme Lord. The Vedas are the original storehouse of knowledge of the entire human being. Before being written down, they were preserved in the memory and transmitted orally from 'guru to disciple'; hence its other name is *shruti*.[32] Besides, they are associated with various meanings; to know, judge, locate, and gain. By reading, people can know the truth, judge between truth and falsehood, become real scholars, and get real peace and happiness. For the Indian Aryans, the Vedas are the most authoritative texts, ranking above all. However, there are a total of 20434 mantras in the Vedas. The Hindus believe that all are divinely inspired and composed by the holy Rishis (sages) in divine inspiration. The combined cultural phrases are deeply rooted in the Hindu religion and do not have an English equivalent. Here, the translator has borrowed and naturalised the Indian term in the translated text as 'Vedic mantras' (*Gora* T, p. 44)

2.4.2 Definition Strategy

Then, *sandhyāhnik* (G S, p. 24) is a religious term that refers to the daily rituals of Hindus in the morning and evening. Similarly, *ṭiki* (*Gora* S, p. 24) is a tuft of hair at the back of the head, grown by Brahmins in Bengal as a mark of orthodoxy. Here, the translator has replaced the first one by 'ceremonial worship morning and evening' following a 'definition' strategy that might be understandable to the target audience. Similarly, 'tiki,' belonging to religious culture, is rendered from the Bangla text, and the translator provides a supplementary endnote. He explains- "A tuft of hair at the back of the head, grown by Brahmins in Bengali as a mark of orthodoxy.

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32   *Banglapedia,* s.v. *"*Vedas*.",* Vol. 14, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2012.

2.4.3 Substitution Strategy

Religious practices like *śuddhācārī* (*Gora* S, p.16) or the English equivalent virtuousness generally refers to the behaviour and excellence influenced by morality and honesty. It means devotion to duty and honesty at the individual level, and the person who is practicing virtue or sanctity is called *suddhacari.* The translator has made a substitution of the mentioned religious term for the target reader as 'orthodox' (*Gora* T, p. 12) that could be understandable. Similarly, *prāẏaścitta* (*Gora*, p. 216) means atonement for one's misdeeds. In Hinduism, the term refers to voluntarily accepting one's errors and misdeeds, confession, repentance, means of 'penance' (*Gora* T, p.154), and expiation to undo or reduce the karmic consequences.[33] Here also, he has used substitution strategy. Again, *upabās* (*Gora* S, p. 224) is replaced with 'fasting' (*Gora* T, p. 159) that is a special ritual of Hindus. It means not eating for a certain period of time for social or religious purposes. Fasting is observed in marriage, worship, and various vows.[34] In the same way, *tapōban* (*Gora* S, p. 63) has taken the place of ''forest' (*Gora* T, p. 44) that is a hermitage situated in a secluded place like a forest where the sages live for austerities.

2.4.4 Transliteration Strategy

Ganges related terms like *gaṅgāsnān* (*Gora* S, p. 24), and *gaṅgājal* (*Gora* S, p. 26) are associated with untranslatability interrelated to socio-religious customs and conventions performed by the Brahmins. The first one literarily refers to bathing or ablution in the Ganges. Actually, it is a ritual or a pious deed done by the Hindus, believing that bathing in the Ganges on a specific day can save one from sins through purification.[35] The Ganges is considered one of the sacred rivers in Hinduism. She is both a goddess and a river. In Hindu mythology, the Ganges descends from heaven to liberate the dead. The second one is the continuation of the previous one considering the water as the holiest. The water of this river can remove all the impurities. The scriptures say that if Ganges water is given to the face of a dead person, then his soul gets peace. However, Western readers do not know the Hindu rituals, customs, and conventions, and it is a difficult task for the translator to convey the proper massage.

To be faithful to the source text, the translator has followed 'transliteration' strategy with literal translation to make the message meaningful to the target audience. He has rendered those religious objects from the source text as 'bathe in the Ganges' (*Gora* T, p.18), and 'Ganges water' (*Gora* T, p. 20).

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33 James G. Lochtefeld, *The Illustrated Encyclopedia of Hinduism*, 1st ed. (New York: Rosen, 2002), p. 526.

34 *Banglapedia,* s.v. *"*Upavasa*.",* Vol. 14, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2012

35 Stephen Alter, *Sacred Waters: A Pilgrimage Up the Ganges River to the Source of Hindu Culture* (Houghton Mifflin Harcourt Trade & Reference Publishers, 2001), p. 129.

2.4.5 Omission Strategy

The target culture has no suitable equivalent for the following instances. The translator feels that it may not create any problem transporting the necessary message if they are omitted. The cultural phrase *kīrtankarā* (*Gora* S, p.130) or Kirtan is one of the earliest genres of Bengali music. Its emergence as a means of attaining God very easily for the ordinary person. This trend of practicing religion through songs has been going on in this country since ancient times. Kirtan is the developed form of Vaishnavism in Bengal. It usually describes God's qualities and pastimes.[36]

3. Conclusion

Untranslatability has become overwhelming in translating Bengali culture into English due to the gaps between the two languages and cultures. After analyzing the selected culture-bound Bengali novel and its English translation, it can be determined that translating culture-specific items seems indisputably a very challenging task. More remarkably, the optimal use of a particular strategy from the different translation procedures is undeniably a fact because the success of a translation mostly depends on it. However, in the translated novel *Gora*, the translator tried his best to overcome the cultural intricacy by rendering the corresponding cultural items in the target cultures using different strategies.

Substitution is the most frequently used strategy found in each cultural category. The problems related to the material, social and religious cultures have been solved by providing additional associated information. At the same time, some untranslatable culture-bound words are borrowed directly from the source text and naturalized in the target text. Similarly, in other cases, the translator has moderately defined or explained some typical culture-bound items, mainly unfamiliar to the European context. But in certain circumstances, when many of them have no equivalent in English, the Bengali name in transliteration is employed. Transliteration with addition is a new strategy used in translation. Moreover, as part of the translation strategy provoked by Gideon Toury, the translator intentionally omitted some conflicting (between languages and cultures) cultural items without impeding the natural flow of the translation process. Nevertheless, in some cases, the translator has failed to understand the particular socio-religious words or phrases based on the context resulting in the mistranslation and misinterpretation of the source culture. Finally, the study suggests that more attention is needed while handling the culture-specific items to produce a more effective translation.

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36   *Banglapedia,* s.v. *"Kirtan .",* Vol. 8, Asiatic Society of Bangladesh, 2012.