

Examining Semiotic Structures and Their Impact on Translation Equivalence in Media: A Cross-Cultural Analysis of India and the West

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Abstract

The paper deals with the complex relationship of semiotic structures and translation equivalence pertaining to media localisation, and it attempts to explore the same within the framework provided by the National Education Policy, 2020, in India. A semiotic analysis of the film "PK" or any other movie will reveal how signs, codes, and conventions can carry meaning to the audience. For example, the use of the alien character to criticise human customs is used metaphorically in the context of commenting about societal norms. With a focus on Indian and Western cultural contexts, this study examines the relationship between semiotic structures and translation equivalency in media localization. The study explores the difficulties of maintaining cultural meaning in translation and is based on India's National

Education Policy (NEP) 2020, which promotes multilingual education and cultural inclusion. It argues how the semiotic properties of language in media discourse shape the reception and understanding of translated texts in various language and cultural communities, with special emphasis on NEP 2020.

This is some critical work towards the realisation of NEP 2020, which has been insistent on multilingual education and cultural diversity. Culture and language become even more important with NEP; it promotes even the first language as one of the tools to learn through and continues insisting on local languages in educational and media contexts. It advocates that NEP should be the basis of translation in local media content. The calls for localisation within the NEP framework, paying attention to semiotic depth with the source text, and guaranteeing literal and dynamic equivalence in the target text.

The NEP 2020 promotes multilingualism as an inclusive strategy by highlighting the use of regional languages and cultural symbols in media and education. To preserve the core of Indian semiotics, media translation within this framework necessitates cultural sensitivity and depth. Drawing on examples from localised educational media, the paper now proceeds with a number of case studies specifically dealing with the problems and strategies for dealing with semiotic complexity in the creation of contextually relevant and culturally specific translations. The results of the current work show that if the semiotic level is allowed to dominate, this will result in linguistic correctness at the expense of the interpretative/semantic level, thus limiting communication and interaction.

In other words, this research on semiotic structures in translation practice under web media conditions is a detailed and situational recognition of the structural necessity that translators and localizers are to be aware of such dynamics.

Keywords: Semiotic Structures, Translation Equivalence, Media Localisation, Cross-Cultural Analysis, Indian Culture, Western Culture, National Education Policy

Introduction

The rapid globalisation of media applies increasing pressure for translation perfection in an effective manner across cultures. Translation, however, is by no means just a linguistic exercise; it is often highly complex, with meaning being transferred across tortuous cultural and semiotic boundaries. It is in this scenario that semiotics-the study of signs, symbols, and their meanings-comes into prominence as a highly indispensable frame for comprehension of how meaning is built up, carried out, and perceived within diversified settings. It is for this reason that this paper discusses the important role semiotic structures play in shaping translation equivalence, with particular emphasis on media content. Drawing from semiotic elements considered to be inherent in various forms of media emanating from Indian and Western cultures, this research attempts to extract the intricacies involved in cross-cultural translation. The analysis also looks into how cultural symbols, gestures, and metaphors among other semiotic resources actually drive the translation process, in most instances dictating whether the original message is faithfully preserved or altered. The comparative analytical approach this paper adopts discusses some selected Indian films that have been translated into Western languages with a view to highlighting challenges and strategies employed by the translators in achieving translation equivalence. In this respect, it would also like to contribute to a better understanding of where semiotics meet translation studies and allow describing how cultural differences can be transcended in a translation to communicate with larger audiences.

1.2 Aim and Objectives

Aim:

This research paper embarks on the study of the impingement of semiotic structure elements on translation equivalence within the media, in a critical study contrasting various Indian films with their translation into the Western film audience. The attempt is to

understand how the elements of semiotics-cultural signs and symbols, gestures, metaphors-find their influence on translations being more or less adequate, and how these elements eventually affect the reception and interpretation of media content within different cultural contexts.

Objectives:

- Identifying key semiotic structures: Analyse and identify the key semiotic elements in selected Indian films-cultural symbols, gestures, and metaphors-which form an essential part of any signification process within the original context.
- Examining translation strategies for semiotic structures: Based on semiotic analysis, study translation strategies resorted to translating these semiotic structures into Western languages and cultures, evaluating how far these strategies preserve or alter the original meaning.
- Comparing Cultural Interpretations: Present the interpretations of semiotic elements and cultural references by Indian and Western audiences in order to show differences that may impact the reception and understanding of the translated product.
- Highlight Challenges and Solutions: Identify problems arising during translation of semiotic elements and proffer solutions or best practices that could help achieve higher translation equivalence in cross-cultural media contexts.
- Contribution to Translation Studies: To indicate the way diverse paradigms in semiotics interact in complex ways with translation and give recommendations on how semiotics could best be implemented into less culturally insensitive and more culture-sensitive translation practices.

1.3 Research Problem

How do semiotic structures in Indian and Western cultures influence translation equivalence in media?

What challenges do translators face when translating media content across these cultural contexts?

How can a better understanding of semiotics enhance translation practices to achieve greater equivalence?

Basic Concepts

Semiotics

Semiotics is defined as the study of signs and symbols, their usage, and their interpretation concerning how meaning is created and communicated through signs. In translation studies, semiotics can well demonstrate how various elements—a word, an image, a gesture—are realized with meaning within a cultural frame and how such meaning may be altered when relocated into another culture.

Signifier, Signified, and Referent

These are fundamental concepts in semiotics:

Signifier: The form of the sign (e.g., a word, image, or sound).

Signified: The concept or meaning that the signifier represents.

Referent: The actual object or concept in the real world that the signifier and signified refer to. In translation, the challenge is to maintain the relationship between these elements across different languages and cultures.

Cultural Codes

Cultural codes are those unconscious conventions and rules governing signs and symbols, understood within one particular culture: color symbolism, gestures, metaphorical expressions. This is precisely where media translation needs to understand and interpret the code correctly so that the original meaning and cultural context are preserved.

Translation Equivalence

Translation Equivalence: How translation conveys meaning, style, and effect of the original text. This is all about creating a balance between the following:

- *Literal Equivalence*: Translation in a source form and structure literally.
- *Dynamic Equivalence*: Conveying the same meaning and effect as that of the original text-even if the translation must depart from the word-for-word translation.

Cross-Cultural Analysis

Cross-cultural analysis involves comparing and contrasting cultural elements between different societies. In the context of media translation, it examines how cultural contexts influence the interpretation of semiotic elements and how these elements are adapted or altered in translations.

Media Localisation

Media localisation is the process of adapting media content (such as films, TV shows, or video games) to fit the cultural, linguistic, and contextual norms of a target audience. This includes translating dialogue and adjusting cultural references to ensure that the content resonates with the new audience.

Metaphors and Symbolism

Metaphors are figurative expressions that convey meanings beyond their literal sense, while symbolism involves using symbols to represent larger ideas or concepts. Both are important in media content and pose challenges in translation as their meanings can be culture-specific and may not have direct equivalents in other languages.

Audience Reception

Audience reception refers to how viewers interpret and respond to media content. It includes understanding how different cultural backgrounds influence viewers' perceptions and reactions to translated media.

Literature Review

Translation emerges as one of the more complicated tasks in media that cannot be used merely for changing the words of a language into another language. Every translation includes meanings and culture or semiotics that can be found in the original content. The issue becomes even more complicated when it comes to translation of media content from a culturally dense milieu such as India into its western counterparts since the semiotic codes, cultural and social contexts are rather diverse. This work offers a literature review on the existing studies on semiotic structures in translation focusing on the issue of translation equivalence with special reference to Indian films catering to the western audience.

The theoretical background of semiotics originates from the works of *Ferdinand de Saussure (1916)* and *Charles Sanders Peirce (1931)*. One of the models that became very widely used in the course of translation research was suggested by Saussure, introducing the notions of signifier, signified, and referent. Whereas the sign is 'something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity', it consists of the form-the signifier-and the concept-the signified. It is while the referent is the actual object or event in the real world. Peirce elaborated on this model by creating the concept of signs where there is a triadic relationship between the representamen otherwise known as the signifier, the interpretant otherwise known as the signified, and the object otherwise referred to as the referent. These models have been helpful in understanding how meaning is constructed and deconstructed during translation (Chandler 2007).

Aamir Khan's PK (2014) is one bright example. The movie is replete with cultural and semiotic nuances, which become colossal problems to translate, especially for Western audiences. *PK* narrates the story of an alien protagonist critiquing and satirising religious practices and social etiquette in India-a combination of humour, symbolisms, and metaphors. One of the central semiotic elements in the film is the innocent questioning of religious

rituals by the protagonist and his literal interpretation of the religious and cultural signs serving metaphorically for an outsider's look at the Indian society. In itself, the title **PK**-a colloquial Hindi term for someone who is tipsy or confused-plays on the alien's perceived misunderstanding of human behaviour.

In translating **PK** for a Western audience, several challenges come up. The cultural context and the derived from the linguistic wordplay, such as double meanings of terms and religious references, do not carry over. It also heavily draws on visual semiotics, from the main character's offbeat costume-a pastiche of hand-me-downs that denote his otherness-to the ritual deployment of religious paraphernalia invested with different meanings in the West. While these semiotic elements are central in the narrative and critique of the film, this is at the risk of losing their impact in translation or even being misunderstood. This underlines the complex interplay of semiotics with cultural equivalence in media translation. The translation of **PK** thereby epitomises the broader challenges discussed in this literature review, where preserving cultural and semiotic depth in the translations of Indian films is actually impossible without having more than simple linguistic competence; profound knowledge in both source and target cultures is needed.

Cultural Codes in Translation

Colour, gestures, metaphors-that is, translation of cultural codes-are very tricky. For example, the colour red in the Indian context denotes purity, marriage, and auspiciousness as depicted in films such as *Devdas* 2002. In the West, it may evoke quite different meanings: danger or passion, for example, will get lost or distorted in translation.

Other examples include the act of touching an elder's feet in a touching homage, which in Indian culture, depicted a number of times in films such as *Kabhi Khushi Kabhie Gham* (2001), perhaps does not find an equivalent in most Western cultures since such a gesture may easily be misinterpreted or simply not carry the same meaning. These cultural

codes are too deeply embedded in the source culture to pose quite a challenge for translators in their quest for equivalence in the target language and culture.

Media Translation and Equivalence

Translation equivalence, one of the central notions in translation studies, designates a degree to which the translated text faithfully represents the meaning, style, and effect of the original text. *Jakobson (1959)* distinguished between three kinds of translation equivalence: linguistic, referential, and connotative. Equivalence in linguistic terms is word-for-word translation, equivalence with regard to reference means faithfulness to events or objects depicted, while equivalence in terms of sense is related to the emotive and cultural impact of the text.

Equivalence in media translation is, however, particularly tricky to achieve in that media are basically multimodal—they involve not only a verbal text but also a visual, an audio track, and at times gestures. In Satyajit Ray's *Pather Panchali (1955)*, for instance, the noontime visuals of the countryside, the shrill whistle of the train, and the white kaash flowers swaying in the breeze all carry heavy cultural loadedness. Translating these elements into English for a Western audience requires more than linguistic accuracy; it demands an understanding of the cultural and semiotic meanings behind these symbols (Dasgupta, 1999).

Case Studies and Comparative Analysis

Comparing Indian films such as *Lagaan (2001)* and *Baahubali (2015)* helps to explain the constraints that semiotic elements pose on translation across cultures for a Western audience. For one, *Lagaan* employs cricket as a metaphor of colonial resistance, which is very relatable to Indian audiences cognizant of their history concerning British colonialism. This metaphor may be weaker or even incomprehensible to a Western audience untaught in cricket or the colonial connotations of it.

The film Baahubali in itself is full of Indian mythology and cultural symbolism, wherein the characters and narratives are very much borrowed from Hindu epics like Mahabharata. These are signs difficult to translate; hence, a lot of this cultural depth and resonance gets lost while translating the same in western adaptations, as has been noted by Rajadhyaksha (2014).

This literature review has identified the crucial role semiotic structures play in media translation, with particular relevance to the case of the translation of Indian films for Western viewers. The complexity of such translation of cultural codes, metaphors, and symbols then brings into focus nuances that are required beyond linguistic accuracy toward the attainment of cultural and semiotic equivalence. Further research can build upon these challenges and stress strategies toward better cross-cultural translations in the media.

Methodology

The methodology chapter describes the step-by-step actions taken while researching the impact semiotic structures have on translation equivalence within media, particularly Indian films translated for Western audiences. This chapter aims to elaborate on the research design, methods of data collection, and analytical tools adopted by this study in testing how these three variables are treated in translation. In line with that, this research is going to apply a structured methodological framework in the description of challenges and strategies implicated in translating culturally rich media content. The methodology is designed to offer insights into the effectiveness of translation strategies and the preservation of semiotic meaning in cross-cultural media contexts.

Data Collection

The study employs a comparative analysis of Indian films that have been translated for Western audiences. The films were carefully selected for their cultural significance and the presence of rich semiotic elements, such as symbolism, metaphors, and cultural gestures,

which are deeply embedded in Indian traditions and societal norms. The analysis focuses on identifying key semiotic structures, including the signifier, signified, and referent, and examines how these elements are conveyed or altered in translation. By doing so, the study seeks to understand the impact of these semiotic structures on translation equivalence, particularly in how cultural nuances and meanings are preserved or lost in the translation process. The goal is to highlight the complexities involved in translating culturally rich media content, where the preservation of meaning goes beyond mere linguistic accuracy and delves into the realm of cultural and symbolic fidelity. This comparative approach aims to shed light on the challenges and strategies involved in achieving effective translation of Indian cinema for Western audiences, ensuring that the essence of the original content is retained.

Data Analysis

The data analysis for this research paper focuses on the comparative examination of semiotic structures in Indian films and their translated versions for Western audiences. The analysis involves a detailed review of selected films, including *Pather Panchali*, *Lagaan*, *PK*, *Devi*, *Rang De Basanti*, and *3 Idiots*, to identify and evaluate the semiotic elements that influence translation equivalence.

Firstly, the analysis assesses how cultural symbols, such as colours, gestures, and metaphors, are represented and interpreted in the original and translated versions. In *Devi* (1960), Satyajit Ray's film presents the character of a woman revered as a goddess, which uses religious iconography and cultural practices deeply embedded in Bengali society. The semiotic richness of this portrayal may not be fully grasped by Western audiences, where such intense forms of religious veneration are less common.

In *Rang De Basanti* (2006), the use of historical and revolutionary symbols is significant. The film contrasts contemporary youth with the freedom fighters of India's past, utilising symbols of patriotism and resistance that might not resonate as powerfully with

Western viewers. The historical context and the associated semiotic meaning might be challenging to convey effectively in translation.

3 Idiots (2009) incorporates educational and cultural metaphors, such as the pressure to conform to societal expectations, which are conveyed through humorous and critical dialogue. The semiotic elements of traditional Indian education systems and parental expectations may not translate seamlessly into Western educational contexts, potentially altering the film's critique of these issues.

Secondly, the analysis examines the impact of these semiotic elements on the audience's understanding and reception of the translated content. For *PK (2014)*, the film's use of an alien character to critique religious practices and societal norms employs specific cultural symbols and metaphors that may not translate directly into Western contexts. The protagonist's innocent questioning of rituals and his unfamiliarity with human customs might lose its satirical edge if the underlying cultural context is not adequately conveyed.

The data also includes viewer responses and critiques from both Indian and Western audiences to gauge how well the semiotic nuances are preserved or altered in translation. This comprehensive approach highlights the challenges and strategies in achieving effective translation equivalence, providing insights into the role of semiotic structures in cross-cultural media translation.

The methodology for this research paper on examining semiotic structures and their impact on translation equivalence in media involves a detailed approach to understanding how Indian films are adapted for Western audiences. The study uses a comparative analysis of selected films, including *Pather Panchali*, *Lagaan*, *PK*, *Devi*, *Rang De Basanti*, and *3 Idiots*, to explore how semiotic elements are translated and perceived across different cultures.

Data Collection includes gathering both the original and translated versions of these films, along with viewer responses and translation documentation. This data is sourced from films, film texts, online reviews, and academic critiques, providing a comprehensive basis for analysis.

Data Analysis consists of a three-step process:

- Semiotic Analysis examines the representation of cultural symbols, gestures, and metaphors in both the original and translated films.
- Comparative Analysis assesses the effectiveness of translation strategies by comparing audience reactions from Indian and Western perspectives.
- Evaluation of Translation Equivalence focuses on the accuracy of both literal and dynamic equivalence, determining how well the translations preserve the original film's semiotic meaning.

Analysis

The chapter will explore how Indian films, with their rich tapestry of cultural, historical, and religious references, are interpreted and adapted for Western audiences. Using a selection of films by several renowned directors, the analysis will illustrate how semiotic structures such as cultural symbols, visual metaphors, and linguistic subtleties affect the translation process. Each film presents unique semiotic elements that encapsulate specific cultural contexts, posing distinct challenges for translators striving to maintain both the literal and interpretive aspects of the original content.

Through this comparative analysis, the chapter aims to shed light on the broader implications of semiotic translation challenges and strategies, contributing to a deeper understanding of how cultural and semiotic nuances shape media localisation efforts. The findings will offer insights into the effectiveness of translation practices in preserving the integrity and impact of culturally rich media content.

The analysis in this study is grounded in a semiotic approach, concentrating on the three fundamental components of signs: the signifier, the signified, and the referent. The signifier refers to the form that the sign takes, which could be a word, image, sound, or gesture. The signified is the concept or idea that the signifier represents, giving the sign its meaning. Finally, the referent is the actual object or thing in the world that the sign denotes. By examining these components, the study explores how meaning is constructed and interpreted within different cultural contexts.

Pather Panchali (1955)

Cultural Symbolism and Metaphors:

- **Original Context:** In “Pather Panchali,” there is a scene where the young Apu and his sister Durga chase a train through the fields. The train, symbolising modernity, contrasts with the rural setting of their village, representing the tension between tradition and progress.
- **Translation Challenge:** The semiotic significance of the train in this context is deeply rooted in the Indian cultural landscape, where industrialisation is seen as both progress and a threat to traditional ways of life. Translating this symbolism requires more than a literal translation; it necessitates understanding this cultural dichotomy to convey the same emotional and thematic resonance.

Visual Semiotics:

- **Original Context:** The depiction of rural Bengal with its lush landscapes and the rituals of daily life is integral to Ray’s work. Visual elements such as monsoon rains and the blowing of the conch shell during puja (worship) carry significant cultural weight.
- **Translation Challenge:** When these visuals are translated into a different cultural context, maintaining their cultural specificity is challenging. For instance, the

monsoon may be perceived simply as rain in a Western context, losing the meanings associated with fertility, renewal, and the cyclical nature of life in Indian culture.

Charulata (1964)

Cultural Context and Subtext:

- **Original Context:** In “Charulata,” Ray explores the inner life of Charu, a lonely wife in late 19th-century Bengal. The film is rich in subtext, with Charu’s emotions conveyed through her interactions with her environment, such as her solitary reading and embroidery.
- **Translation Challenge:** Charu’s emotions are deeply embedded in the cultural context of the time. For instance, her reading of Bengali literature reflects the intellectual awakening of the Bengali Renaissance. Translating these aspects into English, where the historical and cultural background may not be familiar, could lead to a loss of depth and nuance.

Language and Poetic Expression:

- **Original Context:** The film’s dialogue and letters are steeped in Bengali literary and poetic traditions. Ray’s use of Tagore’s poetry adds cultural richness and intellectualism.
- **Translation Challenge:** Translating Tagore’s poetry into English is challenging as the original Bengali carries rhythms, connotations, and cultural references that are difficult to replicate, potentially impacting the emotional and cultural resonance.

Shatranj Ke Khilari (1977)

Historical and Political Context:

- **Original Context:** “Shatranj Ke Khilari” is set against the backdrop of the British annexation of Awadh in 1856. The film portrays two noblemen engrossed in a chess game, symbolising their detachment from political upheaval.

- **Translation Challenge:** The chess game as a metaphor for political apathy is culturally specific to the Indian context. Translating this metaphor into English requires conveying its subtext without disrupting the subtlety of Ray's narrative, especially if the audience is unfamiliar with British colonialism in India.

Linguistic Nuances and Multilingualism:

- **Original Context:** The film uses Urdu and English, reflecting power dynamics and cultural identity.
- **Translation Challenge:** The formal, poetic nature of Urdu and its cultural implications may be lost in English, potentially stripping the dialogue of its cultural and emotional depth. The power dynamics embedded in the language use might not be apparent without a nuanced translation.

Devi (1960)

Religious and Mythological References:

- **Original Context:** "Devi" explores religious superstition through Doyamoyee, a woman believed to be an incarnation of the goddess Kali. The film's imagery parallels Hindu goddess worship iconography.
- **Translation Challenge:** Translating this film requires understanding Hindu mythology and religious practices. The symbolism of Dayamoyee as a goddess figure might not be clear to a Western audience, potentially leading to a loss of critical commentary on religious orthodoxy.

Jalsaghar (1958)

Cultural and Social Commentary:

- **Original Context:** "Jalsaghar" (The Music Room) depicts the decline of the Bengali aristocracy through a zamindar who clings to his past glory by hosting music sessions. The opulent music room symbolises his attachment to a bygone era.

- **Translation Challenge:** The film's commentary on social change and the fading aristocracy is tied to the historical and cultural context of Bengal. Translating this commentary into English might not fully convey the significance of the zamindar's decline, and the cultural meaning of the music performances may be lost.

Lagaan (2001)

Cultural Context and Historical Setting:

- **Original Context:** "Lagaan" is set during the British Raj and tells the story of villagers challenging British oppressors to a cricket match to avoid paying taxes. The film is rich with cultural references, such as the villagers' connection to the land and dependence on monsoon rains.
- **Translation Challenge:** The semiotic significance of the monsoon and the villagers' relationship with the land may not resonate with Western audiences unfamiliar with India's agrarian society. Additionally, the cricket match as a symbol of colonial resistance might not be fully appreciated by those unfamiliar with the sport.

Religious and Mythological Symbolism:

- **Original Context:** The film includes religious elements, such as the villagers praying for rain and victory. These scenes reflect their faith and desperation.
- **Translation Challenge:** Translating these religious references might simplify or misunderstand their complexity, leading to a loss of the film's spiritual dimension.

Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge (1995)

Cultural Norms and Social Customs:

- **Original Context:** "Dilwale Dulhania Le Jayenge" (DDLJ) explores the tension between traditional Indian values and Westernised lifestyles, focusing on arranged marriages and family honour.

- **Translation Challenge:** Translating cultural nuances such as “sanskar” (values or traditions) might be difficult, potentially leading to a misunderstanding of the protagonist’s motivations in a Western context where individualism is emphasised.

Language and Cultural References:

- **Original Context:** The film uses Hindi, Punjabi, and English, reflecting the characters’ diasporic identities and cultural references.
- **Translation Challenge:** The phrase “Mujhe Indian banane ka shauq hai” (I have a passion for becoming Indian) captures the protagonist’s desire to reconnect with his cultural roots. Translating this may lose the layered meaning of “Indian-ness” as an identity encompassing both cultural and moral values.

Baahubali: The Beginning (2015)

Mythological and Cultural References:

- **Original Context:** “Baahubali: The Beginning” is steeped in Indian mythology, drawing on themes from Hindu epics like the Mahabharata and Ramayana. Characters represent archetypal figures such as the righteous warrior and the treacherous uncle.
- **Translation Challenge:** Translating the film while maintaining its mythological resonance is challenging. For instance, Baahubali’s portrayal as a god-like hero might not have the same impact on Western audiences unfamiliar with the concept of dharma (righteous duty).

Visual Semiotics:

- **Original Context:** The film’s visual grandeur, including elaborate sets and costumes, reflects Indian cultural aesthetics. Royal court scenes and battle sequences draw on traditional Indian martial arts and warfare techniques.

- **Translation Challenge:** The semiotic richness of these visuals may not fully translate, with Western audiences potentially missing cultural references and interpreting the visual spectacle differently.

Rang De Basanti (2006)

Historical and Political Context:

- **Original Context:** “Rang De Basanti” intertwines modern-day students’ stories with those of Indian freedom fighters. The film uses the motif of history repeating itself, with students drawing inspiration from freedom fighters to combat contemporary corruption.
- **Translation Challenge:** Translating the semiotic parallel between past and present requires conveying the significance of India’s colonial history and its impact on contemporary identity. Without understanding India’s freedom struggle, the film’s message may not resonate as powerfully with non-Indian audiences.

Cultural Symbols and Nationalism:

- **Original Context:** The film uses national symbols like the Indian flag to evoke patriotism and sacrifice. For instance, the colour saffron in the film’s title and visuals references the Indian flag.
- **Translation Challenge:** The emotional impact of these symbols may not be as strong for Western audiences. The translation must effectively convey the deep sense of national pride and historical significance.

3 Idiots (2009)

Educational and Cultural Critique:

- **Original Context:** “3 Idiots” critiques the Indian education system’s pressures and societal expectations, particularly the emphasis on engineering and medical professions.

- **Translation Challenge:** Translating this critique into English might dilute the film's commentary, as educational pressures may be perceived differently in Western contexts. The cultural significance of elements like the "All is well" mantra may also be lost.

Linguistic Play and Humour:

- **Original Context:** The film's humour relies on wordplay, puns, and cultural references in Hindi, such as Chatur's speech filled with deliberate mispronunciations.
- **Translation Challenge:** Translating these linguistic elements into English can be challenging, as the humor depends on specific sounds and meanings in Hindi, potentially leading to a loss of comedic impact.

Padmaavat (2018)

Historical and Cultural Representation:

- **Original Context:** "Padmavat" is based on Malik Muhammad Jayasi's epic poem and depicts Rajput honour and the practice of jauhar (self-immolation). The film reflects Rajput cultural values and historical context.
- **Translation Challenge:** Translating concepts like jauhar into English may lead to misunderstandings about its historical and cultural significance. The semiotic representation of honor and sacrifice may not translate effectively without additional cultural context.

Visual Semiotics:

- **Original Context:** The film's elaborate costumes, sets, and symbols reflect Rajputana's grandeur. Traditional symbols like the turban and sword carry cultural significance related to Rajput identity.

- **Translation Challenge:** The semiotic weight of these visuals might be lost on Western audiences unfamiliar with Rajput history, potentially reducing the impact of scenes relying on these cultural cues.

Findings and Discussion

Semiotic Structures in Indian and Western Media

Indian media often employ complex, multilayered semiotic structures rooted in cultural tradition, religious iconography, and social caste. For instance, colour can have a deep cultural and religious but simultaneously political meaning, such as saffron. By contrast, Western media often rest on more direct, denotative meanings, with a greater emphasis on individualism and forthright communication.

The study finds that the act of translation of Indian media into Western language formats often requires more than mere linguistic translation; it calls for a cultural transposition to convey the same meaning. For example, some symbolic usages of animals in Indian advertisements may not find their corresponding impact in the Western cultures. On the other hand, translation of the western media into Indian languages calls for greater contextualisation in order to strike a chord with the target audience.

Translators have to face a number of problems: misinterpreting cultural symbols, searching for adequate signs, possibly losing meaning in translation. All these problems are sharper in media translation, bearing in mind that timing, visuals, and perception are crucial there.

Challenges

Cultural Nuances in Semiotic Structures: Another task at hand is the task of capturing the cultural nuances contained in semiotic structures in Indian media and then attempting to translate this into a Western context. This assumes a detailed knowledge and conveyance of

such culturally ingrained signs and their meanings, which might not have direct translations in English.

Upholding Translation Equivalence: The process of translation upholding equivalence not only in meaning but in emotional resonance across the cultures could be really complex because different cultural contexts, familiarity, or unfamiliarity with specific symbols or references bear an effect on maintaining that original intent and impact of the media.

Cultural sensitivity, on one hand, plays a very important role; on the other hand, there's the requirement for fidelity. The task is always to perform a balancing act between these requirements. Otherwise, it's either exoticising the content or simplifying it to meet the expectation of the target audience at the cost of authenticity and depth in the original material.

Dealing with Multimodal Semiotics: Analyzing and translating the multimodal semiotics, such as visual imagery, sound, and text, is yet another level of complexity. Much more than linguistic skills are involved in translating these modalities; it also involves an understanding of how these different modalities contribute toward the construction of meaning in various cultural settings.

Access to and interpretation of source material: Within the access of sources that are appropriate, one can find difficulties in interpretation of some cultural elements, which are even harder in cases that may involve historical or even culturally specific elements. Where primary sources are limited in number or expert's interpretations, the analyses are much deeper and full of accurate information.

Summary

The study concludes that semiotic structures significantly contribute to translation equivalence, especially in the case of media content that is deeply embedded in cultural contexts. In order to get meaningful translation, translators need to go beyond linguistic skills

and develop profound knowledge in both source and target cultures. The paper recommends inclusion of semiotic analysis in training programs for translation and raising cross-cultural awareness among translators for better translation practices.

Conclusion

This paper has discussed the relation between semiotic structures and translation equivalence in the media through a cross-cultural analysis of Indian and Western contexts. A study of selected films has indicated certain challenges in translating cultural symbolism, visual semiotics, and linguistic nuances.

The semiotic structures of Indian cinema are deeply enmeshed in specific cultural, historical, and religious contexts that are usually absent in any direct equivalent in the West. For example, metaphors in films-the train in "Pather Panchali" or the chess game in "Shatranj Ke Khilari"-are difficult to carry across Western contexts. At the same time, the themes of cultural practices and critiques of society in the films "Lagaan" and "3 Idiots" themselves are hard to fully bring into translation.

Other factors that make films like "Baahubali: The Beginning" and "Padmaavat" culturally relevant in translation involve visuals. Many of these visuals are saturated with cultural meaning; hence, out of context, this meaning may be lost.

What follows from this is that successful translation does not happen by linguistic exactitude but through in-depth knowledge of cultural and semiotic contexts. A translator has to bridge the cultural divide so that the authenticity of the original media is maintained. Further research in the future should go deep into how semiotic elements affect audience reception and translation strategies for a better approach toward cross-cultural communication and appreciation of media.

Recommendations for Future Research

Future research could explore the role of semiotics in other forms of media, such as digital content and social media, where cultural codes are rapidly evolving. Additionally, examining the impact of semiotic structures on translation in other cross-cultural contexts, such as between Asian and African cultures, could provide further insights into the complexities of translation equivalence.

Conflict of Interest: The corresponding author, on behalf of second author, confirms that there are no conflicts of interest to disclose.

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