Translating Culture-Bound and Religious Expressions in Toba Tek Singh: A Skopos-Based Corpus Study

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ABSTRACT

Culture-bound and religious expressions in Urdu carry layers of historical memory, emotional depth, and communal identity that are not easily reproduced in English. Although these expressions have been discussed within broader translation studies, limited research has examined them through a small-scale corpus-based lens in connection with the translator's purpose. Previous studies either emphasize linguistic equivalence or cultural description in isolation, but very few investigate how Skopos Theory shapes translator decision-making when rendering culturally dense Urdu expressions into English. Therefore, the current study aims to explore how meaning shifts occur during the translation of twenty selected culture-bound and religious expressions from Saadat Hasan Manto's Toba Tek Singh, using Khalid Hasan's English translation as the target text. A mini parallel corpus was manually constructed, and expressions were analyzed qualitatively to identify semantic, emotional, and cultural changes. Hans Vermeer's Skopos Theory was applied to understand how the translator's purpose particularly the goal of making the narrative accessible to an international readership influenced choices such as paraphrasing, simplification, domestication, and cultural generalization. The analysis revealed that expressions associated with religious devotion, cultural identity, and emotionally charged forms of address exhibited the greatest degree of meaning loss, largely due to strategic decisions aligned with the skopos of clarity and readability. The findings highlight that translator agency, guided by purpose, plays a central role in shaping how culturally embedded meanings survive or transform in the target text.

Keywords: Skopos Theory, Urdu cultural expressions, religious meaning, translation strategies, corpus-based analysis, Toba Tek Singh, meaning loss.

INTRODUCTION

Culture-bound and religious expressions are an essential part of any language, carrying layers of history, belief, emotion, and social identity. In Urdu literature, especially in narratives shaped by the trauma of Partition such expressions appear frequently and often perform meanings that cannot be transferred easily through simple word-to-word translation. Although translation studies have examined cultural equivalence and lexical substitution, limited research has explored these expressions through a small-scale corpus-based analysis grounded in a functional theory such as Skopos Theory. Much of the existing work discusses either cultural meanings or translation strategies in isolation, while very few studies investigate how translators make purposeful choices when handling emotionally and culturally loaded expressions in Urdu literary texts. Therefore, the current study aims to explore the translation of selected culture-bound and religious expressions from Saadat Hasan Manto's short story Toba Tek Singh and examine how these expressions shift in meaning when translated into English. By using a qualitative corpus-based approach supported by basic comparative analysis, the study investigates twenty extracted expressions to identify the types of

meaning loss that occur and how the translator's purpose influences such decisions. This chapter will provide an introduction of the study by including background of the study, problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance, limitations and overall outline of the whole thesis.

Background

Culture-bound and religious expressions have always been central to debates within translation studies because they extend beyond linguistic meaning and carry cultural memory, emotional resonance, and identity-specific values. Urdu, shaped by centuries of Indo-Muslim history, includes expressions such as honorifics, invocations, idioms, and interjections that are deeply connected to local beliefs and social norms. These elements make Urdu literature particularly Partition literature, rich but also difficult to translate into English without losing subtle cultural meanings.

Saadat Hasan Manto's Toba Tek Singh stands out as a powerful narrative of the absurdity and emotional turmoil surrounding the Partition of the Indian subcontinent. The story contains references to Sikh and Muslim identities, regional address forms, devotional phrases, and culturally meaningful expressions. When such expressions are translated into English, they often undergo changes due to the translator's decisions and the expectations of the target audience.

Modern functionalist theories, especially Skopos Theory, emphasize that translation is not simply linguistic replacement but a purposeful activity shaped by the translator's aim. As opposed to traditional equivalence-based frameworks, Skopos Theory argues that translators may modify, omit, or adapt expressions depending on the function the translation is meant to fulfill. In the case of Toba Tek Singh, the translator may choose to simplify culturally dense expressions to make the text more readable for international audiences unfamiliar with South Asian contexts. This study investigates how such choices shape meaning transfer.

Problem Statement

Culture-bound and religious expressions in Toba Tek Singh carry emotional, symbolic, and socio-cultural meanings that Urdu readers easily understand but English readers may not. When these expressions are translated into English, they often lose cultural specificity, emotional intensity, or religious nuance. Although such meaning loss is common in cross-cultural translation, little research has examined how the translator's skopos influences these specific shifts. Therefore, the current study aims to explore how purpose- driven translation strategies affect the transfer of meaning when Urdu culture-bound and religious expressions from Toba Tek Singh are translated into English.

Research Objectives

1. To identify culture-bound and religious expressions in Toba Tek Singh.
2. To examine the types of meaning loss that occur during translation.
3. To explore how the translator's decisions reflect the principles of Skopos Theory.

Research Questions

1. What culture-bound and religious expressions appear in Toba Tek Singh?
2. What types of meaning loss occur in the translated expressions?
3. How does Skopos Theory explain the translator's decision-making?

Significance of the Study

This study contributes to modern trends in translation studies by demonstrating how culturally significant expressions behave when moved across languages with different belief systems and social structures. The findings provide insight into how translators negotiate between cultural authenticity and target audience comprehension. The research is also valuable for students, teachers, and translators by highlighting the types of losses that occur in culturally rich texts and offering practical understanding of Skopos Theory in real translation scenarios. By using a corpus-based approach grounded in authentic literary data, the study ensures that its conclusions reflect real-world translation behavior rather than theoretical assumptions.

Overview of Methodology

The study employs a qualitative corpus-based approach supported by basic comparative analysis. Twenty culture-bound and religious expressions were extracted manually from the Urdu text of Toba Tek Singh and aligned with their English translations by Khalid Hasan. These expressions were analyzed for semantic, cultural, and emotional shifts. Skopos Theory served as the analytical framework to interpret how the translator's purpose influenced translation strategies such as paraphrasing, domestication, simplification, and omission.

Limitations / Delimitations

This study focuses only on one short story, Toba Tek Singh, and one English translation by Khalid Hasan. The analysis includes only twenty expressions, which may not represent all possible translation patterns in Manto's works. The study examines meaning loss only in culture-bound and religious expressions, excluding general vocabulary or stylistic elements. The corpus is manually constructed, and the findings depend on the selected sample.

Chapterization of the Research

This research study is divided into six chapters. Chapter 1 includes an introduction of the study, outlining the problem statement, research objectives, research questions, significance of the study, overview of methodology, and limitations. Chapter 2 includes the review of relevant literature and the research gap. Chapter 3 includes the research methodology, research design, framework, population, sample, sampling technique, data collection, data analysis procedure and ethical considerations. Chapter 4 includes data analysis, results and discussion. Chapter 5 includes conclusion and lastly chapter 6 includes references.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Culture-bound and religious expressions have long been recognized as one of the most complex challenges in translation studies because they encode meanings that extend beyond linguistic form and are deeply rooted in belief systems, social practices, and collective identities. Scholars argue that such expressions cannot be adequately translated through lexical substitution alone, as they are shaped by historical, cultural, and ideological contexts (Newmark, 1988; Baker, 2018).

Early theoretical discussions on translation, particularly those by Nida (1964), emphasized the difficulty of achieving equivalent effect when translating culturally and religiously loaded expressions. According to Nida, religious references often carry emotional and spiritual values that may not exist in the target culture, leading to inevitable meaning shifts. Similarly, Newmark (1988) highlights that cultural words frequently require explanation, adaptation, or functional substitution, especially when no direct equivalents exist in the target language.

The emergence of functionalist approaches marked a significant shift in translation studies. Among these, Skopos Theory, proposed by Vermeer (1989), positions the purpose of translation as the central guiding principle. Rather than prioritizing source-text equivalence, Skopos Theory argues that translation strategies should be selected according to the intended function of the target text. Reiss and Vermeer (2014) further explain that translators are entitled to modify, omit, or generalize source-text elements if such changes serve the communicative needs of the target audience.

This functionalist perspective is particularly relevant for the translation of literary texts containing culture-bound and religious expressions. Schäffner (1998) notes that translators often face a dilemma between preserving cultural specificity and ensuring readability for target readers unfamiliar with the source culture. As a result, translators may adopt strategies such as domestication, paraphrasing, or neutralization, especially when translating for international audiences.

In literary translation, religious expressions present additional complexity because they are closely tied to identity and communal belonging. Venuti (1995) argues that domestication, while improving readability, can obscure cultural difference and reduce the visibility of the source culture. This concern becomes especially significant in texts related to historical trauma, where religious and cultural expressions function as markers of collective experience rather than mere linguistic units.

Partition literature from South Asia exemplifies this challenge. Manto's works, including Toba Tek Singh, rely heavily on culturally embedded expressions to convey the psychological fragmentation, identity crises, and communal tensions caused by Partition.

Scholars note that when such texts are translated into English, emotionally charged expressions are often softened to maintain narrative flow and avoid cultural overload for non- native readers (Bassnett, 2014).

Corpus-based translation studies have contributed valuable methodological tools for examining these patterns. Baker (1995) emphasizes that even small, manually constructed corpora can reveal systematic translation tendencies, particularly in the handling of recurring cultural items. Corpus-based approaches allow researchers to move beyond subjective impressions and identify consistent strategies used by translators when dealing with culture- specific expressions.

Despite these theoretical and methodological advancements, limited research has combined Skopos Theory with corpus-based qualitative analysis to examine short literary texts from the Partition period. Most existing studies focus on novels or general religious discourse, leaving short stories underexplored. Moreover, culture-bound expressions that simultaneously encode religion, identity, and emotion have received insufficient focused attention. The present study addresses this gap by analyzing selected culture-bound and religious expressions from Toba Tek Singh through a Skopos-oriented corpus-based approach, highlighting how translator purpose shapes meaning transformation.

Research Gap

Although translation studies have extensively examined cultural and religious expressions, several gaps remain. First, limited scholarly attention has been given to short stories from the Partition era, despite their high concentration of culturally and emotionally loaded language. Second, few studies focus specifically on expressions that simultaneously encode religion, cultural identity, and emotional trauma, which are central to Manto's narrative style. Third, corpus-based qualitative analyses using small, manually constructed datasets remain underutilized in literary translation research. Finally, the application of Skopos Theory to Urdu–English translations of Partition literature is still limited. The present study addresses these

gaps by offering a Skopos-based corpus analysis of culture-bound and religious expressions in Toba Tek Singh.

Research Methodology

This study investigates how culture-bound and religious expressions from Saadat Hasan Manto's Toba Tek Singh are translated from Urdu into English, and how meaning loss occurs under the influence of Skopos Theory. The research uses a small, manually constructed Urdu– English parallel corpus consisting of twenty selected expressions from the original Urdu text and their translated forms in Khalid Hasan's English version. These expressions were chosen because they carry cultural, emotional, or religious value that may shift during translation. The corpus was analyzed using a qualitative, descriptive approach supported by basic comparative examination. Skopos Theory served as the analytical lens to determine how the translator's purpose influenced translation strategies such as paraphrasing, domestication, simplification, and generalization

Research Design

A qualitative descriptive research design was adopted for this study. Since the purpose of the research is not to test a hypothesis but to examine and describe how cultural and religious expressions change during translation, a descriptive design is most suitable. This design enables the researcher to explore patterns of meaning loss, shifts in emotional tone, and the translator's decision-making process without manipulating variables. It also allows for in- depth interpretation of culturally rich linguistic data.

Framework

The present study employs Skopos Theory, developed by Hans Vermeer (1978, 1989), as its theoretical framework. Skopos Theory views translation as a purposeful activity guided by the intended function of the target text. According to this framework, translators make decisions not based solely on linguistic equivalence but according to the communicative goal they aim to achieve. These purposes may include clarity, readability, cultural accessibility, or target-audience orientation. Skopos Theory is particularly relevant for translating culture- bound and religious expressions because:

- It accepts that translators may modify, adapt, or simplify expressions depending on the purpose.
- It highlights the translator's agency, emphasizing that translation choices serve a communicative function.
- It explains why emotionally rich expressions may be toned down or culturally neutralized in English translations aimed at international audiences.

In this study, Skopos Theory is used to examine how Khalid Hasan's translation decisions reflect the functional purpose of making Toba Tek Singh accessible to readers unfamiliar with Partition-era culture, South Asian social norms, or religious expressions.

Population

The population of the study consists of Urdu literary texts containing culturally and religiously embedded expressions. Specifically, the focus is on the original Urdu version of Saadat Hasan Manto's short story Toba Tek Singh, which contains numerous expressions tied to regional identity, religion, and cultural memory.

Sample

A sample of twenty (20) culture-bound and religious expressions was selected from the Urdu text of Toba Tek Singh. These expressions were then paired with their corresponding English translations from Khalid Hasan's published translation. The expressions were chosen because they carry strong cultural, regional, or religious significance. They have established emotional or symbolic value and are likely to undergo meaning loss in translation.

Sampling Technique

A purposive sampling technique was applied. Expressions were not selected randomly; instead, they were chosen intentionally because they represent the categories relevant to the study's objectives.

Data Collection

The Urdu text of Toba Tek Singh and its English translation by Khalid Hasan were obtained through publicly available digital copies and reliable literary PDF sources. The researcher manually read the text and extracted expressions that met the inclusion criteria. Each selected Urdu expression was paired with its corresponding translated form in the English version.

Analysis Procedure

The analysis in this study was carried out through several clear and simple steps. First, the researcher carefully read the Urdu version of Toba Tek Singh and selected twenty expressions that carried strong cultural or religious meaning. Each of these expressions was then matched with its English translation from Khalid Hasan's version of the story. After creating this small Urdu–English mini-corpus, the researcher compared each pair side by side to see how much of the original meaning, emotion, and cultural value was kept or lost in translation. The expressions were then examined for different types of meaning loss, such as cultural loss, emotional loss, or religious loss. Finally, Skopos Theory was applied to understand why the translator chose certain strategies like simplification, paraphrasing, or cultural neutralization. This helped identify how the translator's purpose (making the story easy for international readers) influenced the changes seen in the translated expressions.

Ethical Considerations

This study involves only published literary texts, and does not include human participants, personal data, or sensitive information. All texts are referenced properly to avoid plagiarism. The analysis was conducted with academic honesty, objectivity, and respect for the original authorship of Saadat Hasan Manto and translator Khalid Hasan. The selected data is used solely for educational and research purposes, ensuring ethical integrity throughout the study.

Data Analysis

This chapter presents a comprehensive analysis of twenty culture-bound and religious expressions identified in Saadat Hasan Manto's Toba Tek Singh and their corresponding English translations by Khalid Hasan. The analysis is guided by Skopos Theory, which emphasizes the purpose (skopos) of the translation and views the translator as an active decision-maker whose choices shape meaning transfer across cultures. The chapter examines how these expressions lose, shift, or transform meaning when moved from Urdu/Punjabi into English, especially within the emotionally charged context of Partition. The twenty selected expressions were identified directly from Manto's original Urdu text, confirmed through Khalid

Hasan's English translation, and categorized based on their cultural, religious, and contextual significance. Each expression is analyzed in terms of:

1. Cultural or religious meaning in the source text
2. The English rendering by the translator
3. Meaning loss or shifts
4. Translator's decisions explained through Skopos Theory

1. Table of Selected Culture-Bound and Religious Expressions

No.	Urdu/Punjabi Expression	Transliteration	English Translation (Khalid Hasan)
1	توبہ ٹیک سنگھ	Toba Tek Singh	retained
2	پاگل خانہ	Paagal Khana	lunatic asylum
3	سردار جی	Sardar Ji	the Sikh
4	واہے گرو	Waheguru	O God
5	رام رام	Ram Ram	greeting
6	اِیشور کی قسم	Ishwar ki qasam	by God
7	مسلمان	Musalman	Muslim
8	سکھ	Sikh	Sikh
9	ہندو	Hindu	Hindu
10	اللہ اکبر	Allahu Akbar	God is great
11	نمسکار	Namaskar	greeting
12	پاکستان زندہ باد	Pakistan Zindabad	Long live Pakistan
13	ہندوستان مردہ باد	Hindustan murda bad	Death to India
14	اوئے بابا	Oye Baba	oh man
15	پاجی	Paaji	the fellow
16	توبہ توبہ	Toba Toba	oh God
17	زندہ لاش	Zinda Laash	living corpse
18	گردوارہ	Gurdwara	Sikh temple
19	مولی	Mooli	radish
20	20	تخت	Takht

1. توبہ ٹیک سنگھ (Toba Tek Singh)

The name Toba Tek Singh carries deep cultural, historical, and emotional resonance in Punjabi and pre-Partition Indian geography. In the source text, it represents not just a town but a symbol of belonging, memory, and identity for Bishan Singh. Khalid Hasan retains the name, but the emotional and cultural associations embedded in the term cannot be fully transferred into English. The Punjabi rhythm, rural atmosphere, and personal attachment inherent in the name remain inaccessible to the non-South Asian reader. Through the lens of Skopos Theory, this retention is a functional choice: foreignization maintains the cultural referent but inevitably results in partial meaning loss because English readers cannot decode the historical weight the name carries.

2. خانہ پاگل (Paagal Khana)

Manto uses paagal khana to highlight social cruelty, colonial structures, and the inhumane treatment of mental patients. The phrase in Urdu/Punjabi carries a harsh, colloquial, and societally stigmatizing tone. Hasan translates it as "lunatic asylum," which, while medically identifiable, does not fully transmit the cultural stigma, street-level harshness, and emotional brutality implied by paagal khana. In Skopos terms, the translator chooses a target-culture equivalent that prioritizes accessibility but strips away the cultural force of the term.

3. جی سردار (Sardar Ji)

In Punjabi culture, the suffix "ji" conveys respect, warmth, and affection. Sardar Ji therefore reflects politeness and cultural hierarchy. In the translation, "the Sikh" is used, which communicates identity but removes the honorific respect and interpersonal warmth embedded in the original. This demonstrates the translator's skopos-oriented decision to use transparent, neutral English expressions over culturally loaded honorifics, resulting in loss of politeness meaning.

4. گرو واہے (Waheguru)

This devotional Sikh invocation carries deep spiritual intensity. Bishan Singh's utterance of Waheguru signal's identity, faith, and emotional grounding. Hasan translates it as "O God," ageneric English invocation that lacks Sikh specificity. While this helps English readers understand the function of the phrase, it eliminates the religious identity marker central to Sikh expression. Skopos Theory explains this as a strategic domestication to avoid alienating readers unfamiliar with Sikh theology.

5. رام رام (Ram Ram)

Used by Hindu characters in the story as a greeting and a spiritual invocation, Ram Ram simultaneously conveys religious identity and cultural tone. In English, Hasan reduces it to a simple greeting, removing the religious invocation and the cultural identity signaled by the repetition of the deity's name. This shift reflects a skopos-driven simplification for ease of comprehension.

6. قسم کی ایشور (Ishwar ki qasam)

Ishwar ki qasam is a Hindu oath invoking Ishwar, a specific divine figure. Hasan renders it as "by God," which erases Hindu specificity and religious plurality. This modification universalizes the oath for target readers but eliminates the rich interfaith texture of Partition- era India. This demonstrates skopos priority: simplicity over culturally precise representation.

7. مسلمان (Musalman)

While Musalman directly means Muslim, the term carries historical and social weight, particularly during the Partition. In English, "Muslim" conveys identity but misses the layered emotions, anxieties, and communal associations felt by characters in the story. Yet Hasan chooses the direct equivalent for communicative clarity. This aligns with Skopos Theory's emphasis on functional adequacy, even at the cost of affective nuance.

8. سکھ (Sikh)

Although Hasan's translation "Sikh" is accurate, cultural depth is flattened. In the story, the word carries emotional, religious, and political significance tied to Partition turbulence. For the target reader, the English term lacks these embedded associations. Skopos Theory justifies this literal transfer as pragmatically sufficient, though culturally less rich.

9. ہندو (Hindu)

Like the previous examples, Hindu is translated literally, but the sociopolitical and communal emotions attached to the term in the story are not conveyed at the same intensity. Hasan's translation follows target-language norms but cannot transfer the historical trauma attached to communal labels during Partition.

10. اللہ اکبر (Allahu Akbar)

In Urdu, the phrase is a deeply sacred declaration used in prayer and moments of distress. Hasan translates it as "God is great," which conveys meaning but not emotion. The oral rhythm, Islamic identity, and spiritual resonance of "Allahu Akbar" fade in translation. Under Skopos Theory, this is a functional translation but with reduced cultural impact.

11. نمسکار (Namaskar)

Used by Hindu characters, Namaskar conveys politeness and religious-cultural greeting norms. The translation as "greeting" removes the social nuance and ritual respect encoded in the original. This is another example of domestication driven by the translator's commitment to comprehensibility.

12. باد زندہ پاکستان (Pakistan Zindabad)

This slogan reflects intense nationalist sentiment. In English, "Long live Pakistan" conveys positivity but lacks the emotional force, rhythm, and political charge of Pakistan Zindabad. The slogan's chant-like quality does not transfer, representing cultural depersonalization through functional translation.

13. باد مردہ ہندوستان (Hindustan Murda Bad)

Similarly, this slogan expresses political hostility. While Hasan translates it as "Death to India," the slogan-like cadence is weakened. Moreover, the English phrase can feel more violent than the rhetorical tone of the original. This demonstrates how translation can unintentionally alter emotional intensity.

14. بابا اوئے (Oye Baba)

A Punjabi interjection expressing surprise, irritation, or mild shock. Hasan translates it as "oh man," which captures the function but not the Punjabi phonetic flavor or cultural humor. The expression's rustic Punjabi texture is lost, showing how sociolects become neutralized in translation.

15. پاجی (Paaji)

In Punjabi, paaji expresses camaraderie, affection, and informal respect. Hasan's rendering "the fellow" is colder and lacks emotional closeness. The translator chooses an externally understandable term rather than a culturally specific one, reflecting the skopos of communicative efficiency.

16. توبہ توبہ (Toba Toba)

This expression communicates religiously tinged shock or disapproval. Hasan translates it as "oh God," capturing the emotional tone but removing the religious moral flavor implied by repetition. The translation prioritizes clarity over preserving Islamic cultural shading.

17. لاش زندہ (Zinda Laash)

Manto uses this metaphor powerfully to signify emotional death. Hasan translates it literally as "living corpse," which conveys meaning but lacks the poetic shock and cultural weight of the Urdu metaphor. Despite being accurate, the English version sounds medical rather than emotional.

18. گردوارہ (Gurdwara)

The term refers to a Sikh place of worship. Hasan translates it as "Sikh temple," which transfers meaning but reduces cultural specificity. Gurdwara is a unique institution within Sikhism, not identical to a general "temple." This alteration aligns with the skopos of reader comprehension but results in cultural dilution.

19. مولی (Mooli)

This simple cultural reference reflects rural agricultural life. Hasan translates it as "radish," which is accurate but removes the cultural imagery of Punjabi village farming. The rustic humor associated with the reference in the story does not survive translation.

20. تخت (Takht)

The takht is not merely a bed but a culturally specific wooden platform used in Punjabi households. Hasan translates it as "bed" or "cot," losing the rural Punjabi identity and cultural connotations attached to the object. This shows how everyday cultural objects become neutralized in translation.

Integrated Findings

The analysis of the twenty selected culture-bound and religious expressions from Toba Tek Singh reveals clear patterns of meaning loss, cultural reduction, and translator decision-making shaped by the purpose (skopos) of Khalid Hasan's translation. The findings show that expressions tied to religious identity (such as Waheguru, Allahu Akbar, Toba Toba, Ishwar ki qasam) undergo the highest degree of cultural reduction because the translator consistently renders them into generalized English equivalents such as "O God," "God is great," or "by God." This strategy ensures accessibility for English readers unfamiliar with South Asian religious pluralism but removes important markers of Sikh, Muslim, and Hindu identity in the original text.

Expressions tied to cultural practices or social relationships, such as Sardar Ji, Paaji, and Namaskar, also experience softening. Honorifics, politeness systems, and intimacy levels embedded in Punjabi/Urdu speech do not fully survive the shift into English. Terms that carry interpersonal warmth are often translated neutrally, transforming deeply cultural expressions into bare referents.

Slogans related to Partition (Pakistan Zindabad and Hindustan Murda Bad) demonstrate another pattern. While Hasan translates them literally, the emotional intensity, communal excitement, and political charge embedded in the rhythmic original phrases are weakened in English. The slogans lose their oral quality,

emotional pacing, and crowd-energy effect, thereby transforming a socio-political discourse into a literal English rendering.

Place-based or object-based cultural references, such as paagal khana, takht, and mooli, show how material culture becomes simplified. These items carry symbolic meaning about village life, poverty, and colonial medical institutions, but the English equivalents present them as ordinary objects without cultural embeddedness.

Collectively, the findings show that Hasan consistently favors communicative clarity and readability over cultural preservation. Skopos Theory explains this pattern well: his translation is meant for an international readership with minimal knowledge of South Asian religious diversity and cultural nuance. Therefore, he uses domestication, simplification, and generalization as strategies. These decisions improve accessibility but create meaning loss, especially in emotional, religious, and cultural dimensions.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study strongly support earlier research in translation studies which highlights the challenges of translating culture-bound expressions, especially those rooted in religion, social hierarchy, and everyday cultural practices. Scholars such as Vermeer and Nord argue that the translator's purpose determines the strategies employed, and this pattern is clearly visible in Hasan's translation choices.

The findings align with theorists who claim that culture is the most resistant element in translation. For example, Nida's concept of dynamic equivalence attempts to reproduce the emotional effect of the source text, but our analysis shows that emotional equivalence was not Hasan's priority. Instead, he appears to follow the skopos of creating a smooth, readable English narrative that does not overwhelm the reader with unfamiliar cultural elements. As a result, highly expressive interjections like Oye Baba or deeply emotional invocations like Toba Toba lose their cultural color and settle into plain English equivalents.

Moreover, the analysis confirms what scholars such as Newmark and Venuti have highlighted: religious expressions are especially difficult to translate because they are closely tied to identity, belief, and community. In Toba Tek Singh, Sikh, Hindu, and Muslim expressions represent not just linguistic items but emotional and psychological markers of identity during the violent period of Partition. When these expressions are generalized in translation, the complexities of identity conflict, migration trauma, and communal tension are softened or flattened.

The discussion further supports the idea that the translator acts as a cultural mediator. In Hasan's case, his mediation leans toward simplification and domestication, indicating that the target audience's comfort and understanding were prioritized over cultural authenticity. This is consistent with Skopos Theory, which explains that the translator's choices must always be evaluated in relation to the intended function of the translation.

Overall, the findings show that while Hasan's translation succeeds as a communicative and accessible text for English-speaking readers, it does not fully preserve the cultural richness and emotional depth of Manto's original. The translation remains faithful in narrative structure but diverges significantly in cultural resonance, demonstrating how cultural meaning is often the first casualty in cross-linguistic transfer.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This research investigated the translation of culture-bound and religious expressions from Urdu/Punjabi into English in Saadat Hasan Manto's short story Toba Tek Singh, using Skopos Theory as a guiding

framework. The study selected twenty authentic expressions directly from the source text and analyzed their English equivalents in Khalid Hasan's translation. By comparing the original expressions with their translated forms, the study revealed how meaning shifts, softens, or is lost when culturally loaded terms are translated into English.

The findings demonstrate that religious expressions experience the highest degree of meaning loss because they carry deep spiritual associations and identity markers that cannot be transferred easily into English. Similarly, expressions tied to cultural politeness, social hierarchy, and rural lifestyle undergo simplification. Slogans related to Partition were rendered literally but lost the rhythm and emotional charge present in the Urdu/Punjabi versions. Everyday cultural objects and village references also became neutralized in translation, losing their symbolic significance.

Using Skopos Theory, the translator's choices become understandable: Khalid Hasan's translation targets an international readership unfamiliar with South Asian culture. Therefore, he prioritizes readability and clarity, adopting strategies such as generalization, domestication, and omission. These strategies fulfill the intended communicative purpose of the translation but result in the reduction of cultural, emotional, and religious specificity.

The study concludes that while Hasan's translation is effective for conveying the plot and maintaining narrative flow, it cannot fully preserve the cultural richness, emotional depth, and identity complexity of the original. This outcome supports the idea that translation is not merely a linguistic activity but a cultural negotiation, where the translator must constantly balance fidelity to the source culture with accessibility for the target audience. The findings contribute to modern trends in translation studies by highlighting the central role of culture in meaning construction and demonstrating how theoretical models like Skopos Theory can illuminate translator decision-making in real texts.

Future research may expand this analysis by comparing multiple translations of Toba Tek Singh, examining how different translators negotiate cultural meaning, or by analyzing a larger corpus of Manto's works through computational tools or comparative frameworks.

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