The Translator's Role in Addressing Untranslatability in Poetry: Observing Translations of Kazi Nazrul Islam's *Bidrohi*

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Abstract

Among the many concerns about poetry translation, untranslatability is the most critical one. Translators often face difficulties in offering an authentic translation in target language. It is, after all, the translator who may decide how to address this issue. One phenomenal Bengali poem entitled *Bidrohi,* written by the "rebel" poet Kazi Nazrul Islam can be regarded as a text that contains untranslatability issues to a large extent. It is to be noted that there are some translation-techniques - both for any type of source text and for poetry in particular –that are suggested by translation theorists like, for example, Vinay and Darbelnet, Andre Lefevere, and Peter Newmark. Whereas Vinay and Darbelnet categorized the general translation procedures into two methods (direct and oblique translation), Lefever suggested a catalogue of seven possible strategies for translating poetry. On the other hand, Newmark's strategies include semantic and free translation. However, as the translator is the agent of authenticity and closeness in translation, s/he has a huge role to play in assessing, choosing, and combining the existing translation techniques according to the source text. This paper aims to explore the role of the translator and to figure out if there is a certain effective approach that can be made towards a poem that is difficult to translate. In order to achieve that ground, two translations of *Bidrohi*– one offered by Professor Kabir Chowdhury, and the other by Mohammad Nurul Huda have been analyzed. The findings of this research paper indicate that the two translations in major parts show two different combinations of translation strategies. This paper takes the

terms "Direct" and "oblique" translation as coined by Vinay and Darbelnet to show that both the translations tend to switch between these two general translation approaches. In addition, both the translations highlight some poetry translation-techniques like Lefevere's "phonemic translation" or Peter Newmark's semantic translation, which too, serve the purpose of overcoming untranslatability. The findings also show that there is no single effective approach in overcoming untranslatability in poetry. Overall, it can be concluded that when a poem appears nearly-untranslatable, a balanced combination of "direct" and "oblique" translation as well as some selected poetry-translation strategies can be an effective standpoint. This paper does not claim to discuss untranslatability issues in any other genre but poetry.

Keywords: Untranslatability in poetry, role of translator, direct and oblique translation, phonemic and semantic translation, combination

One important branch of pure translation studies is Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). This branch includes three major translation research areas– Product-oriented DTS, Function-oriented DTS, and Process-oriented DTS (Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 128). This paper is written based on the traditional area of translation-related research, that is, product-oriented DTS. A phase of product-oriented DTS is comparative translation description, which, according to Hatim and Munday, is about analyzing various translations of the same source-text (ST) in one or multiple target languages (2004, p. 128). This paper functions according to the comparative analytical norms of translation research.

Comparisons can be made between a source-text (ST) and its translation(s) for different research purposes; the comparison offered in this paper is aimed at exploring a vital issue of translation studies: the translator's role in dealing with untranslatability in poetry translation. In translation studies, much time is spent on exploring facts about poetry translation because of the formal and semantic difficulties that poetry creates by default. The problems in general lie in poetic structure, the usage of figures of speech, and the sound-effect created using rhyme and rhythm. However, the problems can be so specific and unique as to create largescale untranslatability issues. Now to assess the specific difficulties and to choose the strategies in overcoming these issues are subject to the translator's decision. The 'choices' that he makes is crucial, as Clifford E. Landers comments in *Literary Translation: A Practical Guide*, "… at every turn the translator is faced with choices – of words, fidelity, emphasis, punctuation, register, sometimes even spelling" (2001, p.10). This paper considers *Bidrohi*, a poem written in Bengali by the national poet of Bangladesh Kazi Nazrul Islam, as a fit choice for exploration of untranslatability issues that can arise in case of poetry translation. In order to explore the translation process, this paper attempts to examine two existing English translations of the text, both done by two Bengali-speaking translators namely Prof. Kabir Chowdhury and Mohammad Nurul Huda, compares the two, and observes how the two translation deal with untranslatability issues. The paper also discusses whether the two translations are combinations of different approaches. Finally, the paper attempts to figure out if there is or not a single effective combination of different translation strategies to overcome untranslatability in poetry.

Before starting the discussion, a brief overview of the translation strategies that will be discussed throughout the paper is required. An analysis of the two translations as mentioned above shows that in both the translations at least two sets of translation strategies have been used in order to overcome untranslatability. Both the translators used some general translation strategies in their work. These translation strategies are what the noted translation theorists Jean Paul Vinay and Jean Darbelnet term as "direct or literal translation" and "oblique translation" (Vinay and Darbelnetas cited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p.148). Vinay and Darbelnet define direct translation as the process of "transposing the source language message element by element into the target language" (2004, p.149). On the other hand, oblique translation procedures are more complex and are used if "certain stylistic effects cannot be transposed into the TL without upsetting the syntactic order" (2004, p.150). Vinay and Darbelnet also bring some specific translation techniques under these two more general terms. According to their categorization, direct translation includes techniques like borrowing, calque, and literal translation, whereas oblique translation includes transposition, modulation, and equivalence (2004, p.149-151). While the former approach falls into a more fundamental category of translation studies, the latter includes comparatively advanced translation techniques. However, poetry as a genre might create unique untranslatability issues, as its brevity makes it the "most personal and concentrated" among the major literary genres (Newmark, 1988, p. 163). Therefore, the general translation techniques might not be adequate to solve certain issues of untranslatability in poetry. In those cases, the translators may take help from the specialized suggestions as given by theorists like Andre Lefevere or Peter Newmark. Lefevere prepared a catalogue of seven strategies that can be used while translating poetry: phonemic translation, literal translation, metrical translation, poetry into prose, rhymed translation, blank verse translation, and lastly interpretation (Lefevereas cited in Bassnett, 1980, p.84). Newmark, too, suggests some special translation techniques in his book titled *A Textbook of Translation;* he categorizes different translation strategies according to the translator's decision to put emphasis on either the source language (SL) or the target language (TL). If the emphasis is put on the SL, the suggested translation techniques are word for word translation, literal translation, faithful translation, and semantic translation; if the emphasis is put on the TL, the translation techniques are adaptation, free translation, idiomatic translation, and communicative translation (1988, p. 45-47). These theories support the paper in analyzing and assessing how the two translations of *Bidrohi* combine the general translation techniques with the specific poetry translation-techniques in order to overcome untranslatability.

The original text of *Bidrohi* (*The Rebel*) consists of 139 'uneven versified lines' (Huda,2001, p. 63). However, the intense content of the poem, which articulates the poet's unquenchable thirst for rebellion and his youthful vigor, gives the poem a sense of magnitude. Huda befittingly marks the poem as "a word-picture of the extraordinary text of a rebellious self that was shaping within his creative being" (Huda, 2001, p. 58). In short, the poem is a universal voice for all rebel souls from time immemorial, a masterpiece that is "destined to stand the test of time" (Huda, 2001, p. 57). The poet's intention is no way kept vague; he indisputably wants to promote the supremacy of the rebellious and the invincible. Nazrul proves himself

to be the emerging voice of Bengal with all its religious, cultural, and linguistic diversity by means of a catalogue of literary, linguistic as well as intertextual variation in *Bidrohi*– majority of which is derived from the soil of Indian sub-continent or from other areas that are close to the region politically or emotionally. For example, except for the small-scale allusion to Greek mythological characters in places, a major part of the poem is filled with Hindu mythological and Muslim religious allusions, and even with references that are more neutral and richer in terms of the national history and heritage of Bengal region.

As for the form, *Bidrohi* presents a style that connects the form with the content. Also, the musicalquality created by the interaction between highly stylized auditory and visual imageries is due to the poem's rhythm. It is then, quite inevitable that the complicated stylistic features as well as the content of the poem make translating it difficult. A translator might have to struggle if s/he has little or even basic knowledge of the source language and culture. While it is true that the tone of the poem can be perceived by any average reader, a certain level of erudition is required in order to understand the text in its totality, including the extended hyperboles, metaphors, and intertextuality. A possible catalogue of the difficult issues that *Bidrohi* presents to a translator roughly includes lexical variety, mythologically as well as culturally enriched allusions, unique rhythms and the resultant musical quality, frequent alteration between different languages, as well as the effect this movement creates, and multilayered figures of speech. Some examples from the original text might make the understanding of this point about the poem's difficulty clear. The very first stanza can be quoted in this regard. (This is to disclaim that, the author of this paper will provide a phonemic translation of the original Bengali text wherever needed for the non-Bengali speaking readers' better understanding. The English translation provided alongside or under the phonemic translation is also done by the author, using words in the target language that can serve as the primary equivalent of the source language words used in the original text) –

Bolo Beer	*Say, Hero*
Bolo unnato momo shir	*Say, high is my head!*
Shir nehari amari' notoshir oi shikhor	*Seeing my head even the Himalayans seem to*
himadri	*bend!"*

(line 1-3; translated by the author)

This appears to be a refrain throughout the poem. The refrain announces the dignity of a brave soul. The word *Beer* might mean a hero or a valiant soldier, or both. In the second line, the stressed word is *Unnato,* which in first reading might mean *High* to the reader. The third line has a straight reference to the Himalayas. With this knowledge, one might understand what the first three lines are trying to convey; the poet here is asking all courageous and heroic people to articulate their inherent heroic spirit and valiance. Not only that, but also the poet attempts to make them feel proud about their soared up-spirit. The question then arises: is that all the poet intends the reader to understand upon reading these lines? In trying to answer this

question, a brief lexical analysis can be done. As mentioned earlier, the key word in the second line of the given stanza is *Unnato.* If this disyllabic Bengali word is divided, the two syllables are *un-* and *-nata;* the prefix (*un-*)indicating a sense of 'negation' and the base word(*-nata*) meaning 'something that is put upside down'. Hence the meaning of the whole word happens to be 'something that is not put downwards'. The word that follows is *Momo* which in English translates as 'mine'. If the two words are read separately or with partial knowledge of the source language, the readers are at great risk of not understanding the actually-intended meaning. If any individual tries to keep his/her head straight and not facing down, so much to make even the Himalayan bend, that person needs to put in immense effort. As the poet has chosen a Bengali word that contextually expresses 'effortful elevation', translating *unnato* as *high* might not convey the closest meaning to the target reader. If he just wanted to talk about 'something high' he could have used another Bengali word *Unchu,* which is the primary Bengali equivalent of the English word 'high'. Therefore, an expression in the target-language that provides the sense of effort to keep something straight amid a lot of struggle would be quite equivalent to the original. This minute speculation into the first three lines of the 139 lines-long poem indicates at the kinds of significance posed by the lexical variety of the poem. In fact, compared to the rest of the poem, the lexical difficulty created by the word *unnato* can be considered to be of lesser degree.

Given that *Bidrohi* challenges a translator with difficulties at different levels of discourse, the specific difficulties come under the more generalized heading of untranslatability – either partial or total. However, it cannot be denied that a linguistically and culturally-enriched text like *Bidrohi* creates untranslatability issues and hence is bound to undergo 'loss' while being translated; here the concept of "loss" referring to "the difficulties encountered by the translator when faced with terms or concepts in the SL that do not exist in the TL" (Bassnett, 2002, p. 36).

To start discussing the strategies used to translate the difficult parts of the poem, the first point that comes to attention is the issue of lexical variety. One of the translators as in discussion, Prof. Kabir Chowdhury translated the title of the poem quite literally – *The Rebel.* Huda's translation uses the same title. It is to be noted that Hudagives a disclaimer along with the translation where he acknowledges his indebtedness to the earlier translators in preparing his text (Huda, 2001, p.64). About their translation techniques in dealing with lexical variety and the resultant difficulty, it can be said that both used the general translation techniques, as suggested by Vinay and Darbelnet, in accordance with their respective focuses. As for the word *Unnato* as discussed earlier, Chowdhury decides to translate 'word for word' (Vinay and Darbelnet cited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 149) and use the TL equivalent word *high.* For the same SL word, Huda chooses to translate semantically, a concept that, as per Peter Newmark's definition, "differs from 'faithful translation' only in as far as it must take more account of the aesthetic value" (Newmark, 1988, p.46). In so doing, Huda translates the SL word as *elevated*, and captures the intended meaning. Same happens with the word *Beer*, which is translated by Chowdhury using a literally equivalent word as *valiant*, while Huda translates

the word as *hero the valiant* – here, in the latter translation, it is to be noted that the translator adds *the valiant* to *hero*, which recaptures the emphasis put on the word *beer* in original text. However, the alliterative effect of the /h/ sound is somehow discarded due to the addition of the word. Moreover, the two translators have translated the very first word of the poem – *Bolo* differently: in Chowdhury's text the translation is *say*; in Huda's text *Hail*. If both translations were put side by side, it would look like this –

Say, Valiant,	*Hail hero, the valiant*
Say: High is my head!	*Hail elevated is my head,*

(Chowdhury, lines 1-2)   (Huda, lines 1-2)

Apart from the punctuation marks, the translation by Huda appears to be semantically more accurate than Chowdhury's one if the closeness of the SL words and their TL equivalent meanings are considered. The force with which *Bolo Beer* is uttered in the original poem is almost similar to war-cry. In that sense, as a synonym of the first TL equivalent of *Bolo*– 'say', 'hail' is more appropriate to use. While in this example it is seen that Chowdhury's translation intends more to the primary lexical equivalence of the original words, Huda tends to search among the secondary as well as distantly synonymous words for options that would render a closer meaning to the original. If only the lexical issue is considered, with its attention to providing equivalent diction in TL that also captures the meaning of the original, Huda's translation attempts to offer a semantic translation of the original text. On contrary, Chowdhury's translation concentrates on preserving the SL word's "most common meanings" (Newmark, 1988, p. 46). Moreover, Chowdhury's emphasis on the alliterative effect of the sound /h/ is quite apparent here.Hence, considering the translator's emphasis on creating a substitute sound effect in target language and thereby an attempt made at Lefevere's 'rhymed translation' (Lefevere ascited in Bassnett, 1980, p.84),choosing the word *high* while translating *Unnato* is justified.

The two translators are observed to combine the general and poetry-specific translation strategies every now and then while dealing with the poem's choice of poetic diction. For example, both take help of Lefevere's 'interpretation' or Vinay and Darbenet's 'literal translation' strategies in order to convey the meaning of the Bengali words to the TL reader. However, the difference in their positions in this case is marked by their respective ways of manipulating the strategies–one of them makes adjustments by means of interpretation as well as ellipses; the other provides phonemically unchanged words. The first measure is taken largely by Chowdhury while the second is adopted by Huda. It is to be noted that there is no ellipted verse in Huda's translation, whereas in Chowdhury's translation both ellipses and interpretation can be found. The Bengali word *Aarosh* from the first stanza can be taken as an example in this regard. The line containing this word in original is as follows (along with a translation by the author of this paper):

Bolo mohabishwer mohakash fari	*Say, tearing apart the great sky of the universe*
Chandra surya groho tara chari	*Passing the Moon, the Sun, the planets, the stars*
Bhulok dulok golok bhedia	*Penetrating the world, the heaven, the universe*
Khodar ashon Aarosh chhedia	*Piercing through God's seat – the Ars*
Uthachhi chiro bismoy, ami biswa bidhatrir!	*Have I risen, the everlasting wonder of Mother Earth!*

(lines 5-9: translated by the author)

The Bengali word *Aarosh* (used in the third line of the given stanza) roughly means 'the seat of God almighty'. Therefore, this word has a strong religious connotation. Use of the word *Khuda (*used in the third line of the given stanza), a borrowed word from Persian language meaning 'the Almighty himself' –conveys a sort of religious as well as emotional attachment to Persian language that commonly exists among the Muslim people of Indian sub-continent. According to Muslim religious belief, God Almighty is seated seven heavens-above the ground. The hero of Nazrul's poem pierces through that seat while elevates himself. To keep the religious connotation of the words intact, the translator must look for TL expressions that can be regarded as close equivalence. In Chowdhury's text, the translation of the lines

(8 and 9) is as follows:

Pushing through Almighty's sacred seat
Have I risen,

(Chowdhury, line 8-9)

While the word *Almighty* or the noun-phrase *sacred-seat* is interpretatively accurate, the religious connotation is observed to be lost. On the other hand, Huda provides a phonemic translation of *Khuda* and *Aarosh* along with a one-word interpretation of the latter –

"Rending through *Khuda*'s throne the *Ars*,
I've risen– "

(Huda, line 7)

It is to be noted that the verse has been written in appositive format ("*Khuda*'s throne the *Ars")* in order to add a TL equivalent of the SL word *Aarosh* - 'the throne'. Using the exact word preceded by a meaningful interpretation meets both the ends of keeping the religious tone intact and conveying the quality of the situation (a human being piercing through Almighty's Kingdom) with careful usage of a TL word ('throne') that carries the meaning. On the other hand, despite the reduction of religious connotation and the resultant loss of originality, the meaning of the word is successfully conveyed through Chowdhury's literal translation.

The technique of using adaptation while dealing with lexical difficulties of the poemhas largely been used by Chowdhury. At times, however, this has been done at the expense of 'loss' in

translation without any certain 'compensation' being made. Such an instance is found in the second stanza wherein original an adjective *Elokeshe* has been used –

> *Ami Dhrujati, ami elokeshe jhor okal boishakhir*
>
> *I am Dhrujati, I am the disorganized hair of the untimely storm of Summer"*
>
> <div align="right">(Line 22, translated by the author)</div>

The tumultuous storm of Summer which is a yearly phenomenon in some parts of this sub-continent is commonly known as *Kalboishakhi* in Bengali. In the original text, Nazrul sees the storm as an untimely one, hence connoting a situation created by the rebel's restlessness. To enhance the emotional effect, he personifies the storm as a woman with 'disorganized hair' – the literal meaning of the word *Elokeshe*. In his translation, Chowdhury offers an adaptation of this word and translates as follows:

> *" I am Dhrujati, I am the sudden tempest*
>
>   *of untimely summer,"*
>
> <div align="right">(Chowdhury, line 23)</div>

Instead of attempting a literal or dynamical translation, Chowdhury resorts to determining the 'invariant core' (Popovic, cited in Bassnett, 2002, p. 33) of the word as a 'sudden occurrence' and translates the rest accordingly. Even if it is undeniable that the meaning is communicated to some extent, the culture-bound imagery along with the visual effect conveyed by the word *Elokeshe* is omitted in this translation. Although 'omission' is listed by Clifford E. Landers as a way of dealing with "the lacunae in the TL reader's knowledge of the SL culture" (2001, p.93), he also comments that omitting any part of the original text is similar to "an unconditional surrender" by the translator to certain translational difficulties (2001, p.95). However, Chowdhury conveys only the core meaning of the line by means of both word for word translation and 'adaptation'. 'Adaptation' is an oblique translation method used when "the type of situation being referred to by the SL message is unknown in the TL culture" (Vinay and Darbelnet as cited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 151). Although Chowdhury's decision to adapt appear to be correct if weighed against Vinay and Darbelnet's definition, his action does not match what Vinay and Darbelnet also suggest doing in case of using adaptation as a translation technique. According to them, "in such cases translators have to create a new situation that can be considered as being equivalent" (2004, p. 151). Instead of doing so, Chowdhury does not at all translate the Bengali word *Elokeshe* and translates the rest of the verse word for word. On the other hand, Huda has attempted at the same line in his translation as follows–

"I'm *Dhurjati*, the untimely summer storm with disheveled hair."

<div align="right">(Huda, line 23)</div>

The literal translation of *elokeshe* (*disheveled hair*) as provided here captures the personification of the original word. Huda translates the line by means of simple word for word translation. However, both the translations gain something at the expense of losses. Chowdhury's translation captures the nuance of an extremely windy weather (as it accompanies the allusion to *Dhrujati* – the enraged image of Lord Shiva and as well as an indication to bad nature) by using the TL word *tempest* instead of *storm*. Huda on the other hand, is observed to omit the repetition of the Bengali first person pronoun *Ami (I* in English) and also to change the syntactic order by interchanging the positions of the words and phrases *jhor okalboishakhir /the untimely summer storm* and *elokeshe/disheveled hair*. This instance of interchanging the elements of a sentence is close to the strategy of 'transposition', a translation technique that allows "replacing one word class with another without changing the meaning of the message."(Vinay and Darbelnet ascited in Hatim and Munday, 2004, p. 150). Huda replaces 'one word class with another' by interchanging the adjective (*elokeshe/disheveled hair)* with the nouns (*jhoro okalboishakhi / the untimely summer storm)* and changes the syntactic order without disrupting the meaning. As Vinay and Darbelnet adds, translators may use transposition as a tool of translation "if the translation thus obtained fits better the utterance or allows a particular nuance of the style to be retained (2004, p.150). Huda's decision to use transposition as a translation tool meets this end. Finally, it can be said that although both Chowdhury and Huda is observed to use oblique translation strategies, the combinations as well as modifications of the techniques are different.

The lexical variation of the poem might seem to be a minor issue in translation on the face of the widespread allusions used in the poem. In this regard, Chowdhury's translation uses both 'ellipses' and 'explication' as translation tools. In translation studies both tools are accepted as part of 'adjustment', that is, a technique applicable when there is no way out other than to gradually "move away from form-by-form renderings and towards more dynamic kinds of equivalence" (Hatim and Munday, 2004, p.43). However, excessive use of any one of those might create inevitable loss in terms of the original's meaning. Specifically, Chowdhury's translation omits the culturally-nuanced allusions to a large scale than explicating them. One perfect example is the allusion made to *Nataraj*, the other name of Lord Shiva, the Hindu mythological god who dances ecstatically to destroy everything only to create anew. In the original text, the line is as follows:

Moha proloyer ami Nataraj,   *I am Nataraj- the Dancing Shiva of doomsday,*

(Line 14)

Here the speaker compares himself to *Nataraj,* the dancing avatar of Lord Shiva who can destroy the world and build again with his dance. In his translation, Chowdhury omits the very name of lord Shiva – *Nataraj*; and translates the line as –

"I am the king of the great upheaval,"

(Chowdhury, line 17)

In this translation, only the kingship of Shiva is referred to; the specific nature for which he is often addressed as *Nataraj* is absent. Hence, the explication does not suffice, considering the significance of the name itself. This type of translation is also called 'free translation', as mentioned by Peter Newmark in *A Textbook of Translation,* where he defines this type of translation as the reproduction of "the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original" (1980, p. 46). On the other hand, in Huda's version of the line, it is seen that the name of lord Shiva is mentioned and at the same time is followed by an explanation:

"I'm *Notoraj*, the dance-king of the doomsday upheaval,"

(Huda, line 14)

In another section of the poem, in order to convey the all-embracing as well as sacrificial nature of the true rebel, the poet alludes to another myth about *Lord Shiva*. The line is as follows:

Ami Krishna-kontho, monthon bish piya   *My throat turned blue, drinking the poison sifted*
byatha-baridheer-baridheer   *from the ocean of sorrow*

(Line 50, translated by the author)

The allusion here refers to a story from Hindu mythology. The story is as follows: in order to save all living beings, Lord Shiva almost drank a life-threatening poison known as *Halahala* that got sifted while he was churning the ocean. However, his wife, the goddess Parvati gripped her husband's neck with both hands in order to stop the poison from being swallowed. Although he was saved, the poison was so potent that his throat turned blue, and earned him the name *Nilakantha-* the one with a blue throat ("Halahala," n.d., para. 2). The poet, however, uses the Bengali word *Krishnakantha* (the one with a black throat) instead of *Nilakantha* to allude to the myth. The allusion compares the ocean that Lord Shiva drank *Halahala* off to a metaphorical ocean of the sufferings of Mother Nature and her offspring. Now it must be noted that in the 139 lines of the poem, the speaker identifies himself to several mythological characters, each or groups of them connoting to the multi-faceted character of the ultimate rebel. Therefore, omission of any such allusion is bound to leave a gap in the reading of the poem. While Chowdhury's translation remains silent in creating this effect, Huda's translation attempts to keep the allusion along with a due explanation–

I'm Krishno's throat, I drink poison from the ocean of pain,

(Huda, line 53)

If the incorrectly-made allusion towards Lord *Krishna* is overlooked, the attempt made here is appreciable. Nevertheless, while Chowdhury's translation is mostly observed to be silent about the effect of allusion, his focus on making a connection between the content and the untranslatable rhyme as well as rhythm of the poem shows the purpose behind doing so. It is, however, questionable whether the translator has the authority to remain silent about a section of the original text that contains culturally enriched allusion. At this point, it is to be

noted that unlike Huda, Chowdhury did not go for literal translation in this case. In Huda's translation, the translation is done at the cost of losing the original's rhythmic and alliterative effect. If Chowdhury rejects to do that, he is justified by the rules of 'natural translation', a term used by Peter Newmark while commenting that a translator "should write in a manner natural to (him)self, a manner that expresses (his) own sense of good style (Newmark, 1988, p. 76). Therefore, in the process of 'naturalizing' the original's poetic effect while translating in the target language, Chowdhury's decision to omit any line of the original text seems acceptable.

Probably the most untranslatable part of a poem is its music. *Bidrohi* appears to be thoroughly musical if its rhythm and frequent use of onomatopoeic expressions are considered. What becomes a challenge for any translator is to recreate the music by using the rhythmic components of another language. It must be said in the first place that the rhythm remains for the most part completely untranslatable, considering the basic grammatical fact, if not anything else, that the norms of creating rhythm are not same in Bengali and English language. Even then, a partial attempt has been made in Huda's translation to 'restructure' the rhythm of the original in the translation. His rendition of the first three lines is a good example in this regard:

Hail   hero, the valiant
Hail   elevated is my head,
*   Seeing this my head the Himalayan peaks are bent and knelt.*

(Huda, line 1-3)

This appears to be a well-made recreation attempt made on the three lines. Especially, the third line closely imitates the internal rhyme-scheme of the original. Hence the rhyming of *Natashir / Himadrir* in the original has been duplicated by 'bent'/'knelt'in the translation. Nevertheless, the attempt at duplicating the original rhyme scheme has been made only after a sort of 'stylistic modulation' has been done: in the original *Natashir* alone means both *bent and knelt*, whereas its rhyming pair *Himadrir* refers to the Himalayan peak. Therefore, it can be said that there is a sense of 'gain' in providing a second word (*knelt*) as translation of *Natashir*.

While an attempt to restructure the original rhythm in the translation is madein Huda's text, in Chowdhury's text the attempt is made not towards replicating but towards adapting the rhythm. His translation of the third line of the poem uses the /h/ sound alliteratively, which is not present in the original text –

Say, high is my head!

(Chowdhury, line 3)

Regarding the sound created by onomatopoeic words, the whole poem has ample instances where these words add to its musicality so intrinsically that omitting them would be irreparable. However, in poetry translation, such difficulties are quite commonly found and are in most cases considered untranslatable. Moreover, to overemphasize on this feature at the expense of the whole might create an imbalance (Cluysennaras cited in Bassnett, 2002, p. 84). The same

comment applies for the imaginary effect created by different sensory images. In the third stanza of the poem, a transition in tone takes place, as the rebel spirit seems to tame its rage (as articulated in the preceding lines) and to celebrate its rebellious nature instead. The transition comes with brilliant visual imagery denoting leaping and dancing in various manners–

Ami Chalo-Chanchol, Thomoki Chhomoki	*I am always-restless, frolicking-romping*
Poth jete jete chokite chomoki	*Getting caught by a sudden thought on my way*
Fing diya dei tin dol;	*Tossing and turning thrice;*
Ami chapola-chapol Hindol.	*I am a fast-moving swing.*

<div align="right">(Line 31-34, translated by the author)</div>

In Chowdhury's translation, the immensely detailed visual imagery of dancing with intermittent swaying and flipping three times *(fingdiyadei tin dol/ tossing and turning thrice)* has been translated using dynamic equivalence of the words like *chomoki/thomoki; fing; chapola-chapol-*

I caper and dance as I move!

<div align="right">(Chowdhury, line 36)</div>

The translator has analyzed the overall meaning of the words and the lines they belong to and has restructured in just two words – 'caper and dance'. Whereas this section in the original adds to the richness of the imagery used in this poem, in his translation, Chowdhury is seen to omit the onomatopoeic words in order to convey the intended meaning in brief. While the core meaning is successfully conveyed through Newmark's 'free translation' method, the imagery and the sound-effect is lost. Newmark observes that 'free translation' is usually "a paraphrase much longer than the original" (Newmark, 1988, p.46); Chowdhury, however, does the opposite by translating the four-line stanza in one line. This approach says that the translator emphasized on maintaining brevity instead of offering extension by means of explicative translation. On the other hand, Huda's translation is observed to keep the core meaning intact, but not at the expense of the imagery as presented in the original. In so doing, however, even if the sound-effect of the original is 'lost', the literal or word for word translation 'compensates' by offering at least the exact set of visual imagery:

I move restless, I caper and dance,
      Suddenly frenzied on my way,
I swing, leap, and make three somersaults.
I'm indeed swift-moving hindol.

<div align="right">(Huda, line 33-36)</div>

Another unique feature of *Bidrohi* is the use of phonemic translation of words that originate from other languages. This creates one big untranslatability issue, as in this case the translation must be done at multiple levels of meaning. Even before the translator encounters the usual difficulties of poetry translation that are in most cases created by rhyme and rhythm, the

translator must decipher the primary meaning of the line in his/her native language. After that being done, s/he is required to translate in a way that does not dismiss the special semantic effect that the line creates. In the fourth stanza of the poem, the major part of the second line consists of borrowed words from Persian, Urdu and Hindi language–

> *Ami doordam, momo praner peala hardam hain hardam varpoor maud.*
>
> *I am indomitable, My heart's cup of life is always full of liquor.*
>
> <div align="right">(Line 43, translated by the author)</div>

This verse poses at least two difficulties for the translator. One, there is a mixture of four different languages in a single line. If the line is divided into two parts, the first part starts with a Bengali noun phrase *Ami doordam* (*I am indomitable*), and ends with the first punctuation mark – a comma. After the punctuation mark, the second part of the line is a combination of Bengali, Persian, Hindi and Urdu words. The second partstarts with a Bengali noun phrase *momo praner* (*my heart's*), and then continues with a Bengali borrowed noun from Persian - *Peala* (*cup*); Urdu adverb *hardam* (*always*) as used twice; Hindi verb *hain* (*is*) and adjective *Bharpoor* (*full of*); and finally ends with a Bengali noun *maud* (*alcohol*). The difficulty of translation turns to be more intense if the close regional connection among the four languages is considered. Bengali has many words borrowed from Persian and many identical ones with Hindi; for example, *Peyala* and *Bharpoor* from the line under discussion. At the same time, Urdu and Hindi are close in meaning and utterance. Because of the earlier unified state of the whole sub-continent and the resultant literary as well as cultural connection between different regions, even the origin of most of these languages matches. For example, both Hindi and Urdu are two different forms of the "Khariboli dialect" of Hindustan ("Hindi-Urdu Controversy", n.d., para 2). Hence a translator from this sub-continent might be able to decipher the meaning of all the words and understand that of the line. However, since all the languages are different, the usage of even the same word might be different in different languages. In addition to these linguistic complications, the reason why Nazrul combines four such languages in one sentence is also supposed to be one of the translator's concerns. In his essay "Nazrul-Kabye Aabri-Farsi Shabda" ("Arabian-Persian Diction in Nazrul's Poetry") Syed Ali Ashraf comments that Nazrul has used different languages not only for giving a regional flavor, but also for creating an effect of alcoholic exultation that automatically comes with the combination of these languages and that consequently strikes a sub-continental reader (Ashraf, 1991, p.305). Hence the translator can either attempt to translate the words according to the primary literal and figurative meaning of the words, or to capture the poet's aesthetic intention and overlook the remaining issues. Either way, this single line puts a challenge before the translator.

The second issue that arises from linguistic variation is that of rhythm. Nazrul not only blends four languages in this line, but also creates a brilliant rhythmic effect. Because the author has shown such dexterity, the translator's task gets even more challenging: to choose one semantic approach while not violating the original text's rhythmic effect. While the former is somehow attainable, the latter is largely accepted as quite unattainable in cases. In this line - as

is loosely understandable from the primary meaning of the words - the speaker says that he is indomitable, that his life is like a cup full of liquor. The brilliant metaphor between human life and a cup of alcoholic liquor creates a sense of indulgence in life and limitlessness of life's desires. Now it is equally notable that the rhythm of this line adds to creating this effect to a large extent. A close observation shows that the alliterative use of the sound /h/ suffuses the whole line, with the repetition of Urdu *hardam* twice. As the disyllabic word *hardam* is repeated twice with the monosyllabic word *hain* in between, it creates an internal rhyme. The irregular pattern of stressed and unstressed syllables along with the internal rhyme creates a lighter mood than the rest of the poem, hence connoting the usual unstable condition due to excessive alcohol consumption; here, for the speaker it is a lifelong condition since his life itself is a cup full of liquor. Viewed from another perspective, this sound effect might also connote the kind of unbound as well as raw exhilaration that alcoholic effect creates in a human being. Such rawness of emotion is what the poet presents in different manners throughout the poem.

Overall, such movement among multiple languages, along with the connotation of the diction, contributes to the thriving tone of the poem. Therefore, a translator must attempt to translate a significant line as such. However, in Chowdhury's translation, this line has been left undone. Now a translator can take the decision not to translate a particular portion of the SL text because, as Susan Bassnett observes, "Equivalence in translation…should not be approached as a search for sameness, since sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL version." (Bassnett, 2002, p. 36). The multilingual line might be seenas such a portion of the poem. It can then be observed that Chowdhury decided to remove a line that appeared to him largely untranslatable. Also, Bassnett's statement indicates that such approach can be made by a translator in an attempt to keep the translation free-flowing and not forced in any way. Even then, this line cannot be termed as untranslatable. A text is considered as untranslatable either when there is little or no lexical or syntactical substitute in the TL for an SL item; or when a similar context for the SL text is not found in the TL culture, hence creating cultural untranslatability (Bassnett, 2002, p. 38). That this line has an 'invariant core', that is, a core meaning, is beyond argument. In that case, according to Popovic's definition of translation equivalence, a kind of stylistic equivalence, that is, a kind of "functional equivalence of elements in both original and translation aiming at an expressive identity" (Popovic as cited in Bassnett, 2002, p.32) can be found between the SL and TL text. An SL-speaking translator who is supposed to decipher the meaning of all the four languages as contained in the line can at least provide an interpretative translation. In so doing, the poet's intention is also conveyed in the translation. While Chowdhury's translation is observed to avoid an interpretative translation, in Huda's translation such an attempt has been found. Huda translated the line as –

I'm irrepressible, my cup of soul is always full of elixir.

(Huda, line 45)

While this translation does not duplicate the rhythm as well as the cultural connotation that the usage of different languages in the same line offers in the original, the invariant message is communicated. Moreover, the choice of secondary diction replacing the primary ones (*soul*

for *life; elixir* for *alcohol)* can also be seen as an attempt to capture and recreate the highly emotional and exhilarated tone.

From the above discussion, it is observed that in cases of untranslatability Chowdhury mostly adheres to literal translation, phonemic translation, free translation, and adaptation - a combination of direct, oblique, and poetry-special translation techniques. He applies these techniques mostly for the sake of preserving the flow of the original text. His preference of brevity to the chance of mechanic and 'unpoetic' translation – mostly observed in case of allusions and language variations – also brings the observation that this translator's central concern was to provide a translation that remains 'faithful' to the source language (Newmark, 1088, p. 46). Such an approach does not require a translator to attend the issue of stylistic authenticity at a regular basis. At the same time, however, the translator is seen attempting to 'compensate' for the resultant overall 'loss' by offering equivalent or at least independent sound effects in the target language (as is seen in case of the first three lines of the poem). It can then, be observed that Chowdhury's translation is an example of Newmark's observation that "whether a translator gives priority to content or manner…must depend not only on the values of the particular poem, but also on the translator's theory of poetry" (Newmark, 1988, p. 166). Moreover, being one of the earliest translations of *Bidrohi*, Chowdhury's *The Rebel* has been a model for later translators (as is evident from Huda's disclaimer), which indicates that his translation is successful in building a basis for further translation. As a much later translation, Huda's translation appears to be inclined more to a recreation of the original, combining the same translation techniques as Chowdhury wherever it seemed appropriate to him. The assessment of the techniques and the usage of those is where the two translators' works become different from each other. Therefore, there are instances in the translations where the same SL textis omitted by Chowdhury but translated word for word by Huda (the case with the SL word *Elokeshe)*. Now the decision as to which approach is more effective depends entirely on the translator. As Newmark's earlier observation continues, "…no general theory of poetic translation is possible and all a translation theorist can do is to draw attention to variety of possibilities and point to successful practice…the translator has to decide whether the expressive or the aesthetic function of language in a poem or in one place in a poem is more important. Deliberately or intuitively, the translator has to decide whether the expressive or the aesthetic function of language in a poem or in one place in a poem is more important" (1988, p. 166). Thus justified, Huda's combination of the translation techniques is mostly effective in 'recreating' the SL text in and for the TL culture wherever the elements of the original text turn to be either nearly untranslatable, or if translated forcefully or omitted completely, it has to be done at the expense of any significant formative or semantic loss. Huda's translation, then, demonstrates the translator's emphasis on offering a translation that conveys the SL message to the TL reader as clearly as possible. On the other hand, Chowdhury's combination of translation techniques approach towards maintaining the 'naturalness' of the Source text in the target language. At the same time, his translation seems to remain faithful to the source text, if assessed against Newmark's suggestion "if (the translation) remains unnatural to you, you should avoid it" (1988, p.76). It can then be concluded that both the translations are

effective in overcoming the untranslatability issues of *Bidrohi.* Also, as Newmark's observation clearly gives the translator an autonomy over his/her translation, no all-encompassing as well as effective translation approach can exist for all instances of untranslatability in poetry. Now this should be acknowledged that one shortcoming of this research paper is that it analyzes only two translations of *Bidrohi* because of word and length limitation; further research on the other translations of the poem is likely to highlight other translators' approaches and bring more insights into the translator's role in overcoming untranslatability in poetry.

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