



RESEARCH PAPER

Relevance and Iqbal's Concept of Khudi: Analyzing English Translation of Selective Poems of Allama Iqbal from Zarb-E- Kaleem

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the translation of Allama Muhammad Iqbal's concept of 'Khudi' in selected English translations of his poems through the lens of Relevance Theory, a framework rooted in cognitive pragmatics developed by Gutt (1991). Relevance Theory posits that the relationship between a source text and its translation is determined by interpretive resemblance rather than strict equivalence. The sample has been comprised of three poems from Zarb-e-Kaleem (1936), translated by Syed Akbar Ali Shah as The Rod of Mosses (1983) and the sample has been taken by applying the purposeful sampling technique. The selected poems, Khudi ki Zindagi (The Life of Selfhood), Agahi (Awareness), and Hayat-e-Abdi (Eternal Life), serve as case studies to examine the extent to which the translator's choices reflect cognitive and optimal relevance. The study finds that while the translation maintains a surface-level resemblance to Iqbal's original metaphors and imagery, it somehow falls short of conveying the full cognitive and philosophical depth of 'Khudi'. The findings indicate that while the translation align with Relevance Theory in terms of preserving general ideas, it lacks the deeper cognitive relevance and interpretive depth necessary to fully convey Iqbal's intricate philosophical ideas. The study concludes that translation is an interpretive act that involves balancing linguistic fidelity with the cognitive and cultural resonance of the original text.

KEYWORDS Interpretive Resemblance, Khudi, Relevance, Translation

Introduction

More and more translation scholars are delving into the cognitive aspects of translation. Both the translation process and the translation product are impacted by these factors. According to Van Dijk (2001), text production and comprehension are inextricably linked to cognition because texts are mental representations that a person creates in order to make sense of the context. Translation is a complex decision-making process. According to Shreve and Diamond (1997), translation is the result of the complex integration of multiple common cognitive mechanisms acting over a specific neural site configuration. Relevance theory, which originated at the nexus of pragmatics and cognitive linguistics, has also influenced the advancement of cognitive translatology (Sperber and Wilson, 1986). By incorporating Relevance Theory into translation studies, Gutt (1991) created a theoretical framework for a relevance-based translation methodology. This method rejects the idea of equivalence between the source and target texts rather it provides a new approach of interpretative resemblance between source text and target text. Gutt(2005) examined translation as an inferential communication process within the context of a

relevance-based translation framework. She also addressed the issue of never-ending circles of inferences, contending that a variety of cognitive processes are involved in the transfer of relevant meaning.

In Allama Iqbal's poetry, the idea of Khudi stands for transforming conception of the self that inspires people to acknowledge and fulfil their inner potential. There are many obstacles in translating this complex idea into English because it is frequently hard to capture the richness of meaning in translation without losing the essence of original. Hence, the objective of this study is to examine how the concept of Khudi is interpreted in the English translations of a selected poems taken from *Zarb-e-Kaleem*. The objective of this study is to draw attention to how difficult it is to accurately translate rich cultural and spiritual terms and metaphors into other languages.

Allama Muhammad a poet and philosopher promotes self-realization through his poetry. Iqbal's idea of the perfect human being is best represented by Khudi, who embodies self-awareness, self-respect, and an active engagement with the world to bring about both individual and collective transformation. Iqbal's poetry is a rich and difficult subject for translation because it is so deeply ingrained in philosophical and cultural contexts. It entails not only linguistic transfer but also the transfer of complex cognitive and cultural contexts.

Literature Review

Many scholars challenged Grice's (1975) intentional inferential view of communication. They took Grice's insights in a different direction, with Sperber and Wilson (1986) arguing that language use is ostensive inferential rather than intentional inferential. According to this viewpoint, the speaker provides the hearer with clues in the form of words and context to help them understand and infer the meaning of a specific communication. The Relevance Theory is a framework for understanding cognition, particularly in terms of communication. According to Relevance Theory, every intentional act of communication assumes that the information being communicated is the most relevant for the listener to understand the speaker's intended meaning (Sperber and Wilson, 1995).

Relevance Theory, as proposed by Sperber and Wilson (1987), offers a framework for understanding communication that emphasizes the role of cognitive processes in decoding meaning. This theory diverges from Grice's (1975) intentional inferential model by proposing that language use is ostensive inferential, meaning speakers provide clues for listeners to infer the intended meaning through both words and context. This approach is particularly useful for explaining comprehension mechanisms beyond literal utterances, highlighting that understanding intended meaning involves pragmatic decoding rather than mere linguistic decoding and encoding (Blackmore, 1992).

In translation, relevance and context are crucial for interpreting implicit meanings. Translators draw on contextual cues to bridge the gap between literal and intended meanings, using pragmatic intervention to convey the intended proposition of a message. Relevance Theory posits that this pragmatic decoding is driven by cognitive inferential processes, especially the search for relevance (Blackwell, 1990). The role of the writer or translator, according to Relevance Theory, is to communicate utterances in an ostensive manner, making it easier for readers to decode with minimal effort. This principle aligns with the theory of human cognition, suggesting that cognitive systems are optimized to process inputs that offer maximum cognitive value with the least mental effort. Thus,

relevance is achieved through a trade-off between cognitive effort and effects, paralleling theories of rational decision-making (Allott, 2006).

In communication, the most relevant utterance is the easiest to comprehend, involving both the speaker's effort to make their message clear and the listener's effort to interpret it. This is encapsulated in Sperber and Wilson's (2002) two-step comprehension procedure: (1) the hearer minimizes cognitive effort and maximizes cognitive effect, and (2) the listener stops processing once their expectations of relevance are met. Relevance Theory claims that human cognitive systems are designed to focus on inputs with the greatest anticipated significance, interpreting them in the most relevant way (Wilson, 2006). This broad principle applies to perception, memory, reasoning, and the systems underpinning communication and rationalization.

In literary translation, Trotter (1992) argues that interpreting a literary text involves not only encoding and decoding but also inference on the part of the reader. Translating poetic texts is particularly challenging due to the presence of weak implicature, which demand more effort to comprehend. A translator who provides weak implicature may fail to achieve optimal relevance, and making explicit information implicit contradicts the concept of optimal relevance. Translation, along with other humanities disciplines, relies on informed discussion among experts or laymen. Detecting errors involves consulting encyclopedias and dictionaries, but ultimately, choices are subjective, guided by translators' instincts and preferences (Newmark, 1988). The concept of equivalence in translation aims for balance between source and target texts but does not specify the nature of this relationship, merely assuming that a translation should be equivalent to the original in content and material.

Aslam, Khan, and Sadiq (2023) analyze the concept of "Khudi," or "self," in Iqbal's poetry, focusing on its aspects of self-realization, self-awareness, and the development of a unique identity. Iqbal's notion of Khudi involves surpassing societal limitations, embracing individuality, and striving for personal growth. It encourages individuals to overcome internal fears and external pressures that could obstruct their development. By embracing Khudi, individuals can unlock their inner strength, creativity, and intellectual potential, leading to a profound impact on the world. Although Iqbal's poetry has been studied for its socio-political implications, there is a lack of research specifically on the concept of Khudi and its translation and significance in different languages.

Material and Methods

The methodology section provides a comprehensive overview of the research approach and data analysis methods used in the study. It details the use of Relevance Theory as a framework to analyze the translation strategies employed in conveying the concept of Khudi in English translations of Allama Iqbal's poetry from "Zarb-e-Kaleem." The data has been comprised of selected poems from Iqbal's "Zarb-e-Kaleem" and their English translations by Syed Akbar Ali Shah collected by using purposeful sampling technique. The analysis focuses on how translators navigate the complexities of conveying this concept in English, considering the cultural and linguistic differences between Urdu and English.

The framework of this study is the relevance theory of translation by Gutt (1991). According to the principle of relevance, the most relevant utterance in a particular communicative exchange is that that is easiest and simplest to comprehend. So both the speaker and listener are involved in this procedure because the speaker attempts to make his/her utterance easiest and relevant while on the other hand, hearer follows

the direction of least effort to interpret the particular utterance of the speaker. So, as far as the relevance theory and translation is concerned, it is based on the stance that the use of language is interpretive and it is across the boundaries of languages. So, by taking interpretive use of a language in translation as a basic point, one can say that the source text and the target text show resemblance with each other as due to implicatures and explicatures. According to relevance theory, Implicatures and explicatures are two different ways used by the writer to communicate. However, on the other hand, Implicatures are defined as a subcategory of contextual meanings of an utterance. These are the meanings which the speaker wants to communicate and convey. According to relevance theory and translation, the audience of the particular text identify the Implicatures and explicatures on the basis of relevance theory. In *Translation and Relevance: Cognition and Context*, Ernst-August Gutt (1991) specifically extended Sperber and Wilson's Relevance Theory to translation. According to Gutt, translation is an example of interlingual communication in which the translator must take the target audience's intended cognitive effects of the source text into account. He underlines that the goal of translation is to communicate the intended meaning and any contextual effects that are pertinent to the intended audience, not to replicate the original text word for word.

The cognitive approach to translation under the perspective of relevance theory consists of the following points:

- 1- There should be similar descriptive decoding for the hearer of both source text and target text.
- 2- The cognitive effect produced by TT on target readers should be similar to the cognitive effect produced by ST on source readers.
- 3- The source text author intentions should be reproduced in target text i.e. the translator ought to take into account all the settings (linguistic, sociocultural, psychological and sociological) of the ST in TT.
- 4- The original and target texts should have similar poetic effects.

Ernst-August Gutt's adaptation of Relevance Theory, building on Sperber and Wilson's work, provides a detailed framework for translation as interlingual communication. Gutt emphasizes that translation should convey the source text's intended meaning in a way that is relevant and contextually appropriate for the target audience. This requires maintaining the original text's cognitive impact while minimizing cognitive effort for the new audience. In applying Relevance Theory to translations of Iqbal's concept of *Khudi*, the focus is on how well the English versions capture its philosophical depth and cultural nuances. The analysis evaluates whether these translations create similar cognitive effects for English readers as for Urdu speakers, balancing fidelity to the original text with cultural relevance. It also examines the handling of cultural elements like metaphors and symbols, assessing whether the translations achieve interpretive resemblance by accurately reflecting the cognitive and philosophical dimensions of *Khudi* as intended by Iqbal.

Data Analysis

In this discussion section, the data is analyzed by drawing comparison between the source text and translations. This section provides the answers to all the research questions. The translator's responsibility is to convey the meanings to the target audience. This study

is based on the stance that meanings are understood by relevance and are translated on the basis of relevance.

Sample # 1

Zindagaani Hai Sadaf, Qatra-e-Neesan Hai Khudi	Life acts just like the mother shell
Woh Sadaf Kya Ke Jo Qatre Ko Guhar Kar na Sake	It takes in lap the drop of vernal rain
Ho Agar Khudnigar-o-Khudgar-o-Khudgeer Khudi	Unless it changes the drop to pearl
Ye Bhi Mumkin Hai Ke Tu Mout Se Bhi Mer Na Sake	The shell is worthless quiet and vain
	If self can pick its faults, perfection seek
	And for its perfection mount a guard
	Such man is likely to have lasting life
	Perhaps, death may not claim him as reward

The excerpt is from the poem "Hayat-e-Abdi" in Allama Iqbal's "Zarb-e-Kaleem," translated as "Eternal Life" by Syed Akbar Ali Shah. According to Iqbal man is responsible for all possibilities of life which implies that man is the master of both the seen and the unseen. It is the self which is capable of seeing and doing what apparently looks a miracle. If you want to understand God you have to understand yourself first. To understand and then awaken *yourself* you have to pass through strenuous stages. The original Urdu translation of "Hayat-e-Abdi" uses metaphors from culture and religion that are familiar to Iqbal's audience to communicate profound philosophical ideas. Ideas like sadaf (shell) and khudi (selfhood) are deeply rooted in a cultural context that connects with the reader's interpretation of Iqbal's philosophy. The terms Khudi and sadaf lose some of their cultural significance and become more abstract in the English translation. Terms like "self" and "mother shell," which the translator employs, require further interpretation on the part of the reader in order to convey the same depth of meaning. Relevance Theory suggests that a translation that requires readers who are not familiar with Iqbal's cultural context to exert more cognitive effort may have a less effective communicative effect.

The language used in the original poem indicates the significance of spiritual development and self-realization. Readers who speak Urdu and are acquainted with Iqbal's writings are probably aware of the deep significance that the term "Khudi" has in relation to his larger philosophical system. The English translation makes an effort to capture the spirit of these concepts, but it is unable to fully express the range of meanings present in Khudi. In English, the word "self" does not have the same philosophical significance. Different interpretations by readers could result in a departure from the original's intended cognitive effects. For the translation to be relevant, the reader must put in more work, particularly if they are unfamiliar with Iqbal's philosophical background.

Sample # 2

Nazra Sapper Pea Rekhta Hai Sitar Shana's Nain Hai Aping Khudi Ke Maqam Se Augh	He who predicts the fate of man,
Khudi Ko Jibs Ne Flak Se Boland Tar Dacha	And keeps his gaze e'er fixed on sky
Whoa Hai Malika-e-Sabah-o-Sham Se Augh	Such man is unaware of fact
Whoa Nigh Ke Na-Knob-o-Knob Se Mahram	That rank of self is very high
Whoa Hai Dill Ke Hill-o-Haram Se Augh	Those who perceive this fact so clear
	That dome of sky that spins around,
	Has not the height as self of man
	Bout' world have formed an opinion sound
	They are aware of all those things
	That charm and repel the human sight
	To them alone this fact is known
	What blackens heart, what renders bright

The lines above are from the poem "Agahi" translated as "Awareness" by Syed Akbar Ali Shah. This poem is taken from Iqbal's book, "Zarb-e-Kaleem". The translator has used the principles of relevance to translate this concept. Iqbal's original poem, which makes use of his audience's common understanding of the concept of Khudi, is full of

philosophical and cultural references. Because the poem makes metaphorical references to the stars, the heavens, and the self, readers must make the connection between these images and the larger themes of spiritual awakening and self-realization that are essential to Iqbal's philosophy. Although the translation makes an effort to preserve the meaning of these metaphors, readers unfamiliar with Iqbal's philosophical background miss some of the nuances. The essence of Khudi is encapsulated in expressions like "rank of self is very high" and "self of man," but they lack the cultural nuance that the original audience would have recognized right away. Relevance Theory suggests that this might cause the English reader to experience a different cognitive environment, leading to a variety of interpretations.

The original text conveys difficult concepts about self-awareness and spiritual development through metaphors and implicit language. "Khudi Ko Jis Ne Falak Se Buland Tar Dekha" alludes to a transcendental vision that acknowledges the ultimate value of the self and sees beyond the material world. Phrases like "those who perceive this fact so clear" and "has not the height as self of man" in the translation further clarify this idea. This makes the meaning more understandable for English readers, but it also eliminates the need for inference, which could cause readers to engage with the text less deeply. As a result, the translation becomes more understandable but might also have less profound cognitive effects. Readers who are unfamiliar with Iqbal's philosophical background must expend more mental effort when reading the English translation. The decision by the translator to make some concepts more explicit improves the translation's clarity and reduces ambiguity. As a result, readers have a unique set of cognitive effects, understanding the main idea but missing the deeper, more nuanced implications that were present in the original.

Sample # 3

Khudi Ho Zinda To Hai Faqr Bhi Shehanshahi Nahin Hai Sanjar-o-Tughral Se Kam Shikoh-e-Faqeer Khudi Ho Zinda To Darya-e-Be Karan Payaab Khudi Ho Zinda To Kuhsar Parniyan-o-Hareer Nahnang-e-Zinda Hai Apne Muheet Mein Azad Nahnang-e-Murda Ko Mouj-e-Sirab Bhi Zanjeer!	Faqr is as exalted as a king If self of man has vital flame The lofty rank of true fakir Isn't less than Sanjar and Tughral's fame On foot we can cross the bondless sea If self is active and can tread On mountain range and feel as if Not stones, but carpet soft is spread A crocodile that is full of verve In its own suburbs is quite free If dead, e'en billows of mirage For it, like chains and fetters be
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The above lines are from the poem "Khudi ki Zindagi" translated as "The Life of Selfhood" by Syed Akbar Ali Shah. According to Iqbal, the ego "has the quality of growth. It can expand to absorb the elements of the universe and the attributes of God. In these verses, there is an implicit meanings of self of a man as described by Iqbal. The translator has tried his level best to convey these implicit meanings on the basis of relevance in target language. Iqbal used a lot of historical and cultural references in his Urdu poetry. The sea, mountains, and crocodile metaphors connect with the themes of strength and freedom, while the mention of Sanjar and Tughral evokes the grandeur of Islamic history. The original readers would have understood the depth and intended meaning right away because they were familiar with these references. Although the translation makes an effort to preserve these references, readers who are not familiar with Islamic history may find some cultural resonance lost. The fundamental meaning is clear, but it may not be as clear how deeply significant it is historically and culturally. This has an impact on the cognitive environment because English readers might not understand the majesty connected to Faqr and Khudi as well as Iqbal's original audience did.

Readers must actively engage with Iqbal's metaphors in order to fully comprehend the text. The processing effort is greater, but so are the cognitive effects, as readers discover layers of meaning about Khudi, Faqr, and spiritual independence. The translation reduces processing time by clarifying these metaphors, making the poem more accessible to those unfamiliar with Iqbal's setting. However, this reduction in effort may result in a decrease in cognitive effects, as the reader may miss out on the deeper, more nuanced implications of Iqbal's philosophy.

Conclusion

According to the research findings, the translation of Allama Iqbal's poetry shows a significant shift in meaning when analyzed using Relevance Theory. While the translation accurately conveys surface meanings, it frequently simplifies the deeper metaphors and cultural references found in the original Urdu text. This simplification reduces cognitive effort for the reader, making the translation more accessible, while also diminishing the profound cognitive effects intended by Iqbal. The original Urdu verses, which are full of historical and cultural references, force the reader to engage in a more complex process of interpretation, which amplifies the significance of Iqbal's philosophical concepts. The rich interaction between text and reader that is essential to Iqbal's work may be lost in the translation, though, as the nuanced layers of meaning and the profundity of spiritual and existential themes become more obvious and direct. In the end, the translation strikes a balance between depth and clarity, but it is unable to completely capture the original's cognitive environment, leading to a subtle but unavoidably changed comprehension of Iqbal's concept of Khudi.

Although the translator translated the concept of Khudi in English according to the principles of relevance but the translator is deviant to some extent as he has not make the concept of Khudi in English translation relevant with the concept of Khudi by Allama Iqbal. According to the perspective of the theory of relevance, the translation must be aimed to convey the relevance as that of the original text. So, the effort at cognitive level by the reader of translated text is equal to the cognitive effort of source text reader. The translator works with pragmatic and cognitive content of the source text along with linguistic content and tries to adapt the inherent cognitive content in the target text. Sometimes translation produces such an awkward text that it raises conflicting relevance between source text and target text.

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