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## **Stylistic Analysis of Two Different Translations of Manto's Short Story "Boo"**

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### **Abstract**

Sadat Hasan Manto, remembered as one of the prominent short story writers during the period of partition of India-Pakistan in 1947, enjoys fame amongst the literary world of both countries, and is considered a common writer of Indo-Pak. "Boo" is one of his masterpieces translated by Khalid Hasan and Ahmad & Reeck as "Odour" and "Smell", respectively. Generally it is perceived that it requires a lot to present the inner world of the characters in translation when it comes to stories. While attempting the translation from Source Language (SL) to Target Language (TL), it is equally difficult to maintain and reproduce the stylistic aspects. Stylistic analysis in this paper is attempted on "linguistic level" of text such as lexical level, grammatical level, figures of speech, cohesion and context.

**Keywords**

Saadat Hasan Manto; Stylistics; Source Language; Target Language; Linguistic Level.

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**Introduction**

Saadat Hasan Manto was born in Samrala, Punjab, on 11 May 1912, and died in Lahore, Pakistan on 18 January 1955. He was not even forty three when he died. Manto did many experiments in his writings on man-woman relationship. “Boo” is the story of a man – Randhir who had relationships with many women and could not forget smell/odour of one of the *ghatin* girls to whom he had developed relationship during his stay in Bombay. To carry the stylistics of source text in translation is a difficult job for a translator. On this comparative note, this paper will examine two translators in the backdrop of original story of Manto. According to Lecerle, “nobody has ever really known what the term ‘stylistics’ means, and in any case, hardly anyone seems to care” (Lecerle 14) and according to Simpson, “Stylistics is ‘ailing’; it is ‘on the wane’; and its heyday, alongside that of structuralism, has faded to but a distant memory” (Simpson 2).

**Translation & Stylistic Analysis**

Leech & Short describe stylistics as “The distinction between what a writer has to say, and how it is presented to the reader, underlies one of the earliest and most persistent concepts of style: that of style as the ‘dress of thought’” (Leech 30). While studying translated texts of two different translators, the style of re-writing the same text is prominently changed. The first paragraph of the original text is as follows:

**Original Text (Paragraph 1)**

*baarish ke yehi din the / khidki ke baahar peepal ke patte raat ke dudhiya andhere jhumaro.n ki tarah tharthra rahe the- aur shayaam ke samay , jab din bhar ek angrezi akhbaar ki puri khabrei.n....*  
(Manto 52)

**Translation by Khalid Hasan (Paragraph 1)**

It was about this time of year. The monsoons had come and outside his window, the leaves of the peepal tree danced as the raindrops fell on them, on the mahogany bed with the spring mattress that had now been pushed away from the window, a girl lay next to Randhir, their bodies clinging. Outside, in the milky dankness of the evening, the leaves of the peepal tree swung in the breeze like a golden ornament on a women's forehead. (Hasan 67)

**Translation by Aftab Ahmad & Reeck (Paragraph 1)**

It was monsoon day just like today. Outside the window the leaves of the peepal tree were glistening in the rain, just as they were now. On this very teak bed, now pushed back a little from where it used to rest next to window, a ghatin girl was nuzzling against Randhir's side. (Ahmad & Reeck 69)

Asaduddin remarks on the translation by Hasan in Alok Bhalla's *Life and Works of Sadat Hasan Manto* as "The most serious of all Hasan's errors is his omission of large chunks of the original in his English translation" (Bhalla 164). As Leech explained, "the concept on which stylistic dualism is founded, itself depends on an agreed conception of 'meaning' or 'content', two terms often used loosely and interchangeably. It is useful here to replace these terms by terms whose use we can control more carefully" (Leech 37). Style in translation cannot be the style of translator, rather it should be more closely to the original text "a translator cannot have, indeed should not have, a style of his or her own, the translator's task being simply to reproduce as closely as possible the style of the original" (Baker 244). The original words written by Sadat Hasan in his story "Boo" are differently translated by both translators. Here are some examples. In the beginning of the story the phrase **mahogany palang** (Manto 53) is translated as **Mahogany bed** (Hasan 66) and **Teak bed** (Ahmad & Reeck 69), respectively. There are some differences in the meaning of both words in English. This

difference can be noticed easily throughout the translated work. Similarly, in one instance Manto writes as “*angrezi akhabar ki puri khabrein aur **ishtihaar** padhane ke pashchaat kuch sustaane ke liye wah balkani me aa khada hua*” (Manto 53). These lines are translated in different ways as “After reading each and every section of an English newspaper (**even its ads**)” (Ahmad & Reeck 69). Same is translated as “**including the advertisements**” (Hasan 66). What Manto writes in his story is not much emphasized but the style in translation becomes more emphatic when it comes in parentheses.

In *The Death of the Author*, Barthes describes writing as a neuter composite where all identity is lost. “Once a fact is recounted”, he argues, “...the voice loses its origin, the author enters into his own death, writing begins” (Barthes 49). **Katte huye ballon** par khaki rang ki topi (Manto 53) is translated as “khaki cap sitting at a jaunty angle on her fashionable **coiffured hair**” (Hasan 66). It is a kind of substitution found in TL. According to Nida “produce correct equivalents” (226) is the utmost demand of translation. The same expression is translated as “place her khaki hat crosswise over her **military-style haircut**” (Ahmad & Reeck 70). The utmost attention for the evaluation of the text from stylistic point of view is the preference of selection of words by a writer in particular context to make a complete sense of the story. **Kaate huye baal** as phrase is not much emphasized in the story by Manto as this has been highlighted by both translators. Another expression while carrying out the story ahead is “He feared that she might get **pneumonia**, so he said, ‘Take those off. You’ll catch cold’” (Ahmad & Reeck 70). The same is translated by Hasan as “She might **catch a chill** ‘take your wet clothes off unless you want to catch something’” (Hasan 67). And originally it is written by Manto as “*ye kappade uttaar do, **sardi lag jayegi***’ (Manto 54). Repeating throughout in the translated stories, these different phrases for one word (**sardi lag jayegi = catch a cold, pneumonia**) create an atmosphere of misconception regarding the style of original writer in the story. E. Nida defines translation as “Translation consists

of reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.” It is very important to discuss whether style comes first in any discussion on translation. Form is a basic thing that conveys the natural feelings of a writer in an adequate style and, therefore, faithfulness to the source text includes adherence to the form of original text. However, in translation, it seems very difficult to observe. In stories, it is the writer who decides/selects the appropriate words and phrases to mark his style, to shape a style of a writer in the minds of the reader. To experience the work of a writer, reader also may develop his/her own style of interpreting a text. Sometimes, a writer uses very simple words and sentences; on the contrary translator makes it more complicated to fit into the frames of the rules of TL. In this process, theme of the text becomes common but style becomes different for both – writer and translator. Hasan translates the title of the sensual-thematic short story “Boo” as “Odour” whereas Ahmad & Reeck translate the same as “Smell”. The gist of story is all about the comparison between Randhir’s sexual experiences with two different girls. He could not forget the experience that he had with *Ghatin* girl, even on his first night with his wife. He remembers the day he spent in Bombay with the poor girl. The euphemistic phrase “Smell” or “Odour” does not evoke the same sense of ‘sweating’ as Randhir experienced. The key word here is “sweat” of body that serves as metaphor to create a specific mood and image among the readers. “The heuristic notion of ‘style marker’ is the key to the method. If we can identify style markers, we rule out, simply by ignoring them, whole areas of the English language which do not seem to be exploited in any unusual way in a particular text.” (Leech 72)

“The sentence is the highest rank of grammatical construction. In terms of their communicative functions, sentences may be divided into four categories: statement, commend question, and exclamation” (Channell 171). Most of the sentences of the short story “Boo” fall into the type, namely, statement. But it is particularly noteworthy that this textual web, is generally woven out of

commentary sentences. *Baarish ke yehi din the* (53) (Original sentence) got translated as “It was monsoon day just like today” (Ahmad & Reeck 69) and “It was about this time of year” (Hasan 66). We know that writers generally take utmost care while starting their stories to give them particular setting and design. Here, Ahmad & Reeck’s translation seems nearer to original text while Hasan’s translation fails at the beginning. Two translated sentences create different meanings of original sentence.

Another distinctive feature of Manto’s writing style, as is revealed by a scrutiny of “Boo”, is his generous use of figurative languages, metaphors and similes in particular. Translators could establish a relationship in a unique way between translations. *Peepal tree swung like a golden ornaments* (Hasan 66). The same is translated as “**as if they were flashy earrings**” (Ahmad & Reeck 69). According to Newmark, “Whilst the central problem of translation is the overall choice of a translation method, for a text the most important particular problem is the translation of metaphor” (Newmark 104). The close reading of the text suggests that metaphors and similes abound in the story. For example, “*Like clay cups*” (Hasan 67) and “*like potter’s newly turned vessels*” (Ahmad & Reeck 71). However, “the distinction between lexical and non-lexicalized metaphors is not always clear-cut” (Leech 214). The same text has been translated into different ways by using similes.

### **Conclusion**

With all the references mentioned in the paper, one may conclude that Manto’s style, as is studied through the translations of “Boo”, is relatively different. Difficulties faced by the translators of Manto’s works is apparent and cannot be avoided as it is shown by different linguistic features available in the TL and SL. Thus, what translators presented to non-Hindi and non-Urdu readers is unreliable version of Manto as far as his style is concerned. Translators alternatively and comparatively portray different translations of the story in the perspective of originality of Manto’s style of writing. There are many issues

related to stylistics that have not been touched in the select translations. On metaphorical level, misplaced zeal of translators could be seen easily though it is a genuine problem of translation while attempting literary text. Translators have shown their intelligence, respect and competence at maximum levels in linguistic achievement.

**Table 1**

| <b>Original words/phrases</b>                 | <b>Translation by Khalid Hasan</b>    | <b>Translation by Ahmad &amp; Reeck</b>     |
|---|---------------------------------------|---|
| <i>Ishtihaar</i>                              | <i>Advertisements</i>                 | <i>Ads</i>                                  |
| <i>Mahogany</i>                               | <i>Mahogany</i>                       | <i>Teak</i>                                 |
| <i>Katte huye baal</i>                        | <i>Coiffured hair</i>                 | <i>Military style hair-cut</i>              |
| <i>Sardi lag jayegi</i>                       | <i>Catch a chill</i>                  | <i>Get pneumonia</i>                        |
| <i>Lehnga</i>                                 | <i>Lehnga</i>                         | <i>Sari</i>                                 |
| <i>Choli</i>                                  | <i>Choli</i>                          | <i>Bra</i>                                  |
| <i>Passinne ki boo</i>                        | <i>Smell of perspiration</i>          | <i>Smell of sweat</i>                       |
| <i>Sunnhara phooldaar jumperphur</i>          | <i>Gold colored jumper</i>            | <i>Flowery kameez</i>                       |
| <i>Dupatta</i>                                | <i>Dupatta</i>                        | <i>Veil</i>                                 |
| <i>Chinni mitti</i>                           | <i>Like old porcelain</i>             | <i>Porcelain vessel</i>                     |
| <i>Peepal ke patto.n par baarish ki bunde</i> | <i>Leaves of peepal tree danced</i>   | <i>Leaves of the peepal tree fluttering</i> |
| <i>Kacche dudh ki tarah safed</i>             | <i>Made of milk and melted butter</i> | <i>Milk and butter</i>                      |

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