

## Cross-cultural communication of concepts in *Modiain*

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### ABSTRACT

Translation involves communication across languages and cultures. When one translates, s/he is involved in cross-cultural communication that is necessary in the current world scenario of globalization. English has been a global lingua franca that lubricates communication in the multilingual and multicultural communities. In this context, some Nepali novels have been translated into English, including *Modiain* that is the corpus of the present study. This study aims to explore and examine strategies used in translating cultural concepts (CCs) from Nepali into English. To achieve the set objective, I have employed corpus-based research design that uses parallel corpora consisting of Nepali-English pair of the selected novel. I investigated CCs in the original version and examined their translation counterparts in light of the set strategies such as translation by a more general term, a more neutral term, cultural substitution, loan terms, paraphrase, omission and illustration. The findings reveal that the use of the strategies poses pitfalls in transferring senses of the CCs across languages and cultures in one way or the other. This implies that the translators should be aware of the bilingual and bicultural sensitivities and sensibilities while translating CCs. Further implication of the study is that the course developers of applied linguistics, especially translation studies, should pay due attention while designing the courses towards the cross-cultural communicability of the CCs.

**Keywords:** Communication; cultural references; gaps; translation; strategies

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### INTRODUCTION

Language and culture are like body and soul. To exhibit the inseparability of the two, numerous scholars have expressed their views. For instance, Lotman and Michajlovič (1972) has asserted, “No language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; no culture can exist which does not have at its centre the structure of natural language” (as cited in Shastri, 2012, p. 57). Likewise, Bassnett (2005) has conceded, “Language [...] is the heart within the body of culture, and it is the interaction between the two that results in the continuation of life-energy” (p. 22). In the same way, for Kothari (2006), “Culture is the silent language” (p. 1) and for House (2010), “Language and culture are most intimately interrelated” (p. 95). Recently, Shaheri and Satariyan (2017), highlighting the inseparability of language and culture, have asserted, “Translators

should therefore be aware of the cultural differences and values of the source language while translating” (p. 54). These exhortations justify that language cannot be taken out of culture and culture cannot survive without language. Therefore, language is culture-bound. This claim has ground reality. For example, in the Arab world, an ‘owl’ is often conceptualized as a sign of bad omen but in Western culture, it is a symbol of wisdom (Al-Hasnawi, 2007). Similarly, ‘white’ dress for married female in the East indicates ‘death’ of her husband but the same refers to virginity and chastity in the Western culture.

Thus, when one translates across languages, s/he is involved in cross-cultural communication. In this regard, Narasimhaiah and Srinath (1982) have conceded, “Translation is like a stabilizer between two languages, a mediation between two people,

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their culture, and their civilization separated by time or space” (as cited in Bhattarai, 2000, pp. 4-5). This view entails that bicultural understanding is required for a good translation. Therefore, translation is a tool to transmit source language culture into the target language culture.

For Hatim and Mason (2005), translation is an act of communication, which tries to relay across cultural and linguistic boundaries (as cited in Ordudari, 2008). Supporting this view, Robinson (2002) has expressed, “Cultures, and the intercultural competence and awareness that arise out of the experience of cultures, are far more complex phenomena than it may seem to the translator who needs to know how to say, ‘wrap around text’.” (p. 222). This implies that to be a good translator, one requires to develop “pragmatic competence” which encompasses both “appropriateness of form” and “appropriateness of meaning” (Canale, 1983, as cited in Niezgodna & Rover, 2010, p. 64). Therefore, both form and meaning should be transmitted in a good rendering. To highlight the importance of meaning aspect in translation, House (2010) has claimed, “Since in translation ‘meaning’ is of particular importance, it follows that translation cannot be fully understood outside a cultural frame of reference” (p. 92). Thus, meaning is culture-context-dependent. To emphasise the view that culture is crucial in translation, she has added Snell-Hornby’s (1988) opinion that in translation, one does not translate languages but cultures and in it, one transfers cultures, not languages. Thus, a good translator should be bilingual as well as bicultural.

Culture refers to customs, arts, social institutions, rituals and rites of a particular group of people. It also refers to established norms, unwritten but an inherited property of society. Several scholars have attempted to define the term ‘culture’ but a single precise one has not appeared so far. Vermeersch (1965) has presented an analysis of the definitions of cultural concepts collected by Kroeber and Kluckhohn (1952), which can be divided into three categories: enumerative, criterion-based, and the combination of the two. The third is somehow satisfactory because the inadequacy of the one may be fulfilled by the other. Out of the third kind of definitions, Tylor’s (1791) – the first scientific definition – reads, “Culture [...] is that complex whole which includes knowledge, belief, art, law, morals, custom, and any other capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of a society” (as cited in Vermeersch, 1965, p. 162). In this definition, the criterion ‘acquired’ is vague and not so exhaustive. It called for such definitions that contained explicit criterion. Many scholars attempted towards this direction but they were next to failure.

It was only in 1949 when Wilson and Kolb defined the term not as acquired habits but as

learned behaviours. To put in their words, “Culture consists of the patterns and products of learned behaviour – etiquette, language, food habits, religious beliefs, the use of artefacts, systems of knowledge, and so on (as cited in Vermeersch, 1965, p. 166). In this definition, there is a combination of two categories; enumeration follows criterion. However, one category cannot address the imperfections of the other. Further, all learned behaviours are not related to culture. For instance, even the animals learn but their learned behaviours do not lie under the domain as culture is a human property. Further, their enumerative definitions include: (a) *mental states and processes*: knowledge, ideas, beliefs, attitudes, values and morals; (b) *regularly repeated patterns of behaviours*: habits, customs, behaviours, acts and responses; (c) *a series of partly mental and partly material acquisitions*: methods of communication, language, skills, use of tools, and art; (d) *products of human activity*: material products, tools, artefacts, and non-material products; and (e) *concept of institution*: organisation, law, marriage, property system and religion.

These categories show the class of cultural objects. However, some scholars have denied the material phenomenon alone to be a cultural object. To put in Goodenough’s (1957) words, “Culture is not a material phenomenon; it does not consist of things, people, behaviour or emotions. It is rather an organization of these things” (as cited in Wardhaugh, 1986, p. 211). This indicates the inevitability of knowledge of the culture for behaving acceptably in the society one lives in. Therefore, culture refers to a set of authoritative unwritten rules, which is obeyed and understood by the people who share it.

Similarly, Newmark (1988) has asserted that culture is “the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression” (p. 94). This implies that culture is idiosyncratic and so differs from one community to another. He has added that cultural concepts (CCs) can be classified into (a) *ecology*: flora, fauna, winds, plains and hills; (b) *artefacts*: food, clothes, houses, towns, and transport; (c) *social culture*: work and leisure; (d) *organizations, customs, activities, procedures, concepts*: political and administrative, religious, and artistic; and (e) *gestures and habits*.

To address the issue of culture in translation, Crystal (2003) has put his words as, “There are some conceptual differences between cultures due to languages are undeniable, but this is not to say that differences are so great that mutual comprehension is impossible” (p. 15). It implies that one language may require many words to express something whereas another may enable the users to express something by using a single word. It does mean that the translation of culture across languages is

possible. This may frequently occur in case of cultural concepts that are the concepts referring to customs and social institutions, idiomatic expressions, proverbs, specific expressions, ecological terms, beliefs, custom, religion, costume, and the like, which are specific to a particular language.

To categorize the CCs, Dinçkan (2010) offers an insight. In the study of the translations of culture-bound collocations from English into Turkish, the following categories are mentioned: food and beverage, special days and holidays, entertainment and leisure time activities, marital status, addressing terms and referring expressions, place names, household appliances, social habits and traditions, politics and institutions. Likewise, extracting from two sets of seven novels published before and after 2000 in Taiwan, Chung-ling (2010) has categorized 200 cultural references into three broad types: non-material items, material items and slang/idioms. Non-material items comprise customs, religion, festivals, institutions and others. Material items include natural resources, real people, food, clothes, houses, transports, and others. Slang/idioms incorporate dialects and a specific style of speaking. This study, however, does not incorporate many cultural references related to ecology and concepts. It further reveals that to deal with cultural concepts in translation is one of the hurdles the translators encounter. Similarly, if one tries to domesticate the foreign values and cultures in the name of intelligibility, the quality of translation can be questioned. Likewise, Oalk's (2014) recommendations of the seven procedures confirm that CRs lie in a cline with source and target cultures the two extremities. Thus, a translator should be familiar not only with source and target cultures but also with the third codes of translation while translating CCs. At this point, Venuti (2011) is right to assert, "Translation is often regarded with suspicion because it inevitably domesticates foreign texts, inscribing them with linguistic and cultural values that are intelligible to specific domestic constituencies" (p. 67). Extending this view, Sturge (2011) has mentioned, "It raises complex technical issues: how to deal with features like dialect and heteroglossia, literary allusions, culturally specific terms such as food and architecture [...] that surrounds the text and gives it meaning" (p. 67). Therefore, culture is difficult to translate.

The present article aims to examine the level of cross-cultural communication of concepts across languages using the lens of strategies for translation. This observes cultural concepts adapting Newmark's (1988) model, which incorporates the five types of CCs: (a) ecology, (b) material culture, (c) social culture, (d) religious culture, and (e) conceptual terms. This selection is justifiable firstly because Newmark himself has discussed and illustrated them at considerable length and secondly because his

taxonomy is applicable for classifying CCs in the context of this study. The theoretical framework for this study, which is delineated in some detail below, is Baker's (2018) set of strategies for translating cultural references.

## METHOD

The study, which is a part of a larger PhD research in which the data were extensively extracted from the selected six Nepali novels and their English translations (Neupane, 2017), has employed corpus-based research design after Zanettin (2014) who has observed, "Corpus-based studies usually involve the comparison of two (sub) corpora, in which translated texts are compared with [...] their source texts (parallel corpus)" (p. 178). Further, Zanettin (2014) has written, "Parallel corpora offer learners a repository of translator's strategies and choices" (p.178). Similarly, it has clarified that parallel corpora consist of original texts and their translated versions.

Originally, corpus-based studies employ computer software for comparing the corpora and are quantitative in nature. Nevertheless, this study compiled, analyzed and interpreted parallel corpora manually and it is a qualitative research. Such adaptations occurred in this research because the translator has used his subjective intuition for transferring cultural references that call for subjective interpretation. Further, manually compiled corpora have adapted descriptive-interpretative design for analysis of the translation pairs.

## Source materials

The study has used the Nepali version and its English translation as the source materials to extract the CCs and their translation counterparts as its corpora.

The main thrust, spirit and message of the selected novel, *Modiāin* is "Nānī, thūlo nahunū, vīr nahunū. Asal hunū, asal..." [Babu, don't be great; don't be brave; be good... be good.] (Koirala, 2012, p.57). This shows that its author B. P. Koirala was shocked at the genocide of humankind at the Great War of Kurukṣetra. The author's dissatisfaction implies his humanistic attitude and philosophy that men should survive as men, neither as animals nor as Gods. There is a true depiction of B. P.'s political conviction and literary outlooks in the present novel. Therefore, *Modiāin* is a masterpiece of the versatile author.

The SL title 'Modiāin' has been derived from the Maithili language in which 'Modi' means 'a grocer' and 'Modiāin' means 'grocer's wife' (Koirala, 2012). The present novel consists of terms and expressions from Hindi/Maithili, Sanskrit and Nepali. Therefore, its English translation calls for a sound knowledge of the three donor languages (i.e.

Hindi, Sanskrit and Nepali) and English, the receiver language. Such quadripartite knowledge of the translator, Jaya Raj Acharya enables him to transfer meaning into English. Such special ability dwells in the translator and therefore his translation of the present novel is a vivid example of typical translation- one of the good models of translating Nepali prose fiction. This justifies the selection of the novel for investigation.

### Instruments

The study has utilized Newmark's (1998) taxonomy for CCs (delineated before) for collecting corpora. For analysis and interpretation of the CCs, Baker's (2011, 2018) strategies, which are illustrated in the succeeding paragraphs, are adopted to explore the ways they can be translated into English.

Firstly, translation by a more general term (superordinate) is a most frequently used strategy to deal with the cases of non-equivalence in the domain of propositional meaning. It is used to overcome the lack of specific term in the target language. For example, tools, baggage, an agent and scars are superordinate terms and they include the Nepali terms, *hatiyār*, *jholā ra kuṭurā*, *gallāwāl*, and *sumlā* respectively. To be specific, the term 'tools' includes *hatiyār*[weapons], *sāadhan* [instruments], *sāmagri* [materials], and others, which are co-hyponyms and the relation between *hatiyār* and tools is one of hyponymy.

Secondly, translation by a more neutral/less expressive term is used when the SL term does not have TL equivalent. In this case, the SL term should be replaced by near equivalent TL term, although it may be more neutral/less expressive. For example, the Nepali term *nāgbelī* [zigzag] does not have its equivalent term in TL (English). However, the translator has used 'serpentine', which is less expressive. Similarly, *kahāli*, *naulā*, and *agni* are replaced by near-equivalent terms like dizzy, curious, and acid respectively, which are more neutral.

Thirdly, translation by cultural substitution occurs when the translators replace/substitute the SL term with a TL term, having dissimilar propositional meaning but it may have a similar impact on the target audience. For example, Nepali term, *Dashain* does not exist in English culture but it is culturally equivalent to 'Christmas' as both are the greatest festivals of respective cultures.

Fourthly, translation by using a loan term (plus explanation) is used in translating modern concepts and buzzwords (Baker, 2018). When it is very difficult to give equivalent at any rate, the translators borrow SL terms. In this case, sometimes, a loan word is required to explain to make the TL audience understand. Moreover, loan terms are used to add a touch of elegance to it, create a stylistic effect or give it a touch of authenticity (Ceramella, 2008). For three reasons,

this strategy can be used: English has no generally used equivalents; Nepali terms sound better, and the translator wants to retain the real sense/feel of the SL (Nepali).

Fifthly, translation by paraphrase using related terms is used when, "the concept expressed by the source item is lexicalized in the target language but a different form" (Baker, 2018, p. 36). When literal translation does not work, the translators should paraphrase by using the related terms.

Sixthly, translation by paraphrase using unrelated terms is used when a semantic complication appears in the translation process. It means when SL term cannot be lexicalized in the TL, this strategy is used. For example, *pātāl* is common to the Nepali audience but not for English people. Therefore, translation is 'dense forest', which is an unrelated term although the sense is somehow similar.

Seventhly, some terms can be omitted if they are unimportant or redundant to the understanding of the discourse. However, it is risky to omit something without judging their value in the discourse. The reason behind this is that the translator thinks the terms to be less significant to the development of the text.

Finally, restrictions in translation and lack of equivalence in TL result in using illustration strategy that includes some examples, pictures, and the like. In Baker's (2011) words, "This is a useful option if the word which lacks an equivalent in the target language refers to a physical entity which can be illustrated" (p. 43).

### Procedures

At first, I used the adapted framework of taxonomy of the CCs for identifying them in original version. I transliterated them using phonetic symbols (Appendix A). Then, I explored their translation counterparts in the English version of the selected novel. After this, I analyzed and interpreted English-Nepali pairs in light of the strategies adapted.

I did not observe the frequency of the strategies as it is a qualitative analysis. Instead, I interpreted the pairs for evaluating the efficacy of cross-cultural communication in translation.

### FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

*Modiāin* consists of numerous CCs, which I have observed through Baker's (2018) eight strategies and found out that all these are present in its translation. The following sub-sections explicate the translation of the CCs based on the strategies.

#### Translation by a more general term

I have observed the use of TL superordinates to replace SL subordinates in the translation of the present novel, *Modiāin*. The translator has used general terms due to the lack of specific ones to

replace the SL terms. All the examples in table 1 prove that SL terms are subordinates to the TL superordinates, which have been used to replace SL subordinates, related to the terms of artefacts, ecology and concepts.

For example, *gyāmi* in SL refers to the paid labourer or wage-earner, who works for others to earn his and family's life. This typical term could be translated as 'paid worker' or 'labourer' or 'wage-earner'. Instead, the TL term 'workers' is too general, which subsumes *gyāmi* as a type of worker. It is a case of sense transfer in general. Likewise, *poko* refers to a small package of things, wrapped with clothes or papers. On the other hand, 'bundle' is a general term to refer to a collection of things, which

are packed, fastened or wrapped together. Therefore, 'bundle' is an umbrella term, which includes *poko*, *pokopunturo* (small packages), *gunṭā* (luggage), and the like. Another related term in SL is *mālmattā*, which refers to a collection of one's goods, articles, belongings or property to carry from one place to another. However, 'bag' in TL refers to a 'container made up of flexible (e.g. paper, cloth, leather) with an opening at the top, used for carrying things from place to place' (Turnbull et al., 2010). Thus, bags and bundles are too general and synonymous terms, which subsume *poko* and *mālmattā*, as well. The translator may have done so due to the lack of proper co-hyponyms in TL.

**Table 1**

*Use of Superordinates for Translating CCs of Modiāin*

SL Terms	TL Terms
<i>gyāmi</i> (p. 1)	workers (p. 1)
<i>poko</i> (p. 2)	bundle (p. 2)
<i>mālmattā</i> (p. 3)	bags (p. 4)
<i>palāṅ morna cāhine lugā</i> (p. 4)	beds (p. 5)
<i>ṭanṭan bajne ghanṭi</i> (p. 6)	bell (p. 8)
<i>culho</i> (p. 10)	kitchen (p. 14)
<i>kithro ra jhyāūkkīrī</i> (p. 13)	crickets (p. 18)
<i>bhanṭāko taruwā</i> (p. 17)	vegetables (p. 23)
<i>cyādar</i> (p. 17)	widespread (p. 23)
<i>bhāḍākkūḍā</i> (p. 17)	dishes (p. 23)
<i>laharekhokī</i> (p. 18)	cough (p. 24)
<i>bakāino ra babulko jhyāñ</i> (p. 24)	bushes (p. 33)

Note: The digits in the brackets in the left-hand column refer to the page numbers of the Nepali version whereas in the right-hand column to the page numbers of the English version.

Apart from these, *palāṅ morna cāhine lugā* could be 'bedsheet' or 'bed cover'. The translator's term for it is 'bed', which is too general. General terms are used even in the pairs like *cyādar*-widespread, *ṭanṭan bajne ghanṭi*-bell, *culho*-kitchen, and *bhāḍākkūḍā*-dishes. Further, *kithro* (an insect) and *jhyāūkkīrī* (cicada) are crickets, *bhanṭāko taruwā* (fried eggplant) is a type of vegetable, *bakāino* (Chinaberry or bead tree) and *babul* (acacia, babul) are bushy plants and *lahare khokī* (whooping cough, pertussis) is a type of cough.

The translator has focused on terms for sense transfer rather than cultural referents. Therefore, problems of meaning transfer are apparent.

**Translation by a more neutral/less expressive term**

The translator has used less expressive or more neutral terms to transfer only the propositional meaning of SL into TL. Therefore, Translation carried out in this way results in the loss of expressive meaning.

**Table 2**

*More Neutral/Less Expressive Terms for Translating CCs of Modiāin*

SL Terms	TL Terms
<i>kad</i> (p. 1)	height (p. 1)
<i>pahiran</i> (p. 1)	clothes (p. 1)
<i>ubhīdāko bhaṅgimā</i> (p. 1)	gait (p. 1)
<i>agrākhko ḍāḍī</i> (p. 2)	wooden shaft (p. 2)
<i>slok</i> (p. 4)	verses (p. 5)
<i>uttar-purva</i> (p. 20)	otherside (p. 27)
<i>dhārmik anuṣṭhānharu</i> (p. 22)	religions ceremonies (p. 29)
<i>dar-dar ṭhokar khāḍā</i> (p. 24)	even after running around (p. 32)
<i>koselī</i> (p. 26)	gift (p. 37)
<i>tumulghoṣ</i> (p. 32)	constant explosion (p. 44)

This strategy is used for translating CCs related to concepts, artefacts and religious terms (Table 2). To begin the analysis and interpretation,

the propositional meaning of *kad* is 'height' but it expresses more than this, such as *banāwaṭ* (stature), *ākār* (size), *jiudāl* (structure of the body) and the

like. The translator should have used 'stature' in place of 'height' to minimize the gap between the SL and TL CCs. Similarly, *pahiran* has multiple referents, such as dress, costume, attire, clothing, guise, uniform, garment, and the like. The term also shows the personality of a person. Such kind of invisible meaning has been lost in TL term, here 'clothes'. However, the third pair is problematic. The SL term *ubhīdāko bhaṅgimā* refers to the posture of standing whereas the TL term 'gait' is a manner of walking or running' (Turnbull et al., 2010).

In the fourth pair, *agrākh* could be 'kernel of a piece of wood', which has been translated by using a general term 'wood'. Similarly, *ḍāḍī* (a kind of pole) has been translated as 'shaft', which is long handle or a bar. The SL term here, is more expressive but the TL one is more neutral. The next pair '*slok*-verses' also justifies that the TL term is less expressive. The word meaning of *slok* is 'verse' but it is recited in ritual ceremonies, which is lost in the TL term. Moreover, 'other side' and 'running around' are more neutral than the SL terms. However, there is a problem in the last pair. *Tumulghoṣ* is a loud sound or roar of a big kettledrum but its representation cannot be 'constant explosion'. Instead, it could be 'loud sound and tremor of war'.

### Translation by cultural substitution

In the use of cultural substitution as a strategy, the translator removes SL terms and replaces them with the approximants in the TL. It is done so due to the lack of SL terms in the TL. The examples (Table 3) exhibit that cultural substitution as a strategy is used to translate CCs related to concepts, artefacts, and social culture. These examples also prove that functional approximants are used for transferring a sense of SL into TL. In the first pair, *galpa* refers to

'short tales, idle talks, gossips, jokes, and short humorous tales' (Adhikari & Bhattarai, 2013; Lohani & Adhikari, 2010). Such events can be 'riddles' in English and yet *galpa* cannot be represented well. So, the translator has used 'legend', which refers to 'story handed down from the past, especially one that may not be true' (Turnbull, et al., 2010). The second pair also shows that *hattisār* (elephant-house) has been substituted by 'stable', where horses are kept. However, the third pair exemplifies mistranslation as *aswābhāwik* (unnatural/ artificial) cannot be 'loud'.

In counting system too, SL and TL differ. For example, *sāt thān* in SL refers to 'seven items' but the translator has used 'seven pieces', which cannot rightly represent the SL sense. Yet, TL readers can understand the sense of counting. Even in a part of houses, SL and TL differ as in the pair '*aṭālī*-balcony'. The SL term *aṭālī* refers to an opening part, which is made on the upper-part of the house, and which is also called *kausi*, *bārdālī*, or *verandah*. In the lack of a proper word, the translator has used 'balcony', which is a 'platform with a wall or rail built onto the outside wall of a building and reached from an upstairs room' (Turnbull et al., 2010). Even if *aṭālī* cannot rightly be resembled by the term 'balcony', there are no proper words than it. Similarly, *cauki* in SL refers to a small sacred piece of ground, which is used by priests while worshipping Gods or performing any ritual ceremonies. In TL, such a culture does not exist. So, the translator has replaced it by 'platform', to make its sense. Similarly, for translating artefacts, substitution has been used. *Khapaḍā* (pieces of mud, used in roofs) are translated as *tile* (pieces of mud, cement, etc. and used in roofs, walls, etc.).

**Table 3**

*Cultural Substitution for Translating CCs of Modiāin*

SL Terms	TL Terms
<i>galpa</i> (p. 1)	legend (p. 1)
<i>hattisār</i> (p. 2)	stable (p. 2)
<i>aswābhāwik rāto rañ</i> (p. 3)	loud red colour (p. 4)
<i>sāt thān</i> (p. 3)	seven pieces (p. 4)
<i>aṭālī</i> (p. 4)	balcony (p. 5)
<i>khar ra khapaḍākā chānā</i> (p. 4)	thatched or tiled roofs (p. 5)
<i>kāriḡarharu</i> (p. 4)	masons (p. 5)
<i>jhāḍphānus</i> (p. 4)	chandeliers (p. 5)
<i>meckursiharu</i> (p. 4)	chairs (p. 5)
<i>kāthkā sāmānharu</i> (p. 4)	timber furniture (p. 5)
<i>kaupin</i> (p. 5)	loincloth (p. 6)
<i>phāṭak</i> (p. 5)	gate (p. 6)
<i>nilo raṅko nāit kep</i> (p. 5)	dark blue hat (p. 6)
<i>phīṭin</i> (p. 6)	carriage (p. 8)
<i>caukī</i> (p. 6)	platform (p. 8)
<i>cana gahūko sattu</i> (p. 6)	brown sugar (p. 8)
<i>hissi parekī</i> (p. 6)	beautiful (p. 8)
<i>colo</i> (p.7)	blouse (p. 9)
<i>pitīle thāl</i> (p. 9)	a plate of brass (p. 13)
<i>loṭā</i> (p. 12)	tumbler (p. 18)
<i>pandītiyū</i> (p. 14)	sir (p. 20)
<i>ḍībarī</i> (p. 17)	lamp (p. 23)

The other terms also show cultural substitution. For example, *kārigar* (craftsman) is rendered into 'mason' (skilled stone worker); *jhāḍphānus* (a kind of kerosene lamp) and *dibari* (small lamp) are rendered into 'chandelier' and 'lamp' respectively, and *thāl* (flat plate) is rendered into 'plate'. The remaining pairs in table 3 also prove that SL cultural referents have been replaced by TL ones. The result is the use of domestication in translation (Venuti, 2004). The use of cultural substitution, here, is justifiable in target reader-friendly translation.

#### Translation by loan terms (plus explanation)

Loan terms are used when untranslatable terms, such as proper names and specific cultural referents, occur in the text. The translator of the present text has used loan terms for translating character names, geographical names, typical man-made objects and unique ecological terms (Table 4). It is also obvious (from the pairs in the table) that the translator has used two types of use of loan words: (a) bare

borrowing, and (b) borrowing with brief explanations.

The first four pairs of terms in table 4 exemplify the use of bare borrowing. *Misirji*, *Darbhangā*, *paan-bidi*, and *sisau* refer to character names, geographical names, edible leaves (for chewing and smoking) and a wild tree, used for making timber and furniture, respectively. The target readers may not speculate their meanings without SL cultural knowledge. The second type of strategy is used in translating *bhoṭo*, *purī*, *dhoti*, *Lakṣmī*, and *Draupadī*. A brief explanation of them enables the TL readers to speculate their senses. However, the remaining terms show that there is use of borrowing along with other strategies. For example, there is a literal translation in *darbār-palace*, *talāva-pond*, and *bandigriha-detention camp*. Moreover, there is back translation in the pairs like *phransisī silk-French silk*, and *lālṭin-lantern*. Additionally, there is naturalisation in the pair *Jamunā-Yamuna*.

**Table 4**

*Use of Loan Words for Translating CCs of Modiāin*

SL Terms	TL Terms
<i>Misirji</i> (p. 2)	Misirji (p. 2)
<i>Darbhangā</i> (p. 2)	Darbhangā (p. 2)
<i>pān, bīḍī</i> (p. 3)	paan, bidi (p. 4)
<i>sisau</i> (p. 3)	sisau (p.5)
<i>naulakhkhā darbār</i> (p. 4)	Naulakhkhā palace (p. 5)
<i>bhoṭo</i> (p. 4)	bhoto (particular Indian shirt) (p. 5)
<i>Rājnagar</i> (p. 4)	Rajnagar (p. 5)
<i>phransisī silk</i> (p. 4)	French silk (p. 5)
<i>purī</i> (p. 5)	puri (thin Indian bread deep fried in butter) (p. 7)
<i>bhujā</i> (p. 6)	bhuja (p. 8)
<i>dhoti</i> (p. 8)	dhoti (loincloth) (p. 12)
<i>Hadahā talāva</i> (p. 8)	Hadaha pond (p. 12)
<i>lālṭin</i> (p. 12)	lantern (p. 18)
<i>Durgā kavac</i> (p. 14)	Durga kavach (p. 20)
<i>Dhritarāstra</i> (p. 19)	Dhritarastra (p. 26)
<i>Jamunā</i> (p. 20)	Yamuna (p. 27)
<i>Laxmī</i> (p. 26)	Lakshmi, the Goddess of beauty (p. 37)
<i>Yaduvamśa</i> (p. 30)	Yadus (p. 42)
<i>Draupadī</i> (p. 35)	Draupadi (princess of Panchala) (p. 47)
<i>Sundarijal Bandigriha</i> (p. 42)	Sundarijal detention camp (p. 57)

This explication shows that the translator has used borrowing along with other strategies, such as back translation, literal translation, and naturalisation. This entails that a single strategy cannot be adequate to compensate gaps even if it is source language-friendly translation.

#### Translation by paraphrase using related terms

For some cases, the translator should explain the terms by using related lexemes. Such contexts are presented in table 5, which show that related terms are used for paraphrasing SL. For example, *kacahari* (gathering, meeting, or assembly) has been 'meeting hall'; *macmac* (sound of something swaying and moving) has been 'funny monotonous noise'; *ghuṭco*

(crowd) has been intensified as 'great crowd' and so on.

However, for translating *baidhya* (an Ayurvedic doctor), *kubelā* (unsuitable/bad time), *pirkā* (wooden seat), and *kabandha* (a headless trunk) have literally been translated respectively as 'medicine man', 'wrong time', 'flat wooden seat' and 'headless body'. In addition, there is use of explication for translating *tāḍikhānākā jhopaḍiharu* and definition for *devar*.

Although there is partial omission in the other pairs, their senses have been transferred. For example, *jamindāribitra* could be 'inside their landlordism/ landed estate', and *pradakṣiṇā* could be 'clockwise circumambulation of a person or object

as a mark of respect or worship' (Lohani & Adhikari, 2010). *Topi* has been translated as 'hat', which is an instance of cultural substitution as *kāne topi* is not used by English people.

Therefore, in the touchstone of sense transfer, paraphrasing this way is an appropriate strategy for translating CCs.

**Table 5**

*Use of Related Terms for Paraphrasing CCs of Modiāin*

SL Terms	TL Terms
<i>kacahari</i> (p. 2)	meeting hall (p. 2)
<i>macmac</i> (p. 2)	funny monotonous noise (p. 2)
<i>ghuīco</i> (p. 4)	great crowd (p. 6)
<i>baidhya</i> (p. 6)	medicine man (p. 8)
<i>tāḍikkhānāka jhopaḍīharu</i> (p. 12)	huts made of the palm barks and leaves (p. 17)
<i>kubelā</i> (p. 12)	wrong time (p. 18)
<i>jamindāribhitra</i> (p. 13)	among their possessions (p. 19)
<i>rāto kāne topī</i> (p. 14)	red hat covered his ears (p. 20)
<i>pradakṣiṇā</i> (p. 14)	walking around (p. 22)
<i>pirkā</i> (p. 17)	flat wooden seat (p. 23)
<i>devar</i> (p. 26)	husband's younger brother (p. 37)
<i>sahasra bajra</i> (p. 35)	thousands of thunderbolts (p. 47)
<i>kabandha</i> (p. 40)	headless body (p. 55)

**Translating by paraphrase using unrelated terms**

The translator uses unrelated terms for paraphrasing CCs only when lexicalization of SL into TL is impossible. In the present text, like in the previous ones, these are only a few terms, which are paraphrased in this way.

Table 6 exhibits that the translator has paraphrased by using unrelated terms. In the first pair, *tolāumu* is to stare/gaze being absent-minded'. It has been translated as 'look around in awe', which is not close to the SL sense.

**Table 6**

*Use of Unrelated Terms for Paraphrasing CCs of Modiāin*

SL Terms	TL Terms
<i>tolāyera hernu</i> (p. 6)	to look around in awe (p. 8)
<i>Apsarā</i> (p. 25)	celestial nymph (p. 36)
<i>bhubhār hārnu</i> (p. 31)	to be a catharsis of all evil (p. 42)

The second pair, *Apsarā* in Hindu mythology are dwellers of the *Amarāwati* (Kingdom of Gods) and beauties frequently used by the king Indra, there. On the other hand, nymphs in Greek and Roman mythology are minor goddesses living in rivers, trees or hills. Moreover, *guptabās* is living secretly in such a way that others cannot notice. Its translation in the text is 'living in disguise', which is sense transfer of the SL. In the final pair, *bhubhār harnu* refers to liberate the earth dwellers from the demonic behaviours. Its weak translation, here, is 'to be a catharsis of all evil.'

birds, geographical names and concepts, which should not have been omitted.

These three pairs (Table 6) confirm that the use of unrelated terms for paraphrasing CCs is not justifiable. Instead, related terms should have been used for clarifying the SL senses into TL.

**Translation by illustration**

Translators sometimes use "physical entity" (Baker, 2018, p. 43) to illustrate SL terms into TL. There are illustrations in the translated version of the novel to show *Darbhāngā* (p. 2), physical beauty and stature of *Modiāin* (p. 10), *Darbhāngā* Royal Palace and *Haḍāhā* pond (p. 16), *Draupadī* (p. 31), the stature of *Nāri* (p. 34), *Nāri* and a warrior (p. 35), and the battlefield of *Kurukṣetra* (p. 48). These illustrations enable the TL readers to speculate the SL meanings easily.

**Translation by omission**

Although omission is undesirable in translation, the translator uses it as a last resort. In the translation of *Modiāin*, some terms have been omitted, such as *astabal* (p. 2), *khīrārara...* (p.4), *datiwan* (p. 5), *ḍhakkī* (p. 6), *barachā* (p. 7), *ghāt* (p. 9), *kauwā-cīl* (p. 11), *naḡardarśan* (p. 11), *Bhāratbarṣa* (p. 19), *mudrā* (p. 22), and *lāmo dandā* (p. 42). These terms are related to artefacts, onomatopoeic words, herbs,

The delineations above offer an insight into the nature and type of the problems of meaning transfer the translator may have encountered. However, I have assessed problems in terms of strategies. The primary ones have appeared when terms and expressions are partially or entirely omitted. Although omission is a legitimate strategy in some contexts, it is observed inappropriate in the present translation.

As culture differs from one linguistic community to another, the translator faces problems while transferring meaning across languages. Theoretically, culture cannot be substituted. Some



CCs cannot be transferred directly due to the lack of the proper ones in the TL. However, in practice, sense transfer should be accepted and therefore, cultural substitution proves to be a legitimate strategy. In this context, loss of meaning (original) is a natural phenomenon. These problems, observed here, are natural in any type of literary translations. It is because literary translation functions like a creation, which is a production of personal intuition. Therefore, as there are comments on creation as there are comments on its translation. From this perspective, the translator's function is just like a woman whose function does not finish only after delivering a baby.

### CONCLUSION

Efficacy of cross-cultural communication is at the heart of a successful translation. When one translates, s/he translates not only language but also culture. Thus, translating cultural concepts (CCs) across languages is a major aspect that a translator has to focus while translating. CCs subsume social and political organizations, rituals and rites, habits, values and assumptions hold by the people in a community, artefacts, traditions, customs, geographical and proper names, leisure time activities, referring expressions, idioms, religious and cultural expressions, natural landscapes, insects and animals and abstract terms and expressions. CCs are culture specific and thus pose difficulty for translators.

In this study, the translation of CCs is observed through the lens of Baker's (2011, 2018) strategies that comprise translation by a general term, less expressive term, cultural substitution, loan term, paraphrase, illustration, and omission. The translator has tried to maintain a balance between literal and sense translations to create a third space. However, the present translation does not seem to address all the pitfalls and hurdles, which encounter while translating the cultural references. As in other translation works, limitations and problems are found in this one, too. It implies that the present translation appeals the further translations as a text may have thousands of translations and yet none of them can be a complete one.

The present study is limited to the appraisal of strategies in interlingual translation of cultural concepts in the Nepali-English pair of a selected novel. Furthermore, it only delved into the terms based on a limited corpus. Thus, further studies can be conducted by taking extensive corpora from the other sets of interlingual and/or multilingual translations. Such extensive studies can contribute to the development of an exhaustive translation model that may attribute for lubricating cross-cultural communication and designing the courses with due attention to the crosscultural communicability of the cultural concepts.

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APPENDIX A

SPECIMEN OF PHONOLOGICAL SYMBOLS

a	अ		h	:		d	ड		y	य	ष
ā	आ	ा	k	क	ख	dh	ढ		r	र	ः
i	इ	ी	kh	ख	ख	ṅ	ण	व	l	ल	ऌ
ī	ई	ी	g	ग	ग	t	त्	ट	w/v	व	ऋ
u	उ	ू	gh	घ	घ	th	थ	ड	ś	श	ऌ
ū	ऊ	ू	ṅ	ङ		d	ड		ṣ	ष	ऌ
e	ए	ै	c	च	च	dh	घ	ड	s	स	ऌ
ai	ऐ	ै	ch	छ		n	न्	ट	h	ह	ऌ
o	ओ	ौ	j	ज	ज	p	प्	प	kṣ	क्ष	ऌ
au	औ	ौ	jh	झ	झ	ph	फ्	फ	tr	त्र	
/m	म्		ñ	ञ	ञ	b	ब्	ब	jñ/gy	ज्ञ	ऌ
			ṭ	ट		bh	भ्	भ			
			th	ठ		m	म्	म			

Source: Adapted from Turner & Turner (2009, p. xviv)