Original Paper

Emotion without a Word: An Analysis of Bengali Emotions and Their English Translation

Shibashis Mukherjee[1*] & Anupam Das[2]

[1] Organizational Behavior & Human Resources Management, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, India

[2] Humanities & Liberal Arts in Management, Indian Institute of Management Kozhikode, India

[*] Shibashis Mukherjee, Organizational Behavior & Human Resources Management, Indian Institute of Management Bangalore, India

Abstract

Using Bengali texts and their English translations done by a set of English speaking native Bengali translators and another set of native English translators, we analyze how two specific Bengali emotion words (obhiman and lajja) have mapped onto English. In translating lajja translators use only three English words while for obhiman they choose an array of words with no consistency. This indicates that no English word represents a concept that is close to obhiman's meaning suggesting that the concept represented by a particular emotion word in one language may not be totally captured in another language. Additionally, the findings indicate emotion words represent concepts with fuzzy borders (as suggested in scripts hypothesis) instead of dots in affect grids as envisioned in evaluation-potency-activity measurements. Such concepts vary in the spectrum of events they denote and in the degree to which they overlap. Subsequently, we, drawing from skopos theory, argue that cultural contexts in translation studies need to be considered rather than looking for exact equivalence of these emotion words.

Keywords

emotion words, obhiman, lajja, script hypothesis, affect control theory, translation

1. Introduction

Studies in disciplines like anthropology, psychology, sociology, translation, and communication have considered the relationship between emotions and culture. Starting with Hochschild's seminal study (1983), sociologists have emphasized the important role of culture in shaping emotions. Sociologists such as Heise (1979, 2007) have studied emotions cross-culturally using Affect Control Theory (ACT). One central question that emotion scholars have been interested in is "Do more differentiated societies produce a more refined emotion vocabulary that is more precise distinctions among emotions (Gordon, 1990, p. 148)?" Gordon suggests that a society may develop a plethora of terms to emphasize emotions, which are culturally more important. Similarly, if an emotion is less desirable in a culture, there may be fewer terms to describe it. The anthropologist Weirzbicka (1986) said that emotion words reflect those emotions valued by a particular society. For example, English has no equivalent for the Polish word tesknic (near equivalents include homesick, nostalgic, miss, etc.). She argues that this is because the Anglo-Saxon culture has believed that the feeling generated by the Polish word tesknic is not important enough to have a special name.

The literature on faithful methods of translation overwhelmingly adopts the "equivalence paradigm", according to which the focus of translation must be on the faithfulness of translated forms to that of the source forms. Therefore, the aim of the translation is to achieve a text in the target language that is equivalent—of "equal value" (Pym, 2007)—to the original source-language version. A translation is equivalent if it achieves "the conveyance of identical meaning" (Hult et al., 2008, p. 1035) between the target and source language versions. However, in the recent past, the focus of translation studies has shifted from equivalence to contextualization of the texts in the culture in which the readers reside. Therefore, although not irrelevant, equivalence is no longer the main objective, and the source text is "dethroned" (Vermeer, 1998). Further, Reiss and Vermeer (1984/2013) also stress that it is not possible to produce a target-language text that is fully equivalent in all its features: not just the lexical equivalence favoured by back translation (Note 1), but also grammatical, stylistic, pragmatic, and even reader response equivalence (see e.g., Baker, 1992 for different types of equivalence). Consequently, the translator must decide which aspects of the source text need to be rendered faithfully in the target text. Vermeer (1998) argues that the "cultural" level of the text is more fundamental than its linguistic features. Meaning is ultimately cultural in nature, therefore, unavoidably changes its value when transmitted from one culture to another (Reiss & Vermeer, 1984/2013).

Here, we study two emotion words used in Bengali—*obhiman* and *lajj*—in two linguistic and cultural contexts. *Obhiman* can loosely be translated as anger, while *lajja* as shame or embarrassment. We have selected these two words because past research has suggested that they do not have exact English equivalents (Parish, 1991; Russell, 1991; Menon & Shweder, 1994). We study Bengali texts and their English translations to analyze how native Bengali and English translators communicate these two emotion words in English to their prospective readers. This helps to understand if there is a systematic

251

way to communicate the concepts to those readers whose native language have similar concepts, and on the other hand, those readers whose native language, do not have them.

In this paper, we have examined novels, short stories and dramas written in Bengali and translated into English. The reason to choose literary works over other forms of texts is that the former is more likely to be translated. The Bengali works are written by native Bengali speaking authors and their respective translations are done by both native Bengali and English speakers. Ideally, translators are assumed to have deep knowledge of both languages and cultures, hence in the best position to express an emotion in a language which does not have a word for it.

2. Theoretical Background

2.1 Are Emotions Universal or Culturally Defined?

One of the key questions contested across disciplines is whether emotions are universal or culturally constructed. Izaard (1977, p. 18) quoted that "emotions have innately stored neural programs, universally understood expressions and common experiential qualities". "Culturally universal emotions exist because at least some reactions are 'wired in'" (Thoits, 1989, p. 321). This is the positivist approach, which argues that certain emotions called basic emotions have universal expressions across all cultures (Ekman, 1983).

Certain researchers tried to introduce the role of socialization within the positivist approach. Kemper (1987) claims that certain secondary emotions emerge as individual experiences one or more of the primary emotions.

For example, shame is attached to the primary emotion anger. The anger directed towards self for behaving in a demeaning way will result in shame. Here a secondary emotion emerges from a primary emotion. Kemper (1987) also suggests that more than one primary emotion may combine to form secondary emotions. For example, fear and depression may combine to form anxiety. Turner (2000) also supports this view of combining primary emotions to produce secondary emotions. So the positivist view in the sociology of emotion introduces the role of socialization. As to how many emotions exist, Kemper hints at cultural variations: "The answer seems to depend on how many social situations a culture differentiates and on the degree of motivational interest or concern it produces in its members about them (Kemper, 1987, p. 284)".

Social constructionists also debate about the role of culture in emotional experience. For example, Shott (1979) acknowledges that emotions have physiological causes; however, different emotions can share a single physiological arousal. Shott believes that besides the arousal, affective labeling is a required component of an emotion. Hence, Schachter and Singer's (1962) experiment shows that some subjects experienced the same physiological impulse as anger but others saw it as euphoria. Shott argues that what really determines a particular emotion (e.g., anger and not euphoria) is not the physiological impulse but the belief that the emotion (say anger) is the most appropriate explanation for

252

the arousal. This belief is shaped by culture and social structure. Fisher et al. (2004) found that people in traditional countries feel certain emotions such as shame and guilt more intensely compared to people in more egalitarian societies. Siemer et al. (2007) argued that how people appraise a particular situation can be shaped by culture, which may induce individuals to respond to the same situation with different emotions.

2.2 A Cultural Approach to Emotions: Emotion as Scripts

One important theory that acknowledges the role of culture in emotional experience is the scripts approach in psychology (Russell, 1991). According to this view, each emotion word expresses a "script" (concept); each emotion is an "event", which can be broken up into a sequence of "sub-events". Here is how Russell describes the script of anger: a person is offended by some injustice. This is followed by the victim glaring and scowling at the individual. The victim feels internal tension, agitation, and the desire to fight back. The physiological changes are pounding of heart and tightening of muscles. If the emotion is uncontrollable, the victim may hit back the offender. Based on slight changes in the script, there can be different names given to different shades of anger such as annoyance, fury, rage, and irritation. Russell indicates that scripts of some emotions are more complicated than others. For example, "in happiness, you desire something, get it, feel pleasure, smile, and, perhaps feel kind toward others" (Russell, 1991, p. 442). In contrast, "Jealousy might include anger, but jealousy implies a surrounding situation, a social relationship involving three people, specific motives, behaviors, and consequences" (Russell, 1991, p. 442). In the classical view, concepts are believed to have necessary and sufficient features that create clear category boundaries (Mendoza & Fernández-Dols, 2010). However, Russell and Fehr (1994) indicated that because each emotion concept includes many features, they are more likely to have fuzzy boundaries than to be properly defined. This is the case not only for the secondary emotions but even for basic emotions like anger. The word anger, when translated into other languages, does not have the exact same features (Russell & Fehr, 1994) and therefore the one-to-one translation of emotion words between languages is not possible (Russell, 1991).

The script hypothesis helps us understand cross-cultural differences in emotions. Languages with fewer emotion categories have more general scripts: Each script will have fewer features and encompass a broader range of phenomena. Conversely, languages with more emotion categories will have more specific scripts: more features and narrower range of phenomena. Moreover, the antecedent causes that lead to a particular emotion can be emphasized more in one culture compared to another. As a result, people can react emotionally to different things in different cultures.

2.3 EPA Scale

One of the most popular sociological approaches in studying emotions cross-culturally is Affect Control Theory (ACT), a symbolic interactionist theory developed by Heise (1979, 2007) and others (Smith-Lovin & Heise, 1988). This theory is based on the works of Osgood, Suci, and Tannebaum

253

(1957), and Osgood, May, and Miron (1975), who described Evaluation, Potency, and Activity (EPA) as three dimensions along which people respond to all kinds of stimuli. They called them "affective response" because emotional expression varies along these dimensions (Osgood, 1962). Heise used this idea to develop ACT. According to ACT, the discordance between fundamental and transient feelings gives rise to deflection, which produces emotional arousal that can be measured along the EPA dimensions. Fundamental sentiments are culturally established affective meanings about social identities, behaviors, and settings while transient sentiments are feelings about a particular event. One of the great advantages of this approach is that these three dimensions are universal and provide an effective basis for cross-cultural research.

One concern with focusing only on the EPA dimensions of emotions is that it may not reflect all the complexities that are represented by an emotion word. By detailed analysis of the Bengali emotions *obhiman* and *lajja*, we will argue how scripts hypothesis helps to understand complexities of emotions that are not captured through the EPA scales.

2.4 The Cultural Contexts in Translation Studies

According to skopos theory, translation is an act of communicative interaction (e.g., Snell-Hornby, 1988), rather than a narrow linguistic transfer. In fact, a translational action often aims to achieve a specific communicative purpose. This purpose or skopos shapes the translator's interpretation of the commission, as well as his/her expert judgment on what will serve best in the target culture (Vermeer, 1998). A quality translation is one which is adequate to its purpose and "transmitted in a target-culture adequate way" (Vermeer 1998)—not one which is most alike the source text (unless equivalency to the original is the commission that the translator is seeking to accomplish). Furthermore, House (2006, p. 356) views translation as a process of recontextualization; that is, "taking a text out of its original frame and context and placing it within a new set of relationships and culturally conditioned expectations". Ultimately, the judge of whether the translation has achieved its purpose is the target audience (Nord, 1997).

2.5 Lajja and Obhiman

We study how emotion words of one language map onto emotion words in another language when translation/cultural equivalents may not exist. *Lajja* embraces emotional experiences which are denoted by the English words shame, embarrassment, shyness, modesty, etc., depending on the pragmatic contexts of the discourse. However, none of these English words exactly express the concept of the emotion word *lajja* (Parish, 1991; Menon & Shweder, 1994). For example, *lajja* in the following three Bengali sentences denotes three different pragmatic meanings. The corresponding English translations were done by a native Bengali speaker. (1) *Churir apobade lajjay cheletir matha nichu hoye galo* (Falsely charged with theft, the boy hung his head in shame), (2) *lajja narir bhusan* (A woman's finery is in her coyness), and (3) *biyer kathay, meyeti lajjay lal hoye galo* (The girl went crimson at the mention of marriage). Further, the translator indicates that "coyness" is the closest one can get to *lajja*

in the context of ideal feminine conduct in the presence of men. But it can have an element of negativity too. Coyness can be faux. Another alternative for *lajja* in this context, she states, is demureness (A. Dutta Gupta, personal communication, June 30, 2017).

Dutta (2005) states that the other commonly used and extremely evocative Bengali word *obhiman* has bewildered translators over the years. According to the newspaper The Telegraph Kolkata (2010), "The original meaning was pride, but the current usage—anger, or something close to it, at being upset with a loved one. This one word is one whole chapter in any relationship, be it between lovers or between parents and children or between siblings or friends".

The same article quotes a leading Bengali poet Sankha Ghosh: "Try to translate it. Abhiman is not anger or sorrow. It is a temporary expression of a feeling about a loved one that he or she is supposed to address. People speaking in other languages must also be feeling the sentiment. I wonder how they express it". So, although the original meaning of *obhiman* has a direct translation equivalent (pride) in English, the modern usage may lack a counterpart in the English vocabulary. However, many other Indian languages (Hindi, Marathi, etc.) have the same concept as it is evident from the films and literature.

3 Research Questions

In this paper, we investigate the following research questions. (1) How best can the Bengali emotion words *obhiman* and *lajja* be translated in English for the native English speakers whose language does not have exact equivalence linguistic expressions for these emotions, and for the speakers of other Indian languages (e.g., Hindi, Oriya, Marathi, Tamil etc.) that have the equivalent emotion words? The answer to this question will enable us to address the broader issue of whether emotions are universal or culture specific. Therefore, our follow-up research question is: (2) Does scripts approach have advantages over EPA dimensions in cross-cultural research?

3.1 Expected Patterns in Data

Ethnographic methods used in the past to study emotion words cross-culturally have been subject to criticisms (Note 2). Parish (1991) and Menon and Shweder (1994) have used ethnographic methods to study *lajja* (Note 3). Although they argue that the meaning of *lajja* is different from any emotion word in English, the respondents in these studies had limited or no proficiency in English. Therefore, we are unable to know how bilinguals view *lajja*. For our study, we introduce a novel approach: comparison of emotion words from source texts (Bengali) with their translated counterparts. Using the same data, we are also studying the Bengali emotion *obhiman* which unlike *lajja* has not been previously studied cross-culturally. Although no systematic study has been done, people have hinted at the lack of English equivalent of *obhiman* (Dutta, 2005; Russell, 1991; The Telegraph, 2010).

Previous work has mentioned that emotions are "language dependent", and language actively constructs and reconstructs emotions (Grayshon, 1975; Searle, 1995, p. 62; Pavlenko, 2002, p. 209;

Panayiotou, 2006). If the number of English words chosen to translate the Bengali words is few and repeated consistently, it suggests that the meanings of the Bengali words are prevalent in English too. When no exact translation exists for *obhiman* and *lajja*, native English speakers and Bengali speakers may show differences in their choice of words when translating. Pattern differences may be possible because each bilingual may be influenced by his/her first language in assigning meanings to words in the second language, resulting in bias (Russell, 1991), or the translators may purposefully want to recontextualize these concepts for their targeted readers whose native language does not have them. One possibility is that native English speaking bilinguals may find it harder to grasp the concept of a Bengali emotion word if no one-to-one translation exists in English. As a result, they may choose a wider range of English words to translate than native Bengali speakers. The latter group may agree more often and choose fewer English words that are closest in concept to the Bengali words in question. Furthermore, the purpose or skopos influences the translator's interpretation of the text, as well as his/her expert judgment regarding what will serve best in the target culture (Vermeer, 1998). For example, these translated works may be read by the speakers of other Indian languages, such as Hindi, Oriya, Marathi, and Tamil. These languages have the same/similar concepts that *lajja* and *obhiman* denote in Bengali. Hence, the translators may want to preserve the source equivalence of these two emotion words in their English translation.

Script approach views emotions as concepts and Pavelenko (2008) found that while comparing emotion concepts across two languages, three distinct relationships emerge: (1) two concepts may be identical or closely similar in both languages, (2) a concept existing in one language may be totally non-existent in the other and (3) two or more concepts may have partial overlaps. If translators in the present study consistently agree with the words used for translation it will indicate that the Bengali words have exact English equivalents. However, if translators disagree to a moderate degree in their choice of words it is more likely that the Bengali emotion words (*obhiman* and *lajja*) have partial overlaps with English emotion words. When translators are rarely consistent in their translations, it indicates that emotions have only marginal or no overlaps.

Each emotion word has distinct EPA dimensions and therefore different emotion words do not overlap (Note 4). Therefore, it is expected that translators will choose English words that are closest in EPA dimension to the Bengali emotion words. Even when equivalent translations do not exist. Therefore, if *lajja* is consistently translated as shame instead of embarrassment, we can suggest that *lajja* is closer (if not exact) to shame than embarrassment in affect grids. However, if we find that translators are not consistent in their choices of different English words (e.g., switching between shame, shyness, modesty, embarrassment, etc.) to translate Bengali emotion words (e.g., *lajja*), it will suggest that translators are not considering proximity in EPA dimensions (e.g., between *lajja* and shame vs. *lajja* and embarrassment vs. *lajja* and shyness) as the sole basis for translations. Instead, emotion words are being viewed as concepts with different extent of overlaps.

4 Methods

4.1 Data

Bengali literary works and their English translation counterparts are examined. In order to do word searches for our texts, we looked for Bengali literature available online (We have left out pdfs as word searches are not possible for pdfs with Bengali fonts). There are only two authors whose works are extensively available online; Rabindranath Tagore and Sarat Chandra Chattapadhay. Chattapadhay's works have not been used because translations of his work have been mainly done by native Bengali speakers and unless translations done by both native English and Bengali speakers are available, differences in the pattern that may exist between translations of these two groups of translators cannot be examined. Tagore's work has been translated by a few native English translators. Therefore, his works fulfilled both criteria for the project: (1) work available online so that word search can be done for *obhiman* and *lajja*, (2) translations by both native English and Bengali speakers. The Bengali books that have been used for this project are twelve short stories (A*tihti, Chhuti, Denapaona, Didi, Kabuliwalah*, *Khata, Khudito pashan, Konkal*, *Jibito o mrito, Shasti, Sompadok Thakurda*), two novels (*Gora* and *Noukadubi*) and two dramas (*Notir Puja* and *Biday Obhishap*) (Note 5). The list of translators' names from Katherin Henn's *Rabindranath Tagore: A Bibliography* has been used to select native English and Bengali speaking translators. The unit of analysis for the study is one single word (whenever *obhiman* or *lajja* have been used in the original text). Thirty-six instances where the word *obhiman* appears in the original aforementioned Bengali texts have been collected, which were translated by both native Bengali and English speakers.

Table 1a. Instances for Obhiman

Name of original Bengali Books by Tagore	Native English speaking translators	No. of instances	Native Bengali speaking translators	No. of instances
Taken from seven Bengali short stories of Tagore*	Radice	8	Bardhan, Mukherjee, Basu, Sanyal, Saha, Sen, Chaudhury	14
Gora	Pearson	17	Mukherjee	17
			Chakravarty	17
Noukadubi	Drummond	8	Sunanda	8
Notir Pujo	Stykes	2	Devi	2
Biday Obhishap	Thompson	1	Kripalini	1
		Total=36		Total=59

Table 1b. Instances for Lajja

Name of original Bengali Books by Tagore	Native English speaking translators	No. of instances	Native Bengali speaking translators	No. of instances
*Taken from eight Bengali short stories of Tagore**	Radice	10	Bardhan, Mukherjee, Basu, Sanyal, Saha, Sen, Chaudhury	15
Kabuliwalah (one of the eight short stories)	Sister Nibedita	1		
Gora	Pearson	10	Mukherjee	10
			Chakravarty	10
Noukadubi	Drummond	10	Sunanda	10
Notir Pujo	Stykes	6	Devi	6
Biday Obhishap	Thompson	2	Kripalini	2
		Total=39		Total=53

*Names of the short stories are *Kabuliwalah*, *Jibito o mrito*, *Thakurda*, *Atihti*, *Konkal*, *Chhuti*, *Shasti*, *Khata*.

The word *lajja* is more frequent in Bengali than *obhiman*. Because there were 36 instances where the word *obhiman* was translated by native English speakers, we wanted to keep a comparable number for *lajja*; hence, 39 instances of the latter word being translated into English have been chosen. Here is a detailed description of how that number has been reached: there were nine instances where *lajja* was used by native English speakers (Stykes, Thompson, & Nibedita) and also translated by native Bengali speakers. Peason and Drummond's works have abundant instances, so only the first ten times they translated *lajja* (and when it was also translated by Bengali speakers) were chosen. Radice's translated short stories that contained both the words obhiman *lajja* were chosen. This includes the stories *Chhuti, Shasti and Khata*. *Kabuliwallah* was also chosen because it is the only work translated by more than one English speaker, namely Radice and Nibedita. A few other short stories translated by Radice (that also have translations by Bengali speakers) were randomly chosen and we stopped at ten instances because the data then have ten instances where Radice, Drummond, and Pearson each translated the word *lajja* along with nine more instances from other English speaking translators. Sometimes we found more than one Bengali speaker translating the same source texts, making the total number of translations by Bengali speakers slightly higher than those by English speakers. A detailed break-up is given in Tables 1a and 1b.

Collaborative translations by English and Bengali speakers were excluded from our analysis as it would be hard to determine who was responsible for a particular translation, and therefore a comparison between the two groups of translators would not be possible. We have collected fifteen more instances

of *obhiman* translated by native English speakers where we could find no native Bengali speaker translating the same text (These are taken from English translations of *Bhanusingher Padabali*, *Muktadhara*, *Noukadubi*, and short stories *Bebodhan* and *Man Bhanjan*). We have left out these instances for most of our analysis and indicated while using it for any discussion. In sum, we have used seven native English-speaking translators and twelve native Bengali speaking translators. The translations that we have used were done at different times in the last hundred years. Ideally we would have chosen all translators from the same era but that would have seriously reduced the amount of data.

4.2 Coding

Initially, we separated all the English words used to translate *obhiman* and *lajja* into two groups: words solely used by native English speaking translators and words solely used by native Bengali speaking translators. This enabled us to compare translations both between and within the two groups. As mentioned before, *obhiman* has two meanings in Bengali; the original being pride and the current probably lacking an exact English equivalent. Therefore, it is possible that if translators fail to understand the current meaning they may use pride for translation. We observed whether English speakers were using the word pride more than Bengali speakers during translation.

In the case of *lajja*, both groups usually translated it as shame. We observed the times translators agreed when shame was used. When they disagreed, what words did they use instead of shame? We also used another category where the translators did not use shame and analysed whether the English and Bengali speakers agreed in their choice of words. Our coding technique helped us to compare how many words the translators used to translate *obhiman* in contrast to *lajja*.

5. Results

Our first step was to see how many times the word pride (or proud) was used out of the 36 instances when *obhiman* was translated by both native English and native Bengali speakers. The native English translators used it 16 times (44%). Additionally, there were twenty instances where translations were done by two native Bengali speakers, one instance each where there were three and four Bengali translators. Therefore, in total, we have (36 + 20*2 + 1*3 + 1*4) = 59 cases when a Bengali translator translated *obhiman*. Out of these, 16 times (27%) *obhiman* was translated as pride. Bengali translators used pride less frequently than the English translators. However, with the exception of Drummond, English and Bengali translators generally agreed in their translation of *obhiman* into pride. When comparing Drummond's translation with the Bengali translator who translated the same book, we find that, out of the eight cases when both translated *obhiman*, the Bengali translator used pride only once while Drummond used it six times. This suggests that either the translator intentionally translated thus to communicate the idea to a speech community where *obhiman* could only be understood as pride or he/she failed to capture the current concept of *obhiman* due to inadequate knowledge of its pragmatic meanings and used pride instead.

There are ten instances when the English translators used pride for *obhiman*, and in nine out of those, Bengali translators have also used pride. Because (with the exception of Drummond) we can see that native Bengali and English speaking translators consistently agree when translating *obhiman* to pride it is possible to conclude that the script of pride and the original meaning of *obhiman* are very similar (recall the quote "The original meaning was pride" (The Telegraph, 2010)) (Note 6).

The original and current meanings of *obhiman* may have some overlap in their scripts. In fact, an array of common words used by both groups of translators is wounded/injured/hurt pride. However, the two groups of translators rarely agreed on the cases in which *obhiman* should be translated as wounded/injured/hurt pride. Even among the Bengali translators there was no agreement (discussion in more detail in the next paragraph). This lends support to script theory's claim that emotions have fuzzy boundaries. The findings suggest that each emotion word represents a concept (similar to non-emotion words) that varies in breadth (i.e., in the range of events they denote) and in the degree to which it overlaps (Russell & Fehr, 1994, p. 202).

The aforementioned pattern also held for other words that were used in translating *obhiman*. These include the words hurt, resentment, sulking, self-respect, grievance, offense (Note 7), which are not used at the same time by English and Bengali speakers. For example, when an English translator used the word hurt, a Bengali translator used the word offended. Contrariwise, when a Bengali translator used the word hurt, an English translator used the word disappointment and a second Bengali translator used the word petulance. This shows that while both English and Bengali translators used all these six words to express *obhiman*, they disagreed on the word to be used for a particular instance. We found the same pattern while looking at the word wounded/injured/hurt pride (Note 8).

Out of the twenty instances when English translators translated *obhiman* as something other than pride, only three words have been used twice or more. These include wounded/injured/hurt pride (four times), sensitive (twice) and hurt (twice). Twelve words were used only once. Hence, the translators use words only once in twelve out of twenty cases (60%). When we observed the larger sample, we saw that in 62% of the cases (23 out of 37), native English speakers used a word only once (Note 9). In contrast, Bengali translators used an English word in a single instance in only 19% of cases. Bengali translators therefore appear more consistent in expressing *obhiman* in translation, suggesting that native English speakers found it harder to grasp the concept of *obhiman* and therefore were less consistent. Alternatively, perhaps they felt that the attempt is futile for potential readers in whose linguistic and cultural environments the concept of *obhiman* does not exist.

Aside from pride and wounded/injured/hurt pride, no single word was used by either group of translators more than 15% of the time. The word hurt was most commonly used by Bengali speakers and hurt and sensitive were used most commonly by English speakers. Therefore, no English word appears to have a script close to the current usage of *obhiman*. While a bigger sample size would have enabled a better calculation of the percentage of how frequently hurt is used to express *obhiman*, it is

260

still easy to envision that the scripts of hurt and *obhiman* (current usage) are more different than similar. This is in contrast to pride and the original meaning of *obhiman* that have a lot more overlapping features in their scripts. While it can now be argued that *obhiman* (current usage) cannot be successfully expressed in English, does it mean that English speaking monolinguals do not "feel" the emotion *lajja* before exploring this question.

It has already been indicated that the emotion word *lajja* does not have an exact English equivalent (Parish, 1991; Menon & Shweder, 1994). Therefore, our initial expectation was that like with *obhiman,* translators would use several different words to translate *lajja*. However, with *lajja*, the word that both native English and Bengali speakers use most often is shame. English translators have used it 56% of the time while Bengali translators used it 54%. However, in 90% of cases (19 out of 21) when an English translator used shame, a Bengali translator also used it. A larger sample pool may slightly change the percentages, but the basic claim remains intact that both English and Bengali translators largely agreed when using shame for *lajja*. This is similar to the earlier situation where both groups of translators agreed on using pride to translate the original meaning of *obhiman*.

There were instances when *lajja* was not translated as shame. In 19% of the cases the English translators used shyness (or bashfulness) to translate *lajja*, and in all these cases, at least one Bengali translator also used the same words. This shows that the scripts of *lajja* and shyness (or bashfulness) have common features for both groups. Some other words appear rarely (once or twice) in either or both groups, and these words may have marginal overlaps with *lajja*. Alternatively, they may also be the translators' purposeful use for their individualistic stylistic pattern. These words include squeamish, flushed, humiliated, disgrace, diffidence, prudence, fear, and inhibition. If we believe that emotion concepts have fuzzy boundaries, it is possible that in translating an emotion, translators occasionally choose one or two words and not repeat them frequently.

Embarrassment was also a common word used to translate *lajja*: The Bengali translators used embarrassment for 15% of the cases and in none of those cases did an English translator use it; the single case when an English translator did use embarrassment, four Bengali translators used shame instead. This shows that translators have struggled to agree on the common features of *lajja* and embarrassment. Since a person can feel both shame and embarrassment at the same time, it is all the more difficult for translators to agree which one *lajja* should be translated as. Even Bengali translators have not always agreed on the word to use in different contexts. This indicates that both shame and embarrassment have some common features as well as major overlaps.
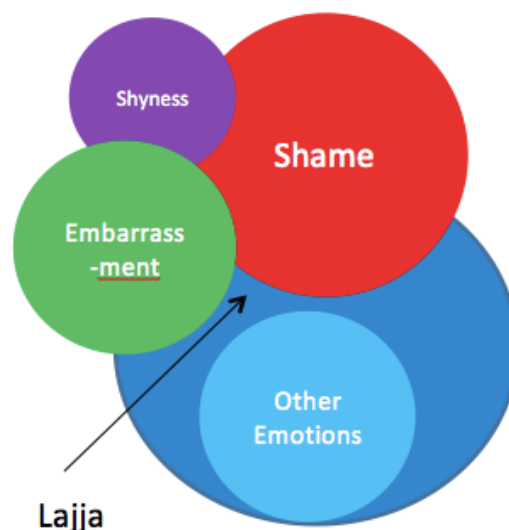
Figure 1. Partial Overlap of Shame, Embarrassment, Shyness and Other Emotions with Lajja

Parish (1991) mentioned that the meaning of *lajja* cannot be totally captured through the words shame, embarrassment and shyness. Lending support to this claim, translators of both groups differ between and within groups when choosing one English word over another in translating *lajja* (although the translators consistently chose the above three words when translating *lajja*). For example, Bengali translators are much more likely than English translators to use embarrassment. This suggests that it is not always clear when *lajja* means embarrassment or shame, indicating there are partial overlaps between *lajja* and its English counterparts (Figure 1).

6. Discussions and Conclusion

In sum, pride and *obhiman* (original meaning) have major overlaps in their concepts. The same is true for *lajja* and the three words shame, embarrassment and shyness taken together. However, there is no single (or combination of few) English word/s that has major overlap with the current meaning of *obhiman* and translators are in minimal agreement over its translation. Because the concepts *obhiman* (current meaning) and to a lesser extent *lajja* do not have an English equivalent, emotions can be culture specific. However, the notion that emotions can be culture specific may not be a commonplace occurring; e.g., of all the Bengali emotion words that exists, perhaps only *obhiman* is unique to Bengali and a few other Indian languages with no close equivalent in English.

Mendoza and Fernández-Dols (2010) mentioned that the Spanish word *verguenza* has different EPA dimensions compared to shame, embarrassment, shyness, guilt and disgrace. Each emotion word has a distinct position (representing dots) on EPA/affect grids. Similarly, if *lajja* is plotted, it should occupy a

262

position separate from shame, embarrassment or shyness. Shame and *verguenza* are paired most frequently in translations of Spanish and English (Becht & Vingerhoets, 2002). However, *verguenza* is closest to embarrassment on affect grids (Mendoza & Fernández-Dols, 2010). Therefore, *verguenza* should always be translated into English as embarrassment. Similarly, if we assume that *lajja* is closest to shame on the affect grids it should always be translated as shame and never as embarrassment, and vice-versa. However, we see that when an exact equivalent does not exist, translators choose more than one word which indicates that the EPA dimensions are not always the most important features in conceptualizing an emotion. Rather, emotions are viewed as concepts with multiple features as described by the scripts hypothesis. In cross-cultural studies of emotions, if we pay attention only to the EPA dimensions, we risk of overlooking other important features of an emotion. EPA dimensions are widely popular because they appear to be pan-cultural. As mentioned above, the ACT position is that affective dynamics determine the affective core of an emotion, but not the naming which must fit the circumstances. Therefore, an alternative way is to view emotions as scripts or concepts with certain features: antecedent causes, beliefs, feelings, physiological changes, desires, overt actions and vocal and facial expressions, and consequences unfolding in a causally connected temporal order (Russell 1991, 1997). According to Russell, none of these features are necessary or sufficient; some may be limited to a few cultures while others are found almost universally. *Obhiman* may be closer in meaning to hurt in a particular context, to upset in another, and close to disappointed in yet another.

This paper has so far established that the concept of *obhiman* (current usage) does not have any translation/cultural equivalent with any word in English. Does that mean English speaking monolinguals don't feel the emotion *obhiman*? Though the question cannot be directly answered with our data (and future studies must provide more details), this paper can shed some light on the debate. A common characteristic of most languages is that some words change their meanings with time. For example, in Japanese, the word *utsukushiki* meant adorable, but as the word changed its meaning to beautiful, the word *kawaii* now represents adorable (Yomota, 2006; Burdelski & Mitsuhashi, 2010). The same phenomenon is also visible for emotion words. Stearns and Stearns (1989) argued that the word temper started to have negative connotations in late eighteenth century and therefore the word temperament came into existence to describe the concept that temper once covered. Similarly, the word tantrum—probably originated from a Welsh corruption of "anthem" (Stearns & Stearns, 1989)—its present meaning came into existence after 1750, because the word anger could not express precisely a particular emotion concept that was strongly felt in Britain due to contemporary cultural changes. Similarly, *obhiman's* original meaning was not sufficient to express an emotion and therefore the word may have started being used for a separate emotion concept of hurt pride or hurt (though not exactly so). If native English speakers had strongly felt the emotion *obhiman* (the current usage), a new word would have emerged to mean *obhiman* or at least an existing word would have been used differently to mean it.

Our analysis lends support to the claim that the concept represented by a particular emotion word in one language may not be totally captured in another. Therefore, at least some emotions can be culture specific, and not universal. In such cases, the translators must make a well thought out decision to represent the source concept in the target language that can be easily comprehended by the readers of the target speech community; thus not always being faithful to the source concept. We argue that skopos theory (e.g., Snell-Hornby, 1988; Vermeer, 1998) can rescue the translator in such a dilemma. Additionally, our project cautions on the reliance of using EPA dimensions too heavily in cross-cultural studies and instead encourages viewing emotions as scripts with complex features. As Russell (1997) famously said, our efforts should reveal, not conceal that complexity.

References

Banerjee, S., & Poulomi, B. (2010). Bengali to English. *The Telegraph India*. Retrieved February 11, 2016, from https://www.telegraphindia.com/1100425/jsp/calcutta/story_12376935.jsp

Becht, M. C., & Vingerhoets, A. J. J. M. (2002). Crying and Mood Change: A Cross-Cultural study. *Cognition & Emotion*, *16*(1), 87-101. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930143000149

Burdelski, M., & Koji, M. (2010). She Thinks You're Kawaii: Socializing Affect, Gender, and Relationships in a Japanese Preschool. *Language in Society*, *39*(01), 65. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404509990650

Datta, S. (2005). Locating and Collating Translated Short Stories of Rabindranath Tagore. *Translation Today*, *2*(1), 196-213.

de Mendoza, A. H., José, M. F.-D., Gerrod, P. W., & Pilar, C. (2009). Emotion Terms, Category Structure, and the Problem of Translation: The Case of Shame and Vergüenza. *Cognition and Emotion*, *24*(4), 661-80. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699930902958255

Ekman, P. (1992). An Argument for Basic Emotions. *Cognition and Emotion*, *6*(3-4), 169-200. https://doi.org/10.1080/02699939208411068

Gordon, S. L. (1992). Social Structural Effects on Emotion. In T. D. Kemper (Ed.), *Research Agendas in the Sociology of Emotions* (pp. 145-79). Albany: State University of New York Press.

Grayshon, M. C. (1975). Some Aspects of Social Grammar Features of One Type of Question in English and Yoruba. *Language in Society*, *4*(1), 17-29. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0047404500004474

Heise, D. R. (1979). *Understanding Events: Affect and the Construction of Social Action*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Heise, D. R. (2007). *Expressive Order: Confirming Sentiments in Social Actions*. New York: Springer.

Hiatt, L. R. (1978). *Australian Aboriginal Concepts*. Canberra: Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies.

Hochschild, A. R. (1983). *The Managed Heart: Communication of Human Feeling*. Berkeley:

University of California Press.

House, J. (2006). Text and Context in Translation. *Journal of Pragmatics*, *38*(3), 338-358. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.pragma.2005.06.021

Hult, G. T. M., Ketchen, D. J., Griffith, D. A., Finnegan, C. A., Gonzalez-Padron, T., Harmancioglu, N., & Cavusgil, S. T. (2008). Data Equivalence in Cross-Cultural International Business Research: Assessment and Guidelines. *Journal of International Business Studies*, *39*(6), 1027-1044. https://doi.org/10.1057/palgrave.jibs.8400396

Izard, C. E. (1977). *Human Emotions*. New York: Plenum Press. https://doi.org/10.1007/978-1-4899-2209-0

Kemper, T. D. (1987). How Many Emotions Are There? Wedding the Social and the Autonomic Components. *American Journal of Sociology*, *93*(2), 263-289. https://doi.org/10.1086/228745

Luker, K. (1984). *Abortion and the Politics of Motherhood*. Berkeley: University of California Press.

Menon, U., & Richard A. S. (1994). Kali's Tongue: Cultural Psychology and the Power of Shame in Orissa, India. In H. R. Markus, & S. Kitayama (Eds.), *Emotions and Culture: Empirical Studies of Mutual Influence* (pp. 241-284). Washington DC: American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10152-007

Nord, C. (1997). *Translating as a Purposeful Activity Functionalist Approaches Explained*. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Osgood, C. E., Suci, G. J., & Tannenbaum, P. H. (1957). *The Measurement of Meaning*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Osgood, C. E., William, H. M., & Murray, S. M. (1975). *Cross-Cultural Universals of Affective Meaning*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

Panayiotou, A. (2006). Translating Guilt: an Endeavor of Shame in the Mediterranean? In A. Pavlenko (Ed.), *Bilingual Minds: Emotional Experience, Expression and Representation*. Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781853598746-009

Parish, S. M. (1991). The Sacred Mind: Newar Cultural Representations of Mental Life and the Production of Moral Consciousness. *Ethos*, *19*(3), 313-351. https://doi.org/10.1525/eth.1991.19.3.02a00030

Pavlenko, A. (2002). Bilingualism and Emotions. *Multilingu*, *21*(1), 45-78. https://doi.org/10.1515/mult.2002.004

Russell, J. A. (1997). The Circumplex in Relation to Emotions. In R. Plutchik, & H. R. Conte (Eds.), *Circumplex Models of Personality and Emotions* (pp. 205-221). Washington, DC: American Psychological Association. https://doi.org/10.1037/10261-009

Pym, A. (2007). Natural and Directional Equivalence in Theories of Translation. *Target*, *19*(2), 271-294.

Reiss, K., & Hans, J. V. (2013). *Towards a General Theory of Translational Action: Skopos Theory*

Explained. Manchester: St. Jerome Publishing.

Russell, J. A. (1991). Culture and the Categorization of Emotions. *Psychological Bulletin*, *110*(3), 426-450. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.110.3.426

Russell, J. A., & Beverly, F. (1994). Fuzzy Concepts in a Fuzzy Hierarchy: Varieties of Anger. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, *67*(2), 186-205. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.67.2.186

Schachter, S., & Jerome, S. (1962). Cognitive, Social, and Physiological Determinants of Emotional State. *Psychological Review*, *69*(5), 379-399. https://doi.org/10.1037/h0046234

Searle, J. R. (1995). *The Construction of Social Reality*. London: The Penguin Press.

Shott, S. (1979). Emotion and Social Life: A Symbolic Interactionist Analysis. *American Journal of Sociology*, *84*(6), 1317-1334. https://doi.org/10.1086/226936

Siemer, M., Iris, M., & James, J. G. (2007). Same Situation—Different Emotions: How Appraisals Shape Our Emotions. *Emotion*, *7*(3), 592-600. https://doi.org/10.1037/1528-3542.7.3.592

Smith-Lovin, L., & David, R. H. (Eds.). (1988). *Analyzing Social Interaction: Advances in Affect Control Theory*. New York: Gordon & Breach.

Snell-Hornby, M. (1988). *Translation Studies: An Integrated Approach*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins. https://doi.org/10.1075/z.38

Stearns, C. Z., & Peter, N. S. (1989). *Anger: The Struggle for Emotional Control in America's history*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Tanaka-Matsumi, J., & Anthony, J. M. (1976). Cross-Cultural Variations in the Phenomenological Experience of Depression. *Journal of Cross-Cultural Psychology*, *7*(4), 379-396. https://doi.org/10.1177/002202217674001

Thoits, P. A. (1989). The Sociology of Emotions. *Annual Review of Sociology*, *15*, 317-342. https://doi.org/10.1146/annurev.so.15.080189.001533

Turner, J. H. (2000). *On the Origins of Human Emotions: A Sociological Inquiry into the Evolution of Human Affect*. Stanford: Stanford University Press.

Vermeer, H. J. (1998). Starting to Unask What Translatology Is About. *Target*, *10*(1), 41-68. https://doi.org/10.1075/target.10.1.03ver

Wierzbicka, A. (1986). Human Emotions: Universal or Culture-Specific? *American Anthropologist*, *88*(3), 584-594. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1986.88.3.02a00030

Yomota, I. (2006). *"Kawaii" ron* (Theory of "kawaii"). Tōkyō: Chikuma Shinsho.

Notes

Note 1. Back translation is the procedure in which a translator interprets a document previously translated into another language back to the original language.

Note 2. For a detailed criticism see Appendix 1.

Note 3. Menon and Shweder (1994) studied *lajja* among native Oriya speakers while Parish (1991) studied *lajja* among native Nepali speakers. It is generally accepted that *lajja* has the same/similar meaning in different languages of the Indian subcontinent (Oriya, Nepali, Bengali, etc.).

Note 4. Interact (computer simulation program) computes an EPA point for an emotion and reports terms close to that point. The terms might be quite discrepant conceptually—example, terrified and impatient. Analysts are told to choose the one that makes the most sense in the situation.

Note 5. All are available online at this website http://tagoreweb.in/Render/

Note 6. Translators earlier may also be more likely to use pride compared to the more recent translators (for both native Bengali and English speakers). Whether that is the case, is beyond the scope and focus of this research.

Note 7. When we looked at the additional fifteen instances translated by native English speakers only, we find three other words—sensitive, indignant and petulance. These words have also been used by Bengali translators in our sample of 59 instances of translations of *obhiman* by Bengali translators.

Note 8. Appendix 2 gives examples when translators agreed or differed in their choice of words.

Note 9. This includes 51 instances where *obhiman* is translated by English translators (in 36 of those cases we also have a translation by a Bengali speaker). In 37 of those instances *obhiman* is not translated as pride.

Note 10. Here we considered grievance and aggrieved as same words.

Appendix 1

There has been no conclusive evidence as to what is the best method to study emotion words cross-culturally. While ethnographic methods have been the most popular, Russell (1991) has raised questions on them to compare emotion words cross-nationally. According to him there is no effective way by which an ethnographer can confidently propose the meaning of an emotion word found in another language. Hiatt (1978) stated that in Gidjingali, the word *gurakadj* includes the meanings of the English words shame and fear. Russell challenged the claim saying that gurakadj can be used for shame and fear does not mean that the word is used in all and only those cases. Moreover, there is often only one ethnographer studying such a topic on a particular language and the claim cannot be backed by findings of other ethnographers, thus leaving no way to check if the he/she was able to rightly understand the concept of the emotion word under study.

Appendix 2

The following is a rare example where both native English and native Bengali translators used same words to translate *obhiman* (the italicized words are translations of *obhiman*) (Note 10).

The strange thing was that Lolita, though noticing this change in Sucharita, made no *grievance* of it as she would have done before. Was it because enthusiasm for the play and her recitations had taken such complete possession of her? (English translator)

The surprising thing was that Lolita, even after noticing the change in Sucharita, did not react by being *aggrieved* as she would have done before. Had her enthusiasm about the play rehearsals and the recitation practice come to occupy her so fully? (Bengali translator)

The following is an example where both the groups of translators used similar but not exact words.

  The storm went on all night, and the weeping too. I went on wandering through pitch-black rooms in fruitless remorse. There was no one anywhere; no one whom I could comfort. Who was it who was so *distressed*? (English translator)

Bengali translator: Neither the storm nor the weeping stopped that night. I spent those hours wandering in the dark from room to room, grieving helplessly. There was no one anywhere; no one to whom I could offer solace. Whose was this dreadful *sorrow*? (Bengali translator)

An example where both groups used different words:

Anandamoyee realized that if Sucharita herself expressed her wish to stay on Harimohini would feel *hurt*, but if she made the request then the anger would be directed against her and not against Sucharita (English translator).

She knew that if Sucharita herself expressed the desire to stay on, Harimohini would be *offended*. Whereas if she were to take the request and Harimohini disapproved, her disapproval would be directed at Anandamoyi-and this did not matter to Anandamoyi (Bengali translator).