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## *A Comparative Analysis of Machine Translation and Human Translation: Efficacy of Poetry Translation from Urdu to English*

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### Abstract

Poetry is essentially the most condensed and pragmatically loaded form of art. The daunting task of effectively translating poetry requires avant-garde translating acumen. With the advent of neural machine translation, the debate on Human vs. Machine Translation and the speculation of Machine Translation replacing humans went rife. The current study aims to gauge the efficacy of Google Translate's (MT) rendering of Iqbal's poem *La Illaha Ilallah* as compared to Bashir Ahmed Dar's Human Translation (HT) of the same poem. Bashir Ahmed Dar published his English translation of the chosen poem in his book 'Rod of Moses'. This study examines the impact of Antoine Berman's deforming tendencies on the Machine and Human English translations of Iqbal's poem *La Illaha Ilallah*. Moreover, the study aims to find out how lexical elements change in the translations of the source language to make it suitable for the target language audience by adopting the deforming tendencies. It is a qualitative type of study employing Berman's Model of Twelve Deforming Tendencies to analyze which strategies were used in both the English translation of Iqbal's Urdu poem. The data of the Source Urdu Text was collected from the Internet Archive, and that of Human Translation was taken from Bashir A. Dar's book *Rod of Moses*. To generate the Machine Translation, Google Translate was used to generate the MT output. The results indicated that the MT of the work suffered from lexical mismatches, destruction of rhythm and destruction of vernacular networks, rendering an erroneous and vague translation, while HT managed to retain the cultural and contextual essence of the source text. The findings also revealed that the Human translation also faced many deforming tendencies but successfully maintained the genre and social stance of the author. Overall, it appears that poetry translation may benefit from a human translator's profound attention to cultural and contextual detail, which is ignored by NMT tools such as Google Translate, leading to inconsistencies in the translation.

### Keywords:

Neural Machine Translation, Google Translate, Berman's Model, Iqbal's Poetry, Deforming Tendencies.

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## **Introduction**

Translation studies are the field that examines how texts and meanings move from one language into another, combining theory, description, and practice in real cross-language communication. It plays a crucial role in circulating knowledge and ideas across cultures so that people from different linguistic backgrounds can understand them more deeply. Mona Baker describes translation as the act of conveying meaning from the source language into the target language, highlighting that it is much more than a simple exchange of words (Zhuang, 2021). In this sense, translation is central to the transfer of ideas across multilingual societies. Translation studies itself cover a wide range of practices, including literary translation, technical and scientific translation, audiovisual translation, machine translation, and interpreting (Wendland, 2008).

Historically, interpretation and translation were central to the spread of theological, scholastic, and scientific texts. Early figures such as Cicero and St. Jerome debated whether translators should follow a word-for-word (literal) approach or a sense-for-sense (free) approach, a discussion that still shapes contemporary theory. Translation studies began to emerge as a distinct academic discipline in the twentieth century, especially after James S. Holmes's influential paper "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies," which helped define its scope. In the twenty-first century, technological developments such as computer-assisted translation tools (CAT) and neural machine translation systems like Google Translate have transformed the field and reshaped how translators work.

Within this broader discipline, the translation of poetry is particularly complex because it demands both technical skill and creative sensitivity. The translator must try to preserve the poet's voice, emotions, and intentions while making the poem accessible in another language. Poetry translation can be seen as the process of reshaping a poem so that it speaks to a new audience, a process that often involves negotiation and interpretation on the part of both translator and reader (Jones, 2011). The aim is to produce a text that resonates with the target audience while maintaining as much as possible of the original poem's meaning and aesthetic effect. In doing so, translators face a number of challenges, including maintaining rhythm and melody, preserving cultural and contextual meanings, conveying psychological depth, and handling metaphorical language (Wise-Concetti Ltd, 2021; translations, 2016). Various strategies—such as dynamic equivalence, adaptation, and interlinear translation—have been proposed to help translators manage these issues while staying close to the emotional and psychological impact of the original (Yuqing; Jones, 2011).

The question of whether poetry is fully translatable has been at the centre of debate for decades. Jakobson (1959) argues that the translation of poetry is especially problematic because much of its effect depends on rhyme and rhythm, features that are difficult to reproduce in another language without loss. Bassnett (1980) emphasises that poetry is deeply rooted in cultural contexts, which can make it hard to carry over certain images and references. Venuti (2018) introduces the concepts of "foreignization" and "domestication," suggesting that translators must decide whether to keep a poem's foreign elements visible or adapt them to the target culture. Catford (1965) draws attention to language-specific features and proposes the idea of "translation shifts" to describe structural changes that occur when moving between languages. Newmark (2003) calls for a more balanced approach that tries to preserve both the emotional force and the poetic qualities of the original. Despite such frameworks, translators still confront practical problems such as structural limitations in the target language and cultural obstacles when a poem is tied to a specific tradition or social context. Nida's (2003) distinction between formal equivalence (adhering closely to the source text) and dynamic equivalence (focusing on the effect on the target audience) has also informed how translators navigate these choices.

In the digital era, literary translation remains an intricate practice that relies heavily on human abilities such as contextual awareness, linguistic competence, and creativity. Technological advances and new publishing platforms have made it easier to distribute texts globally, but they have not removed the need for human judgement in translation. As literary works circulate to a worldwide readership, the demand for translation has increased dramatically. Translators often find themselves negotiating whether to modernise, adapt, or “upgrade” a text or to preserve its original form, decisions that are influenced by ethical, sociocultural, and political considerations.

Machine translation has introduced further change into this landscape. In the mid-twentieth century, Warren Weaver suggested the use of computers for translation, leading to early systems that relied mainly on rules and lexicons and struggled with idioms and poetic devices. Later, statistical machine translation (SMT) models were developed to analyse large bilingual corpora and identify patterns, which improved performance but still posed difficulties for longer or more nuanced texts. The most significant shift came with neural machine translation (NMT), which uses deep learning models—such as Google’s Transformer architecture—to produce faster and more context-aware translations. NMT is now widely used in online platforms, international business, and customer service because it can handle large volumes of text quickly. However, many professionals argue that machine translation is best understood as a support for human translators rather than a replacement. While machines are effective at processing data and producing draft translations, the creative and interpretive work at the heart of translation, especially in poetry and literature, continues to depend on human expertise.

### **Literature Review**

The translation of literary works, especially poetry, has long been debated, with some translators claiming that poetry is inherently untranslatable, while others argue that it can be rendered into other languages if its aesthetic and cultural dimensions are carefully handled. The concept of “translatability” laid a foundation for translating poetry into different languages while attempting to maintain style and context across cultures (A.A. Almasaeid, 2013). Many translators find stylistic translation particularly challenging because they must preserve the melody and flow of the poem when transferring it into another language, and thus pay special attention to rhyme, rhythm, and the artistic and emotional influence of the poem (Hariyanto; Newmark).

A recurring concern in the literature is the difficulty of translating poetic devices and figurative language without losing expressive depth. Ladani (2008) notes that the translation of poetic style and expression often creates dilemmas when selecting appropriate words that can retain the same poetic effect. Fasiullah (2019) illustrates this through her attempt to translate a Persian poem into English, where she struggled to transfer poetic devices because each language has its own way of expressing meaning. Riaz (2021) similarly reports the hurdles faced when translating poems by Muhammad Iqbal and Faiz Ahmed Faiz from Urdu into English, emphasizing the challenge of preserving the poet’s concept, imagination, and emphasis and pointing out that poetic beauty and depth are frequently diminished in the process.

With the growing use of digital tools, machine translation—particularly Google Translate—has also been examined in the context of poetry. Amilia (2020) identifies serious shortcomings in Google Translate’s handling of poems, observing frequent errors in idiomatic expressions and grammatical structures and noting that the tool struggles to cope with complex poetic syntax. Quigley argues that while Google Translate can provide a basic understanding of a poem, it has difficulty analyzing poetic devices and therefore fails to capture deeper nuances. In a similar vein, Sawant (2023) concludes that Google Translate cannot adequately

render Marathi literature, as it falls short in conveying detailed poetic expressions and fails to encompass all aspects of poems.

Many researchers, therefore, maintain that human translators are still preferable for poetry translation, especially where depth of meaning and cultural resonance are concerned. Hasibuan (2020) stresses that machine translation may assist human translators but lacks the contextual and interpretive awareness needed to grasp hidden meanings and select words that reflect the poet's intended message. Mirzayev (2024) adds that translators do more than convert words; they also provide contextual background and bridge cultural gaps between source and target audiences. Farahani (2020), in a comparative study of human and machine translations of Persian poems into English, finds that machine output tends to be simple and overview-like, whereas human translations offer more precise renderings enriched with cultural and contextual detail.

Recent work has expanded these debates in light of new AI systems and more complex poetic corpora. Dewan (2025) investigates whether artificial intelligence can capture the "poetic essence" of texts or merely produce linguistically accurate paraphrases, comparing AI-generated translations using tools such as Google Translate and DeepL with human translations of poems from several languages. The study shows that AI performs well in terms of literal meaning and grammatical accuracy but continues to struggle with metaphor, rhythm, and culturally embedded symbols, and thus works best when its output is post-edited by human translators in hybrid AI-human workflows. Eljazouli (2026) explores another dimension by examining the translation of poems closely connected to visual artworks in French-English ekphrastic translation, demonstrating that translators must negotiate not only verbal rhythm and imagery but also multimodal references linking text and image. This multimodal perspective reinforces the idea that poetry translation is a complex aesthetic and cultural negotiation in which even skilled translators risk losing meaning when visual and cultural elements are deeply rooted in the source context.

### **Research Gap**

Numerous studies held in the past have explored Google Translate's shortcomings, but there is still room for analyzing East Asian poetic and literary texts, especially Urdu poetry. This vacuum compels a detailed and comprehensive analysis of Google Translate's potential to translate an intricate poem like Allama Iqbal's "*La Illaha Ilallah*" and a comparative study between human translators' versions.

### **Research Objectives**

1. To find out which deforming tendencies have been observed in both the English translations (Bashir Ahmed Dar's Human Translation and Machine Translation of Google Translate) of Iqbal's poem *La Illaha Ilallah*.
2. To examine the impact caused by the negative analytics of Berman's deforming tendencies on the quality of both the English translations (HT by Bashair A. Dar and MT from Google Translate) of Iqbal's poem *La Illaha Ilallah*.

### **5. Research Questions**

1. What deforming tendencies have been detected in the English translations (MT and HT) of Iqbal's poem *La Illaha Ilallah*?
2. How do the observed deforming tendencies impact on the quality of both the English translations (MT and HT) of Iqbal's poem *La Illaha Ilallah*?

### **Purpose of the study**

Google Translate is an important tool due to its significant characteristics it offers a user-friendly interface for translation services, and easily approachable free-of-cost facilities to anybody around the globe without any language obstacles. Unlike its competitors, the most prominent feature that sets it apart is that it caters for Urdu translation as well, making it the choice tool for users looking for translations to and from the Urdu language.

Iqbal's poetry is well-known for evoking the sentiments of Muslims of the subcontinent to unite them and raise their voice against the authorities. The major and most important goal was to create a sense of awareness and understanding among the Muslims of the subcontinent to stand up and become united against the dystopian regime. The aim was to gather and unite the Muslims under the same belief. The themes are still relatable in the modern era as Muslims need to be united and raise their voice against oppression.

This selected poem, "*La Ilaha Illallah*" by Allama Iqbal is important because it incorporates the sense of unity among Muslims around the world. It strongly joins the Muslims to their common interests, traditions, hopes, and identity and firmly emphasizes the significance of becoming a unified nation to save the integrity and values of the Muslim Ummah which were inherited by their ancestors. Irrespective of colour, caste, or geographic barriers, they had to come along throughout the world.

### **Significance**

Literary texts are enriched with emotional and cultural contexts. The comprehension and translation of these contexts need imagination and visualisation so that they can be interpreted accurately. But machine translation fails to understand these delicacies such as it can easily translate and convert complex sentences and words to simpler ones, but is unable to comprehend poetic devices like similes, metaphors and alliterations.

Google Translate is a very powerful assistant as it provides easy, precise and accurate information without any charges. It can also comprehend the text in any desired language without taking much time.

More work and effort on neural networks can lead to better and more helpful text translation through machines. Improving the neural networks to deal with the idiomatic expressions can help them give a better version of translation to the user. There is a need for better algorithms, exercising them with the quantity and quality of data, and contextual understanding also plays an important role in helping them fill the gap between machine and human translations.

### **Research Methodology and Theoretical Framework**

Renowned translation theorist, Antoine Berman, is popular for his unique method of analyzing translation. In his world-famous book "The Experience of the Foreign" (1984), Berman discussed the challenges that translators come across when they have to minimize the loss of meaning and stylistic essence of other languages while translating efficiently in the target language. He was of the view that the unique essence of the source text should be preserved while converting it into the desired language even though some transformations cannot be ignored in this phenomenon.

Berman introduced a list of twelve forms through which the text can be modified. He further branched these forms into two categories: one which changes the actual meaning of the source text and the other that does not revamp the meaning but extracts the uniqueness of that text. To maintain a balance between these two categories is the actual task of the translator.

### **The 12 Deforming Tendencies in Translation**

Berman's 12 tendencies, which need to be considered as a guideline for translators, are as follows:

- **Rationalization:** Changing the original essence of the source text in such a way that the source text seems more clearer and more understandable.
- **Clarification:** Explaining the source text by adding further details for better understanding. But they can take away the actual depth of that text.
- **Expansion:** Adding unnecessary poetic devices, and melody, which may alter the real style of that text.
- **Ennoblement:** Demolishing the originality of the text by adding unwanted or exaggerated melodies and rhymes.

- **Qualitative Impoverishment:** Decreasing the uniqueness of the text while extracting the particular structure and words from it.
- **Quantitative Impoverishment:** Weakening the quality and diversity of verbal expression from the source text.
- **Destruction of Rhythm:** Distorting the melody and flow of the text particularly in poetry and literature.
- **Destruction of Underlying Networks of Signification:** Symbolic expression in the text is disrupted.
- **Destruction of Expressions and Idioms:** Unable to translate and interpret the figurative devices in the original text.
- **Effacement of the Superimposition of Languages:** Diminishing the impact of complexity in the text while exposing the hidden meanings of the text.
- **Domestication:** Translating the source text in such a way that the audience feels overly familiar with it and does not consider it as an external text.
- **Exoticization:** Translating the text in a complex way that the audience is not able to even slightly familiarize themselves with.

These tendencies are chosen for their undeniable precision, flow and cultural relevance while drawing a comparison between human and machine translation. By using these approaches, the scholar can analyze the text more comprehensively and understandably. This study will maintain the original style and spirit and the beauty of poetic expression will also be preserved in human and machine translators. Above mentioned approaches play their role in maintaining a balance between accuracy and cultural relevance. This study explores the balance between human and machine translators.

Keeping this in view, the framework will investigate the positive and negative analytics of both the translation methods in preserving the ethnic and poetic essence of Allama Iqbal's poem, "*La Illaha Ilallah*", while shedding light on difficulties faced in Urdu-English poetry.

#### Data Collection

The data comprising the source text was taken from the Internet Archive website, whereas the text of the human translation was taken from Bashir Ahmed Dar's translation compilation of Allama Muhammad Iqbal's poems 'Rod of Moses'. The Machine translation of the poem was generated by typing the source text in the input section of Google Translate and copying the generated output.

**Table no. 1: List of line-by-line translation of ST to Human Translation and Machine Translation**

Line no.	ST	HT	MT
1.	خودی کا سر نہاں لا الہ الا اللہ خودی ہے تیغ، فساں لا الہ الا اللہ	The secret of self is hid In words "No god but He alone."  The self is a dull-edged sword, "No god but He" the grinding stone	The head of the self is not there, there is no god but Allah  The self is the sword, the destruction is there, there is no god but Allah
2.	یہ دور اپنے براہیم کی تلاش میں ہے صنم کدہ ہے جہاں، لا الہ الا اللہ	An Abraham by the age is sought To break the idols of this Hall:  The avowal of God's Oneness can	This era is in search of its Ibrahim

		Make all these idols headlong fall.	Where is the idol, there is no god but Allah
3.	کیا ہے تو نے متاعِ غرور کا سودا فریبِ سود و زیاں، لا الہ الا اللہ	A bargain you have struck for goods Of life, a step, that smacks conceit,  All save the call "No god but He Is merely fraught with fraud and deceit.	What is it that you have traded for the pleasure of pride  Fraudulent interest and losses, there is no god but Allah
4.	یہ مال و دولت دنیا، یہ رشتہ و پیوند بتان و ہم و گماں، لا الہ الا اللہ	The worldly wealth and riches too, Ties of blood and friends a dream  The idols wrought by doubts untrue, All save God's Oneness empty seem	This wealth and wealth of the world, this relationship and bond  The illusion and doubt, there is no god but Allah
5.	خرد ہوئی ہے زمان و مکاں کی زناری نہ ہے زمان نہ مکاں، لا الہ الا اللہ	The mind has worn the holy thread Of Time and Space like pagans all  Though Time and Space both illusive "No god but He" is true withal.	The belt of time and space has been broken  There is no time or place, there is no god but Allah
6.	یہ نغمہ فصل گل و لالہ کا نہیں پابند بہار ہو کہ خزاں، لا الہ الا اللہ	These melodious songs are not confined To Time when rose and tulip bloom  Whatever the season of year be "No god but He" must ring till doom.	This song is not bound by the season of flowers and tulips  Whether it is spring or autumn, there is no god but Allah
7.	اگرچہ بت ہیں جماعت کی آستینوں میں مجھے ہے حکم اڈاں، لا الہ الا اللہ	Many idols are still concealed In their sleeves by the Faithful Fold,  I am ordained by Mighty God To raise the call and be much bold.	Although idols are in the hands of the congregation  I have the command to call to prayer, there is no god but Allah

Analysis and Discussion

Table no. 2 Comparison of deforming tendencies employed in HT and MT

Line No.	Tendency	HT Analysis	MT Analysis
1	Rationalization	Syntax adjusted for clarity; retains poetic elements but simplifies rhythm.	No deforming tendency was observed. Overly literal translation, leading to a loss of poetic rhythm and metaphorical depth. Simplistic phrasing loses sophistication.
	Ennoblement	Elevated diction is used (e.g., "grinding stone"), maintaining a poetic tone.	
2	Destruction of rhythms	Maintains poetic rhythm; however, slight structural changes alter cadence.	Rhythm is disrupted due to overtly literal phrasing.
	Effacement of exoticism	Cultural references Abraham (Ibrahim) are retained, maintaining authenticity.	Cultural reference is retained but lacks nuance, reducing its impact.
3	Clarification	Adds interpretative elements (e.g., "fraught with fraud and deceit") to clarify the ST.	Lacks clarification; literal approach results in ambiguity.
	Quantitative impoverishment	Omits some symbolic depth of the original text.	Omits key lexical elements, leading to loss of meaning.
4	Destruction of networks	Symbolic connections (e.g., "idols wrought by doubts") are partially reinterpreted but preserved.	Fails to convey the metaphorical significance of "idols."
	Expansion	Adds interpretive phrases (e.g., "empty seem") to enhance readability.	It does not expand but results in oversimplification.
5	Destruction of patternings	Rhythmic and phonetic elements are partially altered but poetic flow remains intact.	Phonetic patterns are entirely lost due to literal translation.

	Rationalization	Adjusts for logical coherence, but some mystical undertones are weakened.	Fails to adjust syntax, resulting in awkward phrasing.
6	Destruction of rhythms	It attempts to preserve poetic rhythm but introduces modern stylistic choices.	It entirely disrupts rhythm with rigid, prosaic syntax.
	Effacement of exoticism	Retains cultural essence (e.g., "season of flowers and tulips").	Reduces cultural richness; lacks evocative imagery.
7	Clarification	Add explanatory elements (e.g., "ordained by Mighty God"), enhancing understanding.	Literal phrasing leads to vagueness and loss of theological significance.
	Ennoblement	Uses elevated and formal tone consistent with the ST.	Simplistic language fails to capture the intended grandeur.

The table demonstrates that the human translation (HT) systematically negotiates between fidelity to Iqbal’s mystical-poetic discourse and the demands of the target language by consciously employing several of Berman’s deforming tendencies as strategic choices rather than mere losses. HT deliberately uses rationalization, ennoblement, clarification, and limited expansion to make the complex theological and philosophical content accessible for the contemporary English reader while still striving to retain the density of imagery and cultural embeddedness of the source text. In doing so, HT often preserves or recreates metaphorical networks, rhythmic effects, and key cultural markers, thus sustaining much of the original’s emotional and aesthetic force.

By contrast, the machine translation (MT) gravitates towards lexical and structural literalism, which results in what Berman would call “negative” deformation: a flattening of rhythm, imagery, and intertextual echoes. MT prioritizes surface-level equivalence at the word and phrase level, but this comes at the expense of Iqbal’s intricate symbolic system and the mystical undertones that are crucial for understanding the poem’s philosophical message. As a result, MT frequently produces outputs that are grammatically comprehensible yet semantically impoverished, theologically vague, and aesthetically inert, thereby misrepresenting both the meaning and the tone of the source text.

#### **Rationalization and ennoblement (Lines 1 and 5)**

In HT, rationalization manifests through syntactic adjustments that enhance clarity without entirely sacrificing poeticity. For instance, the reordering of clauses and the choice of more transparent connectors help organize Iqbal’s often elliptical Sufi imagery into a logically coherent flow for the target audience. This rationalization, however, is accompanied by ennoblement: the translator employs elevated lexis (“grinding stone”, “ordained by Mighty God”) and a formal register that mirror the solemn and exalted style of the original. In combination, these strategies create a text that reads as consciously poetic rather than merely informative, thereby maintaining the dignified and contemplative tone of Iqbal’s verse.

In MT, the absence of effective rationalization is evident in awkward, source-bound structures that sound unnatural in English and obscure the underlying conceptual relations.

Sentences remain syntactically rigid, with minimal adjustment to English norms, so the mystical argument unfolds in a disjointed manner. At the same time, the lexical choices tend toward everyday or neutral vocabulary, which undermines the grandeur and spiritual elevation characteristic of Iqbal's style. Instead of ennoblement, there is a form of "trivialization": the lofty metaphysical themes are rendered in flat, prosaic language that diminishes their rhetorical power.

### **Destruction of rhythms and patternings (Lines 2 and 6)**

Rhythm and sound patterning are central to Iqbal's poetic effect, because the cadence of the verse reinforces the emotional intensity and the meditative quality of the text. HT attempts to approximate this by adopting a quasi-poetic lineation, maintaining parallel structures, and occasionally using internal echoes or alliteration. Although some structural changes inevitably alter the original cadence, the translator's choices show an awareness of rhythm as a meaning-bearing feature; the flow remains recognizably poetic, even if not metrically equivalent. Similarly, phonetic patternings are partially reconstituted through careful selection of stress patterns and sound correspondences, contributing to a cohesive aesthetic experience.

In contrast, MT exemplifies Berman's "destruction of rhythms" in an unmitigated form. Its outputs prioritize word-level fidelity and syntactic mapping over prosodic considerations, resulting in sentences that read like segmented prose rather than verse. Line breaks, if present, are arbitrary or mechanically derived, and there is no attempt to recreate the rise and fall of the original lines. Phonetic and rhythmic patternings are entirely lost, so that one of the main carriers of emotional and spiritual resonance disappears. This rhythmic flattening significantly reduces the affective impact of the translation, making Iqbal's impassioned discourse sound monotonous and detached.

### **Effacement of exoticism and cultural references (Lines 2 and 6)**

Both translations retain key cultural markers such as references to Abraham (Ibrahim) or the "season of flowers and tulips", but they treat these references differently. HT chooses to preserve these elements with minimal domestication, thereby maintaining a sense of otherness and anchoring the poem in its Islamic and Indo-Persian cultural milieu. The translator's decision to keep these terms, while embedding them in a somewhat elevated and explanatory context, allows readers to perceive the cultural specificity of Iqbal's imagery without completely foreignizing the text.

MT, however, handles the same references in a more mechanical manner. Although the proper names and images are not removed, the surrounding language lacks nuance and fails to frame their symbolic or theological significance. As a result, the cultural items are present at a superficial level but stripped of their interpretive depth; they appear as opaque, isolated tokens rather than integrated components of a broader spiritual cosmology. This produces a subtler form of effacement: exoticism in terms of vocabulary remains, but cultural meaning and resonance are largely effaced.

### **Clarification, expansion, and meaning negotiation (Lines 3, 4, and 7)**

HT frequently employs clarification and controlled expansion to make implicit meanings explicit. Phrases such as "fraught with fraud and deceit" or "ordained by Mighty God" do more than add information; they interpret Iqbal's compressed metaphors and theological allusions for readers who may not share the poet's doctrinal background. Similarly, the rephrasing and partial reinterpretation of symbolic chains (e.g., "idols wrought by doubts") reflects an attempt to preserve the network of metaphors while rendering them intelligible in a different linguistic and cultural environment. These strategies inevitably introduce a degree of interpretive subjectivity, but they also reduce ambiguity and help maintain the coherence of the poem's mystical argument.

MT, in contrast, largely avoids clarification and expansion, adhering closely to literal renderings of individual words and expressions. This restraint is not a deliberate attempt to preserve ambiguity; rather, it stems from an inability to recognize when the source text presupposes background knowledge or when metaphors require unpacking. Consequently, key concepts remain vague or misleading, especially where theological or philosophical nuance is involved. The failure to reconstruct metaphorical networks—such as the cluster of images around “idols”, doubt, and spiritual blindness—results in isolated fragments that do not cohere into a meaningful interpretive whole.

#### **Quantitative and qualitative impoverishment (Lines 3 and 4)**

Both translations exhibit some degree of quantitative impoverishment, but the nature and consequences differ. HT occasionally omits or compresses elements of the source text, leading to a reduction in symbolic density. However, these omissions are often compensated by interpretive additions and stylistic enrichment elsewhere, so the overall qualitative impact may be preserved or even enhanced for the target reader. In other words, HT tends to exchange some lexical quantity for greater interpretive and aesthetic clarity.

MT, on the other hand, suffers from both quantitative and qualitative impoverishment. It omits or mistranslates lexical items that carry crucial theological or philosophical weight, and it fails to reconstruct the relationships among the remaining elements. This leads not only to shorter or simpler sentences but also to a substantial loss of meaning. The result is a text that is poor in both content and form: it lacks the original’s conceptual complexity, metaphorical richness, and stylistic distinctiveness, thereby misrepresenting the source text at multiple levels.

#### **Implications for translation practice**

Taken together, the patterns in the table suggest that HT, despite its interpretive liberties and partial deformations, offers a more ethically and aesthetically responsible mediation of Iqbal’s poetry. By strategically employing rationalization, ennoblement, clarification, and limited expansion, the human translator negotiates between fidelity to the source and readability in the target culture, preserving much of the poem’s emotional, cultural, and spiritual charge. MT, by contrast, illustrates the limitations of current machine approaches when faced with highly metaphorical, culturally embedded religious poetry: its literalism results in a translation that is not only vague and misleading at several points, but also largely devoid of the artistic and affective force that defines Iqbal’s work.

#### **Conclusion**

The original Urdu Source Text is filled with rich cultural and religious references that are essential to the political and spiritual message of the poem. Some metaphorical expressions have been simplified or altered by using deforming tendencies in both the Human and Machine translations, resulting in a loss of depth. The detailed comparative analysis of these English translations of Iqbal’s “*Lailaha Ilallah*” using content analysis by applying Berman’s model reveals that the Human translation, even though it applies multiple deforming tendencies, manages to somewhat meticulously conserve the cultural and contextual cues of the source text. Human translators, like Bashir Ahmad Dar, have the contextual knowledge and interpretive expertise to negotiate nuances of language, style, and meaning. The findings reinforce the stance that literary translations, particularly poetry, demand human touch and sensibility.

The Machine Translation generated by Google Translate heavily relies on the word-for-word/ literal translation strategy. Although MT tries to retain the cultural and contextual essence of the source text but becomes less evocative because of the disruption of rhythm, rhyme, omission of key lexical elements and oversimplification. As a result of these exclusions, which also lessen the emotional and ideological impact of the source text, which are key features of Iqbal’s poetry. However, both translations succeed in conserving the genre of the

source text, and the application of Berman's model aids in maintaining the poem's main themes of justice and revolution. Machine translation might be able to serve as a useful tool for non-literary texts or prose, but poetry translation insists on a skilled translator's careful and strategic measures to conserve and effectively transfer linguistic richness and metaphorical meaning across languages - the art which machine translation has yet to accomplish.

The findings of this research will be able to inform and contribute to shedding light on the areas of development of advanced machine translation algorithms, enhance training for human translators, and promote cross-cultural literary exchange. It also highlights the importance of preserving the cultural and philosophical essence of literary works, promoting a global understanding of diverse philosophies and traditions.

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