

## CHALLENGES IN TRANSLATING HINDI FOLKLORE INTO ENGLISH – A CASE STUDY OF PREMCHAND’S EIDGAH



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**Shiv SINGH,**

Lecturer of Indian Studies,  
Center for Indian Studies,  
Faculty of Arts and Humanities,  
University of Lisbon, Portugal.  
[shivsingh@edu.ulisboa.pt](mailto:shivsingh@edu.ulisboa.pt)

**Abstract.** *India is a country where oral literature and folklore is abundant and an ancient practice which started from the era of Sanskrit is still present in modern Hindi literature. Defining the meaning and scope of folklore literature becomes a cumbersome process in translation. Premchand is considered the father of realism in Hindi literature and his contribution to Hindi literature is so immense that he is considered as a time frame in Hindi literature, such as pre-Premchand/post-Premchand.*

**Keywords:** *Translation, Indian Studies, Hindi, Premchand, pragmatics*

**Annotatsiya.** *Hindiston og‘zaki adabiyoti va xalq og‘zaki ijodi ko‘p bo‘lgan mamlakat bo‘lib, sanskrit davridan boshlangan qadimiy amaliyot hozirgi hind adabiyotida hamon mavjud. Tarjimada folklor adabiyotining mazmuni va ko‘lamini aniqlash mashaqqatli jarayonga aylanadi. Premchand hind adabiyotida realizmning otasi hisoblanadi va uning hind adabiyotiga qo‘shgan hissasi shunchalik kattaki, u hind adabiyotida, Premchand/post-Premchand kabi vaqt doirasi sifatida qaraladi.*

**Kalit so‘zlar:** *tarjima, hind tadqiqotlari, hindiy tili, Premchand, pragmatika.*

**Аннотация.** *Индия – страна, где богата устная литература и фольклор, а древняя практика, зародившаяся в эпоху санскрита, до сих пор присутствует в современной литературе на хинди. Определение смысла и объема фольклорной литературы становится трудоемким процессом при переводе. Премчанд считается отцом реализма в литературе, и его вклад в литературу на хинди настолько огромен, что он считается временным отрезком в литературе на хинди, такой как до-Премчанд/пост-Премчанд.*

**Ключевые слова:** *перевод, индийские исследования, хинди, премчанд, прагматика.*

Eidgah is one of the iconic short stories of Premchand which is part of the fiction literature, which was published in 1933. A fiction which is so real that still Indians identify with it. It was translated in English as

‘Festival of Eid’ by Khushwant Singh and the story has some resemblance to ‘Christmas Carol’ of Charles Dickens. The main characters are Hamid (A four-year-old boy) and Amina (his grandmother, a widow). The story shows an experience of the festival of Eid of XIX/XX century.

The summary of ‘Eidgah’ revolves around a very poor boy, who lives with his grandmother. On the festival day of Eid, when other kids were busy with candles and toys and showing him his place of belonging, that little boy buys a pair of tongs so that her grandmother could make *rotis*<sup>1</sup> without getting her fingers burnt. The sensitivity of the story simply touches the heart.

The tradition of Eidgah-type story telling comes from the ancient Indian practice in which, through folklore, the knowledge is transmitted from one generation to another, and this tradition is still present particularly amongst wandering or migrating tribes from Rajasthan to Bihar. E.g., Ramayana and Mahabharat are narrated by many performing artists differently from one zone to another. It also has similarity to non-canonical Indian literatures, such as, Panchatantra, Hitopadesha, Jataka stories (moralistic teachings).

The biggest challenge while translating a folklore is the transmission of the contextual, pragmatic, and culture-specific nuances and knowledge from source language to target language. Some of the difficulties, which were encountered during the translation of ‘Eidgah’ from Hindi to Portuguese, are as follows:

- Variation of Emotions across cultures and languages.
- Variation of syntax across Language families (Hindi – Portuguese, SVO-SOV)
- Regionalism: *saanaa-paanee (chaaraa)*, *pauRá (Bhoossa)*
- Lexical – Saudade (*Dor* / pain in Romanian), gardner (She-gardner)....
- Culture / context specific: E.g. An[t]chal (apron), *dekhná, laukná?*
- Tradition and beliefs (transfer of culture specific knowledge and professions): *telee, bhshti, ..*
- Gastronomy (*sevaiyan – vermicelli*), *rewaDiyáN रेवड़ियाँ*,
- Clothes: *achkan, sari, ...*

<sup>1</sup> homemade Indian bread

• Symbols / images / expressions: ullú (owl) (wisdom and dumbness):  
माली को कैसे उल्लू बनाया है! कहाँ पचास, कहाँ एक सौ। इक्के-ताँगे

• Sayings, e.g. अब पछताए होत का जब चिड़िया चुग गई  
खेत Ab pachhtaaye hot kaa jab chiDiyaa chug gayee  
khet. Now regretting happens what when bird peckwent field. EN -  
There is no point crying over spilt milk.

PT - Não vale a pena **chorar** pelo **leite derramado**.

In such cases, the translator must pay attention not only to syntactic, but also on semantic, pragmatic and cultural nuances that can demand different adaptations with respect to process and place of different languages and cultures.

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