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Cultural Translation in Bengali Cuisine: A Study of Pumpkin Flower Fritters and Culinary Semiotics

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Abstract:

Food transcends its role as a survival substance to become its language, expressing social structures and cultural systems. It serves not only as a tool for defining cultural identity but also as the primary means of encountering and understanding different cultures, especially in contemporary inclusive societies. New communication technologies and advancements have promoted international integration and interconnectedness in the twenty-first century, fostering increased exchange and mutual dependency between cultures. Food, fundamental to existence and intricately linked to cultural identity, is a potent medium for communication, conveying messages and information with every transaction and consumption. Culinary practices are not only blending into a multicultural blend but are also converging in a transcultural culinary arena. Both translation and food involve intricate processes that preserve and transmit essential elements of identity and meaning across different contexts. According to Peeter Torop, translation significantly shapes and evolves cultures. His assertion underscores the power and influence of translation in cultural studies.

He also said that mutual understanding entails both presenting oneself to others and comprehending others' perspectives. As culinary practices vary widely across cultures, translation strategies and approaches vary depending on linguistic nuances and cultural sensitivities. Both are fundamental aspects of human interaction and cultural exchange. The accessibility of diverse culinary experiences today and the significance of food in shaping cultural identity indicate the sensitivity involved in translating dishes. These often pose challenges in translation, as food items may lack direct equivalents in the target language, thereby highlighting the limits of translatability. Therefore, when translating food-related cultural elements, translators must navigate complex decisions involving linguistic fidelity and reflect broader societal attitudes towards the other. In this paper, an attempt will be made to delve into the intricacies of translating culinary codes in Bengali cultural contexts by examining Pumpkin Flower Fritters, translated by Shelia Lahiri Choudhary, initially written in Bengali as Rakamari Amish Ranna and Rakamari Niramish Ranna by Renuka Debi Chaudhurani. The research method will involve examining how foods, culinary habits, practices, and their associated meanings transform when transferred from one food sphere to another. This study will seek to identify and analyse the primary factors influencing these processes by exploring the role of semiotics in enhancing our understanding of such dynamics.

Keywords: Cultural Translation, Food, Identity, Cultural Sensitivity, Translatability.

Cooking has been a fundamental and frequent human activity ever since the discovery of fire - this primitive interest in cooking dates back to ancient times. The oldest known cookbook, attributed to M. Gavius Apicius and titled *De Re Coquinaria* proves this historical interest. The influence of this book spread across Europe, from Scandinavia to Great Britain. Initially, the upper classes—who could afford both the ingredients and the privilege of reading—bought cookbooks. They did not include recipes for simpler, everyday dishes of the

lower classes. However, cookbooks serve as valuable historical documents, reflecting the culture of their time and place. They offer insights into local ingredients, food preparation methods, and the tools and equipment used for a recipe. Besides the technicalities, the author's comments on a recipe can reveal details about the religious beliefs, gender roles, ethnic backgrounds, and political contexts of the time.

Cookbooks exemplify a blend of different text functions. According to Katharina Reiss, texts can serve three primary functions: Informative (conveying factual content), Expressive (presenting content in an artistically structured manner), and Operative (aiming to persuade). Text varieties are classified based on socio-cultural communication patterns specific to language communities (Reiss 124). Cookbooks primarily fulfil an informative function by providing detailed instructions on preparing dishes. They also have an instructional aspect, guiding readers through the cooking process. Additionally, cookbooks often serve a commercial purpose by persuading readers to purchase particular foods, kitchen appliances, or tools. Reiss outlines specific translation methods tailored to different text types, emphasising the importance of matching the translation approach to the nature of the text. For informative texts, the Translator should focus on accurately conveying the content's meaning, ensuring the information is clearly and unambiguously transferred from the Source Language (SL) to the Target Language (TL). This may require explicating or simplifying implicit content as necessary (Reiss 128). For expressive texts, which aim to convey aesthetic form and artistic intent, the translation should seek to preserve the original style and tone by adopting "translating by identification," method, (Reiss 124-128) where the Translator closely aligns with the source text's artistic nuances. The instructive text type, which is often related to the operative text type, is distinct in its goal of guiding the reader to perform specific actions, such as following a recipe. In such cases, the Translator's primary focus should be on accurately and effectively conveying the instructions from the SL to the TL,

which is crucial in cookery texts. The instructive function must take precedence to ensure that the reader can successfully execute the intended actions, resulting in a properly prepared dish (Kerseboom 23). Failure to adequately translate the expressive or operative elements in these texts may lead to a loss of important nuances such as the taste or the texture of the dishes, for the target audience.

Carrie Helms Tippen presents an alternative view, describing cookbooks as “books made for readings” (3). She highlights how these cookbooks engage readers with the author's personality and style, emphasizing the book's organization, tone, language, and narrative. Leonardi points out that a recipe is “a point of trust and inside knowledge between narrator and reader” (346). This perspective treats readers as imaginative participants who engage with the book beyond just using its recipes (Harde Wesselius 3). Recipes are among the few text types with such standardized typography, layout, and overall structure that they can be easily recognized, even by someone with no linguistic expertise (Nordman 558). This makes the translations of recipes a prime example of what Nord describes as instrumental translation, where the translated text is intended to serve the same functions as the original (Nord 50).

In this age of Global Culture, with the constant growth of food industry, each year, it has become a medium to bring out a new cultural identity of a race and society to other people from different backgrounds. Hence, translated cookbooks can help introduce new cultural aspects to the targeted readers. The Encyclopaedia of Globalization asserts that cultural globalization began with the quest for unique foods, leading to a situation where differences are not erased but freed from geographic limitations. Today, frequent intercultural interactions, migration, and media have further bridged cultural divides, allowing recipes to travel in all directions and increasing the need for translating cookbooks and menus. As food production has advanced globally, the demand for translating food labels has risen,

highlighting the importance of translation in this field. This increased exchange of culinary experiences has made the diverse cuisines of the world more accessible and exposed audiences to a variety of cultural practices and thereby, bridging cultural gaps. As food is a symbol of cultural identity and political significance, translating cookbooks acts as a vital means of introducing new cooking styles and ingredients from different regions.

Cookbooks by colonial-era authors like Bipradas Mukhopadhyay, Prajnasundari Devi, and Renuka Devi Chaudhurani played a crucial role in integrating global culinary concepts with local practices, giving voice to the emerging Bengali middle class's desire for global taste and self-representation. The late 19th-century print culture in Bengal greatly aided the spread of European culinary ideas, new world vegetables, and recipes. Bengali periodicals were instrumental in shaping the Bengali identity, promoting the modernization of Bengali cuisine through these publications. Mukhopadhyay and Devi introduced global culinary elements into Bengali cookbooks, crafting a 'Modern cuisine' that merged traditional Bengali flavours with new ingredients like potatoes and tomatoes, which had become staples due to colonial encounters. These cookbook authors served as intermediaries between global influences and local traditions. Having a deep understanding of Hindu culinary philosophy and Bengali tastes, they creatively adapted traditional Indian recipes with foreign ingredients. For example, they incorporated culinary techniques of different regions into Bengali dishes, creating innovative recipes like 'Armmani Pudding' (Armenian Pudding) and 'Ingraji Arhar Dal' (English Yellow Split Pigeon Peas) by Devi, and 'Ihudi Machh Bhaja' (Jewish Fish Fry) and 'Aloor French Ball' (French Potato Balls) by Mukhopadhyay. The process of integrating new vegetables often involved comparing them with existing local ingredients. For instance, while earlier Bengali cookbooks like Pakrajeswar did not include European recipes, later works by Renuka Devi Chaudhurani introduced and adapted European and international dishes into Bengali cuisine.

Renuka Devi Chaudhurani's works *Rokomari Niramish Ranna* and *Rokomari Aamish Ranna* stood out for their deep engagement with culinary varieties of the time and innovative approach. Her recipes, such as 'Beguner Madraji Dom', 'Mughlai Aalur Dom' highlighted her commitment to blending Bengali heritage with multicultural culinary practices of modern Bengal, showcasing her role in the evolution of Bengali cuisine during this period. The selected cookbook *Pumpkin Flower Fritters* being a translation of these two Bengali cookbooks *Rkomari Niramish Ranna* and *Rokomari Aamish Ranna* reflects a shift in cultural politics and culinary philosophy of the evolution of Bengali Modern cuisine. This transformation involved reimagining traditional Bengali cooking through experimentation and innovation, facilitated by restructuring the Bengali kitchen.

Findings

A well-crafted recipe guides the user efficiently, and a proficient recipe translator must recognize the textual elements that can either enhance or hinder this effectiveness. The translator needs to anticipate how the recipe will be interpreted by the Target Audience, producing a translation that is both accessible and functional. The broader cultural exchange through translation of cookbooks and food memoirs of various geographical regions and in various regional languages has enriched language by introducing new terms for ingredients, dishes, and cooking techniques. As Javier Franco Aixelá puts it, "in a language everything is culturally produced, beginning with the language itself" (57). However, gaps in translation remain where new concepts lack culturally established equivalents. Culinary differences are often represented through language, as a result translating cookbooks requires a deep understanding of both the Source and Target cultures' culinary traditions, encompassing vocabulary, and specialized culinary knowledge (Colina 65). Effective translations must be not only accurate and technically sound but also functional for the target reader. These factors underscore the growing need for skilled translators in the culinary field. This paper discusses

the challenges faced whilst translating Renuka Devi Chaudhurani's work *Rokomari Niramish Ranna* into English for a global readership. as stated by the translator Sheila Lahiri Chaudhury in the introduction that cooking at that time was of purely based on intuition, and being a daughter in-law, she has first handedly seen how Chaudhurani used to measure things with just the developed sense, by being in the kitchen. In her translator's note of the book *Pumpkin Flower Fritters: And other Classic Recipes from a Bengali Kitchen* Sheila Lahiri Choudhury outlines the difficulties she encountered as a translator, while translating the books for a modern readership. Besides the challenge of translating dish names, a major issue that emerges is translating the ingredients listed in the two original cookbooks. Cultural differences between the Source and Target audiences complicate the translator's task, particularly in selecting region-specific ingredients that may be unfamiliar to the Target Readers. To address this issue, the translator often resorts to using Functional Equivalents and Communicative Equivalents (Newmark 2001) as substitutes for those in the Source Text. This approach is applied to food items, traditional dish names, and cooking utensils or appliances that may not be recognizable or available to the Target audience. For example, ingredients like শিউলি গাছের পাতা (shiuli gacher pata) and গন্ধরাজ লেবু (Gandharaj lebu) are translated using functional equivalents to make the recipes more accessible to the Target readership while an attempt is made to maintain the spirit of the original dish. This task requires a deep understanding and experience, particularly with culture-specific items—phenomena unique to one culture or better known in the culture they originate from (Hejwowski 128). In the words of David Crystal, 'translators [must] have a thorough understanding of the field of knowledge covered by the source text, and of any social, cultural, or emotional connotations that need to be specified in the target language if the intended effect is to be conveyed' (344). Various evidence found throughout the book where the translator struggles while translating culture specific cooking processes, ingredients and

nuanced techniques exclusive of the Bengali culture. In the translator's note Choudhury discussed the challenges she faced in the following areas:

Intuitive Measurements

The original recipes often relied on intuitive measurements rather than precise ones, making it difficult for the translator to convey the exact quantities needed for the Target Readers. In order to translate the measurements of various ingredients of Source Text Recognised Translation (Newmark 89) has been used which typically uses the official or the generally accepted translation of any institutional term, but as the translator expressed in the Translator's note that it does not capture the spirit of Choudhurani's writing. Such examples are:

“আধভাঙ্গা সর্ষে উঁচু উঁচু বড় এক চামচ” (Choudhurani 130)

Translation: ½ tsp mustard seeds coarsely crushed, Transliteration: “Adha bhanga sarse unchu unchu boro ek chamoch”

Observation: The original measurement indicates a rough estimate (a large amount of), showing an intuitive approach rather than precise quantity.

“আদা বাটা বেশ খানিকটা” (Choudhurani 130)

Translation: 2 tbsp ginger paste, Transliteration: “Ada bata besh khanikta”

Observation: The term “besh khanikta” suggests a generous amount based on personal judgment, reflecting flexibility rather than exact measurement. The meaning of generous can differ for different people depending on their class and financial ability.

“কালো জিরে সমান এক চা চামচ” (Choudhurani 154)

Translation: 1 tsp nigella seeds, Transliteration: “Kalo jire saman ek cha chamoch”

Observation: The specific measurement of “1 tsp” contrasts with the original’s subjective “saman,” showing a shift from intuitive to exact measurement.

The translator’s note indicates that precise translations fail to capture Choudhurani’s nuanced approach of measuring ingredients. The measurement technique used by Choudhurani is intuitive in nature demonstrating the “chef’s andaaj” she believed on. The preciseness of the instructions in the quantity of ingredient somehow made the translation very accurate and lost the sense of tacit understanding among the target readers as it uses Functional Equivalent (Harvey 2).

Scale and Cultural Specificity

The original recipes of Renuka Devi Chaudhurani were designed for large, joint families and included local and regional elements exclusive to Bengali kitchens. This challenges the translator in adapting the recipes for a modern audience, where smaller families and unfamiliarity with specific ingredients and techniques may make the original scale and cultural context less relevant. The original traditional recipes of a particular culture often included elaborate cooking procedures that may seem outdated or unnecessary for contemporary readership, requiring the translator to balance authenticity with practicality. This procedure is evident in the present book. For an instance one such recipe “আলুর সুতো ভাজা” (Aalur Suto Bhaja) in the original book includes specific details and traditional techniques, and the translated version is more focused on efficiency and practicality. The disparity in the Source Text and the Target Text is evident in ingredient specificity, ingredient details and cooking techniques – the original mentions a specific variety of potato called “নৈনিতাল আলু” (Nainital Aalu) whereas the translation focuses more on the exact peeling and cutting process, allowing for any variety of potato. As the readership may not be very familiar with the Source Culture, providing proper instruction of cutting the ingredient

increases the functionality of the text. Original recipe Includes “dalda” as the source of fat (a type of clarified butter or hydrogenated vegetable oil) translation omits “dalda” substituting it with a more commonly used ingredient as “dalda” has been considered as unhealthy source of fat in modern time. Emphasize on detailed cutting techniques as mentioned in the Source Text “...আলুর দুই মাথা কেটে বাদ দাও, এখন আলুর মাঝের অংশ পাতলা করে ফিতের মতন ঘুরিয়ে ঘুরিয়ে সাবধানে কেটে নাও....” (...Alur dui maatha kete baad dao, ekhon alur maajher angsho patla kore fiter moto ghuriye ghuriye sabdhane kete nao...) and slow cooking methods, reflecting traditional practices but the Target Text simplifies the cutting technique and opts for faster cooking methods, prioritizing saving time over tradition, the elaborate process just simplified as “Julienne into thin strips”, making the translation more result oriented than process oriented.

The English version of the recipe of “Chechki” does not emphasize minimizing waste, which is why there is no mention of using vegetable peels in “chechki”, as it may be seen as irrelevant to modern readers who have access to refrigerators and other conveniences. Additionally, the Bengali version highlights the slow cooking process of “chechki”, which can enhance its flavour, but this detail is omitted in the English version.

The translation of “গন্ধরাজ লেবুর টুকরো দুই তিনটি” (Gandharaj lebur tukro dui tinti) (Choudhurani 7) as “...a few freshly sliced lime pieces and lime leaves...” (Choudhury 15) generalizes the ingredient “lime leaves”, whereas the Bengali source text specifies গন্ধরাজ লেবু (Gandharaj lemon), a distinct variety of lime known for its fragrant. This reference to Gandharaj lime is not merely an ingredient but a symbol of cultural specificity. The omission of the specific lime variety in the English translation represents a loss of cultural nuance. For an international audience unfamiliar with this variety, the translation might suffice; however, for a Bengali audience, this change erases a cultural reference

integral to the cooking process. Similarly, “উনুনে ডেঁচকি বসিয়ে অর্ধেক ঘি দাও” (Unune denchki bosiye ardhek ghee dao) (Choudhurani 130) is translated as “...boil in a large pan,” “Pour the rest of the ghee into the kadai and stir-fry the garam masala...” (Choudhury 18). The English translation uses “kadai” —common cooking vessels in many South Asian kitchens—while the source text refers to ডেঁচকি, a particular Bengali cooking vessel. The translator’s choice to use “kadai” reflects Communicative Translation strategy (Newmark 2001), attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that received on the readers of the source language (Cai 176). aimed at making the dish accessible to readers who may be unfamiliar with Bengali cooking equipment. This adaptation sacrifices cultural specificity to achieve greater understanding for a broader, possibly non-Bengali audience. While translating “উচ্ছে, বেগুন, বড়ি বা ডালের চাপড়া দিয়ে তিতো ঘন্ট” (Uchhe, Begun, Badi ba Daler chapra diye tito ghanto) (Choudhurani 45) into “Sukto With Lentil Cake” (Choudhury 88), “Mixed Vegetable with Lentil Cakes” (Choudhury 103), the translator reduces the dish to a mere description of its components whereas the Bengali name of the dish indicates the kind of taste the recipe could have. The English translation for “শিউলি গাছের পাতা ভাজা” (Shiuli gacher pata bhaja) (Choudhurani 42) refers to “Jasmine Leaf Fritters”, a general term that applies to fritters made with any jasmine leaves. However, the Bengali term “শিউলি গাছের পাতা” (Shiuli Gacher Pata) refers specifically to the leaves of the *Nyctanthes arbor-tristis* plant, which belongs to the Jasmine family and has cultural significance in Bengali rituals, particularly during religious observances. The English translation, while accurate in a literal sense, lacks the semantic precision that the Bengali source text provides. The term Shiuli carries cultural connotations that are important to Bengali readers. By using the general term “Jasmine Leaf” the translation becomes functionally appropriate for an international audience, but it loses the deeper significance of

the specific variety of jasmine that is associated with Bengali festival of Durga Puja hence carry cultural symbolism. As Catford argues that translation equivalence is determined by communicative features such as function, relevance, situation, and culture, rather than formal linguistic criteria. When these elements diverge, a translation shift occurs, which Catford describes as “departures from formal correspondence in the process of going from the SL to the TL” (Munday, 2001). In balancing authenticity with practicality, the translated version appears to streamline the recipes for today's busy cooks, potentially sacrificing some of the traditional flavours or textures that come from the original method.

Narrative Technique

The relationship between a recipe and the narrative in which it is embedded is crucial in shaping the reader's connection to a cookbook. According to Leonardi, a recipe serves as an embedded narrative, whether it appears in a novel, memoir, or cookbook. It requires a recommendation, context, purpose, and reason for being, much like a story. While recipes can vary in how they are framed, their ultimate role is to create a bond of trust and insider knowledge between the narrator and the reader (Harde Wesselius 3). Nora Ephron cooked her way through the holy trinity of cookbooks: Julia Child's *Mastering the Art of French Cooking*, Michael Field's *Cooking School*, and Craig Claiborne's *New York Times Cook Book*. In a *New Yorker* column from 2006, titled “Serial Monogamy: My Cookbook Crushes,” Ephron describes how she related to the authors of these books: “as I cooked, I had imaginary conversation with them both [Claiborne fell out of favor early on]. Julia was nicer and more forgiving ... Field was sterner and more meticulous; he was almost fascistic. He was full of prejudice about things like the garlic press (he believed that using one made the garlic bitter), and I threw mine away for fear that he would suddenly materialize in my kitchen and disapprove.” (73) Ephron's attachment to the narrative voice in cookbooks is as strong as her connection to the dishes themselves. Her affection for Lawson's roast-beef

dinner, a meal she likely knows by heart due to its regular appearance in her mother's cooking, highlights the deep emotional connection readers can develop with both cookbooks and their authors. These narratives are enjoyed like engaging fiction or life-writing, eliciting emotional and linguistic responses while also guiding the reader to successful cooking. If we look at some instruction that are translated briefly, we will understand the dynamics of relationship between the reader and the author.

The Bengali recipe “চালতা দিয়ে অড়হর ডাল” (Chalta diye Arhar Dal) ends with the author's personal touch, “অড়হর ডালে চালতা খুব ভালো লাগে” (Arhar dale chalta khub bhalo lage), whereas the English translation lacks this personal opinion, by just closing the recipe at the end of the instructions. The Bengali recipe “কাঁচা মানকচু বাটা” (Kacha Mankochu Bata) includes an optative style, with lines like “মানবাটা সর্ষের সঙ্গে মিশে সামান্য ঝাল ও অল্প মিষ্টি স্বাদের হয়। গলা ধরে না” (Manbata sorsher songe mishe samanjo jhal o alpo misti swader hoy. Gola dhore na), which is not present in the English translation, missing out on the discussion of taste with the readers in a dialogic tone. The recipe for “নতুন চাল ও নলেন গুড়ের পায়েস” (Notun Chal o Nolen Gurer Payesh) includes culturally specific instructions crucial for the success of the dish, such as “দুধ স্বর ভাঙ্গা হবে না” (Dudh swor bhanga hobe na) and “অনেক সময় দুধ গুড়ি গুড়ি হয়ে যায়” (Onek somoy dudh guri guri hoye jay), which the English translation fails to fully capture.

In the very beginning under the discussion of Bhaat Renuka Devi suggested not to waste Bhaat as “ভাত বেশ চটকে চপের মত করে ভেজে চায়ের সঙ্গে দিলে ভালো লাগে। এইভাবে অপচয় যাতে না হয় সেই দিকে নজর রেখে, রুচির মত নানা পথ তৈরি করে পরিবেশন করলে রাঁধুনিগৃহিণী সকলেরই মন খুশি হয়।” (3) [Bhaat besh chotke choper moto kore bheje chaayer shonge dile bhalo lage. Ei bhabe opochoy jate na hoy shei dike nojor

rekhe, ruchi'r moto nana poth toiri kore poribeshon korle radhunigrihini shokoleri mon khushi hoy.] This passage suggests a way to repurpose leftover rice by mashing it, frying it like a chop (a fried snack), and serving it with tea, making sure that nothing goes to waste and preparing various dishes to suit different tastes, which will make the cook and everyone else happy. The translation does not discuss such dishes with leftover rice indicating the shift in Target Readership in a modern, busy society, but somehow lost the cultural essence and the belief of Bengali community, where Bhaat is similar to goddess Lakshmi, who ensures the flow of wealth and money to a family and wasting rice grains are equivalent to insulting the goddess. The Communicative Equivqlent is absent here leading to the loss of essence. The relationship between a recipe and its narrative context is crucial in establishing a bond of trust and insider knowledge between the narrator and the reader. Recipes, like narratives, require context, purpose, and reason for being, which is essential for engaging readers.

Historical and Cultural Relevance

The cookbook is set in a time when India was undergoing significant political changes during the colonial era. The author, a woman from the pre-colonial period, was deeply influenced by events such as the Bengal famine, the Emergency period, and the partition, all of which shaped her consciousness. This is reflected in the recipes, where she often encourages using leftovers, highlighting the Bengali culture of zero-waste cooking. The translator occasionally omits these ingredients, possibly because they may lack nuance or relevance for modern readers in the twenty-first century. Examples of this can be found throughout the text. The English translation of “Chhenchki” does not emphasize minimizing waste by using vegetable peels. Dishes such as “কাঁঠাল বিচি পোড়া” [Kanthal bichi pora], “আলুর খোসার ঝুড়ি ভাজা” [Aalur khosha jhuri bhaja], “লাউ কুমড়া শসা ইত্যাদির খোসার ছেঁচকি” [Lau, kumra, sosa ityadir khoshar chechki] are actually cooking from the peels of

leftover vegetables highlighting the societal change of that time as Sati was discontinued due to which a large population of widows emerge who are to be followed a vegetarian diet which should cater their financial condition as a woman with fortunes left by their husband (Dash Dash 119).

In the case of “চাপড়া ঘন্ট”[Chapar Ghanto] “Mixed Vegetable With Lentil Cakes”, there are multiple layers of cultural and historical significance, particularly relating to the partition of Bengal and the connection to “Purbobongo” (East Bengal, now Bangladesh). The mention of Purbobongo and the partition reflects a deep historical context. The recipe being famous on the "other side of Bengal" ties it to a cultural identity that was fragmented during the partition, making it not just a culinary detail but a narrative of migration and cultural preservation. The Source Text uses “Khesarir Daal” as the base ingredient but in the Target Text “Split Pea Lentil” is mentioned at the place of “Khesarir Daal”. “Khesarir Daal” (*Lathyrus sativus*) is known for its distinctive taste and cultural significance, is common in parts of Bangladesh. It's a staple in traditional Bengali cooking, especially in rural areas where it grows abundantly and cater the issue of economic constraints of the mere villagers in rural “Purbabanga” . Split Pea Lentil is a different type of lentil that is more widely recognized in the West and in contemporary global cooking. By translating “Khesarir Daal” as “split pea lentil” the translator aimed to make the recipe more accessible to modern or non-Bengali readers but in doing so, altered the authenticity of the original dish. The translator's decision to replace “Khesarir Daal” with “split pea lentil” represents a broader issue in translation: the balance between authenticity and accessibility. Split-Pea lentil can be described as Functional Equivalent to “Khesarir Daal”. While there is no universal method for handling culture-bound or other problematic items in translation, Nida’s Dynamic Equivalence Theory emphasizes that the most important aspect of translation is ensuring the message is effectively received by the audience. According to Nida’s theory, messages that

are significant both in form and content must not only be understood but also appreciated by the target audience. Achieving "dynamic equivalence" involves the translator conveying the original features of the text in a way that is functionally communicative for the receiver, ensuring that the meaning is transferred faithfully. As Paradowski notes, this approach stresses the importance of prioritizing meaning over strict linguistic correspondence in order to maintain the text's communicative function (63). Split pea lentil might be more familiar to a wider audience, but it doesn't carry the same cultural and historical weight as "Khesarir Daal", which is deeply rooted in the region's agricultural practices and culinary traditions. The translator could have retained "Khesarir Daal" in the text, with a footnote or glossary entry explaining its significance, origins, and possible substitutes for those who might not find it locally. Including a brief cultural or historical note about the partition, Purbobongo, and the significance of certain ingredients which possibly enrich the reader's understanding and appreciation of the recipe would have helped the modern readers to navigate.

Conclusion

The translation of Renuka Devi Chaudhurani's *Rokomari Niramish Aahar* into English as *Pumpkin Flower Fritters* presents several challenges related to cultural translation, culinary semiotics, and the preservation of historical and regional identities. The translator's task is not just to convert the text from one language to another, but to bridge the cultural gap between the original Bengali audience and the global readership, while remaining faithful to the nuances and richness of the original recipes. This requires a deep understanding of both the source and target cultures, as well as the ability to make informed decisions about which elements of the original text to retain, adapt, or omit in the translation. Through this process, the translated cookbook becomes not just a collection of recipes, but a document that conveys the cultural, historical, and emotional significance of Bengali cuisine to a wider audience. In *Pumpkin Flower Fritters*, the omission of detailed cooking procedures and cultural nuances

in the English translation risks losing the richness and context that connect readers to the original narrative, which reflects a time of political upheaval and the Bengal partition. A more nuanced approach, such as including footnotes or cultural explanations, could have better preserved the authenticity and historical context, enriching the reader's experience and understanding of Bengali culinary traditions.

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