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Indirect Translations from Bengali into Swedish Translated via English

Christopher Fröderberg Shaiek

Department of Swedish Language and Multilingualism
Institute for Interpreting and Translation Studies (TÖI)
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Supervisor: Raphael Sannholm
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Abstract

This study investigates indirect translations translated from Bengali source texts to Swedish target texts via English intermediary texts by comparing Pedersen’s (2011) Extralinguistic Cultural References in coupled pairs from all three languages. The purpose of this study is to examine how indirect translations differ from direct translations and to discern whether there are specific translation strategies that translators use when transferring Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECRs) from a third language. The results were analyzed with a perspective based on translation norms, previous research into indirect translation, and the concept of foreignization/domestication in mind. The results show that an indirect translation can be closer to the original source text than the intermediary text it was based on in the first place. This was demonstrated with the Swedish TTs displaying more source-oriented transfer strategies compared to the English ITs, which displayed a higher amount of target-oriented strategies used by the translators. An unexpected finding was noted in the analysis material, namely that misunderstandings or deviations present in the ITs were not necessarily transferred to the TTs, which goes against previous research into indirect translations (cf. Dollerup 2000; Tegelberg 2011; Ringmar 2016). This supports similar results as found in Adler (2016) and Hekkanen (2014). In conclusion, the results suggest that the tendency of high-prestige literature resulting in adequate translations would be stronger than the tendency of indirect translations resulting in acceptable translations in the context of the Swedish target system. The source-oriented strategies in the TTs could also be seen as resistancy to target norms by the translators to create foreignizing translations.

Keywords

Indirect translation, direct translation, translation norms, foreignization, domestication, Extralinguistic Cultural References, Bengali, Swedish, multiple translatorship.
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1 Introduction

There have probably existed indirect translations as long as there have been translators. In fact, indirect translations have played an important role in disseminating new ideas and making a potential readership for a given author or work larger. For example, Greco-Roman works of philosophy and science were translated indirectly via Arabic into Latin during the Medieval Ages (Mavroudi 2015:30; St André 2008:231), thus making large bodies of texts available that would perhaps otherwise have vanished into history. Indirect translation has also played a crucial role for Bible translations (Ringmar 2007:1). Nida wrote that “most Bible translators are faced not with a two-language but a three-language communication problem” with the task “to communicate the M₁ [ST] in terms of M₂ [TT], with the least possible skewing as the result of M₂ [IT]” (Nida 1959:18–19).

Despite the importance of indirect translation on spreading literary works to new readerships, indirect translation is argued to be “one of the most understudied phenomena in translation studies today, and one that could and should receive more attention from theoreticians and historians alike” (St André 2008:232). Not only has the phenomena of indirect translation been neglected in the research field, there are also many examples of organizations advising against indirect translations directly (no pun intended). For instance, UNESCO states that indirect translation should be the only option if “absolutely necessary” (Ringmar 2007:2). Similarly, the Swedish Arts Council, a governmental agency in Sweden that promotes “cultural development and access … by allocating and monitoring state funding”, expresses that, for a translator to receive grants for translating from Swedish, “the translation must be done directly from Swedish or any of the national minority languages rather than via any third language” (Swedish Arts Council 2019).

In the Swedish cultural system, the tolerability threshold for indirect translation is purportedly said to be high (Lindqvist 2002:63); although this trend seems to have changed since Lindqvist’s publication. For instance, Alvstad argues that “[p]resent-day cultural policies in Scandinavia clearly favor direct over indirect translation” (Alvstad 2017:151). Tegelberg (2011:86) also claims that the number of indirect translations is thought to have decreased.

The attitude that is sometimes held towards indirect translation is that it is seen “at best, as a necessary evil, and the assumption is that it is always preferable to translate from the original, just as it is always preferable to read the original rather than a translation” (St André 2008:230).
1.1 Aim and Research Questions

In the light of the above, the aim of this study is to examine how indirect translations differ from direct translations and to discern whether there are any particular patterns of translation strategies that translators use when transferring what Pedersen (2011) refers to as Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECRs). This is done by investigating indirect translations (TTs) into Swedish from Bengali (STs) via English (ITs). The purpose is to shed light on how indirect translations are produced by translators by comparing Swedish target texts (TT) translated from Bengali source texts (ST) via English intermediary texts (IT).

To be specific, the research questions are:

- In what way can the translation of ECRs in indirect and direct translations differ? How can an indirect translation be closer to the source text than the direct translation it was based on in the first place?

- How do translators of indirect translations use target-oriented and source-oriented translation strategies when transferring ECRs from both a ST and an IT? In case the TT translator also has access to the ST, is this discernable in the TT?

- Are norms favoring adequacy or acceptability in operation for indirect translations in the Swedish target system?

In line with previous research in indirect translations, the hypothesis in question is that the indirect Swedish TTs will be more target-oriented (Ringmar 2007:10; Ringmar 2016:142), i.e. show more features of domestication, than the direct English ITs, which will be closer to the original ST. However, another hypothesis in play is that high-prestige literature in the Swedish literary norm system will favor an adequate translation, as indicated by Lindqvist (2002:218). A source-oriented, foreignized translation is then more likely to be the outcome when translating high-prestige literature, which the material in the present study could be considered as.

1.2 Scope

The material to be examined is limited to three languages, Swedish, Bengali, and English with a total of six texts, two from each language. The results are analyzed with a perspective based on translation norms, previous research into indirect translation, and the concept of foreignization/domestication in mind. Importantly, the Swedish TTs originate from a single source, namely the book Branden i hjärtat: Berättelser från Bengalen. Consequently, the results only consist of a limited set of data from a delimited time range. However, despite these limitations, it is the author’s ambition that the present study will shed some light on the phenomena of indirect translation and the norms that govern it in the Swedish context.
1.3 Organization
In Chapter 2, I will present the theoretical background where I will discuss translation norms, indirect translation, and Venuti’s concept of foreignization and domestication. In Chapter 3, I will discuss the method behind the present study and Pedersen’s categorization of ECRs and the transfer strategies used to translate them. In Chapter 4, I will present the material briefly. In Chapter 5, the analysis and findings will be demonstrated. And finally, in Chapter 6, I will discuss the overall implications of the results followed by some concluding remarks in Chapter 7.

2 Theoretical Background

The theoretical background behind this study encompasses three concepts that are considered relevant: translation norms (Lindqvist 2002; Toury 2012), indirect translation (Dollerup 2000; Ringmar 2007, 2016; Tegelberg 2011; Adler 2016; Alvstad 2017), and the dichotomy of foreignization/domestication (Venuti 1995). These will be accounted for in the same order as indicated above.

2.1 Translation Norms

The concept of translation norms is an instrument that provides a way of understanding how a translation came to be and why the translator applied a certain translation strategy. At the very basic level, norms can be defined as:

the translation of general values or ideas shared by a community – as to what would count as right or wrong, adequate or inadequate – into performance ‘instructions’ appropriate for and applicable to concrete situations. These ‘instructions’ specify what is prescribed and forbidden, as well as what is tolerated and permitted in a certain behavioural dimension. (Toury 2012:63)

Translation norms can in turn be divided into preliminary norms and operational norms, where operational norms involve the actual translation practice carried out by the translator, in other words, the norms that influence the “decisions made during the act of translation itself” (Toury 2012:82). Preliminary norms, on the other hand, involve for instance the translation policy in a particular language or culture, which governs the choice of texts, and the directness of translation, which involves the willingness to use translations as source texts (Toury 2012:82).

In connection to this, an adequate translation is a translation that “involve[s] the norms realized by the source text”, (Toury 2012:70) whereas an acceptable translation is translated with “adherence to norms which originate and act in the target culture itself” (ibid.:79).
According to Lindqvist, the tolerability threshold for indirect translations is high within the Swedish cultural system (Lindqvist 2002:63). Lindqvist also claims that when a literary system prefers adequate translations, it is more likely that norms supporting direct translations can be found (Lindqvist 2002:45). The adequacy norm also “prescribes direct translation for high-prestige literature” (Ringmar 2007:12). Furthermore, when it comes to “high-prestige literature”, Lindqvist argues that translators are expected to translate according to adequacy norms (2002:218), i.e. with a stronger focus on the source text. The opposite is the case when it comes to translators who translate “low-prestige literature”, who are expected to translate according to acceptability norms (Lindvist 2002:222), by focusing on norms in the target language.

According to Toury, indirect translation is not as rare as one may think (Toury 2012:161). In this context, the question that Toury poses is “from what languages / text-types / periods (etc.) is it permitted / prohibited / tolerated / preferred? What are the permitted / prohibited / tolerated / preferred mediating languages?” (Toury 2012:161).

2.2 Indirect Translation

Indirect translation, or relay translation as it also can be called, “refers to a chain of (at least) three texts, ending with a translation made from another translation: (original) ST > intermediate text (IT) > (end) TT" (Ringmar 2016:141, boldface removed from original). In translation studies, “[t]he term ‘indirect translation’ tends to focus [on] the end product, whereas ‘relay translation’ highlights the process (Ringmar 2016:141). See Dollerup (2000:18–19) for a discussion on the choice of terminology. The general tendency of indirect translations that can be noticed is that the intermediary language (IL), i.e. the language which acts both as a source language (SL) and a target language (TL), is a dominating language, whereas the original SL and the TL are dominated ones, i.e. smaller peripheral languages (Ringmar 2016:143). This is also true for the present study, in which the intermediate text is a “dominating language”, English, while the source texts and target texts are two “dominated”, peripheral languages, Bengali and Swedish respectively.

According to Ringmar, target texts translated indirectly from a source text via an intermediary language tend to have more explications, omissions, additions, misunderstandings, while they also tend to be longer (Ringmar 2016:142). Ringmar goes on to say that it is almost exclusively the case that a “TT differs more from the ST than the MT [mediating text, i.e. IT] differs from the ST” while the contrary only “occurs marginally” (2007:10). Similar views are expressed by Dollerup, who says that translators “will normally add new deviations to those made by predecessors in the chain. In relation to the original, there is thus a cumulation of deviations every time a work is relayed” (Dollerup 2000:23). Tegelberg claims that it is likely that the special character, such as semantic and
cultural features, of the original ST is lost when translation is carried out from an intermediary language (Tegelberg 2011:86).

In the research field, however, there seems to exist conflicting views and results on the level of directness indirect translations actually demonstrate. Research shows that an indirect translation can be more source-bound than the direct translation that was used as intermediary text by the translator (Hekkanen 2014:61). Likewise, in a recent study comparing an indirect translation from Hebrew to Swedish via English, it is suggested that the level of directness and faithfulness to the original source-text could depend on factors related to predominant translation norms in said target system and on the specific translator’s overall strategy to focus on either adequacy or acceptability (Adler 2016:34).

In the Swedish target system, Alvstad (2017:151) says that direct translation is far more favored than indirect translation. The fact that the governmental body the Swedish Arts Council rarely issues grants for indirect translations (ibid.:151) may provide an illustration of this. This is relevant for the present study as it suggests that, for cases such as the ones investigated here, three of the preliminary norms in Tour’s norm theory are breached in the translated works behind the book series Indiska biblioteket (Alvstad 2017:150). These include the choice of text to be translated, the norms of translation policy, and the directness of translation (Alvstad 2017:150), which also applies to the examined TTs in this study.

2.3 Foreignization and Domestication

Lastly, a complimentary perspective related to the concepts of adequate/acceptable translation is presented. Venuti (1995:20) uses the terms domestication (cf. acceptable translation) and foreignization (cf. adequate translation) to explain the differences between target-oriented and source-oriented translations. This perspective is particularly relevant for the study at hand, as it has been suggested that translations into dominating and peripheral languages tend to display different orientations (Ringmar 2016:143).

Foreignization, or a foreignizing translation, means that the translator aims to “register the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text” in the target text “by disrupting the cultural codes that prevail in the target language” (Venuti 1995:20). Domestication, according to Venuti, occurs when the translator instead aims for “an ethnocentric reduction of the foreign text to target-language cultural values” (Venuti 1995:20). In this context, Venuti also speaks about the “translator’s invisibility” which occurs when a more invisible translator creates a “fluent” translation (Venuti 1995:1–2). In contrast, a more visible translator emphasizes the original author or meaning of the source text (ibid.:1–2). What is important here, in Venuti’s words, is to “develop a theory and practice of translation that resists dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and
cultural difference of the foreign text” (Venuti 1995:23). This translation strategy is called resistancy in Venuti’s theoretical framework (Venuti 1995:24).

To connect this with the above, as mentioned previously in section 2.2, the IT in indirect translations is likely to be a “dominating” language, such as English, whereas the ST and TT are more often than not “dominated” languages (Ringmar 2016:143). In addition, Ringmar also states that “there is a correlation between dominating languages and ‘domesticating’ translation (2007:11).

In the following chapter, the method used in this study is presented.

3 Method

Having established the choice of methodology for the present study, the raw material was compiled and analyzed using Pedersen’s taxonomy of ECRs (Extralinguistic Cultural References) (Pedersen 2011:59–60). Coupled pairs containing ECRs were then extracted from the Swedish TTs, English ITs, and Bengali STs and analyzed in parallel. The ECRs were then compiled according to which category they belonged to as listed in Section 3.1, for instance, professional titles, government, geographical names, etc. Having compiled and categorized the coupled pairs of ECRs in all three languages, i.e. TT segments and their corresponding segments from the STs and ITs (see Toury 2012:117), the coupled pairs were then analyzed to establish which strategies the translators had used to transfer the ECRs from the Bengali source text (ST), and for the Swedish translators, from the English intermediary text (IT) as well.

3.1 Extralinguistic Cultural References

As regards the categorization of different translation strategies, this study uses Pedersen’s (2011) taxonomy of Extralinguistic Cultural References (ECR) and their subsequent transfer strategies. An ECR “is defined as reference that is attempted by means of any cultural linguistic expression, which refers to an extralinguistic entity or process … [e.g.] references to places, people, institutions, customs, food, etc.” in the source culture (Pedersen 2011:43–44). Furthermore, Pedersen divides ECRs into three levels of what he calls Transculturality: “Transcultural ECRs, Monocultural ECRs and Infracultural ECRs (2011:107). “A Transcultural ECR is […] not bound to the source culture […] as it could be assumed to be known in both the SC and the TC” (ibid.:107). A Monocultural ECR “can be assumed to be less identifiable to the majority of the relevant TT audience than it is to the relevant ST audience” (ibid.:107). “An Infracultural ECR is typically bound to the Source Culture, but it could not
be assumed to be within the encyclopaedic knowledge of the ST nor the TT audience, as it is too specialized or too local to be known even by the majority of the relevant ST audience” (ibid.:108).

The main issue when it comes to ECRs in STs is not the existence of them, but rather how the translator goes about to transfer them to the target language in question. Although Pedersen’s taxonomy is mainly focused on, as the name suggests, cultural aspects in the source-text culture and the target-text culture, other researchers in the field have indicated that the taxonomy might also be used to analyze lexico-grammatical features in translations (Englund Dimitrova 2011).

When it comes to Pedersen’s categorization, it is important to bear in mind that we are discussing two different taxonomies: on the one hand the ECRs themselves and on the other hand the subsequent strategies used to translate them. Pedersen’s ECRs are divided into the following categories: 1) weights and measures; 2) proper names1; 3) professional titles; 4) food and beverages; 5) literature; 6) government; 7) entertainment; 8) education; 9) sports; 10) currency; 11) technical material; 12) other (Pedersen 2011:59–60).

When it comes to ECR transfer strategies, Pedersen divides them into source-oriented strategies and target-oriented strategies (2011:71). As regards the source-oriented strategies, there is “Retention”, which refers to an ECR being kept either unchanged or adjusted to the TL requirements (ibid.:76). “Specification”, in turn, refers to the adding of information in the translation by completing for instance an acronym or a name (“Completion”) or by adding more information (“Addition”) (ibid.:76). For “Direct Translation” the semantic content remains the same, while the segment is translated (ibid.:76). As regards the target-oriented strategies, “Generalization” involves making the ECR less specific in the TT by using a “Superordinate Term” or a “Paraphrase”; “Substitution” involves replacing the ST ECR with an ECR from either the SC, TC or a third culture (“Cultural Substitution”), alternatively with “something completely different that fits the situation” (ibid.:89). There are also the strategies of “Omission”, which, as the name suggests, involves omitting the ST ECR in the translation, and the strategy of using an “Official Equivalent” (ibid.:76). See Pedersen (2011:75) for a complete graphical representation of ECR transfer strategies.

4 Material

The choice of texts depended on the criteria that the target text would be an indirect translation, i.e. a translation that is translated via an intermediary language, in this case from Bengali via English to

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1 Further subdivided into ii) personal names; ii) geographical names; iii) institutional names; iv) brand names.
Swedish. One example of such texts can be found in the anthology of Mahasweta Devi’s short stories in Swedish translation, *Branden i hjärtat: berättelser från Bengalen* (Devi 2008). Considering that this short story anthology, together with the English IT and Bengali ST, allows for a comparison between the English and Swedish translations, *Branden i hjärtat*, the Swedish TT, constitutes a particularly interesting case for analyzing strategies used in different target texts, as previously suggested by Alvstad (2017:150), thus shedding light on the interplay between different STs in a TT.

4.1 Bengali Source Texts

The two short stories that were selected for analysis in the present study were *দ্রৌপদি* (*Draupadi*) and *শিকার* [*shikar*] (*Jakten/The Hunt*) written by the Indian Bengali author Mahasweta Devi. Mahasweta Devi’s literary works concern topics on social and political issues in India, mainly focusing on the tribal peoples’ situation in rural India and the Naxalite rebellion (Devi 2008:13–16). In *Draupadi*, the female guerilla rebel Dopdi is chased by an army general and his team of soldiers in the forest until she is caught and arrested. In *Jakten/The Hunt*, the story revolves around the tribal woman Mary Oraon who one day attracts the attention of lumber trader Tehsildar Singh, who tries to force her into marriage. Protagonists in Devi’s stories are often strong female characters who fight against social injustices. The female protagonists are often juxtaposed with male antagonists from the other side of the social ladder. Devi’s literary style and prose could be described as “a collage of literary Bengali, street Bengali, bureaucratic Bengali, tribal Bengali, and the languages of the tribals” (Chakravorty Spivak 1981:384).

4.2 English Intermediary Texts

The English translator of Mahasweta Devi’s source texts, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, describes that she considered both the readership in the United States and India during the translation (Chakravorty Spivak in Devi 1995:xxiii). She also describes her collaboration with the author by acknowledging that Devi read “the manuscript of the translation” and that “[s]he made many suggestions, noted omitted passages, corrected occasional mistranslations, and supplied names for government agencies” (Chakravorty Spivak in Devi 1995:xxiii). Chakravorty Spivak also says that she “had the usual ‘translator’s problems’, for example, with the peculiar Bengali spoken by the tribals” but adds that she used “straight English” in the translation (Chakravorty Spivak 1981:391). Chakravorty Spivak explains her unconventional translation strategy of italicizing all English words found in the source text to “make […] the English page difficult to read. The difficulty is a reminder of the intimacy of the colonial encounter. Mahasweta’s stories are *post*colonial” (Chakravorty Spivak in Devi 1995:xxxii).
4.3 Swedish Target Texts

The Swedish target texts that were chosen for analysis were selected from an anthology of Mahasweta Devi’s short stories translated into Swedish called *Branden i hjärtat: Berättelser från Bengalen*. This book is an anthology of short stories written by Mahasweta Devi, translated to Swedish from English ITs and Bengali STs. The book was published by the Swedish publishing house Ordfront as part of a translation project called *Indiska biblioteket* [Indian library] and the Indo-Swedish Translation Project. This project was initiated by the Swedish Writers’ Union with financial aid from Sida (the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency) and the Swedish Institute (Löfström & Wallin 2009).

In the translator’s afterword to *Branden i hjärtat*, one of the translators, Jan Stolpe, brings up the topic of translating via intermediary texts and describes his translation method (Stolpe 2008:293). To begin with, he translated the Bengali STs via English ITs, thereafter he reviewed the English ITs with a native-speaking Bengali collaborator who compared the English ITs with the Bengali STs. Having compared the English ITs and Bengali STs, the Bengali native-speaker collaborator provided the Swedish translator Jan Stolpe with new, alternative translations to the Bengali ST. In his comments, Jan Stolpe brings up the topic of what he calls culture-specific elements, for example, references to Hindu deities, religious festivals, and source-language idioms and terms of address (in Löfström & Wallin 2009).

In what follows, the analysis and the results will be presented, followed by a discussion of general tendencies in Chapter 6. Finally, the study is summarized, and the overall conclusions are presented in Chapter 7.

5 Analysis and Results

The findings from the analysis are divided into the respective categories of ECRs in order to display them in a systematic manner. In this way, examples from each language can be more easily compared. In section 5.2, I will analyze and discuss the ECRs separately.

5.1 Transfer Strategies

The results show that the Swedish TTs contain a higher amount of source-oriented transfer strategies compared to the English ITs, which display a higher amount of target-oriented transfer strategies. The results are graphically represented in table 1 below, showing how the Swedish TTs contain a higher
amount of source-oriented strategies used by the translator to transfer SC ECRs from the ST compared to the English ITs:

*Table 1. Number of source-oriented strategies used in the Swedish TTs and English ITs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source-oriented Strategies</th>
<th>In English ITs</th>
<th>In Swedish TTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Retention</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specification</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct Translation</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>18</strong></td>
<td><strong>30</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2 below shows the number of target-oriented strategies, illustrating the opposite result: Here, the Swedish TTs display a lower number of target-oriented strategies used by the translators, whereas the English ITs display a higher number of target-oriented transfer strategies:

*Table 2. Number of target-oriented strategies used in the Swedish TTs and English ITs.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Target-oriented Strategies</th>
<th>In English ITs</th>
<th>In Swedish TTs</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Generalization</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Substitution</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Omission</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>23</strong></td>
<td><strong>14</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Figure 1 below displays the complete results across both translations and strategy type for transferring ECRs:

*Figure 1. ECR transfer strategies used by the Swedish and English translators.*
5.2 Extralinguistic Cultural References

The categories of Pedersen’s ECRs that proved applicable are weights and measures, proper names, professional titles, food and beverages, literature, government, entertainment, currency, and technical material. These ECR categories were used as a tool to find instances in the text material where the translations differed. By doing so, a more systematic overview of the findings could be provided. In the material at hand, however, not all of Pedersen’s categories are represented as examples from each category were not found.

The ECR findings are presented in the same order as listed in Section 3.1. For the subsequent examples in this chapter, ST, IT, and TT stand for source text, intermediary text, and target text; square brackets are used to show the transliteration of the Bengali ST, which is followed by my source-oriented back translation of the Bengali text in italics. Note, however, that I have not used any standardized transliteration system for the Bengali segments; instead I have chosen to transliterate the Bengali script to reflect the pronunciation. The ECRs in the examples are highlighted by underlining whenever applicable.

5.2.1 Weights and Measures

Most of the measurements in the Bengali source texts are retained in the Swedish target text, with the English intermediary text showing similar results. The Swedish translators consistently use source-cultural measurements, for example “miles” and “acres”, instead of more target-oriented measurements such as “kilometer” or “hektar”. Example 1 below shows how the translators deal with the SC ECRs:

(1)

ST: প্রসাদজীর বাংলা সংগাজনক পঁচাত্তর একর বা দুশো পঁচাত্তর বিঘা (p. 49)

[Prasadjir banglor songlogno jomi pocattor aekor ba dusho pôchish bigha]

Surrounding Prasadji’s bungalow are twenty-five acres or two hundred twenty-five bighas of land

IT: Seventy-five acres or two hundred and twenty-five bighas of land are attached to Prasadji’s bungalow. (p. 6)

TT: Sjuttiofem acres eller tvåhundratjugofem bighas med land omger Prasadjis bungalow. (p. 91)

In Jakten, Swedish translator Birgitta Wallin (from here on BW) uses a source-oriented “Unmarked Complete Retention” for the SC measurement “bigha”, a measurement that probably most target readers would not be familiar with. There is also an example (2) in which Swedish translator Jan Stolpe (JS) transfers an ECR from the English IT instead of the ECR from the Bengali ST:
Instead of using a more target-oriented strategy, such as substituting the ECR for a target-language (TL) ECR, as would be the case with “kilometer”, Swedish translator BW uses an “Unmarked Complete Retention” to transfer the ECR from the English IT. The English IT translator, Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (GCS), on the other hand, uses a “Substitution” with the Transcultural ECR “miles” to transfer the SC ECR “krosho”.

There is also an example in the text material in which all three texts differ according to what measurements they use, as seen in example 3 below:

(3)

ST: তারপর এক নিয়ুত চাঁদ কেটে যায়। এক নিয়ুত চান্দ্র বৎসর। লুক্ষ আলোকবর্ষ পরে … (p. 38)

[Тарпор еk нивут кãд кете yay. Эk нивут кандro ботсор. Lokkho алокбorsho pore]

Then a million moons pass. One million lunar years. After a hundred thousand light years …

IT: Then a billion moons pass. A billion lunar years. Opening her eyes after a million light years … (p. 401)

TT: Så passerar tio miljoner månar. Tio miljoner månår. När Draupadi öppnar ögonen efter hundratusen ljusår … (p. 43)

In the example above, both the Swedish TT and English IT differ from the Bengali ST. The Bengali ST uses “a million lunar years” and “a hundred thousand light years”, whereas Swedish translator JS uses the figure “ten million lunar years” and “hundred thousand light years”. English translator GCS uses “a billion lunar years” and “a million light years”. In other words, both translators use a “Situational Substitution” for the SC measurements.

5.2.2 Proper Names

As could be expected when translating literary works, the source texts, and subsequently the translations, display several ECRs related to proper names. These are both names of fictional characters in the source texts as well as names of real-world referents, such as personal names, geographical names, and institutional names.

Personal Names
The findings show that ECRs related to personal names are consistently retained in both the Swedish TT and the English IT, however with some slight modifications to spelling, where the English translator reflects the Bengali pronunciation in contrast to the Swedish translator(s). Most ECRs of personal names are names of artists and film stars in the SC, as illustrated in example 4:

(4)  

ST: … বিবিধ ভারতী শোনা ও “ইয়ে হায় জিন্দগী” ফিল্মে সঙ্গীত কুমার ও ভগবান শ্রীকৃষ্ণকে মুখোমুখি দেখার সুযোগ-সুবিধা পেয়ে থাকে। (p. 33)  

[Bididha Bharati shona o “Yehi Hai Zindagi” filme Sanjeev Kumar o bhogoban Srikrishnoke mukhomukhi dekhar sujog-subidha peye thake]  

listening to Bibidha Bharati and getting the opportunity to see Sanjeev Kumar meet the god Lord Krishna face-to-face in the film “Yehi Hai Zindagi”  

IT: … opportunity to listen to “Bibidha Bharati” and to see Sanjeev Kumar and the Lord Krishna face-to-face in the movie This Is Life. (p. 396)  

TT: … man ger dem tillfälle att lyssna på Vividh Bharati och se Sanjee Kumar [sic!] möta Krishna i Detta är livet.⁶ (p. 34)  

The Swedish translator JS uses a “Target-language Adjusted Retention” to transfer the name of Bollywood film star Sanjeev Kumar and the radio channel Vividh Bharati. Interestingly, the Swedish TT drops the final v in Sanjeev Kumar, rendering his name Sanjee Kumar. This is probably a typographical error in the book since leaving out the “v” would not fulfill any specific function in the TT. Apart from this, the Swedish translator modifies the spelling of the name “Bibidha Bharati” (Bengali-influenced spelling) to “Vividh Bharati” (Hindi-influenced spelling). The translator also chooses to use a “Shifted Direct Translation” for the 1970’s Hindi film Yehi Hai Zindagi, via English, to “Detta är livet” [This Is Life] even though it does not exist an official Swedish title for the film. In this example, English translator GCS uses the more source-oriented strategy “Unmarked Complete Retention” for the ECR “Bibidha Bharati”.

Geographical Names

The names of places, both fictional and real, are kept in the Swedish TT, however, with some ECRs showing slight modifications compared to the Bengali ST and English IT. When it comes to the rendering of names in the two translations (Swedish TT and English IT), the Swedish translators use a higher number of source-oriented strategies compared to the English translator. The Swedish TTs show signs of transferring ECRs from the Bengali ST directly, while also using geographical names with the same spelling as in the English IT.
Instead of being mere names of geographical places, they are also names that have cultural connotations attached to them, and it could be argued, therefore, that they function as ECRs in the source text, such as in example 5 below:

(5)

ST: দোপির রক্ত চম্পাভূমির পবিত্র কালো রক্ত, নির্ভেজাল। চম্পা থেকে বাকুলি (p. 36)

[Dopdir rokto Chompabhumir pobitro kalo rokto, nirbhjal. Chompa theke Bakuli …]

_Dopdi’s blood is the pure black blood of Champabhumi, unadulterated. From Champa to Bakuli_

IT: Dopdi’s blood was the pure unadulterated black blood of Champabhumi. From Champa to Bakuli … (p. 399)

TT: Dopdi’s blox var det svarta och rena från Champa. Från Champa till Bakuli … (p. 39)

In this example, the Swedish translator uses the target-oriented strategy “Omission” by deleting the suffix “-bhumi” which means land in the source language. In the following sentence, the geographical name Champa is introduced, and it is possible that the Swedish translator did not want to confuse the reader by having two different names for the same geographical location. The English translator GCS on the other hand retains the name “Champabhumi” in its full form in the first sentence but “Champa” in the second. This can be categorized as an “Unmarked Complete Retention”. In fact, Spivak uses a note to explain that the ECR “‘Champabhumi’ and ‘Radhabhumi’ are archaic names for certain areas of Bengal. ‘Bhumi’ is simply ‘land.’ All of Bengal is thus ‘Bangabhumi.’” (Chakravorty Spivak 1981:392). The Swedish translator JS, similarly, uses an endnote to explain the ECR “Radhabhumi” as “Bengal”.

(6)

ST: শিয়নডাঙার মার্কিন সৈন্যদের উপহার টুওয়ার্ডস রাটহুমি (p. 36)

[Shiyondangar markin soinyoder upohar towards Rarhhumi]

_A gift to Radhabhumi from the American soldiers of Shiyondanga_

IT: Contributions to Radhabhumi by the American soldiers stationed at Shiyondanga. (p. 399)

TT: De var en gåva till Radhas land från amerikanska soldater som legat stationerade i Seondanga. (p. 39)

Considering that “রাটভূমি” or "Radhabhumi" is translated as "Radhas land" in the Swedish TT, this constitutes a “Direct Translation” of the literal meaning behind the ST ECR. In other words, this might indicate that the Swedish translator either received assistance from a Bengali speaker or made some research to transfer the ST ECR. Swedish translator JS also uses an endnote to explain the ECR “Radhabhumi” in the TT, which further supports this assumption.
Institutional Names

The Swedish and English translators transfer the ECRs relating to institutional names in the Bengali ST differently: In the English IT, the translator GCS uses more source-oriented strategies, for instance, by retaining the institutional names. In the examined text material, both Swedish translators use the target-oriented strategy “Substitution” in cases with institutional names in the ST by replacing the ECRs from the source culture with corresponding ECRs in the target culture. See example 7 and 8 below for an illustration of this:

(7)

ST: দ্খায়াই-প.ডবল ডিউ খাম্বা (p. 36)
   [khoyai-PWDr khamba]
   building P.W.D. posts

IT: Public Works Department markers (p. 399)

TT: skyftar från byggnadsstyrelsen (p. 39)

Institutional names also raise translation problems when they are names of defunct or historical institutions, as in example 8 below:

(8)

ST: সাহেবদের দিন নেই যে হাঁথি আনব ফরেস ডিপাট থেকে আর তোহরি অর্থ টানাব কাঠ (p. 49)
   [sahebder din nei je háthi anbo fores dipat theke ar Tohri obdi tanabo kath]
   The sahibs’ days are over when I would bring elephants from the forest department and pull the wood until Tohri

IT: This is not the white man’s rule when I could have brought elephants from the Forest Department and pulled the timber to Tohri. (p. 7)

TT: Det är inte som på de vitas tid när jag kunde ha hämtat elefanter från skogsförvaltningen för att dra timret till Tohri. (p. 92)

In example 8 above, Swedish translator BW uses a “Cultural Substitution” with the TC ECR of “skogsförvaltningen”, the actual name for the corresponding TC ECR. By doing so, the SC ECR is translocated to the target culture. In the English IT, however, the ECR is retained with some slight modifications to fit the target language.

Sometimes it is unclear whether an ECR with an institutional name was translated with an “Official Equivalent” or whether it is a “Retention” in the translations; it can be difficult to discern obscure or local institutional names or even fictional names from real ones. This is an issue that Pedersen addresses in what he calls “Text Internal ECRs” and “Infracultural ECRs”, with “Text Internal ECRs”
being for instance fictional characters or places and “Infracultural ECRs” being highly specific or obscure ECRs that are not known to most ST readers (Pedersen 2011:108, 153).

5.2.3 Professional Titles

Although both the English and Swedish translators use target-oriented strategies to transfer the ECRs present in the Bengali ST, it is worth mentioning that only two different professional titles were found in the ST, making it difficult to draw any general conclusions about the transfer strategies.

Example 9 illustrates how an ECR in the ST can be transferred using a “Substitution” in both the IT and TT:

(9)

ST: তারপর প্রিমাচিওর ফোর্ড রিটায়ারমেন্টের জুজু দেখিয়ে তবে তাকে বাংলি প্রৌঢ় সমর ও বামপথী উপর রাজনীতি স্পেশালিস্ট সেনানায়কের টেবিলে হাজির করা যায় (p. 30)

[Tarpor premature forced retirement juju dekhiye tobe take bangali prourh somor o bamponthi ugro rajniti specialist senanayoker tebile hajir kora jay]

After being threatened with a premature forced retirement, he is only then able to present himself at the table of the middle-aged Bengali general and specialist in combat and extreme leftwing politics

IT: At long last, under the shadow of a premature and forced retirement, it was possible to present him at the desk of Mr. Senanayak, the elderly Bengali specialist in combat and extreme-Left politics. (p. 393)

TT: Under hot om förtidig framtvingad pensionering kunde man till slut sammanföra honom med en äldre bengal, en armémajor som var specialist på väpnad kamp och politik på yttersta vänsterkanten. (p. 29)

As can be seen in the example above, the professional title in the ST, “সেনানায়ক” [senanayok] with the dictionary meaning general or commander (Bangla Academy 2011), is rendered as “armémajor” by the Swedish translator, while the English translator changes the professional title to a name. In other words, the Swedish TT displays a case of “Cultural Substitution” by means of a “Transcultural” ECR, whereas the English IT displays a “Situational Substitution”.

Another example of an ECR of a professional title in the ST is the word “কুলী” [kuli] coolie, which is rendered as “bärare” [carrier] in the Swedish TT and “porter” in the English IT. Interestingly enough, the words kuli [coole] and coolie exist in both target languages, however, with some slight difference in meaning since a coolie or kuli can also mean any unskilled laborer from South Asia (Svenska Akademien 2015; Oxford English Dictionary 2019). In the source language, a “কুলী” [kuli] exclusively means a porter or carrier (Bangla Academy 2011). However, both kuli and coolie are listed
as derogative in Svenska Akademiens Ordflista and the Oxford English Dictionary, which might explain why the translators chose not to use these words. Instead the translators used a “Situational Substitution” by using a more universal and neutral word, “bärare” and “porter”, respectively.

5.2.4 Food and Beverages
Food and beverages can often be ECRs in source texts. Indeed, cultures differ when it comes to food practices, food items, etc. When encountering an ECR related to food and beverages, the translator has to decide whether to leave the ECR as it is or try to adapt it in some way to the target reader, perhaps by replacing it with an ECR from the TC or using a “Generalization” as in example 10 below:

(10)
ST: তারপর দুপুরে মকাইয়ের ছাতু টিফিন (p. 50)

[Tarpur dupure mokaiyer chatu tiffin]
Afterwards a *tiffin* of cornmeal in the early afternoon

IT: And a *tiffin* of cornmeal in the afternoon. (p. 9)

TT: Och på eftermiddagen en *lunch* gjord på majs. (p. 93)

In this example, the ECR “টিফিন” *tiffin* or *lunch*, makes a special case since it could be considered an ECR in both the Bengali and English SC. This also raises the question to which part of the source culture the ECR belongs to (see the discussion on Transculturality in Section 2.3.).

As a result of the “Generalization” in the Swedish TT, the connection to the ECR in the ST becomes lost. It can also be argued that the TT generates a different mental image of the sentence compared with the English IT or Bengali ST due to the transferred ECR. On the other hand, retaining the ST ECR in the Swedish TT would perhaps have a foreignizing effect on the reader.

There is also an example where the Swedish translator uses a more source-oriented strategy in contrast to the English translator, as shown in example 11:

(11)
ST: … কেউ বিড়ি সিগারেট চা খায় না (p. 36)

[Keu bidi sigaret ca khay na]
*no one smokes bidis, cigarettes nor drinks tea*

IT: … none of them smokes or even drinks tea. (p. 399)

TT: … ingen av dem röker *bidis* eller cigarretter eller dricker te. (p. 40)

In the source culture, “bidis” are a type of thin hand-rolled cigarettes (Bangla Academy 2011), which could be considered as a Monocultural ECR. Retaining it with a “TL-adjusted Retention”, as in the Swedish TT, is thus a source-oriented strategy, since it constitutes an ECR that most Swedish target
readers would not recognize in the first place. In comparison, GCS uses an “Omission” in the English IT for the SC ECR.

5.2.5 Literature
It is not uncommon to find ECRs in source texts that refer to other literary works. In Mahasweta Devi’s *The Hunt* (শিকার), references are for instance made to the novel *First Blood* by David Morell. This makes an interesting case since this ECR is originally an ECR from a second culture, namely the American culture. In the English IT, which is also by definition a target text, this ECR could be described as being “recycled” since it is returned to its source culture. In the Swedish target text, however, the ECR behind the novel *First Blood* has a different function; in this context the ECR is not from the source culture, but rather from a third culture. According to Pedersen, an ECR does not necessarily have to come from the source culture, but it could come from a third culture (Pedersen 2011:107). The example below illustrates how the two translators deal with this ECR:

(12)

ST: সাহিত্যের সঙ্গে যোগ রাখার ফলে ‘ফার্স্ট ব্ল্যাড’ পড়ে তিনি তাঁর চিন্তা ও কাজের সমর্থন দেখেছেন। (p. 37)

[-Sahityer songe yog rakhar phole ‘First Blood’ pore tini tãr cinta o kajer somorthon dekhechen]  
*As a result of keeping up with the literature, and having read “First Blood”, he has seen support of his thought and work*

IT: Since he has kept up with the literature, he has read *First Blood* and seen approval of his thought and work. (p. 400)

TT: Eftersom han har följt med i litteraturen har han läst *boken om Rambo* och fått stöd för sina tankar och handlingar. (p. 41)

For this particular ECR, the Swedish translator chose to paraphrase the actual book title by rephrasing it to as “boken om Rambo” [the book about Rambo]. By paraphrasing the ECR, the Swedish translator could be seen as using a target-oriented strategy, since the paraphrase gives the reader a chance to grasp the ECR more easily. When it comes to the English IT and the transfer strategy, the title of the novel is retained.

5.2.6 Government
In the source texts there are several ECRs related to the category of government; however, during the analysis process it was occasionally difficult to distinguish government ECRs and ECRs related to institutional names. It is possible that an institutional name could be seen as part of the governmental system, which would suggest it being a government ECR. However, it is also possible to suggest the opposite, where a government ECR is categorized as an institutional name. The distinction I made
between ECRs of government or institutional names, was that institutional names should consist of proper names, either real or fictional, whereas government ECRs should be of a more general, descriptive nature that would encompass ECRs relating to the administrative system. Pedersen brings up this issue with an ECR belonging to more than one category, calling it a multifunctional ECR “which belongs to several domains on various levels” (Pedersen 2011:60).

Example 13 below illustrates how the English and Swedish translators deal with an ECR relating to the administrative system in the SC:

(13)

ST: ওর নামে বখশিশ ঘোষণার কাগজটা আজই পঞ্চায়েত আপিসে দেখে এসেছে (p. 34)

[Or name bokhshish ghoshonar kagojta aj i ponchayet apise dekhe eseche]

*Just today she has seen the poster with a reward in her name in the panchayat office*

IT: She has seen in the *Panchayat* office just today the notice for the reward in her name. (p. 397)

TT: På byrådets kontor har hon just i dag sett ett anslag med hennes namn och ett löfte om belöning. (p. 35)

As can be seen in the example above, the Swedish translator uses the target-oriented strategy “Generalization” by using a more general term for the ECR “panchayat”, even though this term could be considered to exist in Swedish: it is for instance listed in the Swedish encyclopedia NE (Nationalencyklopedin 2019). In comparison, the English translator retains the SC ECR by using an “Unmarked Complete Retention”.

As mentioned earlier, not all government ECRs have to necessarily be related to a government body per se. Instead, they could be related to other aspects of how a society is run, say for instance references to laws and legal practices. This is illustrated in examples 14 and 15 below:

(14)

ST: এ অঞ্চলে সিলিঙ কেউ মানে না (p. 49)

[E onchole ceiling keu mane na]

*In this area no one adheres to ceiling*

IT: Nobody around here obeys the *land ceiling laws*. (p. 6)

TT: Ingen häromkring följer *lagarna som reglerar markägandet*. (p. 91)

Here, the Swedish translator uses a “Generalization” with a paraphrase to describe the ECR, rewriting it and explaining it to target readers. The English translator, on the other hand, employs a “Specification” with a “Completion” by adding the word “laws.” In the ST and SC, “ceiling” is a reference to an Indian law that regulates landownership rights (Urban Land [Ceiling and Regulation] Act 1976). This ECR could be considered an Infracultural ECR, meaning that “it is too specialized or
too local to be known even by the majority of the relevant ST audience” (Pedersen 2011:108). Recall Section 3.1 for more information on the subject of “Transculturality” and the transparency of ECRs.

Example 15, in contrast, is more transparent as regards the SC ECR:

(15)

ST: কানাল টেক্সো দিয়ে জল লাও, জুলে গেল সব (p. 35)

[Kanal tekso diye jol lao, jole gelo sob]

Get water with canal tax, everything has burned (dried) up

IT: Get your water with canal tax, everything is burning (p. 398)

TT: Betala bevattningsskatten och vattna fälten, allt bränns bort. (p. 37)

In the example above, the Swedish translator uses a “Situational Substitution” by replacing the ST ECR “canal tax” with “bevattningsskatten”, which fits the context semantically. The English translator, on the other hand, has retained the ECR, which is not unexpected considering that the ECR consists of English words in the Bengali ST.

5.2.7 Entertainment

ECRs relating to the category of entertainment in the STs consisted of references to a religious festival, a song, a film, and a radio show. A pattern could be found that suggested that the Swedish translators used more source-oriented strategies compared to the English translator, who used more target-oriented strategies, to transfer the ECRs from the ST. The Swedish translators used for instance endnotes for two of the ST ECRs. This is illustrated in example 16 below:

(16)

ST: জানা যায়, হোলির দিন আদিবাসীদের যে শিকার খেলার নিয়ম আছে, এবার সে শিকার মেয়েদের

(p. 54)

[Jana jay, holir din adibasider ye shikar kheral niyom ache, ebar se shikar meyeder]

It is revealed that this time it’s the women’s turn to have the hunt-game tradition which the indigenous people have on Holi

IT: It is revealed that the ritual of the hunt that the tribes celebrate at the spring festival is for the women to perform this year. (p. 12)

TT: Det blir känt att stamfolkens ritualer under firandet av holi i år ska utföras av kvinnorna.2 (p. 100)

In example 16 above, the Swedish translator bypasses the English IT by retaining the SC ECR from the ST directly. This is evident from the TT translator’s retention of the ECR “হোলি” holi, a SC ECR which relates to a Hindu spring festival. Furthermore, the Swedish TT contains an endnote describing
this festival, a source-oriented transfer strategy that creates a foreignizing effect in the TT. In comparison, the English translator, GCS, transfers the SC ECR with a “Generalization” by using a descriptive “Superordinate Term” instead, rendering the ECR as “spring festival”. The above example illustrates how the Swedish translators on numerous occasions seem to bypass the English IT by referring to the Bengali ST instead.

An additional example of a source-oriented transfer strategy where the Swedish translator seems to have bypassed the English IT and looked at the Bengali ST can be found in example 17:

(17)

ST: আসলে তিনি জানেন, প্রাচীন গণনাট্যগীতির মত করলে বেদনা বোধ হয় জমানা (p. 31)
[Asole tini janen, pracin gonoratyogetir moto korbhote bodol hoga jomana]

In fact he knows, like in the old Gananatya [Indian People’s Theatre Association] song, turn by
turn the times will change

IT: In fact, he knows that, as in the old popular song, turn by turn the world will change (p. 394)

TT: Han vet faktiskt att tiderna skiftar, som det heter i den gamla IPTA-visan, (p. 30)

The example above clearly illustrates how the Swedish translators carried out their own research in the source culture to find the SC ECR. Although the ECRs in both the Swedish TT and Bengali ST could be argued to be the same, the Swedish translator uses a “Specification” by completing the SC ECR with additional information. In fact, Swedish translator JS uses an endnote to describe the ECR, a clear source-oriented strategy. English translator GCS, on the other hand, resolves the ECR by using an “Omission”.

5.2.8 Currency

ECRs which relate to currency make for an interesting case considering that a currency can often be used outside the country it was issued, or indeed in multiple countries as would be the case with the U.S. dollar or Euro. In the findings, currency ECRs are consistently retained in both the Swedish TTs and the English ITs as shown in example 18 below:

(18)

ST: জীবিত বা মৃত সদ্ব্যে দিতে পারলে এবং জীবিত হলে গ্রেপ্তারে সহায়তায় একশেত টাকা […]
[jibito ba mrito sondhan dite parle ebong jibito hole greptare sohayotay ekshoto taka]

Giving information whether dead or alive, and if alive, assistance in arrest: a hundred taka

IT: information whether dead or alive and/or assistance in arrest, one hundred rupees […] (p. 392)
As can be seen in example 18, the SC currency “rupees” is used in both the Swedish TT and English IT; however, this ECR is not present in the Bengali ST. Instead, the ST uses the word “টাকা” [taka] which has the meaning of money in general and, depending on the situation, can be used with any monetary unit. The Swedish TT and English IT therefore displays a case of “Situational Substitution” due to their strategy of transferring the ST ECR with an ECR that fits the context.

In comparison with the above, example 19 below shows how a SC ECR can also be retained in the Swedish TT and English IT:

(19)

ST: বারো আনা আর আট আনা! এ পয়সায় তোহরি বা ছিপডোরে কোন কুলী বাবুদের ব্যাগ বয় না (p. 52)
[Baro ana ar at ana! E poysay Tohri ba Chipdore kono kuli babuder bag boy na]

Twelve annas and eight annas! No coolie in Tohri or Chipdor would carry the bags of babus for that money

IT: Twelve annas and eight annas! No porter carries gentlemen’s cases for this price. (p. 9)

TT: Tolv anna och åtta anna! En bärare skulle aldrig känka på en babus väskor för det priset. (p. 96)

The SC ECR in example 18 above, “আনা” anna, is a currency ECR that is retained by both translators in a “Complete Unmarked Retention”. Anna in the SL literally means one-sixteenth (Bangla Academy 2011) and was a monetary unit previously used in India, i.e. in the SC.

5.2.9 Technical Material
The domain of technical material ECRs can be described as objects that have a specific use in the SC or objects that originally were invented in said SC. In the ST, ECRs relating to this category included a percussion instrument from the SC, as shown below in example 20:

(20)

ST: তারপর একদিন পোহারের ঘরে নাগারা বাজে (p. 54)
[Tarpor ekdin Pohaner ghore nagara baje]

Then one day the nagara sounds in Pohan’s house

IT: Then the gong sounds one day in the priest’s house. (p. 12)

TT: Så en dag ljuder nagaratrumman från byhövdingens hus. (p. 100)
This example displays how the Swedish translator has kept the ST ECR “nagara”, an Indian percussion instrument, by transferring it as “nagaratrumman” and using a “Specification” with the added word “trumman”. In the English IT, however, the translator has substituted the ST ECR with the “Transcultural ECR” “gong”, an East or Southeast Asian percussion instrument which perhaps would be more recognizable for English target readers. This example clearly indicates how the Swedish translator has bypassed the English IT and referred to the Bengali ST directly.

6 Discussion

To answer the question how an indirect translation could be closer to an original ST than a direct translation, the findings showed that the Swedish TTs regularly were more source-bound than the English ITs, which were more target-bound. This is something that contradicts previous literature in the field that suggests that direct translations tend to be more close to the original ST than indirect translations would be (Ringmar 2016:142). The assumption is that an indirect translation would warrant a more acceptable translation, i.e. translated domestically with more target-oriented transfer strategies. However, the findings indicated the opposite with the TTs containing a higher number of source-oriented strategies, which resulted in a more foreignized translation of the original ST. The hypothesis that an indirect translation will be more target-oriented than a direct translation can therefore be refuted in this study.

Looking at the results more specifically, there was evidence of the Swedish TT translators using more source-oriented strategies than the English IT translator to transfer the ECRs from the original Bengali ST. This again is something that goes against the general tendency of indirect translations that is expressed in previous literature (Ringmar 2007:10; Ringmar 2016:142). Furthermore, an unexpected finding was noted in the analysis material, namely that misunderstandings or deviations present in the IT were not necessarily transferred to the TT – this is also something that differs from views expressed in previous literature (cf. Dollerup 2000:23; Tegelberg 2011:86; Ringmar 2016:142). Instead, the findings supported similar results as indicated by Hekkanen (2014:61) and Adler (2016:34), namely that an indirect translation can be more close to the original ST than the IT it was based on in the first place.

This answer is closely related to the question In case the TT translator also has access to the ST, is this discernable in the TT? In this case, the findings showed that the translators bypassed the English IT and collaborated with native speakers of the Bengali ST. This might have resulted in more foreignized TTs of the STs. Specifically, this was seen in the higher number of source-oriented
strategies that the TT translators used to transfer the ECRs from the original STs. Examples of these findings also showed that the Swedish translators used terms and ECRs that were not found in the English ITs but which had clearly some connection to the Bengali STs. This suggests that the Swedish translators bypassed the English ITs and based their translation solutions directly on the Bengali STs. Indeed, the paratexts to the Swedish TTs corroborate that the Swedish translators received help from a native-speaking collaborator, which might be an explanation to this result.

In the paratext to the Swedish TT, the translator Jan Stolpe gives an account of how he first translated the English ITs to Swedish, then had a native-speaking collaborator, Hena Basu, compare the English ITs with the Bengali STs and produce new translations from the ST. At a final stage, Jan Stolpe revised these preliminary translations together with the collaborator (Stolpe in Devi 2008:293). Stolpe also says that the other translator, Birgitta Wallin, worked in a similar fashion with the native-speaking collaborator (ibid.).

A relatively new concept in the Translation Studies field that may help shed some light on the processes involving indirect translation is multiple translatorship. Multiple translatorship explains how different “agents interact, negotiate and struggle for influence in the various phases leading up to the translated text” (Jansen & Wegener 2013:5). In this sense, the native-speaking collaborator could be seen as part of the agents that are involved in the multiple translatorship of the TTs. It is in other words possible that the collaborator has had influence on the final translation.

This shows how there are multiple, complex factors that give rise to indirect translations, making it difficult to pinpoint any exact causal correlation as to why translators choose either domesticating (acceptable, target-oriented) or foreignizing (adequate, source-oriented) strategies when translating from a ST to a TT indirectly via an IT. The question remains whether the translators of the TTs should be seen as passive agents that follow the governing norms in the Swedish target system and translate according to adequacy norms, or whether they should be seen as active agents that take an active stance to translate the ST/IT into a foreignizing translation. In the latter case, the translators could be seen as taking a stance to avoid “dominant target-language cultural values so as to signify the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text”, in other words, resistancy in Venuti’s terms (1995:23–24).

Another theory that may help explain the outcome of the foreignized translations is the retranslation hypothesis. The retranslation hypothesis posits that a first translation of a ST is more domesticating than a second translation, i.e. the retranslation, which is more foreignizing (Koskinen & Palaposki 2004:27). Venuti claims that reasons for selecting a text for retranslation could be due to the first version containing errors or “lacking linguistic correctness” (Venuti 2004:26). An indirect translation is arguably in some sense a retranslation of an original ST. The validity of the retranslation hypothesis, however, has been questioned (Koskinen & Palaposki 2004:36).
As mentioned in the beginning of this study (see Introduction, Chapter 1), there seem to be conflicting tendencies in operation here. When it comes to the translation policy in the Swedish norm system regarding the directness of translation, the threshold for indirect translations according to Lindqvist is high (2002:63), which means that there is a tolerability to use translations as source texts for creating new, indirect translations. However, the current translation policy is argued to be the opposite by both Adler (2016:34) and Alvstad (2017:151–152), with Tegelberg (2011:86) also suggesting that the number of published indirect translations has decreased in the Swedish target system. Hopefully, the present study might give some indication as to where the norms governing directness of translation in the Swedish target system are heading; although note that the Swedish target texts in the present study were published in 2008, sometime between the publication of Lindqvist on one hand and Adler and Alvstad on the other.

There is also a cost efficiency standpoint in play that cannot be denied; for instance, Ringmar (2007:6-7) argues that it is “more convenient and less risky” to employ an experienced translator translating from an intermediary language than to employ perhaps a less experienced translator who otherwise would have knowledge of the source language in question. This statement is also supported by Alvstad, who says that “[s]everal of the Swedish agents claim that it would have been difficult or impossible to find translators capable of translating the texts [i.e. the original STs] directly”, however, this “is not to imply that there are no speakers of these languages in Sweden, and so to train such speakers as translators would have been a possibility” (Alvstad 2017:154, my emphasis).

Future research would benefit from having a larger text material to be analyzed. Further studies could also benefit from comparing other languages. For instance, it would perhaps yield interesting results by comparing direct and indirect translations from the same language. A study investigating TTs and ITs from the same language would perhaps yield different results considering that it may perhaps eliminate differences regarding adequacy and acceptability norms between the target language and intermediary language. Future research could also investigate the retranslation hypothesis or the concept of multiple translatorship in the context of indirect translation.

In conclusion, the results suggest that the tendency of high-prestige literature favoring adequate translations would be stronger than the tendency of indirect translations favoring acceptable translations in the context surrounding the Swedish target texts. In addition, the source-oriented strategies in the TTs could also be seen as resistance to the “dominant target-language cultural values” (Venuti 1995:23) in order to achieve a foreignizing translation.
7 Conclusion

This study set out to investigate indirect translations translated from Bengali STs to Swedish TTs via English ITs by comparing coupled pairs of ECRs from all three languages. The purpose of this study was to examine how indirect translations differed from direct translations and to discern whether there were any particular patterns and translation strategies that translators used when transferring ECRs from a third language. The results were analyzed with a perspective based on translation norms, previous research into indirect translation, and the concept of foreignization/domestication in mind.

The results demonstrated that an indirect translation can be closer to the original ST than the IT it was based on in the first place. An unexpected finding was noted in the analysis material, namely that misunderstandings or deviations present in the ITs were not necessarily transferred to the TTs, which goes against previous literature into indirect translations (cf. Dollerup 2000:23; Tegelberg 2011:86; Ringmar 2016:142). The results also showed that the Swedish TTs contained more source-oriented transfer strategies compared to the English ITs, which displayed a higher amount of target-oriented strategies used by the translator. This is something that contradicts previous literature in the field that suggests that direct translations tend to be more close to the original ST than indirect translations (Ringmar 2016:142). This shows how multiple, complex factors can affect indirect translations. In conclusion, the results suggest that the tendency of high-prestige literature favoring adequate translations would be stronger than the tendency of indirect translations favoring acceptable translations in context of the Swedish target system. However, the source-oriented strategies in the TTs could also be seen as resistancy to the “dominant target-language cultural values” (Venuti 1995:23) by the translators, resulting in the foreignizing translations.

To finish, I would like to quote St André’s (2008:230) ironic statement:

“If translation is a poor copy, then why discuss poor copies of poor copies?”

Hopefully, this study might have brought some answers to this question.
8 References

Primary Sources


Secondary Sources


