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LOSS OF PRAGMATIC IMPACT IN THE TRANSLATION OF SINDHI IDIOMATIC EXPRESSIONS: A HALLIDAYAN PERSPECTIVE

¹Raheela Gopang*, ²Sindhu Sarfaraz, ³Summayya Sattar

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Corresponding Author:

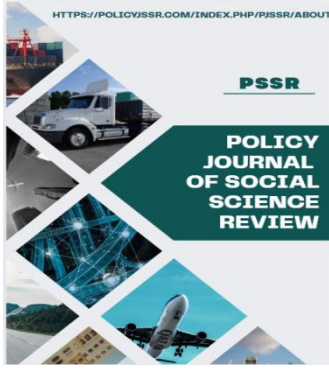
Raheela Gopang

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the loss of pragmatic impact that occurs in the translation of Sindhi idiomatic expressions into English. Sindhi, one of the oldest languages in South Asia, embodies rich traditions of folk idioms deeply connected to agrarian life, Sufi spirituality, and communal oral culture. When these culturally embedded expressions are translated into English, significant meaning and pragmatic impact is lost across various dimensions. Grounded in Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL), the study analyzes ten Sindhi idiomatic expressions selected from Sindhi folk literature, examining meaning and impact loss across three metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual. A qualitative research design was employed, with data drawn from M.G. Shahani's published collection of Sindhi idioms (2012). The findings reveal a consistent and pervasive pattern of pragmatic loss: of the ten idioms analyzed, 40% suffered major loss, 10% minimal loss, 40% partial loss, and 10% total loss. Ideational loss proved most severe, reflecting the deep cultural embeddedness of Sindhi folk idioms in geographically specific references, agricultural imagery, and Sufi cosmology. Textual loss was most consistent, arising from the rhythmic and oral nature of Sindhi idiomatic structure. Interpersonal loss manifested as the neutralization of communal irony, humor, and emotional registers. The study concludes that Sindhi idiomatic expressions are culturally untranslatable in their fullest mode, and that dominant literal translation methods fail to secure their cultural and rhetorical integrity. It recommends that translators prioritize functional equivalence, employ cultural annotations, and that institutions support the development of bilingual annotated dictionaries to preserve linguistic and cultural heritage.

Keywords: Sindhi idioms, pragmatic loss, systemic functional linguistics, translation studies, cultural untranslatability, Halliday's metafunctions.



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1. Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Language is far more than a mere tool of communication; it is a living archive of a culture's history, values, and worldview. Idiomatic expressions represent the most culturally saturated layer of any language, encoding collective wisdom, lived experience, and social identity in forms that are often untranslatable. Sindhi is the official language of Sindh and serves as a powerful symbol of national and cultural identity (Sindh Courier, n.d.). When idioms are translated from one language to another – especially across a profound cultural and sociolinguistic divide such as that between Sindhi and English – connotative meaning and pragmatic function undergo major shifts or become significantly diminished, a phenomenon referred to as the 'loss of pragmatic impact.'

Sindhi is one of the oldest languages of South Asia and possesses a rich and extensive tradition of folk idioms rooted in centuries of agrarian life, Sufi spirituality, communal oral culture, and the geographical and historical experience of the Sindh region. The translation of Sindhi idiomatic expressions into English presents a profound linguistic and cultural challenge. Unlike lexical translation, which is relatively straightforward, idiom translation requires the transfer not only of surface meaning but also of cultural imagery, emotional and social register, and rhetorical structure. When these

dimensions cannot be reproduced in the target language, pragmatic loss occurs.

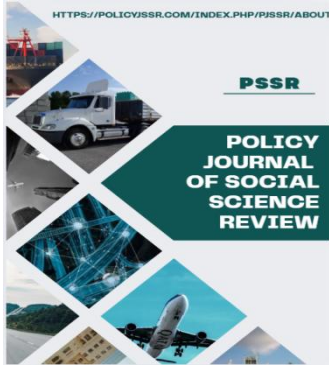
1.2 Statement of the Problem

Despite the abundant stock of Sindhi folk literature, scholarly attention to the quality and fidelity of its English translations remains limited. Existing translations of Sindhi idiomatic expressions typically sacrifice cultural depth in favor of surface-level intelligibility for English-speaking readers. This practice results in pragmatic loss that has not yet been adequately documented or theorized. This study addresses this gap by investigating the degree and nature of meaning loss in the translation of Sindhi idioms into English, using Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL) as an analytical framework.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The present study aims to:

- Identify and categorize meaning loss in the English translations of ten selected Sindhi idiomatic expressions drawn from Sindhi folk literature.
- Analyze the nature of meaning loss across the three Hallidayan metafunctions: ideational, interpersonal, and textual.
- Determine patterns and degrees of meaning loss by classifying each case as minimal, partial, major, or total.
- Contribute to the understanding of the translatability of culturally embedded linguistic expressions from Sindhi into English.



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1.4 Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in Halliday's SFL, a theory of language that understands meaning as organized across three simultaneous metafunctions. The ideational metafunction refers to language's capacity to represent experience and construe the world. The interpersonal metafunction refers to language as the enactment of social relationships, attitudes, and emotions. The textual metafunction refers to the organization of language into coherent and context-appropriate discourse. By examining meaning loss across all three metafunctions, this study provides a comprehensive account of what is gained and lost in the translation process.

1.5 Significance of the Study

This study makes an original contribution to the fields of translation studies, Sindhi linguistics, and applied SFL. By documenting meaning loss in Sindhi-to-English idiom translation with a precise theoretical foundation, it provides a basis for future translators, scholars, and cultural preservation advocates to safeguard the semantic, pragmatic, and cultural richness of Sindhi folk literature. The findings also have broader implications for the translation of endangered or under-resourced languages, where cultural memory is at risk of erosion due to inadequate translation practices.

1.6 Scope and Delimitation

This study is limited to ten Sindhi idiomatic expressions selected from

Sindhi folk literature and their existing English translations. The analysis is qualitative and interpretive, drawing on SFL as its sole theoretical lens. The study does not investigate translators' biography or historical translation context, focusing instead on the textual and semantic dimensions of the source-target relationship.

2. Literature Review

Translating idioms or culturally embedded proverbs between Sindhi and English constitutes a complex cultural and communicative act rather than a purely linguistic task. Idioms are culturally embedded, metaphorically rich, and often humorous, making them particularly challenging to render faithfully in another language. Scholars such as Eugene A. Nida (1964), Mona Baker (1992, 2018), and Patrick Zabalbeascoa (1996) offer theoretical and practical frameworks that highlight how translation strategies can help maintain meaning and cultural resonance.

2.1 Translation Theories: Equivalence and Loss

Nida's dynamic (or functional) equivalence emphasizes achieving the same impact on target-language readers as on source-language readers, rather than preserving grammatical structure or word order. He argues that translation should aim for the closest natural equivalent to the source-language message, prioritizing meaning before style (Nida, 1964, p. 166). He further stresses that idioms are culturally bound and thus resist literal representation, requiring cultural rather



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than grammatical correspondence (Nida, 1964, p. 91).

This principle becomes especially evident in Sindhi idioms. For instance, the expression **اڪين ۾ مينهن وسيو** literally: 'it rained in the eye') symbolizes a sudden burst of tears but cannot be translated word-for-word without confusing an English reader. Translation that captures only the surface denotation fails to convey the social commentary or emotional resonance embedded in the original.

2.2 The Nature of Idioms and Cultural Embeddedness

Idioms are expressions whose meaning cannot be deduced from their individual component words. According to Baker (1992), idioms are 'frozen patterns of language' that carry metaphorical or culturally nuanced meaning, often rendering them untranslatable. In Sindhi, idioms function not merely as linguistic tools but as carriers of rural wit, interpersonal tone, and communal critique.

For example, the idiom **ڊڳو نه پر، ويڙه گهري** (literally: 'no bull, but wants to wrestle') humorously critiques those who claim strength beyond their actual capacity. While humorous in its native cultural context, it loses its intended wit in English due to unfamiliar social and cultural associations. Baker (2018) argues that a translator must employ strategies to achieve the intended communicative effect of the source text in the target text.

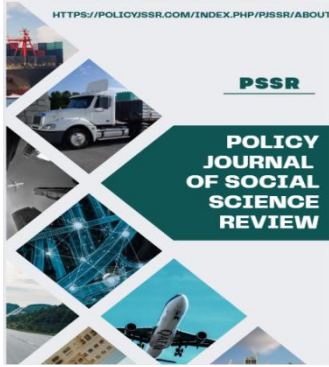
2.3 Humor in Translation: A Specialized Challenge

Zabalbeascoa (1996) examined the translation of jokes and wordplay in audiovisual translation, highlighting the importance of context over literal meaning for effective comedic rendering. He argues for using 'linguistic resource and textual leeway' to preserve the function of humor (p. 237). His functional approach supports adapting culturally embedded idioms while maintaining their comedic or satirical effect.

He further proposes that humorous content must be classified by type – irony, pun, sarcasm, absurdity – before determining an appropriate translation strategy. This recognition that humor is grounded in sound, image, or cultural logic means that each type demands a unique translation approach.

2.4 Halliday's Functional Linguistics and Idiomatic Meaning

Michael Halliday argued that language is not merely a set of grammatical rules but a social semiotic system in which meaning is tied to culture, context, and purpose of communication. Halliday (1994) proposed that language simultaneously operates through three metafunctions: ideational (representing world experiences), interpersonal (expressing relationships and attitudes), and textual (organizing discourse). In idiom translation, all three metafunctions are frequently disrupted, as Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) observe: texts and clauses function as carriers of multidimensional meanings.



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For example, Sindhi idioms employ ideational metaphors drawn from specific cultural experiences – livestock, agricultural landscapes, rural life – while also encoding interpersonal sarcasm and exploiting rhythmic repetition in their textual structure. When translated, these features are often severely compromised.

2.5 Idioms in South Asian and Indigenous Language Translation

Ghani (2011) identified challenges in translating English idioms into Arabic, including lack of equivalence and cultural mismatch – challenges that parallel those faced in Sindhi-to-English translation. M.G. Shahani (2012) compiled a corpus of approximately 3,000 Sindhi idioms, the original collection of which dates to 1937. Fehmeeda Hussain, writing as Chairperson of the Sindhi Language Authority, underscored the cultural stakes: 'Men and women each have their own distinct treasure of words. We can show the beauty and essence of our own language' (as cited in Shahani, 2012).

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a qualitative research design, which is considered most appropriate for investigating linguistic phenomena that require in-depth interpretive analysis rather than numerical measurement. Qualitative research enables the researcher to explore the richness, depth, and complexity of language use in its natural context (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). Given that the focus of this study is on

understanding how meaning, cultural connotations, and pragmatic impact are lost in the translation of Sindhi idioms into English, a qualitative approach is best suited to capturing the subtle dimensions of such linguistic shifts.

3.2 Theoretical Framework: Systemic Functional Linguistics

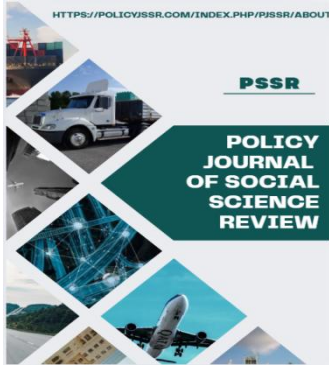
The theoretical framework underpinning this study is Michael Halliday's Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). Halliday (1985, 1994) proposes that language is a social semiotic system that functions to make meaning in context, operating simultaneously through three metafunctions.

3.2.1 The Ideational Metafunction

The ideational metafunction refers to the way language creates and encodes experiences, events, entities, and logical relations in the world. It encompasses the experiential function (how reality is represented through the transitivity system) and the logical function (how ideas are combined through clause complexes). In this study, the ideational metafunction is used to analyze whether the conceptual or experiential meaning of a Sindhi idiom is preserved or lost in its English translation. Sindhi idiomatic expressions are frequently rooted in specific cultural, agricultural, and social realities of Sindhi-speaking communities.

3.2.2 The Interpersonal Metafunction

The interpersonal metafunction concerns the way language establishes and maintains social relationships, expresses attitudes, and enacts roles between speakers. It includes mood, modality, and



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the expression of affect. In translation, idioms often carry strong interpersonal dimensions – conveying irony, humility, solidarity, or social critique. When a Sindhi idiom is rendered literally or near-literally into English, the interpersonal tone or attitudinal charge may be significantly diminished or entirely absent.

3.2.3 The Textual Metafunction

The textual metafunction entails how language organizes information into coherent and cohesive messages. It deals with theme and rheme, given and new information, and the flow of discourse. In idiomatic expressions, the textual organization – including rhythm, repetition, and parallelism – contributes substantially to the overall impact of the expression.

3.3 Population and Sampling

The population of this study is drawn from Sindhi folk literature, which includes proverbs, sayings, and expressions embedded in the oral and written traditions of Sindhi-speaking communities. A purposive sampling technique (Patton, 2002) was applied to select ten Sindhi idiomatic expressions from the published collection of Sindhi folk literature by M.G. Shahani (2012), republished by the Sindhi Language Authority, Hyderabad, Sindh. The selection criteria included:

- Idioms with strong cultural and contextual embeddedness.
- Idioms with existing English translations available for comparison.

- Idioms spanning a range of semantic domains (e.g., social relations, nature, morality, daily life).

- Idioms that reflect the three Hallidayan metafunctions – ideational, interpersonal, and textual.

3.4 Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using Halliday's three metafunctions as the analytical lens. Each selected Sindhi idiom and its English translation were examined systematically through a three-stage process:

Stage 1 – Ideational Analysis: Each idiom was analyzed for its experiential content – the participants, processes, and circumstances it encodes. The English translation was then compared to assess whether meaning was fully, partially, or minimally preserved.

Stage 2 – Interpersonal Analysis: The attitudinal and social meaning of each idiom was examined, including its tone, register, degree of formality, and emotional charge. The translation was evaluated for how adequately it replicated the interpersonal meaning of the original.

Stage 3 – Textual Analysis: The thematic structure, foregrounding, and cohesive patterns of each idiom were examined. The English translation was compared to determine whether the textual organization and rhetorical effect of the original were maintained.

To ensure trustworthiness, this study follows the criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), including credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability. Credibility was ensured through expert validation of cultural



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interpretations; dependability through consistent application of the SFL framework; confirmability through systematic textual evidence; and transferability through rich, detailed contextual descriptions.

4. Data Analysis and Findings

4.1 Idiom-by-Idiom Analysis

4.1.1 Idiom 1: انڌن ملتان ٿو (The Blind Found Multan)

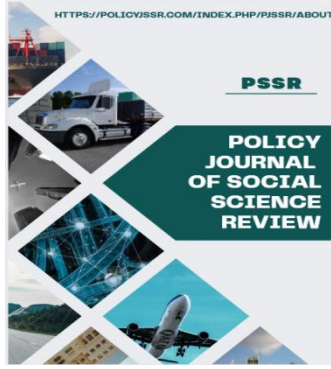
Literal meaning: The blind people found Multan.

English translation: Even the most unlikely people can achieve the unexpected; an accidental discovery by those least expected to succeed.

Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	Points to Multan – a historically sacred, spiritually significant city – found collectively by blind people (انڌن), signifying the paradox of collective achievement against all odds.	Loses the specific cultural and geographical significance of Multan and the collective plural dimension entirely.	Major Loss
Interpersonal	Carries a tone of collective wonder, irony, and local humor – expressing astonishment that a group of blind people found one of the most celebrated cities.	English rendering is flat, neutral, and lacks the ironic communal humor and collective dimension.	Major Loss
Textual	The idiom is structurally compact and paradoxical; its impact comes from the striking juxtaposition of collective blindness and collective discovery (ٿو).	English translation requires expansion and explanation, breaking the self-contained paradox and losing the plural collective force.	Major Loss

Analysis: This proverb is among the most culturally rich in Sindhi folk literature. Its power lies in the plural انڌن – not one blind man but blind people collectively who found Multan. This collective dimension adds profound depth to the paradox. Historically known as the 'city of saints,' Multan carries profound spiritual, cultural, and geographical

significance in the broader South Asian context. In Sindhi social life, this idiom is used with gentle irony and communal humor when an unlikely group achieves something extraordinary together. The English translation loses the cultural richness of Multan, the collective plural dimension, and the ironic local tone – constituting a case of major loss across all



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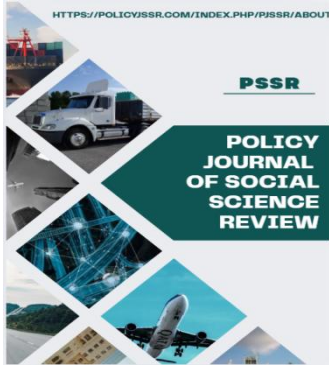
three metafunctions and representing one of the most significant instances of cultural untranslatability in this dataset.

4.1.2 Idiom 2: غريب جو پاڻ ب غريب (A Poor Man's Fate is Also Poor)

Literal meaning: A poor man has a poor destiny.

English translation: The poor are destined to remain poor; fate itself is unkind to the unfortunate.

Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	غريب (poor/unfortunate) appears twice – applied first to the person and then to their destiny – creating a deeply fatalistic perception rooted in Sindhi folk experience of poverty and social inequality.	The general idea of poverty and fate is conveyed, but the power of the repeated غريب, which binds person and destiny as one, is lost.	Major Loss
Interpersonal	Expresses deep communal resignation, social helplessness, and collective despair – a shared cry of a community that has lived under historical poverty and feudal oppression.	English rendering is neutral; the communal grief, resignation, and social critique embedded in the original are absent.	Major Loss
Textual	The repetition of غريب in a single short sentence is a complete rhetorical strategy – the echo itself conveys that poverty is	The parallelism that makes the idiom powerful is entirely lost.	Total Loss

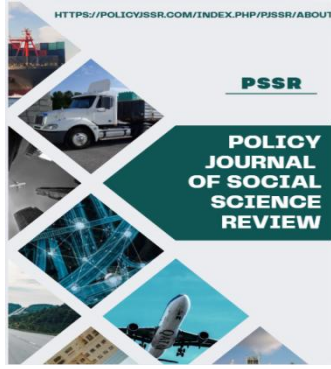


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Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
	inescapable, unavoidable, and total.		
	Analysis: This is a deeply affective proverb that captures the lived experience of generations of poor Sindhi communities under feudal conditions. The genius of this idiom lies in its use of the single word <i>غريب</i> twice – once for the person and once for their destiny – creating a cyclic representation of poverty as both identity and fate. In Sindhi society, where ruling classes historically kept the poor permanently impoverished,	this proverb carries immense weight as social critique. The English translation captures only the surface meaning while failing entirely to reproduce the rhetorical echo, the communal grief, and the historical social critique – resulting in total textual loss and major ideational and interpersonal loss. 4.1.3 Idiom 3: سچ ت بيٺو نچ (Truth Sits and Dances) English translation: Truth wins.	
Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	Uses the physical image of sitting and dancing (<i>بيٺو نچ</i>) to represent the ultimate triumph of truth – a celebratory, embodied victory.	"Truth wins" is a bare abstract statement that retains only the conclusion while discarding the entire physical, celebratory image.	Major Loss
Interpersonal	Expresses local joy, moral vindication, and collective celebration – the dancing image conveys that truth's victory is a communal, performative phenomenon.	"Truth wins" is straightforward and carries no communal warmth, joy, or sense of moral celebration.	Major Loss
Textual	The structure creates dramatic movement and energy; the imperative tone gives it rhetorical force and oral vitality rooted in Sindhi folk performance.	"Truth wins" is a static declaration with no movement; the dynamic structure of the original is destroyed.	Total Loss
	Analysis: In Sindhi folk tradition, where oral performance, music, and communal	celebration are central to social life, the dancing image resonates with enormous	



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cultural depth. The English translation "truth wins" reduces this rich, performative, culturally embedded idiom to its most minimalist possible form. It preserves only the logical conclusion while discarding the physical imagery, the imperative energy, and the communal celebration – representing one of the

most striking contrasts between source and target in the entire dataset.

4.1.4 Idiom 4: تارا چنڻ (To Pluck the Stars)

English translation: To do anything to please a person (even to reach up and pluck the stars).

Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	Plucking stars is a hyperbolic expression of devotion rooted in Sindhi folk culture.	The English translation preserves the image but encloses it in parentheses, marginalizing it.	Partial Loss
Interpersonal	Expresses extreme love, devotion, and self-sacrifice in a tender, affectionate register.	English is explanatory and detached; the emotional warmth is reduced.	Partial Loss
Textual	The idiom's power lies in its hyperbolic simplicity – one image says everything.	English expansion weakens the rhetorical impact.	Partial Loss

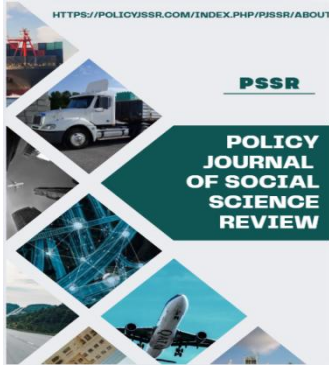
Analysis: This idiom captures the Sindhi cultural value of extreme dedication and loyalty, where one would do the impossible for a beloved. The English translation struggles because it must first explain the action and then explain the hyperbole. Enclosing the star image in parentheses reveals the translator's

uncertainty about whether the image will survive in English – effectively indicating that the translation is a gloss rather than a functional equivalent.

4.1.5 Idiom 5: تارا ڪيڻ (To Draw Out Stars / To Stare Angrily)

English translation: To stare or look angrily; to put on an angry countenance.

Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	The star/stare image (تارا) metaphorically represents the wide, fixed, blazing gaze of anger.	English loses the star metaphor entirely, reverting to a behavioral description.	Major Loss
Interpersonal	Conveys intense social tension and intimidation through a	English is interpretive but lacks visual intensity	Major Loss

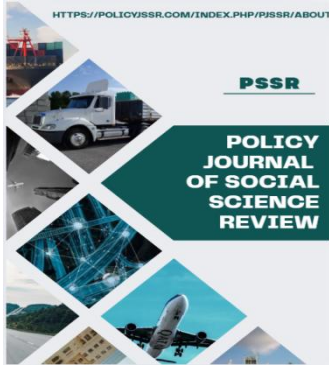


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Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
	powerful visual metaphor.	and metaphorical force.	
Textual	The use of تارا (stars/stare) for eyes creates a bizarre yet powerful textual image that operates on multiple semantic levels.	The visual metaphor is entirely absent in the English translation.	Major Loss
Analysis: This idiom uses stars as a metaphor for the wide, blazing eyes of someone consumed by anger, suggesting that the angry gaze is as vast, penetrating, and unavoidable as the stars themselves. The English translation "stare or look angrily" is simply descriptive and		behavioral, stripping away the metaphorical sophistication of comparing anger to a cosmic visual spectacle. 4.1.6 Idiom 6: تال مول گم ٿيڻ (To Lose One's Rhythm and Worth) English translation: To lose one's wits.	
Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	تال مول means rhythm and value – losing both suggests complete disorientation encompassing cognitive, emotional, and spiritual dimensions.	"Wits" captures only the cognitive loss, missing the rhythmic and values dimension.	Partial Loss
Interpersonal	Expresses sympathetic concern for someone profoundly lost and confused, with cultural resonance.	English tone is neutral and clinical.	Partial Loss
Textual	The rhythmic quality of تال مول has an inherently musical, oral quality.	English translation has lost its musicality entirely.	Partial Loss
Analysis: The Sindhi idiom combines تال گم ٿيڻ (rhythm/beat/worth) with تال گم ٿيڻ (becoming lost) to describe losing both one's rhythm in life and one's sense of self-worth. The English "to lose one's wits" captures only the cognitive dimension while completely missing the deeper cultural representation of losing one's rhythm, balance, and inner value –		resulting in partial loss across all three metafunctions. 4.1.7 Idiom 7: تانگهي ۾ ترهو ٻڌڻ (To Gird One's Weapons While in the Saddle) English translation: To be on guard or careful from the very beginning.	



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Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	The image of tying a girdle or weapon while still mounted in the saddle evokes military preparedness from the very outset.	English captures the general concept of early caution but loses the martial imagery.	Partial Loss
Interpersonal	Transfers wisdom, experience, and a martial sense of survival and urgency.	English is generic and loses the martial, authoritative tone.	Partial Loss
Textual	The physical, action-laden image creates a concrete, immediate textual scene.	English is abstract by comparison.	Partial Loss

Analysis: This idiom draws on the imagery of a warrior who prepares his weapons and girds himself while still mounted – suggesting the highest level of readiness from the very beginning. The English "to be careful from the very beginning" captures the temporal dimension but loses the physical image of

a warrior and the martial cultural context that gives the idiom its authority and urgency.

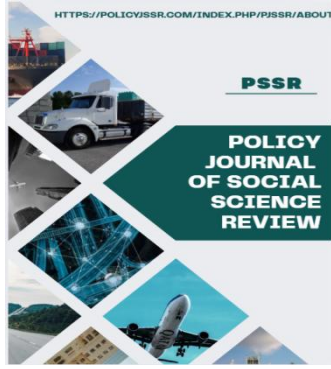
4.1.8 Idiom 8: بل کائڻ (To Toss About in Sickness)

English translation: To toss about (in sickness); to be uneasy in sickness.

Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	بل کائڻ suggests the restless, helpless turning of the body – a vivid physical image of suffering.	English adequately captures the physical restlessness.	Minimal Loss
Interpersonal	Conveys suffering, helplessness, and the painful experience of acute illness with emotional intensity.	"Uneasy in sickness" is mild relative to the original's emotional charge.	Partial Loss
Textual	The physical, active image creates a text felt as immediate and visceral.	English is explanatory rather than visceral.	Partial Loss

Analysis: This idiom clearly captures the restless, helpless tossing of a sick body.

The English translation is close to the ideational meaning but softens the



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interpersonal tone considerably. The suffering conveyed by **کائن** is reduced to the meager word "unease" – far too mild to capture the acute anguish the Sindhi

idiom conveys – resulting in partial interpersonal and textual loss.

4.1.9 Idiom 9: **بلند اختر** (*High Star / Elevated Destiny*)

English translation: Of good fortune.

Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	Aakhtar (اختر) means star; a high star displays an elevated destiny rooted in Sindhi and Persian astrological tradition.	"Good fortune" loses the celestial imagery and the cosmological framework entirely.	Major Loss
Interpersonal	Represents divine favor and blessedness through a poetic, elevated image.	English is generic and carries no sense of the divine or celestial.	Major Loss
Textual	The celestial image creates elevation, grandeur, and poetic resonance in the expression.	English is prosaic by comparison.	Major Loss

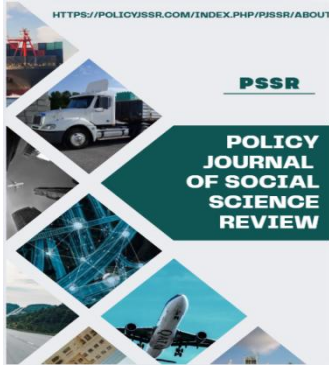
Analysis: **بلند اختر** literally means 'high star' – one whose star of destiny is always elevated. This expression is rooted in Sindhi and Persian cultural traditions in which fortune and destiny are mapped onto the celestial sphere. The English translation "good fortune" strips away the entire celestial imagery, the sense of

divine favor, and the poetic grandeur that the original conveys – resulting in major loss across all three metafunctions.

4.1.10 Idiom 10: **بلو ملانڻ** (*To Bring Into Balance*)

English translation: To make debit and credit sides tally with each other; to square up accounts.

Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss
Ideational	بلو ملانڻ suggests bringing two things into symmetry and harmony – with broader connotations beyond mere financial accounting.	English limits the expression to the financial domain exclusively.	Partial Loss
Interpersonal	Used in contexts of reconciliation, interpersonal harmony, and balancing competing interests – not only financial matters.	English is exclusively commercial in register.	Partial Loss
Textual	The balancing image has broad	English narrows it to	Partial

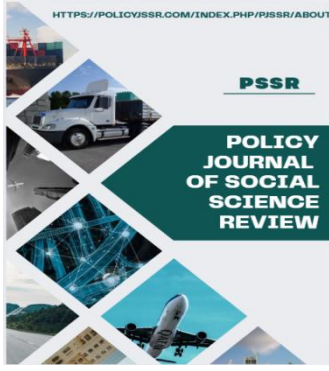


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Metafunction	Source (Sindhi)	Target (English)	Loss			
	social resonance and applicability.	relational accounting terminology.	Loss			
Analysis:	While ملتان can refer to financial balancing, its use in Sindhi extends to any situation where two parties, ideas, or accounts must be brought into harmony. The English translation limits it to the financial domain, erasing its broader social and cultural scope. The social and relational dimension – reconciling people, balancing opposing interests – is entirely	lost through the exclusive use of financial terminology.				
		5. Summary of Findings 5.1 Overall Pattern of Pragmatic Loss The analysis of ten Sindhi idiomatic expressions reveals a consistent and significant pattern of pragmatic loss across all three Hallidayan metafunctions. The following table summarizes the degree of meaning loss for each idiom:				
No.	Sindhi Idiom	English Translation	Ideational	Interpersonal	Textual	Overall
1	ملتان انڌن لڏو	Blind people found Multan	Major	Major	Major	Major
2	غريب جو پاڳ ب غريب	A poor man has poor destiny	Major	Major	Total	Major
3	سچ ت بڻو نچ	Truth wins	Major	Major	Total	Major
4	تارا چڻڻ	To pluck stars to please	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial
5	تارا ڪيڻ	Stare angrily	Major	Partial	Major	Major
6	تال مول گم ٿيڻ	To lose one's wits	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial
7	تانهي ڏانهن ترهو پڌڻ	To be on guard from the beginning	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial
8	بل ڪائڻ	To toss about in sickness	Minimal	Partial	Partial	Minimal
9	بلند اختر	Of good fortune	Major	Major	Major	Major



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No.	Sindhi Idiom	English Translation	Ideational	Interpersonal	Textual	Overall
10	بلو ملائڻ	To square up accounts	Partial	Partial	Partial	Partial

5.2 Distribution of Meaning Loss

The findings reveal the following distribution of meaning loss across the ten idioms: Major Loss – 4 idioms (40%); Partial Loss – 4 idioms (40%); Minimal Loss – 1 idiom (10%); Total Loss – 1 idiom (10%). The predominance of major and partial loss confirms that meaning loss is the norm rather than the exception in Sindhi-to-English idiom translation.

5.3 Metafunction-Wise Findings

Ideational Loss was the most severe and recurring type of pragmatic loss. In five of the ten idioms analyzed, major ideational loss was recorded, indicating that the cultural and experiential content rooted in Sindhi folk life – including references to specific geographies, agriculture, music, and Sufi cosmology – represents the most difficult dimension to translate. This reaffirms that Sindhi idiomatic expressions are deeply connected to cultural and material realities that have no direct equivalent in English.

Interpersonal Loss was moderate across the dataset. In most cases, English translations preserved some elements of social or emotional meaning, though often in a reduced, neutralized, or overly formal register. Loss was particularly evident in the reduction of communal warmth, irony, urgency, and interpersonal social pressure.

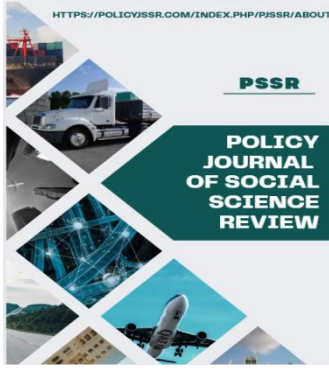
Textual Loss was most consistent in idioms that relied on repetition, parallelism, or physical imagery for their rhetorical effect. The musical and rhythmic quality of Sindhi idiomatic expression – rooted in an oral folk tradition – was almost entirely lost in translation, reflecting the fundamental incompatibility between the oral-performative register of Sindhi folk idioms and the conventions of written English.

6. Conclusion and Recommendations

6.1 Conclusions

This study leads to three principal conclusions. First, Sindhi idiomatic expressions are culturally untranslatable in their fullest sense: they carry layers of ideational, interpersonal, and textual meaning that English cannot accommodate without significant reduction. The three metafunctions of Halliday's SFL provide a rigorous and comprehensive framework for both documenting and theorizing this loss.

Second, the dominant translation strategy employed in the examined corpus – literal or near-literal rendering – consistently fails to preserve the cultural and rhetorical integrity of source idioms. The translation of culturally specific proper nouns (such as Multan in انڌن ملتان لڏو), astrological imagery (بلند غريب جو), and fatalistic repetition (غريب جو)



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پياڳ ب غريب) into generic English phrases represents a systematic sacrifice of cultural memory on the altar of surface intelligibility.

Third, meaning loss is not random but patterned: idioms containing cultural proper nouns, rhyming structures, and vivid physical or celestial imagery suffer the greatest loss, while idioms with more universally accessible behavioral referents survive translation with partial rather than total loss.

6.2 Recommendations

For Translators: Translators of Sindhi folk literature should prioritize functional equivalence over literal translation. Where no English idiomatic equivalent exists, descriptive footnotes or cultural annotations should be employed to preserve the ideational depth of the original.

For Researchers: Future studies should extend the SFL-based framework employed in this study to larger corpora of Sindhi folk idioms, proverbs, and folk poetry, with the aim of developing a comprehensive taxonomy of Sindhi-English meaning loss patterns.

For Institutions: Cultural and academic institutions invested in the preservation of Sindhi linguistic heritage should support the development of bilingual annotated dictionaries and translation guides that document the cultural context of Sindhi folk idioms, making them accessible to future generations and to translators operating across linguistic borders.

6.3 Limitations

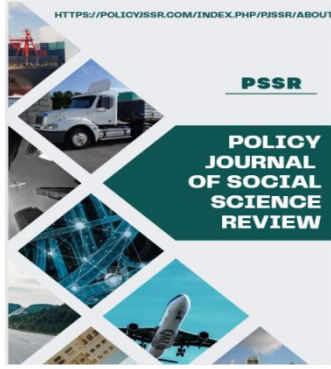
This study is limited to a purposive sample of ten idioms and does not claim to represent the full range of Sindhi folk literature. The analysis is qualitative and interpretive, and different analysts working within the SFL framework may reach different conclusions. The study also does not examine the socio-historical conditions under which the translations were produced. These limitations open productive directions for future inquiry.

6.4 Final Remarks

Sindhi folk idioms are not merely linguistic repertoire; they are containers of cultural memory, social history, and communal identity. When these expressions are translated into English with major or total loss, something more than semantic content is sacrificed – a community's worldview is diminished. As linguists and cultural stewards, scholars and translators alike bear a responsibility to ensure that when a language's folk expressions cross linguistic borders, they carry as much of their original soul as possible. For when a language loses its idioms, the world loses a way of seeing.

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