

# Translection, Brajification and the erasure of earlier literary idioms in manuscript transmission

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**Abstract:** Translation between languages, often between a cosmopolitan and a vernacular, is well attested in South Asia. In contrast, ‘translection’, that is shifts from one literary idiom or lect to another, has hardly received any attention. Early modern vernacular manuscript transmission allowed changing a vernacular literary idiom into another. Variant readings of texts preserved in manuscripts show that the literary idiom of a given work was often hotly contested by scribes. Normally translection was deployed in order to modernise, to ‘Brajify’, an archaic lect, or simply to adjust its morphology to more widespread linguistic forms. Not paying attention to the process of scribal Brajification may obscure our present perception of the scope of Braj Bhasha in late medieval and early modern literary works.

**Keywords:** vernacular, translection, Brajification, literary idiom, lect, early modern, manuscript transmission, variant readings, scribes

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## Introduction

This article focusses on literary ‘translection’, a specific phenomenon of Classical Hindi wherein the work in a certain literary (dia)lect is reworked into another closely related one. Classical Hindi is more than just an umbrella term for a plethora of mutually intelligible literary idioms, such as Braj Bhasha, Avadhi, Pingal (that is Rajasthani-inflected Braj Bhasha), or the mixed idiom Sadhukkari, as well as the neighbouring idiom of Marwari (Western Rajasthani). These idioms had a certain cohesion and permeability among themselves. As we are going to see, scribes and authors were able to move from one of them to another. Works in them were frequently anthologised together or incorporated into the same codex.

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In this piece, I will first show how trans-linguaging or translation is different from translection and then discuss examples of the latter. Translation in South Asia operates through the use of equivalences. The literary idioms of early modern north India are highly Sanskritised and thus languages share a substantial part of their lexicon. Just as the earliest Sanskrit commentators ~~that~~ glossed Sanskrit words with their synonyms, early modern translators tended to avoid using the same word in the same sense.<sup>2</sup> As we are going to see, translection will be similar to another Sanskrit technique, the giving of a *śhāyā* or 'shadow version' to Prakrit speeches within a drama, wherein the same words and structures are repeated in an apparently more accessible idiom.

## Translation with equivalences

Ramanujan famously classified translation as variously iconic, indexical, and symbolic, which roughly stand for word-to-word and free translation and for interlingual reworking respectively.<sup>3</sup> Below, I am going to examine examples of iconic translation. It should be mentioned that sustained iconic translations are hard to find. Poets moved between 'free' translation, compressing or extending the original passages, and close, word-to-word, translation. In order to demonstrate the difference in approach between translection and translation, I will cite two examples of close translation below. The first one is a translation from Sanskrit into Hindi and the other from Hindi (Avadhi) to Bengali. The following Sanskrit lines in which Rama admonishes Sita about how she should behave in his absence are from the *Vālmīki-Rāmāyaṇa*,

भरतस्य समीपे ते नाहं कथ्यः कदाचन;

ऋद्धियुक्ता हि पुरुषा न सहन्ते परस्तवम्;

तस्मान् न ते गुणाः कथ्या भरतस्याग्रतो मम।

bharatasya samīpe te nāhaṁ kathyah kadācana;

ṛddhiyuktā hi puruṣā na sahante parastavam;

tasmān na te guṇāḥ kathyā bharatasyāgrato mama. (Ay. 23,23)

*You are never to boast of me in the presence of Bharata.*

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An example of this type of early commentary is the *Raghupañcikā* of Vallabhadeva. See Vallabhadeva, *Raghupañcikā, The Raghupañcikā of Vallabhadeva: being the earliest commentary on the Raghuvamśa of Kālidāsa, Vol. 1, Critical Edition with Introduction and Notes* (Groningen: Egbert Forsten, 2003).

<sup>3</sup> On early modern translation in India, see A. K. Ramanujan, "Three Hundred Rāmāyaṇas: Five Examples and Three Thoughts on Translation," in *Many Rāmāyaṇas: The Diversity of a Narrative Tradition in South Asia*, ed. Paula Richman (Berkeley ; Oxford: University of California Press, 1991). as well as John E. Cort, "Making It Vernacular in Agra: The Practice of Translation by Seventeenth-Century Digambar Jains," in *Tellings and Texts: Singing, Story-Telling and Performance*, ed. Francesca Orsini and Katherine Butler Schofield (Cambridge: Open Book Publishers, 2015).

*Men with wealth cannot bear to hear others praised,  
and so you must never boast of my virtues in front of Bharata.*<sup>4</sup>

In 1442, the Rāmāyaṇa was rendered into Hindi by the poet Viṣṇu(dās) in Gwalior. Although we cannot exclude the mediation of a possibly oral version, it seems that Viṣṇu vernacularised a text that was close to the above lines. Since the Baroda critical edition does not list substantial variants here, the Sanskrit text of this verse appears to have been stable. The earliest extant manuscript for the Braj Bhasha version of our received text for the above lines is as follows,

भरथहि आगैं मेरी बात; तुम मति कछु कहौ कुसरात।

सुन्दरि, जाहि पास धन होइ; पर-कीरति सहि सकत न कोइ।

bharathahi āgaĩ merī bāta; tuma mati kachu kahau kusarāta.

sundari, jāhi pāsa dhana hoi; para-kīrati sahi sakata na koi. (*Rāmāyan*, 3,33).

*Do not talk of me and of my wellbeing in front of Bharata, my beautiful lady, since no one with wealth can bear the fame of another.*

The 48 syllables in the Sanskrit śloka metre are translated into 46 syllables of Hindi moraic *caupāī*. Although the length is comparable, there are omissions and additions in the Braj version. The Sanskrit repeated admonition sandwiching a statement on general morals, is only given once in Hindi, which in turn adds the vocative *sundari*, ‘o beautiful woman’ to underline that the text is not simply didactic but part of a conversation.

All the words in Viṣṇu’s couplet have Sanskrit etymons. Many of them are also used in Hindi in the same (*tatsama*) form. (*samīpe* ‘near’, 穆ddhi ‘increase; prosperity; success; wealth’, *puruṣa* ‘man’, *stava/stuti* ‘praise’, *guṇa* ‘good quality’), yet none of them is deployed in the translation. Instead, the poet uses *āgaĩ* ‘in front’, *dhana* ‘wealth’, the pronoun *koi* ‘anyone’, *kīrati* ‘fame’ and *kusarāta* ‘well-being, good news’. In the case of 穆ddhi and *guṇa*, words with wide semantic range, the poet has restricted and specified the meaning. He only retained Sanskrit words when they were not emphatic and had no alternatives, such as in the case of *para-* ‘of another’ and *sah-* ‘to bear’ and the negative particle *na*. The poet Viṣṇu, however, is inclined to use cognates that have undergone substantial phonetic change, *āgaĩ* (cf. *agrata*), *kah-* (cf. *kathya-*). Sanskrit idiomatic expressions that are difficult to understand are translated into close Braj expressions. Thus the personal pronoun *aham* ‘of me’ becomes *merī bāta* ‘my matter’, the repeated *na kathyah/kathyā* ‘should not be said’ could have been rendered easily by the Braj passive subjunctive *na kahiyai* ‘should not be said,’ but underlining the dramatic aspect of the conversation, the message is rendered by the imperative *mati kačhu kahau* ‘do not say anything’ distantly echoing the Sanskrit *na kadācana* ‘never’. 穆ddhiyuktā hi puruṣā ‘men with wealth’ became the natural Hindi *jāhi pāsa dhana hoi* ‘those who have wealth’, establishing a relative-correlative sentence. The

Sanskrit *na sahante* ‘(they) do not bear’ became *sahi sakata na koi* ‘no one can bear’. All this gives a natural flow to the Braj version. Viṣṇu’s translation was a complex process deploying various translation strategies, shifting the emphasis towards the dramatic and producing a fluent text exploiting the peculiarities of Hindi.

A similar translation strategy is deployed when one vernacular is translated into another. The example below is the first lines of Jāyasī’s Sufi love narrative *Padmāvat* (1540) and its Bengali translation by Ālāol (1648).

सँवराँ आदि एक करतारु; जेइं जिउ दीन्ह कीन्ह संसार

sāvaraū ādi eka karatāru; jeī jiu dīnha kīnha saṁsāru. (Jāyasī: *Padmāvat*, 1)<sup>5</sup>

*In the beginning, I bring to mind the One, the Creator, who gave life and made the world.*

প্রথমে প্রনাম করি এক করতার; জেই প্রভু জিব দানে স্থাপিল সংসার

prathame pranāma kari eka karatāra; jei prabhu jiba dāne sthāpila saṁsāra. (Ālāol: *Padmāvati*)<sup>6</sup>

*At first, I salute the One, the Creator, the Lord who as a gift of life established the world.*

The 22 syllables of the moraic Hindi *caupāi* are translated into the 28 syllables of the Bengali *payār*. The same translation technique can be observed in this case, too, with the difference that the key terminology (*eka* ‘one’, *karatāra* ‘Creator’, *jiu/jiba* ‘life’, *saṁsāra* ‘world’) is retained. For much of the rest, the poet has deployed equivalents. Thus, Avadhi *savaraū* ‘I bring to mind’, *ādi* ‘in the beginning’, *kīnha* ‘made’ became *pranāma kari* ‘I salute’, *prathame* ‘at first’ and *sthāpila* ‘established’, respectively. The expression *jiu dīnha* ‘gave life’ has become *jiba dāne* ‘in/as gift of life’. The relative pronoun *jeī/jei* is incidentally homonymous in both languages. A more striking example of equivalences on the morphological level is found in the translation of the subsequent fourteen *caupāi* half lines (*pādas*), each starting with the word *kīnhesī* ‘he made’. This form is an archaic Avadhi perfect from the root *kar-*. The most frequent Avadhi plural perfective form is *kīnhe* to which the archaic *-si* is added here. The suffix does not change the meaning of the word but rather elevates it into the realm of the ancient. In his translation, Ālāol changed the verb into *sṛj-* ‘to create,’ for which he used the Bengali past tense *sṛjileka* ‘he created’. The tense is formed by adding the archaic *-ka* to the usual past tense *srijila* ‘he created’. In this way, Ālāol deployed an equivalent not only to the verb but also to a small semantic unit creating the same stylistic effect as the Avadhi. Thus, *kīnhesi agini pavana jala khehā* ‘He made the fire, the air, the water and the dust’ becomes *sṛjileka aguni pavana jala kṣeti* carrying exactly the same meaning.

<sup>5</sup> Vasudev Sharan Agraval, ed. *Padmāvat* (Jhansi: Sāhitya-Sadan, 2000), p. 1.

<sup>6</sup> Ālāol, *Padmāvati, Padmāvati: Jāyasī o Ālāol* (Calcutta: West Bengal Book Board, 1985).



In the manuscript copied in 1577 we find the line in the following form,

फणि पटु खोलि दिखाया जाम । मण अकुलाणि सुंदर ताम ॥

phaṇi paṭu kholi dikhāyā jāma, maṇa akulāṇi sundara tāma.

*After that, when [Nārada] opened and showed him her image, pangs of desire filled the heart of that beautiful person.*

All scribes seem to retain the archaic retroflex *ṇ*, although literary Braj Bhasha does not have it. This may have produced an archaic or Rajasthani feel that linked the text to the Apabhramsha or Maru Gurjar Jain world. In the 1577 manuscript, the opening word is a variation on the Sanskrit *punaḥ* ‘after that’ and the current Braj form *puni* is only present in one manuscript with a retroflex *ṇ* as *puṇi*. The Apabhramsha tadbhava *puḍu* ‘image’ became *paṭu*, a form close to modern usage. Similarly, the Apabhramsha causative *dikhāliu* ‘made to see, showed’ became the Khari Boli *dikhāyā*, a form used even today. The other two manuscripts are not so radical. They retain the causative suffix *-āl-* and one of them contains the modernised perfective ending in *-iya*. The 1577 scribe rejected the tadbhava word *naravaī* (<*narapati*) for king as it was not in current usage by the sixteenth century and replaced it with *sundara* ‘beautiful’. He also removed the Apabhramsha perfective ending from *akulāṇāi*, but the preserved alternative *akulāṇi* is unmetrical and possibly corrupt. The two other later manuscripts give the metrically correct Braj form *akulāno/akulānau*. Due either to their being in rhyming position or being unemphatic, the archaic *jāma... tāma...* “when... then...” correlatives remained unchanged. The reason for the variation *chodi/kholi* ‘released’/‘opened’ is unclear. All three later manuscripts have *kholi*. Is it connected to the spread of paper and the changing materiality of images?

Although linguistic modernisation is not absent from the 1548 manuscript, it does not present translection to the degree that later manuscripts do. The direction of modernisation is not ‘pure’ Braj Bhasha but rather a mixture of Braj and other features, thus bringing the language close to the Sadhukkari of Sants, whose rejection of Hindu ritualism was closer to Jain thinking than the Krishna poetry produced in Braj Bhasha.

### Āndāyan

In the other example, a work that is today perceived to be the earliest Avadhi narrative is presented as close to Braj Bhasha in its Devanagari manuscript. Dā’ūd’s *Āndāyan* was composed in around 1379 in Dalmau on the banks of the Ganges. Its most complete Arabic-script manuscript is preserved in Manchester. The example below is transcribed in Gupta’s edition (stanza 62, lines 1 and 3) as,

सवन कसुनां कहउं हउं काहा | बोलीउं सोइ जो देखिउं आहा ||

savana kasunām kahaūm haūm kāhā; bolīūm soi jo dekhīūm āhā.

...

चारिउं भुवन फिरत हउं आवा| गोवरु देखेउं नगरु सोहावा||<sup>10</sup>

čāriūm bhuvana phirata haiūm āvā; govaru dekheum nagaru sohāvā. (v. 62, lines 1&3)<sup>11</sup>

*“I am not singing about something I overheard; I speak of things I have seen.*

...

*After wandering about everywhere, I came to the charming city of Govar.”* (tr. R. Cohen)<sup>12</sup>

The same couplet is preserved in the Fatehpur Nāgarī manuscript as,

श्रवनक सुन कहीं हैं कहा|; बोल्यो सोइ जो देखैं अहा||

śravanaka suna kahaum haiṁ kahā; bolyo soi jo dekhaim ahā.

...

चारि भुवन भीतरि जौं आवा| देख्या गोवरु नगरु सुहावा||

čāri bhuvana bhītari jauṁ āvā; dekhyā govaru nagaru suhāvā.<sup>13</sup>

In this case, following the editor MP Gupta we assume that the words in the Arabic script in the Manchester ms originally stood for old Avadhi forms. However, the Fatehpur scribe vocalised several of them following the norms of Braj Bhasha. Some of the Fatehpur/Bikaner readings are possible due to use of the Arabic script, since lacking the hamza (hiatus) sign does not allow differentiation between Avadhi *kahaūm* ‘I say’ and Braj *kahaum*. Other reasons for variation include obvious errors (*haūm/haim* for ‘am’/‘are’), reading long syllables as short (as is the licence in vernacular poetry) *sohāvā/suhāvā* ‘is pleasing,’ and the widespread scribal practice of the omission of nasalisation (*bolūm/bolyo* ‘(I) said’). Interestingly, the direction of variations in these three cases is always towards Braj forms. Further variations, always in the same direction, include changing the rhyme words *kāhā* and *āhā* ‘was’ into Braj *kahā* and Avadhi *ahā*; the reworking of Madhyadeśī *čāriūm* (HU *čārom* ‘all four’) into Braj *čāri* (HU *čār* ‘four’), of the Apabhramsha/Madhyadeśī *savana* ‘ear’ into the Sanskrit *śravanaka* and of the Madhyadeshi/Avadhi *dekheum* ‘I saw’ into old Khari Boli *dekhyā* (HU *dekhā*).

<sup>10</sup> بولیون، جو دیکھون اھا // جاریون، دیکھیو، سہاوا کھون ہون کاھا

<sup>11</sup> Mata Prasad Gupta, ed. *Čāndāyan: Dāūd-Viračit Pratham Hindī Sūfī Prem-Kāvya* (Agra: Pramanik Prakashan, 1967), p. 60.

<sup>12</sup> Dā’ūd, *Čāndāyan, The Chandayan* (Marg Foundation, 2024), p. 112.

<sup>13</sup> This version is reconstructed on the basis of Gupta’s variants.

Sheldon Pollock noted that, in Europe, Latin was read in the first millennium according to updated Romance pronunciation, but he was not able to trace this practice with regards to Sanskrit.<sup>14</sup> However, the modernised vocalisation of the Arabic-script original is a similar practice, making translection possible.

### Kavitāvalī

The following example again presents an Avadhi to Braj translection in a text with a relatively stable written transmission. The *Kavitāvalī* of Tulsīdās (d. c1623) is a collection of the poet's quatrains in Braj Bhasha. Tulsīdās himself shifted from composing in the traditional Avadhi into Braj in the second part of his life. However, *chappay* 117 of the 'Uttarakāṇḍa' of this collection appears to have first been composed in Avadhi and was later Brajified. It is also included in its Braj form in the modern vulgate text present in the *Tulsī-granthāvalī* and in the popular Gita Press editions.

को न क्रोध निरदह्यो काम बस केहि नहिं कीन्हों।  
 को न लोभ दृढ फंद बाँधि त्रासन करि दीन्हों।  
 कौन हृदय नहिं लाग कठिन अति नारिनयनसर।  
 लोचनजुत नहिं अंध भयो श्री पाइ कौन नर।

सुरनागलोक महिमंडलहु को जु मोह कीन्हों जय न।  
 कह तुलसिदास सो ऊबरै जिहि राख राम राजिव-नयन॥

ko na krodha niradahyo kāma basa kehi nahim **kīnhoṁ**;  
 ko na lobha dṛḍha phaṁda bāṁdhi trāsana kari **dīnhoṁ**.  
 kauna hr̥daya nahim lāga kaṭhina ati nāri-nayana-sara;  
 locanajuta nahim aṁdha **bhayo** śrī pāi **kauna** nara.  
 sura-nāga-loka mahimamḍalahu ko ju moha **kīnhoṁ** jaya na;  
 kaha tulasidāsa **so** ūbarai **jīhi** rākha rāma rājivanayana.<sup>15</sup>

*Whom has anger not inflamed?*

*and whom has lust not overpowered?*

*Whom has not greed afflicted,*

*binding him in firm noose?*

*Whose heart has not been pierced*

<sup>14</sup>

<sup>15</sup> Tulsīdās, *Kavitāvalī*, 1st ed., *Śrīmadgōsvāmī tulasīdāsajīvirācīta Kavitāvalī (hindī anuvād-sahit)* (Gorakhpur: Gita Press, 1937), p. 179.

*by the most keen of arrows, women's eyes?  
And what man who possesses a fortune  
is not blind though retaining sight?*

*Whom in the worlds of gods and snakes  
and even here on earth has infatuation not overcome?*

– Says *Tulsī Dās* only he is safe  
whose protection is lotus-eyed *Rām*. (tr. R. Allchin)<sup>16</sup>

However, in the earliest recorded form, a manuscript copied in 1691 and preserved at the Hindi Sahitya Sammelan, Allahabad, the Braj forms given in bold are in Avadhi,

को न क्रोध निरदह्यो काम बस केहि नहिं कीन्हेउ।  
को न लोभ दृढ फंद बाँधि त्रासन करि दीन्हेउ॥  
कौन हृदय नहिं लाग कठिन अति नारि-नयन-सर।  
लोचनजुत नहिं अंध भएउ श्री पाइ कवन नर।  
सुर-नाग-लोक महि-मंडलहु को जु मोह कीन्हेउ जय न।  
कह तुलसिदास ते ऊबरै जेहि राख राम राजिव-नयन॥

ko na krodha niradahyo kāma basa kehi nahim̄ **kīnheu**;  
ko na lobha dṛḍha phaṁda bāṁdhi trāsana kari **dīnheu**.  
kauna hṛdaya nahim̄ lāga ka.thina ati nāri-nayana-sara;  
locanajuta nahim̄ aṁdha **bhaeu** śrī pāi **kavana** nara.  
sura-nāga-loka mahim̄.dalahu ko ju moha **kīnheu** jaya na;  
kaha tulasidāsa **te** ūbarai **jehi** rākha rāma rājivanayana.

<sup>16</sup> F. Raymond Allchin, *Kavitāvalī, Unesco Collection of Representative Works. Indian Series* (London: Allen and Unwin, 1964), p. 176.

In this case the original meaning is fully preserved but the dialectal affiliation of a poem that stood out as Avadhi in a Braj corpus was changed into Braj by close morphological modifications.

### Rāmcarit-mānas

In the case of the *Kavitāvalī*, the whole collection was homogenised into Braj Bhasha. However, the attraction of Braj Bhasha was so strong that we can find examples of translection even in the most popular Avadhi text, Tulsīdās’s epic, the *Rāmcarit-mānas*. The twentieth-century vulgate text of a sample couplet is given below,

प्रथम जन्म के चरित अब कहँ सुनहु बिहगेस।

सुनि प्रभु पद रति उपजइ जातें मिटहिं कलेस ॥

prathama janma ke carita aba kahaūm sunahu bihagesa;  
suni prabhu pada rati upajai jātem miṭahim kalesa. (7.96ka)

*Now I will tell of my deeds in a previous birth,  
king of birds. Listen attentively,  
for in hearing them love will arise  
for the Lord’s feet, by which suffering is erased.* (tr. P. Lutgendorf)<sup>17</sup>

The same couplet in the first extant complete manuscript of the *Mānas* (copied in 1648) is already Brajified. The Avadhi words कहँ *kahaūm* ‘I say’ and उपजइ *upajai* ‘is born’ are given in the Braj forms कहँ *kahaum* and उपजै *upajai*.<sup>18</sup> Since the Avadhi forms *sunahu* ‘listen’ and *miṭahim* ‘are destroyed’ are also accommodated in Braj, with the reworking of the two endings, the couplet reads as a Braj one conforming more to the linguistic tastes of the time of copying.

Moreover, linguistic modernisation is carried into nineteenth-century print culture where the *ardhatasama* forms—that is Sanskrit words conforming to Classical Hindi morphology—are reinstated as *tatsama* words. This process is facilitated by the existence of *tatsama* forms in the early text. An instance of early *tatsama* use is जन्म *janma* instead of the *ardhatatsama* जन्म *janama* by the time of the earliest available manuscripts.<sup>19</sup> Modern Standard Hindi prefers *tatsama* and thus the text was brought closer to the morphology of emerging modern Hindi.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>17</sup> P. Lutgendorf, tr., *The Epic of Ram*, Murty Classical Library of India, vol. 7, p. 206 (Hindi), 207 (translation).

<sup>18</sup> A critical edition using primarily this manuscript for the main text is Tulsīdās, *Rāmcaritmānas* (Varanasi: Kāśīrāj, [1962]).. This couplet is on p. 437.

<sup>19</sup> No early manuscript has *janama* in the apparatus in the Kāśīrāj edition. Tulsīdās, *Rāmcaritmānas* (Varanasi: Kāśīrāj, [1962]), p. 498. However, Mataprasad Gupta reads *janama* in his edition (Mataprasad Gupta, ed. *Tulsī granthāvalī*, Hindustani Akademy, Allahabad, 1973, vol. 1, p. 543.

<sup>20</sup> Chinmanlal Goswami while discussing the grammar of the *Mānas* mentioned the editorial strategy that “spellings should be according to the era of printing and not of the era when the book was actually written.” Śrīrāmcaritmānas pāṭhāntar sahit, Gita Press, Gorakhpur, [?], p. 759, quoted in Singhal, Brajendra Kumar, Hardās granthāvalī, Delhi: Dhārikā Publications, 2007, p. 61.

प्रथम जन्म के चरित अब कहीं सुनहु विहंगेश ;

सुनि प्रभु पद रति ऊपजै जाते मिटै कलेश

prathama janma ke ćarita aba **kaḥauṁ** sunahu vihaṁgeśa;  
suni prabhu pada rati **ūpajai** jāte miṭai kaleśa. (7.137ka)<sup>21</sup>

The word *janma* is kept in this text, too. The text follows the Brajifications of the 1648 manuscript and even replaces *miṭahim* “are destroyed”, a Braj-Avadhī present-tense verbal form with the unequivocally Braj *miṭai* “is destroyed”. A more conspicuous modernisation is the use of the Sanskrit *vihaṁgeśa* “lord of birds” and the spelling of *kalesa* “suffering” with the Sanskrit ś – normally absent from Braj and Avadhī – bringing the spelling close to the Sanskrit *kleśa*. A further variation on the vulgate text is the long *ū* of *ūpajai* “arises” recognising the author’s licence that the final short *-i* of *sunī* before the syllable *pra-* does not count as long and thus producing a metrically correct text agreeing with Fairbanks’s rule on the stress.<sup>22</sup>

### Bājīd

Rajasthani dialects were considered in most of the twentieth century to under the umbrella of Hindi but Rajasthani has been recognised as an independent language by the Indian literary academy, the Sāhitya Akādmī in 1974. The example below is by the prolific Sant author Bājīd (fl. 1600) bulk of whose output was in Sadhukkari or Pingal, that is Braj Bhasha inflected with Rajasthani. However, he experimented with various literary idioms, including Khari Boli and Marwari (Western Rajasthani). I am giving below the first verse of Bājīd’s unpublished *Brahma-ćarit* in two forms. The manuscript at Chaupasni Research Institute presents a text with strong Marwari leanings,

ब्रह्म चिरत भगवंत रौ | पढत गुनत सुख होइ।

करम कटहि सब जनम रा |, मर्म लहै जो कोइ॥

*brahma ćirata bhagavaṁta rau, paḍhata gunata sukha hoi /*

*karama kaṭahi saba janama rā, marma lahai jo koi //*

The same verse in a manuscript at Anup Sanskrit Library is preserved as a Braj text,

ब्रह्म चरित्र भगवंत कौ | पढत सुनत सुख होइ।

करम काटै (?) सब जनम के | मरम लहै जै कोइ॥ (ms at Anup Sanskrit Library)

*brahma ćaritra bhagavaṁta kau / paḍhata sunata sukha hoi /*

*karama kāṭai (?) saba janama ke, marama lahai jai koi //*

<sup>21</sup> Duve, Keshav Prasad. *Śrīrāmāyaṇam*. Agra: Vidyāratnākar Yantrālay, 1875, p. u52.

<sup>22</sup> Fairbanks, Constance E. "Hindi Stress from the Poet's Perspective." In *Dimensions of Sociolinguistics in South Asia: Papers in Memory of Gerald B. Kelley*, edited by Edward C. Dimock, Braj B. Kachru, and Bh Krishnamurti, New Delhi: Oxford & IBH Pub. Co., 1992., pp. 297-314.

Although we do not have proof of which version was the original, it is likely that Bājīd experimented with Marwari, just as he did with Khari Boli Rekhta. He produced a text deploying some key Western Rajasthani features, such as the genitive particle *ro (rau)* and the plural in *rā*. The scribe of the Bikaner manuscript has reworked them into proper Braj *kau* and *ke* and changed the *kaṭahi* ‘cuts’ present-tense verbal form into the more conspicuous Braj *kātai*.

A more frequent instance of translection can be observed in Bājīd’s other works composed in Pingal, that is Jaipuri-inflected Braj Bhasha. Although the variation consists of a single phonetic change between the Braj *-au* and the Rajasthani *-ū* ending, this was one of the most unstable areas of Bājīd’s transmission. A reconstructed text in Braj reads as,

साधन संग सदा रहौं, सुनो सयानै लोइ|

मन बच क्रम मोकों भजै गंजि न सकै कोइ||

sādhana saṅga sadā **rahauṁ**, **suno** sayānai loi;

mana baća krama **mokauṁ** bhajai gaṁji na sakai koi.<sup>23</sup>

*I am always with the truthful ones, the sadhus, listen, intelligent people.*

*No one can destroy the one who worships me in mind, speech and deeds.*

A reconstruction in Pingal is as follows,

साधन संग सदा रहूं, सुनहु सयानै लोइ।

मन बच क्रम मोकूं भजै गंजि न सकई कोइ॥

sādhana saṅga sadā **rahūṁ**, **sunahu** sayānai loi|

mana baća krama **mokūṁ** bhajai gaṁji na sakaī koi||

The Braj and Pingal forms are distributed evenly among the twenty manuscripts examined for a critical edition. However, some Braj forms are forced on the text even if they produce unmetrical readings, such as Braj *sakai* ‘can’ instead of the metrically correct *sakaī*. Since we possess a manuscript copied in 1600, that is in the lifetime of the poet, and that manuscript presents Pingal forms, we can speculate that the Pingal form of this poem was also current prior to its being reworked into Braj.

### Viṣṇudās’s *Rāmāyan*

Brajification is occasionally accompanied with ideological modernisation, such as what I would term “Bhaktification”, the introduction of bhakti into a non-bhakti text. To give an example, let us return to Viṣṇu(dās)’s *Rāmāyan*. The two extant manuscripts of Viṣṇu’s

<sup>23</sup> Imre Bangha and Daksha Mistry, *Psychic Lepers, Hunchback Burglers and the Way to God: A Critical Edition of the Poetry of Bājīd* (work in progress).

translation date from 1750 and 1863. Both of them apparently contain versions reworked over the three or four centuries that passed since its composition. The 1750 manuscript, however, also preserves some archaic readings. At the beginning of his story, the poet describes Ayodhya. In the 1750 manuscript this is introduced as,

कही कथा सो रामही तनी | राजनीति दसरथ की गनी ||  
नदी सरउ तहां अवध्यापुरी | बिसुकरमा रचि आपुन करी ||  
kahī kathā so rāmahī tanī, rājanīti dasaratha kī ganī.  
nadī saraū tahām avadhyāpurī | bisukaramā rači āpuna karī || (28)<sup>24</sup>  
*He told the story of Rama and recounted Daśaratha's royal policies.*  
*The city of Ayodhya is on the river Sarayu. The Creator himself formed it beautifully.*

This line in a book copied in 1863 reads as,

रामचन्द्र प्रभु त्रिभुवन धनी | तासु कथा रिषि नारद भनी ||  
सरजू सरित अजुध्या पुरी | सो बिसकर्मा आपुन करी ||  
rāmaçandra prabhu tribhuvana dhanī, tāsu kathā riṣi nārada bhanī.  
sarajū sarita ajudhyā purī | so bisakarmā āpuna karī. (15)<sup>25</sup>  
*Lord Rama is the master of the three worlds. Narada rishi told his story.*  
*The city of Ayodhya is on the river Sarayu. The Creator himself formed it.*

Here, translection is exemplified by the removal of the Madhyadeshi oblique *rāmahī*, the genitive particle *tanī* (equivalent to Hindi *kī*) and the hiatus in *saraū*. More conspicuous than that is the divinisation of Rama that, in the tradition of the popular *Rāmçarit-mānas*, creates a sense of a pious retelling of the story.

‘Mere to giradhara gopāla...’

So far, I have discussed translection as happening within the realm of handwritten books. However, much of the poetry mentioned above was also performed and the process may have taken place within oral performance as well. Below, I am quoting an example of a song that takes us to the world of oral performance. Such texts’ commitment to writing may be secondary to their performed life. In performance, which includes performing for an audience, communal singing and possibly performing with the audience joining in for the refrain, textual changes happen more easily than in written transmission, since no exemplar exists to copy from and check against. In performance, ideological changes can easily be introduced alongside linguistic modernisation. I am giving below two instances of translection of a famous Mīr 唳青 *pada* (song with refrain). The first line of the *pada* is the refrain that may be repeated several times after each line or couplet, thus constituting the most emphatic message of the poem. The Rajasthani version of the song emphasises exclusive devotion to Krishna.

<sup>24</sup> Harihar Nivas Dvivedi, (1973). p. 184.

<sup>25</sup> Loknath Dvivedi, (1972). p. 2. The difference in the verse numbering is due to the two manuscripts including several stanzas missing from the other.

म्हाराँ री गिरधर गोपाळ, दूसरा ण क्यौं।  
दूसरां ण कोर्यौं, साधौं, सकळ लोक ज्यौं॥  
mhārā rī giradhara gopāḷa, dūsarā ṇa kūyā;  
dūsarām ṇa koyā, sādha, sakala ḷoka jūyā.<sup>26</sup>

*Gopala who holds the mountain is mine and no one else.  
No one else, o truthful ones, I have searched the whole world.*

The Rajasthani features of the couplet include the possessive *mhārā* ('my, mine', Modern Standard Hindi *merā*), the verb *jū-* ('search, see', MSH *khøj-, dekh-*) the indefinite pronoun *kūyā* ('someone', MSH *koī*), the masculine nominal, adjectival and verbal endings in *-ā*, as well as the use of the retroflex *ḷ* and *ṇ*.

The song, however, also has Khari Boli and Braj Bhasha versions. Khari Boli provides the grammatical template to Modern Standard Hindi and thus a version in this lect is easily comprehensible to a modern reader.

मेरा तो एक राम नाम, दूसरा न कोई।  
दूसरा न कोई, साधो, सकल लोक जोई ॥  
Merā to eka rāma nāma, dūsarā na koī;  
dūsarā na koī, sādho, sakala loka joī.<sup>27</sup>

*Only Ram's name is mine, no one else.  
No one else, o truthful ones, I have searched the whole world.*

This version with its masculine *-ā* endings, plural vocative in *-o*, and the pronoun *koī* 'someone', is in modern Khari Boli with the exception of the last word retained in Rajasthani as *joī* 'I searched/saw'. It was apparently distorted from *\*joyā* for the sake of rhyme. The theological shift involved here is a move from the Vaishnava world of Krishna, 'Gopala who holds the mountain', to the nirgun Sant realm of Ram's name.

The most popular version of this song, however, is neither of the above but an apparently modernised version in Braj Bhasha. Although here only the first line is indicated as refrain, I also give the subsequent line, missing from other versions, to show how the text has changed. This version reinstates the sagun worship of Krishna by reinforcing his identity with one more attribute, the 'peacock crown'.

मेरे तो गिरधर गोपाल, दूसरो न कोई॥  
जाके सिर मोर-मुकुट मेरो पति सोई।  
Mere to giradhara gopāḷa, dūsaro na koī;  
jāke sira mora-mukuṭa mero pati soī.<sup>28</sup>  
*Gopala who holds the mountain is mine and no one else.  
The one with a peacock crown on his head is my husband.*

<sup>26</sup> Bhagavandas Tivari, (1974), 141. o.

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, 142. o.

<sup>28</sup> *Ibid.*, 143. o.

Here, the *-o* endings in *dūsro* ('other', Modern Standard Hindi *dūsṛā*) and *mero* ('my', MSH *merā*) as well as the relative pronoun in *jā-* (MSH *jis-* 'who') are easily comprehensible as Braj forms. The modern listener's understanding is also helped by discarding the Rajasthani root verb *jo-*. The meaning of the Braj emphatic pronoun *soī* ('[only] he', MSH *vohī*) can be guessed from the context. Khari Boli *koī* ('someone', Braj *koū*) is retained for the sake of the *-oī* rhyme carried throughout the poem adding to the modern comprehensibility of the song.

## Conclusion

Early modern translation into clearly distinct languages included the deployment of equivalents and a certain reluctance to use cognates. It could also mobilise the arsenal of morphology and phraseology. In contrast, translection tended to use the cognate forms and only occasionally digressed from them.

Transition from one literary idiom to the other was not perceived as translation. It only provided the text with new metalinguistic markers. It may have been introduced to facilitate understanding of archaic or regionally diverse works.

We saw that translection is often present as Brajification or linguistic modernisation in manuscript transmission. This warns us that the received texts of many more works may have been systematically different from those originally produced and now lost.

I have mentioned above the similarity of translection to Sanskrit *śhāyā*. In the eyes of its creators, this may also have been a form of translection as the authors perceived Prakrit to be a manifestation of the same linguistic domain to which Sanskrit belonged.<sup>29</sup> By the removal of other regionalisms, the Hindi works were brought closer to the cosmopolitan vernacular. Although Brajification flattened linguistic diversity, it also facilitated transregional circulation and provided works with higher linguistic status.

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<sup>29</sup> Talking about Sanskrit, Prakrit and Apabhramsha, the Apabhramsha scholar Vit Bubenik writes, "we are not dealing with three different languages in the usual sense of the word; rather we are dealing with 'triglossia' definable as the simultaneous use of three functional varieties of the same language for literary purposes." Vit Bubenik, *Historical Syntax of Late Middle Indo-Aryan (Apabhramśa)*, *Amsterdam Studies in the Theory and History of Linguistic Science* (Amsterdam; Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, c1998), p 16.

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