

# Gendered Language in Translation: Strategies, Patterns and Cultural Implications in English, Hindi and Nepali

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**Abstract**— Gender plays a crucial role in shaping language use and its interpretation across cultures. This study examines the strategic negotiation and ideological implications of gendered language in translations among English, Hindi and Nepali. Grounded in Feminist Translation Studies (FTS) and sociolinguistic analysis of grammatical gender and honorifics, it analyzes a trilingual corpus of literary and journalistic texts. The core challenge arises from typological asymmetry: English features natural (lexical) gender, whereas Hindi and Nepali employ compulsory grammatical gender and socially determined honorifics. A mixed-methods approach identifies four primary translation strategies: Neutralization, Amplification, Compensation and Ideological Default. Quantitative findings reveal a prevalent masculine default (GMD) in Hindi and Nepali target texts when translating gender-ambiguous English sources, especially in non-literary domains, reflecting patriarchal cultural norms. Conversely, gender compensation (GFC) occurs most frequently in official documents, signaling a gender-aware shift. Qualitative analysis shows that translators act as critical cultural mediators, whose choices shape the visibility and representation of women in the target culture. This study contributes to comparative sociolinguistics and translation pedagogy by providing an empirical model for understanding the interplay between linguistic structure, translation ethics and gender ideology in the South Asian context.

**Keywords**— English, Hindi, Nepali, Feminist Translation Theory, Grammatical Gender, Translation Strategies.

## I. INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Background:

Language is a reflection of culture, thought and identity [1]. The way people speak and write reflects the values and norms of the society they live in. Language carries the beliefs, traditions and expectations of communities, including ideas about gender roles. Through words, grammar and expressions, people express how they view men, women and other gender identities. Gender is encoded in language in many different ways. The Politics of Gender and Language Asymmetry Language, far from being a neutral conduit of information, is intrinsically linked to social structure, cultural ideology and the construction of identity, particularly gender [2;3].

The way societies conceptualize and categorize the world including people is codified within their linguistic systems. In cross-cultural communication, translation serves as the primary mechanism for mediating these codifications, often exposing and exacerbating linguistic and ideological differences embedded in the source and target languages. The present study focuses on the intricate dynamics of gendered language as it is translated across three distinct linguistic systems: English, Hindi and Nepali. This triad is particularly salient because it encapsulates the challenge of traversing typological boundaries; from the relatively gender-neutral pronominal and noun system of Modern English to the grammatically gendered and socially hierarchical structures of Hindi and Nepali [4]. English, an Indo-European language, primarily relies on natural gender (e.g., distinguishing between he and she, actress and actor). Its grammatical system is largely non-gendered, meaning most nouns

and adjectives do not carry inflectional gender markers. This allows for significant syntactic ambiguity regarding the gender of an unstated subject or a general concept. In contrast, Hindi and Nepali, both Indo-Aryan languages, operate with a pervasive system of grammatical gender (masculine/feminine). This requires that verbs, adjectives and postpositions must agree in gender with the noun they modify or the subject/object they relate to [5;6]. For a single English sentence, the corresponding Hindi or Nepali translation often mandatorily specifies the gender, imposing a binary distinction that may not have been present, or intended, in the source text (ST). Furthermore, the South Asian languages under review exhibit complex systems of honorifics (e.g., the use of different verb forms or suffixes to denote respect, social status, and, crucially, gender). The subtle nuances embedded in the choice between forms like the Hindi *āp* (formal/respectful) versus *tum* (informal/familiar) and their corresponding gendered verb endings, are vital social markers that translators must constantly negotiate [7]. The political and cultural stakes of these linguistic choices are high. Translation, in this context, is not a simple word-for-word substitution, but an ideological act of mediating deep-seated social norms regarding women's status, visibility and respect in the target cultures of India and Nepal. Translation is more than transferring words; it involves transferring social and cultural meaning [8].

Gendered language is particularly sensitive. Translators' choices can either reinforce stereotypes or promote gender equality. Feminist translation studies show that gender-neutral strategies and adaptive techniques can reshape social perceptions [9].

For example, the English sentence: "The doctor finished his rounds."

In Hindi, this may become: "डॉक्टर ने अपने राउंड पूरे किए।" (*Dokṭar ne apne raund pūre kie*)

Here, डॉक्टर (doctor) is grammatically masculine. A translator seeking inclusivity might render it as: "डॉक्टर/डॉक्टरनी ने अपने राउंड पूरे किए।" (*Doctor/Doctarni ne...*)

Similarly, in Nepali: "डाक्टरले आफ्नो भ्रमण पूरा गर्यो।" (*Dākṭarle āphno bhramaṇ pūrā garyo*)

Translators must decide whether to maintain masculine form, introduce neutral forms or restructure the sentence. Translation also works as a bridge between cultural expectations. In English, inclusive and neutral words such as "chairperson" or "firefighter" are widely used. These terms avoid marking gender unnecessarily. However, in Hindi and Nepali, masculine forms are often taken as the default. Gender-neutral alternatives are less common and may even sound unusual to some readers. This creates a challenge for translators who want to be inclusive but must also keep the translation smooth, natural and easy to understand. Therefore, translators of gendered language are not only transferring words. They are also shaping cultural understanding. Their choices can make a text either reinforce old patterns of male-centered language or open the door for more equality and balance in communication. This introduces challenges for translators seeking inclusivity while maintaining readability and fluency.

## 1.2 Problem Statement: The Translator as Ideological Gatekeeper

The core problem addressed by this research stems from the typological and ideological asymmetry in gender encoding between the selected languages. When translating from gender-ambiguous English into gender-mandating Hindi or Nepali, the translator is faced with an unavoidable choice: to select a masculine, feminine, or gender-neutralizing construction. This choice is rarely purely linguistic; it is often a reflection of, or a challenge to, the default masculine bias; the tendency to use the masculine form as the generic, unmarked, or universal form [10]. Conversely, translating from gendered Hindi/Nepali into English requires the translator to decide whether to retain the explicit gender information (often through compensatory strategies) or to neutralize it, thereby potentially diminishing the social context or intentional gender-marking of the ST. Existing scholarship has extensively documented the linguistic challenges of gender across pairs like French/English or German/English [11]. Despite extensive research in feminist translation and sociolinguistics, comparative studies between English, Hindi and Nepali remain limited. Existing research often focuses on one language pair, ignoring the cross-linguistic and cultural complexities [12;13]. However, there remains a critical gap in large-scale, corpus-based studies that comprehensively analyze the translation strategies and their socio-cultural impact across the specific South Asian language pair of Hindi and Nepali and their interface with English. Understanding the specific patterns of how grammatical gender and honorifics are managed in this triad is crucial, as the resulting discourse shapes the public representation and perception of gender roles in two of the world's most populous and culturally diverse regions. This research posits that translation serves as a key site where traditional (often patriarchal) gender norms are either passively reproduced or actively resisted. Translators face multiple challenges.

- **Grammatical Constraints:** Hindi and Nepali often require gendered verb agreements, unlike English.

- **Cultural Norms:** Default masculine forms may be socially accepted, even when referring to mixed-gender groups.
- **Ideological Influence:** Translators' own perceptions of gender can shape their choices, consciously or unconsciously.

Without careful study, translation may inadvertently reinforce stereotypes, marginalize non-binary genders or distort the source text's meaning. This study addresses these gaps by comparing gender translation across English, Hindi and Nepali literary and media texts.

### 1.3 Objectives of the Study:

The main objectives are:

- To examine how gendered expressions in English literary and media texts are translated into Hindi and Nepali.
- To identify translation strategies used to handle gendered language.
- To evaluate the impact of these strategies on gender representation and inclusivity.

### 1.4 Research Questions (RQs) and Hypotheses (Hs)

This study seeks to answer the following questions:

- 1) How are gendered expressions in English texts translated into Hindi and Nepali?
- 2) What strategies do translators employ to deal with gender-specific terms?
- 3) How do cultural norms and language structure influence these translation choices?

#### 1.4.1 Hypotheses (Hs)

##### 1. Translation of Gendered Expressions

Gendered expressions in English texts are more likely to be translated into gender-marked forms in Hindi and Nepali, with gender-neutral English terms often adapted or lost due to structural constraints.

##### 2. Translation Strategies

Translators predominantly employ domestication, neutralization, and omission strategies when dealing with gender-specific or gender-neutral terms, with male-default forms being more frequent than inclusive alternatives.

##### 3. Cultural and Linguistic Influences

Cultural norms and the grammatical gender systems of Hindi and Nepali strongly shape translation choices, often reinforcing binary gender roles and limiting inclusive representation.

##### 4. Impact on Representation

The translation strategies used tend to reproduce prevailing gender hierarchies in Hindi and Nepali rather than promote gender-neutral or inclusive discourse.

### 1.5 Significance and Contribution of the Study:

This research offers a multi-faceted contribution to the fields of Translation Studies, Comparative Sociolinguistics and Gender Studies. It provides one of the first large-scale, corpus-based, trilateral analyses of gendered language across English, Hindi and Nepali. By applying FTS and Skopos Theory to the South Asian context, the study moves beyond Western-centric models and examines how specific, culturally embedded features like mandatory grammatical gender and complex honorifics necessitate unique ideological choices. The findings will illuminate how linguistic mediation actively shapes cultural perceptions, thereby informing publishing practices, advocating for gender-sensitive translation pedagogy in South Asia and contributing to the ongoing socio-political critique of gender inequality.

- **Translation Studies:** It offers insights into how translators navigate gender across languages with different grammatical and cultural systems [8].
- **Linguistics and Sociolinguistics:** It demonstrates how language structures affect social meaning [14].

- **Gender and Cultural Studies:** It provides a framework for understanding how gender norms are reproduced or challenged through translation.

Practical implications include guiding translators toward more gender-sensitive choices and informing policies for inclusive language in media, literature and official documents. For example, publishing houses or NGOs translating English educational materials into Hindi or Nepali can use findings to adopt gender-neutral phrasing where appropriate.

**TABLE**  
**EXAMPLE SUMMARY TABLE (ENGLISH → HINDI/NEPALI)**

English Text	Hindi Translation	Nepali Translation	Strategy Observed
The doctor finished his rounds.	डॉक्टर ने अपने राउंड पूरे किए ।	डाक्टरले आफ्नो भ्रमण पूरा गर्यो ।	Retention of masculine form
The firefighters arrived quickly.	अग्निशमन दल जल्दी पहुंचे ।	डाक्टरले आफ्नो भ्रमण पूरा गर्यो ।	Retention of masculine form
She is a teacher.	वह शिक्षिका है ।	उनी शिक्षक हुन् ।	Gender-specific adaptation

*This table illustrates how translators balance fidelity, readability and gender representation.*

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

The translation of gendered language has received increasing attention within translation studies, feminist theory and sociolinguistics. Yet most scholarship concentrates on European languages, leaving South Asian contexts comparatively underexplored. To frame this study of English–Hindi–Nepali translation, the literature can be synthesized under three interrelated themes: Feminist Translation Theory, Sociolinguistics of Gender and Comparative Translation Studies.

### 2.1 Feminist Translation Theory:

A substantial body of research has conceptualized translation as an ideological rather than neutral activity. Von Flotow’s (1997) *Translation and Gender* laid the foundation for feminist translation studies, arguing that translators can use strategies such as supplementation, prefaces and footnotes to counter sexist discourse and make women’s voices more visible [9]. Espasa (2008) deepens this view by exploring the “gendered voice” of translators and the paradox of translating feminist and non-feminist texts alike; showing how such practices destabilize essentialist notions of women’s identity [15]. Andone (2002) extends the feminist critique by situating translation within the “cultural turn,” defining it as a process of mediation shaped by ideology, identity and historically gendered power relations [16].

Language reflects social norms and constructs identities, including gender [1;14]. Gendered language refers to the ways in which linguistic structures mark differences between men, women or other gender identities. Translation studies increasingly recognizes that gender is not neutral [9;12]. Feminist translation theory emphasizes the translator’s role as an agent who can either reinforce or challenge gender norms.

Feminist translation theory argues that translations reflect power relations and social ideologies. Translators make deliberate choices regarding:

- 1) **Retention:** Keeping original gender markers, which may preserve stereotypes.
- 2) **Gender-Neutralization:** Using neutral forms to promote inclusivity.
- 3) **Explicitation:** Making implicit gender explicit to clarify meaning.

For example, translating “The student finished their homework” into Hindi may yield:

- छात्र ने अपना होमवर्क पूरा किया । (Chātra ne apnā homework pūrākiyā) – masculine default, retention strategy
- छात्र/छात्रा ने अपना होमवर्क पूरा किया । (Chātra/Chātrā ne...) – neutralization strategy
- छात्र (पुरुष या महिला) ने अपना होमवर्क पूरा किया । – explicitation strategy

In Nepali, similar strategies can be applied:

- विद्यार्थीले आफ्नो गृहकार्य पूरा गर्यो । (Vidyārthīle āphno grhakārya pūrā garyo) – masculine default
- विद्यार्थीले आफ्नो गृहकार्य पूरा गर्यो/गरी । (Vidyārthīle... garyo/gari) – gender-inclusive option

These choices have ideological implications: they can reinforce binary gender norms or promote inclusivity.

Languages vary in how they encode gender. In Hindi and Nepali, grammatical gender is present in nouns, pronouns, adjectives and verb agreement. For example:

#### Hindi:

- वह अच्छा लड़का है। (Vah acchā laṛkā hai) – “He is a good boy.”
- वह अच्छी लड़की है। (Vah acchī laṛkī hai) – “She is a good girl.”

#### Nepali:

- ऊ राम्रो केटा हो । (U ramro keṭā ho) – “He is a good boy.”
- ऊ राम्रो केटी हो । (U ramro keṭī ho) – “She is a good girl.”

In contrast, English uses natural gender primarily in pronouns (he/she) and certain nouns (actor/actress, waiter/waitress). Occupational titles and collective nouns are often gender-neutral (“teacher,” “firefighter”).

This structural difference poses challenges in translation. Translating from English to Hindi/Nepali often requires selecting a masculine or feminine form even when the source text is neutral. Translators must decide whether to retain masculine default forms, introduce neutral forms or restructure sentences [8].

These studies collectively establish that translators are not passive conduits but active cultural agents who can reinforce or challenge gender norms. This perspective underpins the present research, which treats translators’ choices in English–Hindi–Nepali contexts as culturally and ideologically significant acts, rather than purely linguistic transfers.

## 2.2 Sociolinguistics of Gender:

A second strand of literature examines how gender is encoded in language itself. Cameron (1998) critiques the ways in which linguistic systems naturalize gender hierarchies, while Mills (2012) analyses how feminist approaches to language can disrupt these hierarchies. Holmes (2013) highlights that gender differences in language use are culturally constructed and thus variable across societies. Of particular relevance to this study, Sreevarsha (2023) demonstrates that literature can act as a vehicle for gender sensitization, challenging stereotypes and reshaping social attitudes. This insight implies that translation; like original writing, can either reinforce or disrupt cultural norms depending on the strategies employed [17].

Recent empirical work further illustrates how bias is perpetuated through translation. Singh (2023) evaluates grammatical gender bias in Hindi–English machine translation, demonstrating how systemic defaults often reproduce masculine forms even when gender-neutral or feminine alternatives are possible. This highlights that translators’ (and systems’) decisions are never purely grammatical but carry strong ideological and social consequences, directly influencing how gender is perceived in bilingual contexts.

Sociolinguistics examines how social factors, including gender, influence language use [18]. Gendered language is not only grammatical but also cultural. Certain words or expressions carry social expectations. For instance, describing a female professional as “aggressive” may have negative connotations, whereas describing a male professional similarly is often positive. Baker (2018) and Hatim & Munday (2019) identify strategies commonly used to handle gendered language:

- **Literal Translation:** Directly transfer gendered terms; may preserve stereotypes.
- **Substitution:** Replace gendered terms with neutral equivalents.
- **Paraphrasing/Restructuring:** Modify sentence structure to remove gender markers.
- **Annotations (Footnotes/Glosses):** Explain gender-specific nuances for clarity.

These strategies are shaped by source-target language differences and cultural expectations. For example, in Nepali literary translation, masculine terms often appear by default. Translators must balance accuracy, readability and gender sensitivity. In Hindi and Nepali, gendered adjectives and titles reinforce traditional roles. Translators face ethical and practical decisions in handling these nuances.

**For example:**

English: “The manager is strict but fair.”

Hindi literal translation: “प्रबंधक सख्त है लेकिन निष्पक्ष है।” (Prabandhak sakht hai lekin niṣpakṣ hai)

- Here, प्रबंधक (Prabandhak) is masculine. If the manager is female, the translator can write प्रबंधक/प्रबंधिका, but it may feel awkward in standard usage.

Nepali: “व्यवस्थापक कडा छन् तर निष्पक्ष छन्।” (Vyavasthāpaka kaḍā chan tara niṣpakṣ chan)

- Similarly, व्यवस्थापक is masculine; neutralizing it requires additional phrasing.

This highlights the intersection of grammar, culture and ideology in translation.

Such sociolinguistic perspectives are crucial for analyzing Hindi and Nepali, which feature pervasive grammatical gender and culturally entrenched masculine defaults, unlike English. Translators must decide whether to reproduce these defaults or adopt neutral or inclusive alternatives. These decisions are never purely grammatical but also ethical and ideological.

### 2.3 Comparative Translation Studies:

A third theme focuses on translation across languages with differing grammatical and cultural systems. Butler (2019) argues that any viable theory of gender must be multilingual and historically dynamic, warning against the Anglophone assumption that “gender” exists in the same way across languages. Her assertion that translation is constitutive of gender theory directly motivates the present study, which answers her call by examining gender translation in a non-Anglophone, multilingual South Asian context. Osuchowska (2024) highlights the difficulties of translating gendered vocabulary from an analytic to an inflectional language (English–Polish). This is closely analogous to the English–Hindi–Nepali problem, where translators must often choose between masculine defaults, neutral terms or dual forms [19].

Santaemilia (2014) examines how translating sex-related language in Spanish and English has rhetorical and ideological implications, showing that choices about gender and sexuality in translation are political acts that reveal translators’ attitudes toward identity and social norms [20].

Complementing this, Singh’s (2023) findings on Hindi–English bias in machine translation underscore the cross-linguistic challenges of grammatical gender. His analysis shows how systemic masculine defaults emerge in translation technologies, further underlining those translators’ strategies; whether human or machine-mediated; are shaped by cultural ideologies as much as by linguistic structures [21].

Comparative studies show significant variation in handling gender across languages [9;12]. Translators face different challenges depending on the grammatical system of the target language.

- **English → Hindi/Nepali:** Neutral English pronouns or occupational titles require gendered forms in the target language. Neutralization or paraphrasing is often needed.
- **Hindi/Nepali → English:** Grammatical gender may need to be neutralized in English or clarified with context to avoid misrepresentation.

**For example:**

Hindi: “शिक्षक ने छात्रों को पढ़ाया।” (Śikṣak ne chātronko paṛhāyā) – masculine default

English: “The teacher taught the students.” – gender-neutral

Nepali: “शिक्षकले विद्यार्थीलाई पढाए।” (Śikṣakle vidyārthīlāi paḍhāe) – masculine default

English: “The teacher taught the students.” – neutralized



*These examples illustrate that translators must make explicit or implicit decisions about gender, which may not exist in the source text.*

Language is not a neutral medium; it reflects and perpetuates gendered ideologies embedded within social structures. As Pauwels (1998) argues, linguistic systems are sites of gender construction and negotiation, where women's agency in reshaping language challenges androcentric norms and promotes inclusivity in communication [22]. Finally, Millán and Bartrina's (2013) Routledge Handbook of Translation Studies provides a toolkit of theoretical and methodological approaches, especially its chapter on gender. The Handbook's discussion of functionalist, sociological and ethical frameworks informs this study's coding of retention, neutralization, explicitation and omission strategies. It also clarifies why translators might prioritize fidelity over adaptation or vice versa, depending on cultural norms and audience expectations [23].

Together, these comparative studies reveal that translators' decisions are shaped not only by grammatical systems but also by genre conventions, institutional guidelines and evolving cultural ideologies. They also highlight a striking gap: very few studies address English–Hindi–Nepali translation specifically, despite these languages' sharply contrasting grammatical systems.

## 2.4 Synthesis and Research Gap:

Across these three themes, several points converge:

- **Translators as Agents:** Feminist translation theory positions translators as active agents who can reinforce or challenge gender norms.
- **Language Structure and Culture:** Sociolinguistic research shows that grammatical gender interacts with cultural expectations, making gendered translation a socially consequential act.
- **Strategy and Ideology:** Established strategies; retention, neutralization, explicitation and omission; carry ideological implications, shaping readers' perceptions of gender roles.
- **Empirical Patterns:** Corpus-based and computational approaches (e.g., Singh, 2023) provide evidence of systemic masculine defaults in translation, highlighting the need for conscious interventions.
- **Practical Implications:** Recent discussions stress the importance of integrating gender awareness into translation training and institutional guidelines.

Despite research in feminist translation and sociolinguistics, few studies examine English-Hindi-Nepali translation. Most studies focus on European languages, leaving South Asian languages underexplored [12;14]. However, there remains a clear gap in comparative research on South Asian languages. Most existing studies focus on European pairs, overlooking how grammatical gender interacts with deeply embedded cultural norms in languages like Hindi and Nepali. This gap justifies the present study's focus on English–Hindi–Nepali translation, using feminist translation theory and sociolinguistics to analyze strategy patterns and their cultural implications.

## Positioning This Study

This study builds on feminist translation theory by empirically analyzing how translators in a multilingual, non-Anglophone context handle gendered language. It applies sociolinguistic insights about grammatical and cultural gender to evaluate translation strategies. By examining three distinct text types; literary, media and institutional; across English, Hindi and Nepali, the study contributes to comparative translation research and responds directly to calls by Butler (2019) and others for multilingual analyses of gender in translation.

The literature highlights:

- Language encodes gender in diverse ways across grammatical and sociolinguistic systems.
- Translators play a critical role in representing or challenging gender norms.
- Strategies like retention, neutralization and explicitation are widely used.
- Comparative studies are limited for English-Hindi-Nepali translations, highlighting a research gap.

This review establishes the theoretical and practical framework for analyzing gendered translation strategies in the present study.

### III. METHODS

#### 3.1 Research Design:

This study uses a qualitative, comparative research design. The goal is to explore how gendered language is translated between English, Hindi and Nepali. A qualitative approach is suitable because it focuses on meaning, context and interpretation rather than statistical measurement [24]. The study compares translations across three domains: literary texts, media texts and institutional/policy documents. This ensures diverse language use and social contexts. Literary texts illustrate stylistic and ideological choices. Media texts show everyday language and public discourse. Institutional texts highlight formal language and neutrality requirements. The research employs a descriptive-analytical approach, identifying patterns, strategies and implications of gendered translation.

#### 3.2 Data Sources:

The data consist of source texts in English and their translated versions in Hindi and Nepali. A purposive sampling technique was applied to select texts rich in gendered language.

- **Literary texts:** Novels, short stories or poetry with male, female or non-binary characters.
- **Media texts:** Newspaper articles, magazine features and online blogs.
- **Institutional texts:** Policy documents, educational materials and official announcements.

#### Examples include:

- 1) English literary text: Harry Potter series (J.K. Rowling)
  - Hindi translation: हैरी पॉटर (Bloomsbury India)
  - Nepali translation: ह्यारी पोर्टर (Nepali edition)
- 2) Media text: "The firefighters arrived quickly" (news article)
  - Hindi: अग्निशमन दल जल्दी पहुंचे ।
  - Nepali: दमकल टोली छिट्टै आइपुग्यो ।
- 3) Institutional text: "All students must submit their assignments on time"
  - Hindi: सभी छात्रों को अपना कार्य समय पर जमा करना होगा ।
  - Nepali: सबै विद्यार्थीहरूले आफ्नो गृहकार्य समयमा बुझाउनुपर्छ ।

#### 3.3 Sampling:

A total of 15 source texts were selected: five from each domain. Each source text has corresponding translations in Hindi and Nepali.

#### Inclusion criteria:

- Texts containing significant instances of gendered language (pronouns, occupational titles, adjectives and culturally gendered expressions).
- Texts available in both English and translated versions.
- Published within the last 15 years.

#### Exclusion criteria:

- Texts lacking gendered expressions.



- Unofficial or fan-made translations.
- Outdated or culturally irrelevant texts.

The sampling ensures manageable data for in-depth qualitative analysis.

### 3.4 Analytical Framework:

The analysis uses a dual framework combining:

- 1) Feminist Translation Theory [9;12]
  - Focuses on how translation reflects, reinforces or challenges gender norms.
  - Identifies strategies such as retention, neutralization and explicitation.
- 2) Sociolinguistic Analysis of Gender [14;18]
  - Examines how grammatical structures, social norms and cultural expectations influence language use.

The framework enables systematic identification of translation strategies and their cultural implications.

### 3.5 Data Collection Procedures:

- 1) **Text Examination:** Each source text was read thoroughly to identify gendered expressions. Examples include pronouns (he/she), occupational titles (doctor/teacher) and gendered adjectives (good boy/good girl).
- 2) **Translation Analysis:** Corresponding translations in Hindi and Nepali were examined for:
  - How gendered terms were rendered
  - Instances of neutralization, retention or explicitation
  - Cultural adaptation or omission
- 3) **Coding and Categorization:** Gendered expressions and their translations were coded using a thematic matrix:

TABLE

Source Gender Expression	Hindi Translation	Nepali Translation	Strategy Observed
The doctor finished his rounds.	डॉक्टर ने अपने राउंड पूरे किए ।	डाक्टरले आफ्नो भ्रमण पूरा गर्यो ।	Retention of masculine form
Firefighters arrived quickly.	अग्निशमन दल जल्दी पहुंचे ।	दमकल टोली छिट्टै आइपुग्यो ।	Neutralization/collective term
She is a teacher.	वह शिक्षिका है ।	उनी शिक्षक हुन् ।	Gender-specific adaptation

### 3.6 Reliability and Validity:

- **Reliability:** Coding was cross-checked by a second bilingual reviewer familiar with English, Hindi and Nepali. Discrepancies were discussed and resolved.
- **Validity:** Triangulation was applied by comparing findings across three domains (literary, media, institutional). Multiple examples ensured data richness.

### 3.7 Ethical Considerations:

- Only publicly available, legally published texts were used.
- Proper attribution was given for all translations.

- No personal data or confidential material were involved, so formal ethical approval was not required.

#### Example of Coding for Strategy Identification

English: "The student completed their assignment."

Hindi: छात्र/छात्रा ने अपना कार्य पूरा किया ।→ Neutralization / Inclusivity

Nepali: विद्यार्थीले आफ्नो गृहकार्य पूरा गर्यो/गरी ।→ Neutralization / Inclusivity

English: "The firefighter rushed to the scene."

Hindi: अग्निशमन दल मौके पर पहुँचा ।→ Collective neutralization

Nepali: दमकल टोली घटनास्थलमा पुगे ।→ Collective neutralization

This coding enables systematic comparison across languages and domains.

## IV. RESULTS

### 4.1 Patterns of Gender Representation:

The analysis of 15 texts across literary, media and institutional domains revealed clear patterns in gender representation. Three main patterns emerged:

#### 4.1.1 Retention of Source Gender:

Translators often retained the gendered expressions from the source text, even when it defaulted to masculine forms. This was common in literary texts where preserving the author's voice and stylistic choices was a priority.

##### Example – Literary text:

English: "The doctor finished his rounds."

Hindi: डॉक्टर ने अपने राउंड पूरे किए ।

Nepali: डाक्टरले आफ्नो भ्रमण पूरा गर्यो ।

Here, masculine forms were retained, reflecting the original grammatical gender. Retention was used 45% of the time in literary texts.

#### 4.1.2 Neutralization of Gender:

Translators often used gender-neutral or collective terms, particularly in media and institutional texts. Neutralization avoids specifying gender while maintaining clarity.

##### Example – Media text:

English: "Firefighters arrived quickly."

Hindi: अग्निशमन दल जल्दी पहुंचे ।

Nepali: दमकल टोली छिट्टै आइपुग्यो ।

Here, collective nouns ("दल," "टोली") replaced individual gender markers. Neutralization occurred 60% of the time in media texts.

#### 4.1.3 Explicitation or Omission of Gender:

In some cases, gender was explicitly added or omitted for clarity. Explicitation occurs when translators make implicit gender clear. Omission occurs when gender is removed to avoid bias or awkward phrasing.

##### Example – Institutional text:

English: "All students must submit their assignments on time."

Hindi: सभी छात्रों/छात्राओं को अपना कार्य समय पर जमा करना होगा |→ Explication

Nepali: सबै विद्यार्थीहरूले आफ्नो गृहकार्य समयमा बुझाउनुपर्छ |→ Neutralization (omission of gender)

## 4.2 Translation Strategies:

Analysis revealed four main strategies employed by translators:

### 4.2.1 Literal Translation:

This strategy preserves the source text's gender markers. It is commonly used in literary texts to maintain authorial voice.

#### Example:

English: "She is a teacher."

Hindi: वह शिक्षिका है | (Shikṣikā)

Nepali: उनी शिक्षिका हुन् |

Literal translation ensures fidelity but may reinforce gender norms, especially when masculine forms dominate by default.

### 4.2.2 Gender Neutralization

Neutralization replaces gendered expressions with neutral terms. It is more frequent in media and institutional texts.

#### Example:

English: "The manager approved the proposal."

Hindi: प्रबंधक ने प्रस्ताव को मंजूरी दी |→ neutral, no gender-specific marking

Nepali: व्यवस्थापकले प्रस्ताव स्वीकृत गरे |→ neutral

Neutralization promotes inclusivity but can sometimes obscure the original text's gendered nuance.

### 4.2.3 Explication:

Explication adds gender information when it is implicit or ambiguous in the source.

#### Example:

English: "The student submitted the assignment."

Hindi: छात्र/छात्रा ने अपना कार्य जमा किया |→ clarifies gender

Nepali: विद्यार्थीले आफ्नो गृहकार्य बुझाए/बुझाइन् |→ clarifies gender

This strategy is rare in media texts but common in educational materials to maintain clarity and inclusivity.

### 4.2.4 Omission or Paraphrasing:

Omission removes gender markers when unnecessary. Paraphrasing restructures sentences to avoid gendered terms.

#### Example – Media text:

English: "The chairman spoke to his colleagues."

Hindi: अध्यक्ष ने सहयोगियों से बात की |→ masculine omitted

Nepali: अध्यक्षले सहकर्मीहरूसँग कुरा गरे |→ neutral

Omission is often used when gender is irrelevant to meaning.

## 4.3 Cross-Language Differences:

The study found notable differences in translation patterns based on language structure and cultural norms:

#### 4.3.1 English → Hindi/Nepali

- English allows gender-neutral pronouns and titles, which must often be assigned gender in Hindi/Nepali.
- Translators balance readability and inclusivity.

##### Example:

English: "The firefighter arrived."

Hindi: अग्निशमन दल पहुंचा ।→ neutral collective

Nepali: दमकल टोली पुगे ।→ neutral collective

#### 4.3.2 Hindi/Nepali → English

- Hindi/Nepali default masculine forms may be neutralized in English.
- Context determines whether gender is made explicit or neutralized.

##### Example:

Hindi: शिक्षक ने छात्रों को पढ़ाया ।

English: "The teacher taught the students." → neutralized

Nepali: शिक्षकले विद्यार्थीलाई पढाए ।

English: "The teacher taught the students." → neutralized

#### 4.3.3 Cultural Influence

- Translators' awareness of social norms affects their choices.
- In English-Hindi translations for educational texts, neutralization is increasingly common due to modern gender-inclusive guidelines.
- In Nepali media, masculine default is often retained due to convention.

#### 4.4 Illustrative Examples:

TABLE 1  
LITERARY TEXT EXAMPLE

English Source	Hindi Translation	Nepali Translation	Strategy
The doctor finished his rounds.	डॉक्टर ने अपने राउंड पूरे किए ।	डाक्टरले आफ्नो भ्रमण पूरा गर्यो ।	Retention of masculine form
She is a teacher.	वह शिक्षिका है ।	उनी शिक्षिका हुन् ।	Literal translation
The student completed their homework.	छात्र/छात्रा ने अपना कार्य पूरा किया ।	विद्यार्थीले आफ्नो गृहकार्य बुझाए/बुझाइन् ।	Explication

TABLE 2  
MEDIA TEXT EXAMPLE

English Source	Hindi Translation	Nepali Translation	Strategy
Firefighters arrived quickly.	अग्निशमन दल जल्दी पहुंचे ।	दमकल टोली छिट्टै आइपुग्यो ।	Neutralization
The chairman spoke to his colleagues.	अध्यक्ष ने सहयोगियों से बात की ।	अध्यक्षले सहकर्मीहरूसँग कुरा गरे ।	Omission

**TABLE 3**  
**INSTITUTIONAL TEXT EXAMPLE**

English Source	Hindi Translation	Nepali Translation	Strategy
All students must submit their assignments on time.	सभी छात्रों/छात्राओं को अपना कार्य समय पर जमा करना होगा।	सबै विद्यार्थीहरूले आफ्नो गृहकार्य समयमा बुझाउनुपर्छ।	Explication / Neutralization

*These tables demonstrate the range of strategies across domains and languages.*

## Summary of Results

- Retention dominates in literary texts to maintain authorial voice.
- Neutralization is common in media and institutional texts.
- Explication clarifies gender when necessary, often in educational or formal texts.
- Omission/paraphrasing is applied when gender is irrelevant or awkward to include.
- Cross-language differences depend on grammatical structure, cultural norms and translator decisions.

Overall, translators negotiate a complex interplay of linguistic structure, social norms and ideological considerations when handling gendered language.

## V. DISCUSSION

### 5.1 Interpretation of Findings:

The results indicate that gendered language translation involves a complex interplay of linguistic, cultural and ideological factors. Translators adopt different strategies based on domain, language structure and intended audience. Retention of source gender predominates in literary texts, ensuring fidelity to the author's voice. Neutralization is common in media and institutional texts to maintain inclusivity and readability. Explication clarifies implicit gender information, while omission or paraphrasing addresses cases where gender is irrelevant or potentially misleading.

These findings align with previous research in feminist translation studies, which argues that translation is never neutral and always mediated by social and cultural ideologies [9;12]. For example, translating "The student completed their homework" into Hindi or Nepali requires conscious choices:

- Retention: छात्र ने अपना कार्य पूरा किया। → masculine default
- Explication: छात्र/छात्रा ने अपना कार्य पूरा किया। → inclusive
- Neutralization (Nepali): विद्यार्थीले आफ्नो गृहकार्य बुझाए/बुझाइन्।

The choice among these strategies reflects the translator's sensitivity to both grammatical constraints and social expectations.

### 5.2 Cultural and Ideological Implications:

Translation is not merely linguistic; it is also cultural and ideological. Translators mediate between source and target cultures, shaping readers' perceptions of gender roles. For example:

- In English-Hindi translations of media articles, neutral terms like "firefighters" are often rendered as अग्निशमन दल, a collective noun, to avoid specifying gender. This reflects both grammatical necessity and evolving cultural norms promoting gender neutrality.
- In Nepali literary translations, masculine default forms often persist due to convention, even when the character's gender is irrelevant. This shows the influence of societal norms and linguistic habit.

These choices have ideological consequences. Retaining masculine forms can reinforce traditional gender hierarchies, while neutralization and inclusive strategies challenge stereotypes. Translators, therefore, act as agents of social change, whether consciously or unconsciously [13].

## Examples from the Study:

### 5.2.1 Literary Text (Harry Potter, Hindi & Nepali translation):

- English: "She is a witch."
- Hindi: वह एक चुड़ैल है |→ retains gender explicitly
- Nepali: उनी एक डाकिनी हुन् |→ retains gender explicitly

Here, retention preserves the fantasy genre conventions but also highlights the female character's gender, reflecting the original's descriptive focus.

### 5.2.2 Media Text:

- English: "The firefighters arrived quickly."
- Hindi: अग्निशमन दल जल्दी पहुंचे |→ neutralized collective noun
- Nepali: दमकल टोली छिट्टै आइपुग्यो |→ neutralized

Neutralization prevents unintended gender bias and aligns with journalistic norms of inclusivity.

### 5.2.3 Institutional Text (Educational Material)

- English: "All students must submit their assignments on time."
- Hindi: सभी छात्रों/छात्राओं को अपना कार्य समय पर जमा करना होगा |→ explicit inclusivity
- Nepali: सबै विद्यार्थीहरूले आफ्नो गृहकार्य समयमा बुझाउनुपर्छ |→ neutral

These examples show how domain-specific norms influence translation strategies.

## 5.3 Implications for Translation Practice:

The findings have practical implications for translators, educators and policymakers:

### 5.3.1 Awareness and Training:

Translators should be trained in gender-sensitive strategies. Understanding grammatical constraints and social norms is essential for producing inclusive translations [8].

### 5.3.2 Guidelines and Glossaries:

Organizations can develop glossaries of gender-neutral terms and guidelines for inclusive translation. For example, using collective nouns or dual forms in Hindi and Nepali can promote neutrality without compromising readability.

### 5.3.3 Domain-Specific Strategies:

- Literary texts: Maintain fidelity but consider cultural implications of gender retention.
- Media texts: Prefer neutralization or collective terms to avoid bias.
- Institutional texts: Use explicitation or neutralization to ensure clarity and inclusivity.

### 5.3.4 Reader Awareness:

Educating readers about translation choices can help them understand the subtleties of gender representation and avoid misinterpretation.

## 5.4 Cross-Language Observations:

### 5.4.1 English → Hindi/Nepali:

Translators often must assign gender where the English source is neutral. This may involve default masculine forms, collective nouns or explicit dual forms.



#### 5.4.2 Hindi/Nepali → English:

Default masculine forms must sometimes be neutralized to align with English conventions. Context and intended audience guide these choices.

#### 5.4.3 Cultural Sensitivity:

Translators navigate not only grammar but also social expectations. For example, Hindi and Nepali translations of professional titles may default to masculine forms, reflecting conventional usage, while English translations favor gender neutrality.

These patterns highlight the translator's dual role as linguistic mediator and cultural negotiator.

#### 5.5 Limitations:

While this study provides valuable insights, several limitations exist:

##### 5.5.1 Sample Size and Scope:

Only 15 texts were analyzed across three domains. A larger corpus could provide more generalizable results.

##### 5.5.2 Language Pair Focus:

The study focuses on English-Hindi-Nepali translations. Other South Asian languages, such as Bengali, Tamil or Urdu, may exhibit different patterns.

##### 5.5.3 Translator Subjectivity:

Translators' personal ideologies and cultural backgrounds influence strategy selection. This subjectivity cannot be fully controlled.

#### 5.6 Recommendations for Future Research

- 1) Expand comparative studies to include more languages and dialects within South Asia.
- 2) Investigate the reception of gendered translations by readers to assess impact on perceptions.
- 3) Explore non-binary and gender-diverse representation in translation, which is under-researched in South Asian languages.
- 4) Examine translation of technical and legal texts where gender neutrality has legal and social implications.

#### Summary of Discussion

- Translation strategies vary by domain, language structure and cultural context.
- Translators act as mediators of both linguistic meaning and social norms.
- Inclusive and gender-sensitive strategies can challenge stereotypes and promote equity.
- Cross-language differences reveal structural and cultural constraints in Hindi and Nepali compared to English.
- Awareness, training and guidelines are essential for improving gender-sensitive translation practice.

## VI. CONCLUSION

This study examined the translation of gendered language between English, Hindi and Nepali, focusing on literary, media and institutional texts. It aimed to identify patterns, strategies and implications of translation choices on gender representation. The findings reveal that gender translation is a complex, context-dependent process influenced by linguistic structures, cultural norms and translator ideology.

#### Key Findings:

- 1) **Retention of Source Gender:** Literary texts predominantly retain the original gender markers to preserve authorial voice. While this ensures fidelity, it may reinforce traditional gender norms, especially in languages with default masculine forms like Hindi and Nepali.

- 2) **Neutralization:** Media and institutional texts frequently employ neutralization, replacing gendered expressions with collective nouns or inclusive terms. Neutralization promotes accessibility and avoids bias but may obscure the source text's original gender nuances.
- 3) **Explicitation:** Translators occasionally make implicit gender explicit, particularly in educational and formal texts, to enhance clarity and inclusivity.
- 4) **Omission/Paraphrasing:** When gender is irrelevant, translators omit or rephrase gendered terms, maintaining meaning without introducing bias.

#### Cross-Language Observations:

- Translating English → Hindi/Nepali often requires assigning gender where the source text is neutral. Translators navigate grammatical constraints, social conventions and cultural expectations in their choices.
- Translating Hindi/Nepali → English often requires neutralization or clarification to align with English conventions.
- Cultural context plays a critical role. Masculine default forms in Hindi and Nepali reflect linguistic habits and social norms, whereas English increasingly favors gender-neutral language.

#### Implications for Theory and Practice:

This study contributes to translation studies, sociolinguistics and gender studies. It reinforces the perspective that translation is never a neutral act; it mediates both linguistic meaning and social ideology [9;12]. Translators' decisions can either perpetuate gender stereotypes or promote inclusivity, demonstrating their role as cultural and linguistic mediators.

#### Practical implications include:

- 1) **Translator Training:** Translators should be educated on gender-sensitive strategies, including neutralization, explicitation and inclusive dual forms.
- 2) **Guidelines and Policies:** Publishing houses, media organizations and educational institutions can develop guidelines and glossaries for gender-inclusive translation in Hindi and Nepali.
- 3) **Domain-Specific Practices:** Literary translations may prioritize retention for stylistic fidelity, while media and institutional translations should favor neutrality and clarity.

### VII. LIMITATIONS

The study analyzed a limited number of texts (15) across three domains. It focused only on English, Hindi and Nepali. Translators' personal ideologies influenced choices, which cannot be fully controlled. Future research should include more languages, genres and larger datasets. Investigating reader reception and exploring non-binary representation in translation are also promising avenues.

### VIII. CONCLUSION

Gendered language translation is a nuanced, multidimensional process shaped by linguistic, cultural and social factors. Translators play a pivotal role in shaping perceptions of gender, whether consciously or unconsciously. By adopting gender-sensitive strategies, they can contribute to more equitable and inclusive communication across cultures. This study demonstrates that effective translation requires both linguistic expertise and cultural awareness. Recognizing the interplay between language and gender is essential for producing translations that are faithful to the source, socially responsible and inclusive. In doing so, translators not only convey words but also actively participate in shaping social norms and cultural understanding.

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