

Translating Physical Limitation in Beckett's *Endgame* and Its Urdu Translation (*Shah-maat*): A Comparative Study

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Abstract

This paper analyzes the representation and translation of physical limitations including immobility, restricted movement, and bodily decline in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* and its Urdu translation *Shah-maat*. Using Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) Model (2015) the study focuses on how these limitations are linguistically expressed in the source text and recontextualized for a culturally distinct Urdu-speaking audience. The analysis is guided by two primary objectives: first, to identify how physical limitation is portrayed in the original English play; and second, to assess how effectively these portrayals are conveyed in the Urdu translation. Through the categories of field, tenor, and mode, along with the application of the cultural filter, this paper highlights how physical suffering in *Endgame* is not only preserved but also reshaped in *Shah-maat* to align with Urdu literary and emotional norms. The findings show that while the translator maintains the essential imagery of bodily decline, subtle shifts in tone, diction, and emotional resonance help make these experiences more accessible to South Asian readers. This study concludes that physical limitation in Beckett's drama is not merely a portrayal of aging but serves as a profound narrative device, reflecting deeper aspects of human dependency and endurance elements that the Urdu translation thoughtfully adapts while maintaining textual integrity.

Keywords: Physical Limitation; Samuel Beckett; *Endgame*; *Shah-maat*; Urdu Translation; Juliane House; Translation Quality Assessment (TQA)

Introduction

Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* presents a concentrated depiction of physical limitation as a fundamental aspect of human existence. The characters Hamm, Clov, Nagg, and Nell exist in

a setting where bodily functions have deteriorated Hamm is blind and unable to stand, Clov is unable to sit and Nagg and Nell live confined within ashbins. Their identities, actions and relationships are shaped by the restrictions their physical conditions impose. In *Endgame* physical limitation operates as a structural framework through which themes of suffering, emotional dependence, communication breakdown, and deteriorating personal relationships are explored.

The motivation for this paper arises from the need to understand how the representation of physical limitation an essential feature of Beckett's dramatic style is adapted when translated across languages and cultures. The study specifically identifies how physical decline is portrayed in *Endgame* and how these portrayals are rendered in the Urdu translation, *Shah-maat*. The Urdu title, meaning "Checkmate," reflects the end of movement and possibility resonating with the static conditions of the characters. However, translating *Endgame* into Urdu involves more than direct linguistic conversion it requires sensitivity to the ways suffering, aging and bodily weakness is conveyed within the Urdu literary tradition known for its metaphorical richness and formal emotional tone.

Physical limitation is a recurring theme across Beckett's works, not only in *Endgame* but also in plays such as *Krapp's Last Tape*, where the character's movements are slow and disjointed, reflecting both physical decline and emotional detachment. Similarly, in *Waiting for Godot*, the characters are depicted with ailments and limited mobility, underlining themes of waiting and endurance. These examples demonstrate that Beckett consistently integrates physical frailty as a means of exploring broader existential conditions.

Beckett's plays have achieved wide global reach and his depiction of physical limitation has found relevance across different cultural and linguistic contexts. The globalization of Beckett's works including translations into multiple languages such as French, German, Arabic, and Urdu, highlights the universality of his themes while raising important questions about how cultural and linguistic filters shape the reception and reinterpretation of his texts. Urdu's literary tradition uses respectful, indirect, and metaphorical language to express pain and limitation, which contrasts with the direct and repetitive tone of *Endgame*. Translating physical suffering from English into Urdu, therefore, requires cultural negotiation to preserve both meaning and emotional depth.

This study applies Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) Model (2015), which evaluates translation through three components field, tenor and mode. Field the subject matter (physical suffering and frailty), tenor the relationship between speakers and mode the form and level of language used. The model also includes a cultural filter which examines how the translator adapts the text to align with cultural expectations of the target audience.

Using this framework, the study analyzes how physical limitations such as "I can't sit," and "I can't stand," are translated in *Shah-maat*. It investigates how the Urdu version balances Beckett's minimalist style with Urdu's expressive norms, maintaining both clarity and cultural resonance.

The paper contributes to Translation Studies and Beckett scholarship by showing how physical suffering is not only translated but also reinterpreted. It affirms that Beckett's themes remain universal, while their expression is shaped by cultural and linguistic contexts.

Literature Review

The theme of physical limitation marked by immobility, bodily decline and restricted agency is central to Samuel Beckett's *Endgame*, where the characters' deteriorating physical conditions are not just narrative details but key dramatic devices. Hamm's blindness and inability to stand, Clov's inability to sit and Nagg and Nell's confinement to ashbins illustrate how the failing body becomes a central symbol of human restriction. As Ruby Cohn (2001) observes Beckett's characters "embody the breakdown of both the body and the spirit" revealing how physical decline is closely tied to emotional dependency and psychological disintegration. Similarly, James Knowlson (1996) noted that Beckett's use of physical deterioration emphasizes the limits of human autonomy and communication highlighting helplessness as a recurring condition of existence in his plays.

John Pilling (1997) further suggests that physical limitation in Beckett's work often occurs alongside repetitive and futile behavior reflecting the way in which bodily restrictions contribute to stagnation and cycles of inaction. Steven Connor (1988) points out that Beckett's portrayal of the weakening body represents an effort to bring structure and order to a world where time, memory and meaning continuously disintegrate. These critical perspectives confirm that Beckett's focus on bodily frailty is not limited to aging or illness it is a deliberate artistic strategy to explore psychological vulnerability, emotional dependence and the breakdown of self-control.

However, while such analyses are well developed in Western Beckett scholarship, the translation of physical limitation into non-Western languages especially Urdu remains underexplored. The process of translating *Endgame* into *Shah-maat* involves not just linguistic substitution but cultural reinterpretation. As Susan Bassnett (2002) argues translation is more than a linguistic process; it is a cultural performance, shaped by norms, values and the expectations of the receiving audience. This is particularly relevant in Urdu where expressions of pain, dependency and aging are often conveyed through poetic imagery, indirectness and emotional delicacy as seen in traditional genres like *ghazal* and *marsiya*. The Urdu language's literary traditions often treat human suffering with dignity and emotional resonance which contrasts with Beckett's stark and restrained style.

Therefore, the challenge for the translator of *Shah-maat* lies in preserving the physical realism and emotional restraint of Beckett's text while rendering it meaningful for an Urdu-speaking audience that may be more accustomed to expressive and metaphorical representations of suffering. This gap in scholarship how the bodily limitations in Beckett's drama are linguistically and culturally adapted into Urdu forms the core of the present study. This gap in the literature raises important questions about how universal themes such as physical limitation, frailty and bodily decline are received, interpreted and reshaped in South Asian cultural contexts. Gayatri Spivak (1993) highlights the translator's role as a "double agent," emphasizing that translation is not simply a linguistic transfer but an ideological negotiation. In this view the translator must balance fidelity to the source text with an awareness of the cultural and emotional expectations of the target audience. This dynamic becomes especially complex when translating texts like *Endgame* where bodily suffering, decay and helplessness are central and where Urdu's cultural idioms often demand a more emotionally layered and respectful rendering of such themes.

To evaluate how these shifts occur this study draws upon Juliane House's Translation Quality

Assessment (TQA) Model (2015). House proposes a functional-pragmatic approach that assesses translations based on how well they replicate the communicative purpose of the original text in a culturally appropriate way. Her model analyzes three register components field (what the text is about), tenor (who is speaking to whom and in what social relation) and mode (how the message is delivered) as well as the concept of a cultural filter which addresses how translators adapt texts to fit the socio-cultural norms of the target language. This framework is particularly effective for analyzing *Endgame* and its Urdu translation *Shah-maat* where the field centers on themes of bodily decay, physical immobility and dependency. These are expressed in lines such as “I can’t sit,” “I can’t stand,” lines that carry both literal and emotional weight. Translating such content into Urdu means working within a culture where physical suffering is often dignified if not spiritualized particularly in literary traditions like *marsiya* or *ghazal* where pain is stylized and emotional endurance is elevated. The tenor also shifts in translation. Beckett’s characters frequently speak with abruptness, sarcasm and emotional detachment whereas Urdu often demands a tone of emotional modulation, politeness, or formal expression, particularly when discussing topics like pain, aging and dependence. Mona Baker (1992) emphasizes that idiomatic meaning and cultural context are major challenges in translating emotionally sensitive content, such as illness, suffering, or death. These cultural preferences influence the mode as well. Where Beckett uses fragmented, elliptical, or disjointed dialogue, *Shah-maat* often introduces slightly more fluid and structured phrasing to fit the expectations of Urdu-speaking audiences without losing the underlying tension.

Lawrence Venuti (1995) introduces the concepts of domestication and foreignization two opposing strategies in translation. In *Shah-maat* the translator appears to adopt a balanced approach preserving the symbolic power of bodily suffering while subtly adapting tone, rhythm and interpersonal dynamics to reflect the emotional and cultural codes of Urdu literature. This reflects what Antoine Berman (1985) calls an ethical engagement with the foreign where translation becomes an act of creative negotiation rather than simple substitution.

Ultimately, these theoretical insights support the analysis that follows in this study that the representation of physical limitation in *Endgame* is not merely transferred into Urdu but transformed adapted to the cultural aesthetics, linguistic expectations and emotional registers of a different readership while still preserving its thematic integrity.

Despite growing interest in Translation Studies few researchers have applied Juliane House’s Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) Model to Urdu literary texts. Studies such as He et al. (2024) and Zhu & Dong (2022) have successfully applied House’s model to Chinese-English literary translations demonstrating how cultural filters influence equivalence and reader reception. Their findings underscore the value of House’s model in non-Western contexts where rhetorical traditions, cultural idioms and expressions of emotional experience often differ significantly from those of the source language. However, no published study to date has applied this model to Urdu translations of Samuel Beckett’s work, particularly *Endgame*. This gap presents a unique opportunity for the present research to contribute to both Beckett Studies and the expanding field of cross-cultural literary translation.

In sum, this literature review establishes three key insights:

1. Beckett’s work uses physical suffering and bodily limitation as core expressions of
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human vulnerability and dependency.

2. Translating these themes into culturally distinct languages such as Urdu requires more than linguistic accuracy; it demands emotional and cultural recontextualization.

3. Juliane House's TQA Model offers a practical and nuanced framework for evaluating such translations, particularly through its focus on field, tenor, mode, and the application of cultural filters.

Building on these foundations this paper applies House's model to a comparative analysis of *Endgame* and its Urdu translation *Shah-maat* exploring how physical limitation when reframed through translation continues to serve as a powerful and culturally adaptable representation of human frailty, emotional distance and the need for care.

Theoretical Framework & Methodology

This study adopts a comparative qualitative approach based on Juliane House's Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) Model (2015) a functional-pragmatic framework used to evaluate how effectively translations preserve the communicative purpose of the original text. Key excerpts from Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* and their corresponding translations in *Shah-maat* are analyzed to assess the treatment of physical suffering, frailty, and dependency.

House's model focuses on three main components field (the subject matter) which in this study centers on physical limitation and bodily decline, tenor (social roles and relationships) exploring how dependency, care and power are expressed and Mode (medium and style) evaluating the formality, structure and delivery of dialogue.

A key feature of the model is the cultural filter which assesses how translations are adapted to fit the norms and values of the target culture. This is especially relevant in translating *Endgame* into Urdu where cultural expressions of aging, pain and emotional tone differ from the original English context. Urdu literary tradition tends to favor respectful, indirect and emotionally layered expressions which may affect how physical limitation is presented.

The analysis examines how elements such as blindness, immobility and pain are rendered across both texts, focusing on word choice, emotional tone, idiomatic language and shifts in character dynamics. The study shows that translation in *Shah-maat* is not merely linguistic transfer but a process of cultural reinterpretation, preserving the core themes while adapting expression for an Urdu-speaking audience.

Research objectives and Questions

1. To examine the representation of physical limitations such as immobility restricted movement, and bodily weakness in Beckett's *Endgame*.

2. To analyze how these physical limitations are translated and culturally adapted in the Urdu version *Shah-maat* using Juliane House's TQA Model (2015).

Research Questions

1. How are physical limitations portrayed in Beckett's *Endgame*, and how are they translated into *Shah-maat*?

2. What linguistic and cultural strategies are used in *Shah-maat* to represent the theme of physical limitation for an Urdu-speaking audience?

Analysis

Field

Field refers to what the text is about its subject matter, content, and themes. In the case of *Endgame* and *Shah-maat*, the field includes physical limitation, frailty, bodily decline, and emotional dependency. It focuses on how these human conditions are described through the characters' speech and actions. In translation, maintaining the field means preserving the central topics and the context in which they appear, without adding or distorting the original meaning.

Tenor

Tenor refers to who is speaking to whom, and the relationship between the speakers. It involves aspects like social roles, emotional tone, power dynamics and levels of formality or intimacy. In *Endgame*, for example, the relationship between Hamm and Clov is marked by dependency and authority, which must be retained in *Shah-maat*. In Urdu, this often requires using formal or respectful forms of address without changing the emotional distance or hierarchy that exists in the original.

Mode

Mode refers to how the message is delivered the medium (spoken or written) and the style (formal or informal, fragmented or fluent). In *Endgame* the mode is typically spoken, elliptical, and often fragmented reflecting the characters' mental and physical conditions. A good translation into Urdu should preserve the conversational and dramatic nature of the original while adapting sentence structure to make it natural in the target language.

Physical limitation

Physical limitation refers to a condition in which a person's bodily movement, control, or functionality is restricted often due to illness, injury and disability. It may include mobility impairment, sensory loss and lack of autonomy in performing basic physical actions like sitting, standing and walking. According to the World Health Organization (WHO, 2011) physical limitations are defined as "any restriction or lack of ability to perform an activity in the manner or within the range considered normal for a human being."

In literary texts especially modernist and absurdist drama physical limitation becomes a powerful metaphor for deeper human struggles. It reflects not just bodily dysfunction but psychological and existential constraints. Physical limitation in this context expresses dependence, helplessness and loss of agency often symbolizing the inability to act, connect or escape one's condition. James Knowlson (1996), Beckett's biographer argues that Beckett's theater uses the body "not just as an actor on stage, but as a symbol of entrapment limited, fragile and resistant to purpose." Ruby Cohn (2001) describes these limitations as "the grammar of Beckett's theatrical world," where the inability to move freely mirrors the inability to escape routine, memory and decay.

English: Clov: "I can't sit."

Urdu Translation: "میں بیٹھ نہیں سکتا۔"

English: Hamm: "True. And I can't stand."

Urdu Translation: "اور میں کھڑا نہیں ہو سکتا۔"

Field

The content of this line is centered on bodily restriction and discomfort. Clov's inability to sit

is a basic yet powerful representation of physical suffering. This limitation is non-dramatic, stated as a fact but implies endurance without rest. It represents how the character's physical discomfort is integrated into the routine of life. In the Urdu translation "میں بیٹھ نہیں سکتا" the translator retains the simplicity and precision of the source line. The focus remains on restricted bodily function, with no added interpretation or cultural layering. The field is directly transferred without embellishment, preserving the function of the original. Hamm line addresses physical immobility. In contrast to Clov, Hamm cannot stand. Together, their limitations represent opposing but equal constraints reinforcing a setting where every character is trapped by bodily dysfunction. The field remains focused on simple and visible human limitation. In the Urdu translation, the translator preserves the contrast and balance of the original. "اور میں کھڑا نہیں ہو سکتا" directly mirrors the structure and focus keeping the emphasis on the physical condition without shifting the meaning or adding metaphoric elements.

Tenor

The tenor here reflects the relationship between Clov and Hamm. Clov is in a subordinate, caretaker-like role. His tone is emotionally detached, not pleading. This line is spoken without resistance which suggests not only acceptance but also emotional fatigue. In Urdu, the tenor is preserved. The formal verb construction "نہیں سکتا" expresses the limitation clearly without additional respect or emotional coloring. The hierarchical tone and Clov's passive stance are maintained in line with the original. Hamm, despite being physically helpless and holds a dominant position over Clov. His tone here is neutral, almost indifferent, showing that even profound limitations like immobility have become ordinary unremarkable facts in their shared environment. The Urdu version replicates this tenor accurately. There is no attempt to soften Hamm's tone or change the social dynamic. The sentence remains functional and expressing a personal state without emotional layering which fits Beckett's original tone.

Mode

The mode of the utterance is spoken, simple and non-literary. The structure is short consisting of a subject "میں" verb "بیٹھ" and negation "نہیں سکتا". It conveys information rather than emotion and the economy of words reflects speech affected by routine and fatigue. The Urdu sentence mirrors this structure maintaining the spoken realistic tone. The translator does not adapt the line to be more poetic staying faithful to Beckett's functional and restrained language. This is also a spoken, plain and unembellished line. The structure is direct and symmetrical to Clov's previous line creating a dialogue of equal limitation. The use of "True" introduces a conversational rhythm even in their physical suffering. In Urdu, the translator removes "True" to "تھیک" from the line and begins directly with "اور" to "And". While this omits a minor conversational marker, the conversational tone and structural parallel to Clov's line are retained. The omission could reflect a desire for fluidity in Urdu, where "تھیک" might have added unnecessary pause or formal tone. As Susan Bassnett (2002) and Antoine Berman (1985) suggest literary translation involves ethical engagement the translator must balance fidelity to the source with resonance in the target culture. In this case the translator effectively preserves the linguistic economy and interpersonal dynamics of the original ensuring that the emotional and physical conditions of the characters are accessible to Urdu-speaking audiences without altering the fundamental tone of the text.

The translator has preserving the original's linguistic structure, tone and function. Both lines

are literally translated with care taken to maintain direct equivalence of verbs and grammatical construction reflects the interpersonal dynamics of speaker roles and ensures that the Urdu remains clear, culturally appropriate, and rhythmically balanced. The cultural filter is lightly applied here. Since the expressions of physical limitation are universally understood no major cultural adaptation is necessary. The translator successfully captures the matter-of-fact tone allowing the human condition of restriction to be just as effective for Urdu readers as it is in the original.

English: Clov: "Stiff, staggering walk."

Urdu: "اس کی چال سخت مگر لڑکھڑاہٹ والی ہے"

English: Clov: "Brief laugh."

Urdu: "ہنستا ہے"

Field

The line describes Hamm's physical movement, or rather his inability to move naturally. The words "stiff" and "staggering" convey both rigidity and instability a reflection of frailty and imbalance in the body. It contributes to the larger image of physical deterioration that defines the characters' world. In the Urdu translation, "اس کی چال سخت مگر لڑکھڑاہٹ والی ہے" the field is accurately maintained. The terms "سخت" (stiff) and "لڑکھڑاہٹ" (staggering) effectively capture the same visual and physical description of movement reflecting the body's lack of control. The field here is a physical expression of emotion a brief likely awkward or forced laugh. The word "brief" is important as it conveys that the laugh is limited, restrained and likely not joyful but mechanical or ironic. The Urdu translation "ہنستا ہے" (He laughs) loses the quality of brevity. It communicates the action but omits the limited nature of the laugh potentially altering its emotional meaning.

Tenor

Clov is commenting on Hamm likely in a descriptive tone. There's no emotional involvement just a factual observation. This reflects a clinical detachment that is common in his speech suggesting that such physical dysfunction is routine and unremarkable in their setting. In the Urdu version the sentence is presented in third person "اس کی چال" matching the neutral, descriptive tone of the original. The translator preserves Clov's detached observational stance maintaining the impersonal tenor. There's no direct dialogue here Clov is either commenting on an action that the text presents this as a stage direction. The tenor is neutral and external not emotional. In Urdu, the tenor becomes more ambiguous. Without "brief" the line could read as casual or natural laughter whereas the English suggests awkwardness and effort which is central to Beckett's portrayal of the body's emotional limits.

Mode

The original is elliptical a short noun phrase not a complete sentence typical of stage direction and dry commentary. The brevity adds sharpness and immediacy. The Urdu translation expands this into a full descriptive sentence which is more common in Urdu stylistics. While it adds a verb "ہے" it remains concise and unembellished preserving the directness of expression even if not the fragmented structure. The English is again a sentence fragment possibly a stage direction and an observational aside. It's terse, creating distance and making the laugh feel uncomfortable. In Urdu, turning it into "ہنستا ہے" makes it a complete verbal sentence losing the abrupt clipped effect of the original. As Newmark (1988) notes, literary translation often requires shifting from semantic fidelity to communicative naturalness,

especially when translating bodily gestures or emotional cues. In the Urdu translation of "Brief laugh" to "ہنسنا ہے" the omission of "brief" may reduce semantic depth but improves fluency and readability for the target audience a trade-off that Newmark acknowledges as often necessary in literary contexts. The tone shifts slightly making the action seem more deliberate or conscious. The translator here adopts what Venuti (1995) describes as a domestication strategy prioritizing linguistic acceptability and rhythm over structural mimicry.

In *Waiting for Godot* physical discomfort subtly underscores the characters' psychological stasis. Estragon frequently complains of sore feet, Vladimir suffers from urinary issues and both characters remain rooted to the spot, unable to exit. While they still have physical mobility, their bodily suffering represents a deeper kind of inertia and dependency much like Clov's inability to sit in *Endgame*. However, in *Endgame*, Beckett shifts from suggestion to direct embodiment. Here, limitation is not thematic background it is the physical and emotional foundation of every character's existence.

The translator chooses to slightly expand the line for grammatical fluency in Urdu but retains the visual impact and tone. There's no cultural shift suggesting a faithful transfer of imagery and tone while adjusting for linguistic norms in Urdu sentence construction. Here, the translator opts for grammatical completeness over semantic nuance. The choice to drop the adjective "brief" simplifies the line possibly to keep the translation fluent and culturally natural. However, it reduces the depth of the original's portrayal of emotional and physical restriction.

NAGG: Kiss me.

Urdu Translation: "مجھے پیار کرو۔"

NELL: We can't.

Urdu Translation: "یہ ممکن نہیں"

NAGG: Try.

Urdu Translation: "کوشش کرو"

Field

This line is about a physical request for affection which becomes symbolic of lost intimacy due to physical limitation. Nagg longs for a small act of connection yet even this is unreachable pointing to how aging affects not only motion but closeness and emotional fulfillment. This line directly addresses physical limitation. Nell responds to Nagg's request by indicating that a kiss though emotionally desired is physically impossible reinforcing the theme of the body failing to meet emotional needs. Despite the restriction, Nagg insists on making an effort. This line shifts from acceptance to gentle insistence. It implies hope to fully give in to limitation.

Tenor

The speaker, Nagg is elderly, dependent and emotionally expressive. The tone is gentle and intimate directed toward his wife, Nell. Despite the affectionate intention there's desperation beneath the simplicity. Nell speaks from the position of someone who shares the same limitations. Her tone is gentle but final, showing resignation rather than frustration. The relationship remains tender but is dominated by helplessness. Spoken in a pleading yet simple tone this line reestablishes Nagg's emotional vulnerability. He is not commanding Nell but longing for a response, even knowing the attempt may fail.

Mode:

The phrase is emotionally loaded but syntactically plain. The Urdu translation “مجھے پیار کرو” stays direct, but the use of “پیار” adds a soft, culturally affectionate tone, making the request feel more emotional in Urdu than in the plain English version is Short and absolute. The Urdu translation “یہ ممکن نہیں” is slightly more formal and structured than the English “We can’t,” giving the line a sense of finality and detachment which may reflect a more composed tone in Urdu. Another brief spoken command yet emotionally charged. The Urdu “کوشش کرو” keeps the tone intact but adds a slightly stronger emotional layer as the verb “کوشش” is culturally associated with effort in the face of hardship.

As Hatim and Mason (1997) emphasize, translation is a communicative process embedded in cultural and interpersonal dynamics. Their concept of register variation aligns closely with House’s model, reinforcing the idea that tenor and mode shifts such as those seen in the Urdu translation of Beckett’s emotionally lines are not only linguistic but also socio-cultural adaptations aimed at maintaining communicative effectiveness in the target context.

Similarly in *Not I*, Beckett isolates the human mouth onstage allowing only voice to exist, detached from the rest of the body. This radical fragmentation pushes the idea of limitation into the abstract. The body is silenced, absent and reduced to a rapid, mechanical flow of speech. Yet the loss of bodily coherence still represents a profound disconnection from agency a theme fully realized in *Endgame* where characters remain together yet disconnected, alive yet limited by the collapse of their bodies.

NAGG: I’ve lost me tooth.

Urdu Translation: “میرا دانت ٹوٹ گیا ہے”

Field

The field here relates to a minor yet symbolic physical limitation: the loss of a tooth. This detail, while small, contributes to the broader theme of bodily decline that runs throughout *Endgame*. In old age, even simple bodily functions like eating are disrupted by the slow erosion of the body. In the Urdu version “میرا دانت ٹوٹ گیا ہے” maintains this field accurately. The translation retains the physical loss without adding metaphor and emotional exaggeration. This reflects functional equivalence as discussed by House (2015), where the focus remains on the literal event a tooth breaking and the underlying theme of aging and decay is subtly preserved.

Tenor

The tenor here involves an aged character (Nagg) speaking from a position of vulnerability and dependence. His tone is not dramatic it's matter-of-fact, possibly even humorous in its simplicity. The relationship between Nagg and those around him especially Nell and Hamm is shaped by shared decline and emotional distance. In Urdu, the tenor remains consistent. The line “میرا دانت ٹوٹ گیا ہے” expresses the same mild frustration or resignation without emotional intensification. Urdu often uses softer or more poetic expressions for pain but here the translator intentionally avoids emotional embellishment staying faithful to Beckett’s tone.

Mode

The mode is spoken, informal and brief. The original line uses colloquial speech “me tooth” instead of “my tooth” suggesting Nagg’s age, informality and possibly reduced articulation.

The Urdu version, “میرا دانت ٹوٹ گیا ہے” translates the line into a grammatically standard form which slightly elevates the tone. The translation is clear and neutral, lacking the casual, dialectal charm of “me tooth.” While this may reduce the character’s informal voice it ensures clarity and cultural fluency for the Urdu-speaking audience. This aligns with House’s cultural filter which allows for grammatical and stylistic shifts that make the translation functionally appropriate in the target language.

The physical limitation tooth loss reflects a larger pattern of bodily failure in the play. The Urdu translation succeeds in preserving the literal meaning but slightly standardizes the tone making it more formal than the original. This is a minor domesticating shift (Venuti, 1995), necessary for maintaining linguistic naturalness in Urdu. Despite this, the core theme of aging and vulnerability is retained without distortion.

NAGG: “Can you see me?”

Urdu Translation: : “تم مجھے دیکھ سکتی ہو۔”

NELL: Hardly. “And you?”

Urdu Translation: “بہت کم۔ اور تم؟”

NAGG: “What?”

Urdu Translation: “کیا”

NELL: “Can you see me?”

Urdu Translation: “کیا تم مجھے دیکھ سکتے ہو۔”

NAGG: “Hardly.”

Urdu Translation: “بہت کم”

Field

The field centers on sensory decline specifically loss of vision in old age. This dialogue captures the shared physical limitation between Nagg and Nell both struggles to see each other. This sensory limitation is not simply medical it becomes a metaphor for emotional disconnection the difficulty of perceiving others and the isolated condition of aging bodies. In the Urdu translation, the field is accurately preserved. Phrases like “بہت کم” “very little” clearly reflect the partial failing vision, and the translator keeps the physical focus intact without shifting to metaphor or sentimentality. This aligns with House’s (2015) notion of functional equivalence where the subject matter remains unchanged even across languages.

Tenor

The tenor reflects an intimate but fragile relationship between Nagg and Nell. They are an elderly couple confined in ashbins physically close but increasingly disconnected by bodily failure. Their tone is gentle, familiar and resigned. Nagg’s “What?” signals not just confusion but an auditory and cognitive lapse, reinforcing their shared disorientation. In Urdu, the tenor is preserved through direct yet polite constructions. “کیا تم مجھے دیکھ سکتی ہو؟” maintains a respectful, gender-appropriate structure. The line “بہت کم” also keeps the response short and resigned matching the tone of Nell’s original line. The formality embedded in Urdu helps maintain the emotional subtlety reflecting Urdu’s cultural norm of showing restraint in intimacy especially in old age.

Mode

The mode is spoken, brief and intimate. The original dialogue is fragmentary and realistic with quick exchanges reflecting faltering communication. These interruptions mimic how older individuals often communicate with pauses, repetition and lapses. The Urdu version

preserves this conversational rhythm, especially with the repetition of “کیا؟” and “بہت کم”. The translator does not expand or stylize the lines thus maintaining the minimalism and realism of Beckett’s original dialogue.

The translator preserves the core meaning, emotional tone and brevity of the original. The use of polite, gender-sensitive Urdu “دیکھ سکتی ہو” for female address respects cultural norms without altering the intent. Minimal intervention aligns with House’s model of overt translation keeping Beckett’s style intact. The shared frailty of the characters physically closes but unable to see becomes a quietly devastating moment well preserved in both language versions.

The sensory and physical decline in *Endgame*, as represented through lines like “Can you see me?” and “Hardly” resonates with a broader literary tradition in which the failing body symbolizes emotional isolation and the limits of connection. Similar portrayals appear in work like “*The Magic Mountain*” (1924) by Thomas Mann novel, the characters live in a sanatorium where illness, slowness and bodily failure are symbols of emotional and moral stagnation. The protagonist, Hans Castorp, begins to accept the logic of a world where bodies are in decline and time becomes meaningless much like in Beckett’s world.

NAGG: “Can you hear me?”

Urdu Translation: “کیا تم میری آواز سن سکتی ہو۔”

NELL: “Yes. And you?”

Urdu Translation: “ہاں اور تم”

NAGG: “Yes. [Pause.] Our hearing hasn’t failed.”

Urdu Translation: “ہاں، (وقفہ) ہماری سماعت ابھی ٹھیک ہے۔”

NELL: “Our what?”

Urdu Translation: “ہماری کیا”

NAGG: “Our hearing.”

Urdu Translation: “ہماری سماعت؟”

Field

The field of this passage is focused on sensory capacity particularly hearing. Unlike vision, which in an earlier passage “Can you see me?” is shown to be failing this passage offers a temporary relief their hearing “hasn’t failed.” But this declaration is laced with irony. In Beckett’s world any retained ability is fleeting and the simple act of hearing becomes a marker of fragile survival. The Urdu translation “ہماری سماعت ابھی ٹھیک ہے” accurately captures the preservation of sensory ability, with the word “ابھی” “still” subtly reinforcing that this functionality may not last a powerful nuance that is faithful to the original’s existential undertone. Cohn (2001) writes that Beckett’s characters exist in a “state of waiting for inevitable collapse” where even intact senses are temporary victories over decay.

Tenor

The tenor reflects an interaction between two elderly characters that are physically close but emotionally fading. The tone is intimate, direct and tinged with irony. The pause after Nagg says “Yes. [Pause.] Our hearing hasn’t failed” is crucial it adds hesitation and fragility to the optimism. In Urdu, the tenor is preserved. The gender-specific and respectful construction “کیا تم میری آواز سن سکتی ہو؟” adds a tone of gentleness and cultural courtesy, reflecting Urdu’s polite register, especially in marital or emotional dialogues. The repetition of “ہماری سماعت” at the end maintains the simplicity and cyclical nature of the conversation. It preserves the

sense of fading memory and verbal misalignment hallmarks of Beckett are deteriorating characters.

Mode

The mode of this exchange is spoken, informal and fragmented mimicking real-life conversation among the elderly. It includes interruptions, repetitions and a meaningful pause. These stylistic elements dramatize the characters' condition where even basic communication is a test of survival. In Urdu, this mode is respected. The translator does not over-clarify and embellish. Phrases like "ہماری کیا؟" and the inclusion of "(وقفہ)" for the pause keep the text per formative and stage-appropriate. In Harold Pinter's *The Homecoming*, (1965) characters "respond with questions, not answers," revealing a breakdown of both sensory and emotional clarity a dynamic echoed in *Endgame* through the "Our what?" exchange.

NELL: "I am going to leave you."

Urdu Translation: "ہاں میں جا رہی ہوں۔"

NAGG: "Could you give me a scratch before you go?"

Urdu Translation: "جائے سے پہلے ذرا مجھے کھجا دو گی۔"

NELL: "No. [Pause.] Where?"

Urdu Translation: "نہیں (وقفہ) کس جگہ کو"

NAGG: "In the back."

Urdu Translation: پیٹھ کو کھجا دو

Field

The field of this dialogue focuses on physical discomfort and dependency. Nagg is unable to scratch his own back a small act that becomes a powerful symbol of bodily incapacity and helplessness. Nell's initial response "I am going to leave you" reinforcing the emotional detachment that accompanies physical limitation in old age. In the Urdu version, the physical action of scratching "کھجا دو گی" is retained precisely maintaining the sense of bodily helplessness. The field is clearly and accurately translated reflecting both the practical need (scratching an itch) and the emotional neglect that follows.

Tenor

The tenor here is intimate yet emotionally distant. Nagg and Nell are husband and wife but their relationship is marked by resignation, routine and unfulfilled needs. Nagg's polite request is met with an initial refusal and then a mechanical follow-up "Where?" which lacks any affection. Nell's tone is cold and disconnected a reaction that reflects fatigue, emotional distance, and even learned helplessness. In Urdu, the translator successfully maintains this emotional register. The phrase "ذرا مجھے کھجا دو گی؟" is gentle and slightly formal keeping the tone non-aggressive but dependent. Nell's "(وقفہ) کس جگہ کو؟" captures her disinterest and detachment, preserving the original emotional flatness.

Mode

The mode is spoken, realistic and fragmented. The exchange contains short sentences and a meaningful pause showing hesitation and a breakdown in connection. There's an implied emotional silence behind Nell's refusal that speaks louder than her words. The Urdu maintains this spoken naturalistic mode. The phrase "(نہیں وقفہ)" correctly mirrors the pause in English keeping the rhythm of Beckett's stage dialogue intact. Urdu sentence structure adds slight grammatical formality but the brevity and tension of the conversation remain

intact. House (2015) notes that preserving mode in literary translation means respecting the text's structure, tone and communicative purpose all of which are successfully achieved here. The translator faithfully retains the physical and emotional dimension of the exchange. Phrases like “ذرا مجھے کھجا دو گی؟” maintain the pleading politeness of Nagg's request. The mechanical tone in Nell's reply “نہیں... کس جگہ کو؟” captures the emotional estrangement between the two a theme central to Beckett's vision of aging. There is no major cultural shift or idiomatic substitution which reflects a deliberate strategy to preserve Beckett's minimalism and emotional realism.

This kind of physical need met with emotional indifference is seen in Philip Roth's *Everyman* (2006), where aging characters experience the loss of touch, care and attentiveness from loved ones. The body becomes a reminder of dependence while others withdraw from even minor acts of help.

Conclusion

This study identifies the representation of physical limitations including immobility restricted movement, and bodily frailty in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* and examines how these limitations are translated and culturally adapted in the Urdu version, *Shah-maat*, using Juliane House's TQA Model (2015). The analysis conducted in this study fully addresses the research objectives and questions outlined at the beginning. The first objective to identify the representation of physical limitations such as immobility, restricted movement and bodily frailty in Samuel Beckett's *Endgame* is achieved by demonstrating how these limitations shape character identity, interaction and thematic development. Through detailed examination of field, tenor, and mode, the study captures how physical suffering defines the structure of the play. The second objective to analyze how these physical limitations are translated and culturally adapted in the Urdu version, *Shah-maat*, using Juliane House's TQA Model (2015) is also met. The research shows that the Urdu translation preserves the emotional and thematic core of the original text while making necessary adjustments to align with Urdu's cultural and linguistic norms. The two research questions how physical limitations are portrayed and how linguistic and cultural strategies adapt them are answered through a comparative textual analysis that highlights both fidelity and adaptation in translation. Thus, the study comprehensively fulfills its objectives and provides a clear structured response to the research questions.

This study is limited to a comparative qualitative analysis of selected dialogues from *Endgame* and their Urdu translations in *Shah-maat*. It focuses on physical suffering, bodily weakness, and sensory decline. Juliane House's TQA Model guides the analysis of linguistic and cultural adaptation. Broader existential themes, performances and other language translations are outside its scope.

The research highlights how physical frailty and suffering can be interpreted across cultures. It shows how Urdu translation bridges emotional differences between Western and South Asian audiences. The study raises awareness of human vulnerability through literature. It offers a framework for culturally sensitive literary translation.

This work contributes to Beckett scholarship and Translation Studies by offering a South Asian lens. It provides translators with practical strategies for balancing accuracy and cultural sensitivity. Scholars of aging and emotion can apply these insights to related texts.

The study also expands Beckett's global relevance and cultural reach.

This study contributes to societal awareness by highlighting frailty and physical decline as universal human experiences. It encourages more empathetic attitudes toward the elderly and those living with physical limitations. On an individual level, it deepens readers' emotional understanding and cultural sensitivity through literature. The translation of Beckett's work into Urdu helps individuals connect with global narratives of suffering in their own cultural context.

The study fosters cultural understanding by portraying frailty as a shared human condition. It equips translators to handle themes like weakness and aging with care. It raises empathy for the emotional and physical struggles of the elderly. By localizing Beckett's vision, it builds bridges between Western and Urdu literary traditions.

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