

## Importance, Problems, Perspectives and Drawbacks of Translation Studies

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### Introduction

The Art of Translation has become essential. All over the globe in all walks of life, 'translation' plays a vital role. There is no rule that a single man should confine himself within the boundaries of a particular language now a day's people are interested to know about many languages, as the result they go for translation. People knowing more than one language naturally become translators and they transmit the source of knowledge from one language into another. "Translators do not speak in their own name; they speak someone else's words," says Theo Hermans. The study of translation, an interdisciplinary field is known as Translation Studies. This has also developed enormously in the past twenty years. Translation is an important tool for the development and growth of a language. A man, who wishes to make his mother tongue more fertile, shall naturally go for translation. Translation can be understood in many different ways. Translation studies approaches literature from a new and dynamic perspective that changes the way we view literature, cultures and each other's. Translation guarantees the survival of our civilization in a globalized world with its digital and electronic innovations. The survival will depend on how well we apply the methods of translation to initiate and promote inter cultural communication. Translation also cultivates associative; thinking and enhances the foundation of creativity. 'If it is true in the beginning was the word, then almost from the beginning there was a problem of translation or rather: there is in that beginning a problem of translation; it is still here, in this beginning, in the very word which was there when I began.' 'A translation, we say, is at its most successful when its being a translation goes unnoticed, i.e. when it manages not to remind us that it is a translation. A translation most coincides with its original when it is most transparent, when it approximates pure resemblance. This requires that the translator's labour be, as it were, negated, or sublimated, that all traces of the translator's intervention in the text be erased. The irony is that those traces, those words, are all we have, they are all we have access to on this side of the language barrier.'

### Importance

George Steiner says, "it is no over statement to say that we possess civilization because we have learnt to translate out of time." The modern term 'Translation Studies' was launched by James S. Holmes in 1972 (Holmes 1988). It covers many different approaches to the subject. "Translation is like a woman if beautiful, it cannot be faithful and if faithful, it cannot be beautiful" One manifestation of respect for the other is the type of translation which attempts to preserve as much as possible of the syntax, prosody or even lexis of the source text. Being a hermeneutics, Gadamer is very much alive to questions of meaning and interpretation. In an essay from 1966, 'Man and Language' - an essay which, appropriately, in view of its title, begins and ends with issues of translation - Gadamer takes up Aristotle's classic definition of man as a being that has 'logos'. Rather than the usual rendering which defines man as a

'rational being', translating 'logos' as 'reason' or 'thought', Gadamer prefers to understand - and therefore to translate - 'logos' as 'language'. Man is not only a rational being but also, perhaps even primarily, a language animal. Gadamer's point is that man's distinguishing feature consists in the capacity to communicate beyond the sphere of the immediately given, for example by referring to general or abstract concepts, or to the future.

Translation aims at producing a text which can stand in a relation of equivalence to another text. When translating a work of art a translator is unable to bring the same ideas that of original text. Sometimes the translated work may contain shorter or lengthier sentences than that of original text. Moreover the number of words does not remain the same in both the languages Source Language and Target Language.

Roman Jakobson in his paper 'On Linguistic Aspects of Translation' makes a very important distinction between three types of written translation.

- a. Intralingual translation- translation within the same language, which can involve rewording or paraphrase.
- b. Interlingual translation- translation from one language to another and
- c. Intersemiotic translation- translation of the verbal sign by a non-verbal sign, for example music or image. Only the second category 'interlingual translation' is deemed 'translation proper' by Jakobson.

Whatever may be translation is "The replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent material in another language". Through translation only many authors gain special interest and their writings reached zenith through translation. The English novelists such as Cooper, Scott and Dickens become more popular in other European countries than they were in England.

"Translation is neither a creative art nor an imitative art, but stands somewhere between the two" says Horst Frenz. Note<sup>6</sup> Translation studies can help a particular race of people who can read and enjoy any work while translated to their mother tongue. May be some original meaning is lost but an easily identifiable core is kept. In Indian literature the role of translation becomes very wide. Translation helps both in bringing about the national and international unity.

A translator paves ways not only to enrich his knowledge but also enriches the two languages itself. A translator, in the first place, should possess inwardness with both languages the Source Language, from which the translation is to be made and the Target Language into which the translation is to be done. He should have a mastery over both languages and the words should "obey his call." Above all, he should have the "feel" of the language. Secondly, in case of literature translation, literal translation should be avoided at all costs because it fails to carry the transposition of culture. He should not only give the lexical equivalent of words but also keep in mind the socio cultural matrix.

Ages ago Cicero summed up the translator's dilemma in the following words, "If I render word-for-word, the result will sound uncouth and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in order or wording. I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator". Language is never a mechanical sound system, for each word is charged with memory, associations and literary allusions. Meenakshi Mukherjee makes an apt observation on this subject: (i) According to her, "the act of translation is voluntary, that is the material has been chose by the translator himself and the prime mover is a compelling desire to recreate, (ii) The translator is a writer in the language in which he is translating, that is, his handling of the language is not merely competent but creative."

J.C. Catford defines translation from the linguistic point of view. He says that translation is “the replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent material in another language.” Though translation has been described differently as an art, a craft and a Science, none of these is adequate. On the other hand, each concept expresses the personal prejudice of the person who says so. In fact translation is more than all these art, craft and science. It is a process of analysis, interpretation and creation. It leads to a replacement of one set of linguistic resources and values for another. In the process part of the original meaning is lost but an easily identifiable core is kept. It is an act of adjustment and a compromising exercise. It is an operation performed on a language.

### **Culture Based Problems**

Indian languages particularly, Sanskrit is rich in erotic vocabulary, but English languages with all its richness and luxury is very poor in erotic vocabulary. Thus, the translation of Vatsyayan’s Kamasutra into English fails to carry the “feel” of original writing. More over words like, “uncle,” “aunt,” “brother-in-law,” “cousin” have a lot of equivalent words in Indian languages. How can one translated these culture-based words and “swear words” without taking the context and the “whole” into consideration?

The translator has to make a balance between maintain close fidelity to the original and utter freedom from it. Sir Aurobindo is in favour of taking liberty with the original. He states that “a translator is not necessarily bound to the original he chooses; he can make his own poem out of it, if he likes, and that is what is generally done.”

Some traditional translation theorists divide translation into two types: literary and non-literary. In literary translation (ie translation of literature) the rhetoric of the Source language (SL) should be faithfully carried over to the Target language (TL). A translator, in the first place, should have inwardness with both the languages - SL, from which the translation is to be made, and TL into which the translation is to be done. He should have mastery over both languages and the words should “obey his call.” Above all, he should have the “feel” of the languages. Secondly, in case of literature translation, literal translation should be avoided at all costs because it fails to carry the transposition of culture. Translation is neither “transliteration” nor “transcreation” and it has to guard against the danger of word for word literal translation as well as taking too much liberty.

Translation is an important tool for the development and growth of a language. From a particular translated work of art, reader can understand the bliss and sufferings of the natives. He can also get what is the culture followed by a particular group of people. Even common behaviour, sufferings, gender harassment of other natives through translated work of art. The translator faces many problems but a creative writer thinks and writes in one language only. Since languages differ from each other in the way they are structured, a translator should be very cautious about the denotative, connotative and idiomatic meaning of words. When we consider problems related to language there may be problems at the word level, above word level and at grammatical level.

When we consider translation of words referring to cultural concept, the Source Language word may express a totally unknown concept in the Target Language. Some religion based words, custom based words even some kind of food which a particular sector of people have may pose a problem to the translators. These types of problems can be grouped under language and cultural problems. Culture is the way of living of a particular sector of people. ‘Cultural’ language is to be distinguished from ‘universal’ and ‘personal’ language.

Problems of translation are varied in nature. Culture and culture- bound words create a good deal of problems in translation. For instance the source language word ‘taali’ has no equivalent in the target language, since it is purely; a Tamil word and a concept of Tamil people it is unknown to the target language readers. Exchanging the rings between the bride

and bridegroom has become a part of marriage ceremony in the Western Culture (Christian beliefs). While translating the word 'taali' it has to be explained that it is a gold coil or a turmeric smeared cord with holy pendants tied by the bridegroom round the bride's neck at the time of wedding. So if the source language word 'taali' is translated by way of cultural substitution into 'exchange of rings,' then the readers would not be fulfilled. So it is better to retain the source language culture specific word in its transliterated form and a foot note can be added. It will help in understanding of the target language readers about an unknown cultural concept of the source language.

There are many other culture based concepts which belong to Hindus and in particular the activities performed in Hindu marriages that cannot be translated. If at all they are translated the real 'feel' is lost. For example the word 'malai maatral' is the important thing in Hindu wedding. After tying the sacred yellow thread the bride and bridegroom are asked to exchange their garlands, this denotes they have become the husband and wife. Again this cultural practise is also unknown to target language readers. Source language phrase has no equivalent in the target language and the sense of concept has been translated into target language as 'exchange of garlands' and naturally the word does not give the real original cultural touch with which the source language phrase has been packed.

There are many other SL phrases like 'mamiyarvittuk kotumai,' 'kaimpen kotumai' have no ready equivalents in the Target Language, although they express concepts which are readily understood by the Target Language readers.

The term 'varatcanaik kotumai' is being translated as 'the severity of dowry.' The Target Language readers are very well familiar with the practice of giving dowry which is an amount of money or property that a woman's parents give to the man whom she marries. But it is something unknown to TL readers about the cruelty or severity of dowry because only in India such a brutal thing prevails. If the bride's parents were unable to offer what the bridegroom and his family demands (may be jewels, properties, cash etc) the bride would be ill-treated by them. Though the above concept is quite familiar to them (TL readers) the Target Language has no equivalent. The SL phrase has been translated as 'the severity of dowry.'

So language is largely culture oriented and therefore translators face the problem of translating certain culture based words into another language with a different culture. Colloquial expressions, culture- words, slang proverbs are difficult to translate, For there is no one to one correspondence between one culture and another or one language and another. Equivalence of words in two or more language is hard to come by hence, the difficulty arises in finding equivalent exact in another language.

Once Robert Frost said, 'Poetry is that which is lost in translation.' From his above words we can understand that translating poetry is also a difficult job. Some methods are there for translation.

**Translation Methods:** The central problem of translating has always been there to translate literally or freely. We can get some useful clearance by four methods of translation.

**Minimal Translation:** when translators find difficult in translating certain English words to Tamil, they just transliterate into Tamil and so naturally those words get used or accustomed to the public, as the result we use those words in our daily life automatically.

**For example:** words like 'buses, 'seminar', 'Whisky', 'car', 'road', 'light' and so on.

The translator sees only the translations have been made or not. Having that one idea he follows this method minimal translation.

**Literal translation:** In this method the structure of the sentence is given more importance than the meaning and so translators find the job to be a difficult thing to translate a whole sentence or a paragraph. Only a word can be translated in this method. From the above point it is crystal clear that this method cannot be applied to all kinds of translation. These Literal

translation maximum satieties the readers because exalted direct words are used in this method.

**Lexical synonymy:** In this method the translators use related words in translation process. They feel tough to translate some of the words from SL to TL in such case they use related words to translate. Instead of emphasizing direct meanings such equivalent words will give in direct meanings. Paraphrase is grasping the meaning of source language text and explaining it by replacing the equivalent ideas. Most of the translators adopt this method.

In general translation is done by three methods, they are word for word form, and we can translate each word. Apart from that we can give different words for a single word to give the same meaning. We can also try to extend and explain certain source language words while translating. If we fail in the above three methods or if our translation does not focus on the above three methods our translation may prove to be vague.

### **Drawbacks**

The important drawback of translation is its failure to convey the jargons of one language through another language through another language. Translation cannot successfully convey or transform professional jargons, critical terms and idioms from one language to another language. As far as poetry is concerned, translation is restricted to ideas only but not to the form. The musicality of a poem along with its technical skill cannot be translated. This is one of the serious limitations of translation. Peter Newmark in his well known piece "The Theory and Practice of Translation" opines that each act of Translation involves some loss of the original meaning and this "basic loss of meaning is on a continuum between over translation and under-translation." Advertisements also have their own drawbacks when they are translated. They are concerned with style and naturally while translating they are handicapped. Translation done within the limits becomes successful. It will give the effect of an original writing done in the source language.

### **Conclusion**

May be tasted part is little but I believe that it quenched the thirst for translation at least in better way. As far as translation studies we need to know more information about changing concepts of translation, more documentation has become a vital aspect. The changing face of translation studies should be studied deeply. As far as language exists translators will also be translating they will also leave some or the other interesting points to be discussed by the readers. The importance of translation lies in the fact that it brings the readers, writers and critics of one nation into contact with those of other not only in the field of literature alone but in all areas of development: Science and medicine, philosophy and religion, political science and medicine, and law and so on. Thus translation helps in the cause of nation building. Even humours based on a particular culture and jokes of a particular community or place are hard to translate, even if they are translated they lose their force, vigour and effectiveness of the target language. Although translation studies got its own setback it has its own advantages also. Through translated works readers can get the cultural, social, artistic terms of particular group of people. The translated work can portray their way of living, about their festivals, about their relations, about their way of worship, to the other group of people who read the particular translated works.

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