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Translation Strategies in Marathi Translations of Ernest Hemingway's Novels

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There is a fairly strong tradition of the American novel in Marathi. This tradition includes writers as diverse as Sir Fennimore cooper, Nathaniel Hawthorne, Herman Melville, Stephan Crane, Mark Twain, Willa Cather, Henry James, Pearl Buck, Upton Sinclair, John Steinbeck and Ernest Hemingway besides a few minor ones.

Ernest Hemingway (1899-1961) was the principal spokesman of the "lost generation", that group of young men and women disillusioned by the widespread breakdown of traditional standards of conduct which took place during and after World War I. The group rebelled against former ideals and values but could replace them only by despair or a cynical hedonism. The writer of the group described such topics as the futility of war, sexual liberty and life in Paris or on the Riviera in the crisp, unpretentious prose, admirably adapted to what he had to say.

Out of the prominent disillusioned expatriates, only the work of Ernest Hemingway has so far been translated into Marathi. Hemingway, who had been wounded by the explosion of a trench mortar bomb while conducting ambulance duty in World War I, became the outstanding fictional spokesman of horrible things. Despite being terribly hurt by life, Hemingway respects courage and refuses ever to admit defeat. As Santiago in *The Old Man and the Sea* says, Hemingway seems to believe, "Man is not made for defeat..... A man can be destroyed but not defeated," and it is this note of fearlessness in Hemingway's fiction that has held a wide appeal in Marathi literary culture.

I

V.V. Dalwi was the first to introduce Hemingway to Marathi readers. In 1957, he translated his *A Farewell to Arms* under the title *Shastrasanyas*. Hemingway's novel confronts the war directly, to see it as a grotesque manifestation of nature. Frederic Henry, an American lieutenant in the Italian ambulance service during World War I, is indifferent to war and war-related activities. However, his controlled response to the horrors of war is put at risk when he falls in love with Catherine Barkley, the British nurse. He makes his 'separate peace' by deserting from the Italian army when his interests and those of Catherine demand it. The two attempt to construct collective solitude from love: 'We could be alone when we were together, alone against the others.' But Catherine dies in childbirth, leaving Henry desolate and alone in a strange land.

Dalwi has made a serious attempt to render Hemingway's dramatic scenes in Marathi. For instance, his translation of the conversation on war between Henry and the priest is quite effective. Nevertheless Hemingway's terse, simple and unadorned writing poses a great challenge to him. Henri, when he is told that his wife has had a hemorrhage, starts praying.

... Don't let her die. Oh, God, please don't let her die. I'll do anything for you if you won't let her die. Please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. Dear God, don't let her die. Please, please, please, please, don't let her die. I'll do anything you say if you don't let her die. You took the baby but don't let her die. Those will all right but don't let her die. Please, please, please, please, please, dear God, don't let her die. (*A Farewell to Arms* 1929: 254)

Hemingway here dramatizes the scene, but Dalwi seeks the easy way of explanation.

“deva vachav mazya katherinla, tuzua ichhepramane mi sadaiv vagen. Muana nelas, aaila tari nevu nakos deva, deva” Maz man hambarada fodun radu lagala. {purushasarakha purush mi, pan ekhadya strichya antakarana pekshahi maza antkaran halav banala hota .} (Shastrasanyas 1957: 314)

It is said about Hemingway’s work that ‘his writing is (characteristically) simple to the point of brutality, concrete, emphatic as the rain of bullets, largely monosyllabic and innocent of subordination, as rich in ‘ands’ as the English Bible.’ See for example this description: “I kissed her hard and held her tight and tried to open her lips; they were closed tight. I was still angry and as I held her suddenly she shivered (A Farewell to Arms 1957: 25) “In Dalwi, the passage suffers from wordiness: (kup aavegan mi maze hot tichya hotanvar tekale va tila ghata aavalun dharale. Tiche hot aalag karanyacha mi prayatna kela, karan tine ghata mitale hoteä. Khara mhatala mhanaje maza rag thoda ka hoina; pan shillak aaheäp. Aasa mala vatala mi tila javal odhun dharal asata ti thar thar kapu lagali (Shastrasanyas 1957: 29). Dalwi omits Hemingway’s fresh and concrete images and at other times, adds his own images which are stale and ridiculous: “I was angry and yet certain, seeing it all ahead like the moves in a chess game (A Farewell to Arms 1957: 25).” becomes incorrectly “mi ragavalo hoto tari dekhil tiche shabda aikun maza raga viraghalhala” (Shastrasanyas 1957: 28)) and again

I knew I did not love Catherine Barkley nor had any idea of loving her. This was a game, like bridge, in which you said things, instead of playing cards. Like bridge, you had to pretend you were playing for money or playing for some stakes. Nobody had mentioned what the stakes were. It was all right with me. (A Farewell to Arms 1957: 28)

Becomes with mistakes of tense,

‘ ... khar sangu ? mi Catherin var prem karit nahi . chukunahi tichya premacha vichar mazya manat yet nahi’
kharach, mazya drushtina tie k krida hoti . (Shastrasanyas 1957:30)

Hemingway’s simple ‘we had a good time’ becomes foolishly, ‘aamachya pritichi phulbag hoti tya veli .’ (Shastrasanyas 1957: 128)

A close reading of Dalwi’s translation reveals that Dalwi has no competence to face the challenge of translating Hemingway into Marathi. Right from the beginning of the novel Hemingway through Henry’s words and deeds suggests that war is futile. In ch.4, about selecting the posts for the wars he says, “It was one of those things that gave you a false feeling of soldiering.” In ch.5, he says to Catherine, “Let’s drop the war” (A Farewell to Arms 1957 1957: 24). In ch.7, instead of forcing the hernia soldier to join the regiment he teaches him a trick of getting injured in order to run away from war. In ch.8, during his visit to Catherine before going to the front, he says:

‘I’ m leaving now for a show up above Plava.’
‘A Show?’

‘I don’t think it’s anything.’ (*A Farewell to Arms* 1957: 37)

Dalwi misses the irony in the word ‘show’ and translates the conversation wrongly as

mi mhatala, “ plava palikade mi jato aaheāp. Aaj halla karayacha aahe tithun.”

“kay! halla ?”

“tas kahi vishes aahe aasa nahi .” (*Shastrasanyas* 1957: 42)

V. V. Dalawi has made a serious attempt to render Hemingway’s dramatic scenes in Marathi. His translation of the conversation on war between Henry and the priest is quite effective. While translating Hemingway’s dramatic scenes, Dalawi uses various strategies of translation. Though he uses different grammatical structures, the translator has tried to keep the content the same as it is in the source language text. The long and complex sentences are converted into short and simple sentences while making translation. Dalawi has followed some indirect translation procedures. The use of synonymy translation strategy can be seen in the translation of ‘pontoon bridge’ as ‘zulata pul’ ‘dugouts’ as ‘khandak’ and ‘lines’ as ‘chavani’. Borrowing translation strategy has also been used by the translator. The source language words such as ‘rockets’, ‘telephone’, ‘major’, ‘blanket’, ‘Barman’, ‘hat’ ‘overcoat’ ‘nurse’, ‘hotel’, ‘hospital’ etc. are transferred directly to the target language. Dalawi has also used Idiomatic translation strategy. This translation strategy makes use of idioms and colloquialisms that are not present in the source text. Here the emphasis is more on naturalness than in the faithful translation. To describe the rain lashing the window panes he has used the idiomatic expression ‘nagara vajavane’.

II

D.B. Mokashi, a short story writer and novelist, made the translation of Hemingway’s *For Whom the Bell Tolls* (1940), a novel depicting the subversive activities of one Robert Jordon, an American who has entered the Loyalist army during the Spanish Civil War of the 1930s, and has been sent to join a guerrilla band in the mountains near Segovia to blow up a strategic bridge at the exact minute that will help a loyalist advance. He spends the three days and nights in the guerrilla’s cave. He falls in love with Maria, a girl raped by Falangists. After a lot of planning and designing, Jordon with the help of the guerrilla band successfully blasts the bridge. In the attempt to flee he is wounded, and forces the others to leave him. He lies on the hillside asserting his belief that the battle for human freedom is going to be lost or won in Spain.

The title *For Whom the Bell Tolls* is derived from a sermon by Donne:

No man is an Island, entire of it selfe; every man is a piece of the continent, a part of the main, if a clod bee washed away by the sea, Europe is the lesse, as well as if a promontorie were, as well as if a Mannor of thy friends or of thine owne were; any mans death diminishes me, because I am involved in Mankind; and therefore never send to know for whom the bell Tolls; It tolls for thee.

Mokashi’s choice of the title, *Ghanaghanato Ghantanad* does not allude to Donne, neither does it refer to death or war as such. ‘Tolling a bell’ has a Christian association with ringing a bell for

a death or funeral. Since the Marathi word 'Ghantanad' has an immediate association with the ringing of the bell in a temple at the time of a prayer, the original allusion is lost in Marathi.

Hemingway's style is thick with 'ands', 'adjectives' and 'adverbs'. His simple and short clauses connected with 'ands' have a very dramatic effect on the mind of the reader. Mokashi breaks these clauses in many pieces that no meaningful narrative is achieved.

He felt the quick, liquid, spastic lurching of the gun against his shoulder and on the road the man, looking surprised and hurt, slid forward on his knees and his forehead doubled to the road. (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 1940: 380)

banduk zatkiyat mage yevun khandyala basalela dhakka tyala kalala. Samorcha to santri kshanabhar chakit hovun mag dukhavyasarkha disala. Mag gudghyavar ghasarala. Kapal sharer dumdlyan zaminila tekala, (*Ghanghanato Ghantanad* 1965: 380)

There is no equivalent for any 'and' and Hemingway's 'quick, liquid, spastic', simply becomes "zhatakyat." Again,

'Look, turn thy head,' and then their mouths were tight together and she lay close pressed against him and her mouth opened a little gradually and then, suddenly, holding her against him, he was happier than he had ever been, lightly, lovingly, exultingly, inertly happy and unthinking and untired and unworried and only feeling a great delight. (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 1940: 69)

paha tonda valav ! tonda valav.”
Mag tyanche hot ekmekanvar ghatta mitale. Ti tyala ghatta bilgun hoti . tiche hot haluhalu vilag zale. Ni ekdam tila ghatta aawalyavarú kadhi nhavat itaka such tyala zala, itaka haluvarú! Itaka god-, itaka uttan ! itaka aatun ! tyacha thakava gela. Kalajya gelya. Aativ aanandan tyacha mana bharun aala. (*Ghanghanato Ghantanad* 1965: 75)

Here, Mokashi seems to have created the original passionate moment of the love between Jordon and Maria, but since his rendering is couched with conventional pauses and exclamations, Hemingway's mode of writing is lost.

Hemingway's text is full of descriptive and conversational subtleties. Mokashi at times fails to understand them and commits grave mistakes in translation.

Golz asks Jordon, "How do you like partisan work?"

It was the Russian term for guerilla work behind the lines.

'Very much,' Robert Jordon said. He grinned. "It is very healthy in the open air." (*For Whom the Bell Tolls* 1940: 14)

“ partishan karya tula kasa aawadata ?”

Shatruchya pichadila karavayachya bhumigat karyala ha rashian shabda hota.

“ phar aawadat' robart Jordan hasala aani mhanala.”

“ ughadyavar chan vatat,”

Here, Mokashi makes a jumbling between ‘partizan’ and ‘partition’. He is not sure about the nature of ‘guerrilla’ (bhumigat) work. Hence the contradiction between ‘guerrilla’ and ‘open air’ (ughadyavar).

Now ‘Have, you mean’ refers to having talent and not to doing an attempt in the past. Another example of a mistranslation is: “There’s no one thing that’s true. It’s all true. The way the planes are beautiful whether they are ours or theirs. The hell they are, he thought.” (*For Whom the Bell Tolls 1940*: 409) ekach ashi goshta sarvasvi satya nahi. He sara milun satya aahe. Pathar aamacha aaso ki shatrucha aaso, te sundar aahe he jasa khar aahe. Aahet te sala! (*Ghanghanato Ghantanad 1965*: 483) Here, mokashi commits a stupid mistake of jumbling ‘planes’ with ‘plains’. Thus, Mokashi’s is not a very effective translation. Mokashi frequently uses Borrowing translation strategy. The source language words such as ‘church’ ‘christian’ ‘short wave transmetre’, ‘nerve’, ‘machinegun’, etc. have been retained in the target text. Idiomatic translation strategy has been used by the translator quite effectively; for example ‘premala udhan yene’ is used for ‘I love her so much’. The translation strategy of Reduction has been used by the translator. He has completely removed ‘sons of bitches’ from the source language text in his translation and instead of this he has used ‘avalad’. Synonymy translation strategy is also used by Mokashi effectively. For example the translation of dreadful things as ‘attyachar’ which is nearly but not completely same.

III

The Marathi readership prefers naturalistic novels. Hence we have one more attempt to translate only naturalistic portion of Hemingway’s novel (*The Old Man and the Sea*) of the old Cuban fisherman who battles first with a giant marlin, which he tames and catches, then with the predatory sharks that reduce the fish to a skeleton he nevertheless brings home to port. Besides a tale of adventure, it is a parable of man’s struggle with the natural world, of his noble courage and endurance.

The Marathi publisher, R. J. Deshmukh, had to face many difficulties in publishing the book. The renowned Marathi novelist, V. S. Khandekar and essayist, Anant Kanekar, refused to translate the novel into Marathi. Instead of giving the work of translation to others or accepting the translation already done by others, the publisher thought it better to hand over the work to the well-known Marathi playwright and humorist, P. L. Deshpande. Now Deshpande, a man of urban sensibility, is at his best in presenting a community life in a chawl--the individual members of it (who happen to be types rather than characters), their oddities, and their limited but rigid outlook on life. Rendering the life of an extraordinary individual, and that of a fisherman, was an arduous task for him. It took two to three years for him to finish. He had to take the help of experts and fishermen. Besides, he owes his debt to Mangesh Vitthal Rajadhyaksha and Vijaya Rajadhyaksha who helped him a lot.

Eka Koliyane by P. L. Deshpande is the only translation of an American novel which has received wide critical attention so far in Marathi translation culture. The book was twice reviewed in *Satyakatha*, a respectable Marathi journal of the 1950s and 60s. R. S. Jog has all praise for Deshpande’s efforts. He congratulates Deshpande for introducing a great English work of art to the Marathi reader successfully. He refers to the Noble prize citation which honors Hemingway for ‘his powerful style-forming mastery of the art of modern narration, as most

lately revealed in his novel *The Old Man and the Sea* and claims that Deshpande has done justice to the original style. Nevertheless even Jog criticizes Deshpande's choice of the title. Jog's final judgment is that Deshpande has been succeeded in rendering even difficult portion of the novel with a finish in Marathi. Besides the translator, Jog admires the publisher for preparing a very beautiful copy of the translation full of original illustrations, good printing paper and bold typeset.

In *Satyakatha* (Oct. 66) there appeared one more review of Deshpande's translation, this time by Achala Sudhakar Joshi. It runs into 10 pages and is a very detailed one. Joshi has her own theory of translation. According to her, a successful translation must accurately present plot in the original work of art, the writer's experience and truths perceived in terms of his subject, characters and atmosphere, the artist's method of designing his work of art and above all, important aspects of his style. There must be no deviation from the original method of expression. At the same time, the language of the translation must also be natural enough to appear not a translation at all. The success of a translation, she continues, depends less upon the translator's own experience and more upon his understanding of the original story and its method of expression and his use of the language. She examines Deshpande's translation in terms of these theoretical points.

At the outset, she takes objection to Deshpande's referring to 'the fish' as 'masedada' and 'the old man' as 'aajoba' which affect emotional affinity quite absent in Hemingway's stark realistic account of the encounter between the desperate old man and the mighty marlin. She is also strongly critical of Deshpande's choice of the title, *Eka Koliyane*, which, besides being irrelevant, is pseudo-poetic and lacks the effect of the original straightforward and touching one's.

Santiago admires the fish but is determined to destroy the mighty one. He knows that the marlin is mightier than him but it is his intelligence only that is going to help him in this unequal battle. He never feels pity for the fish, neither does he despise him. Similarly, he never affects undue fondness for him. Deshpande has failed to maintain this tempo in his translation.

According to Joshi, while writing serious and emotional writing, P. L. Deshpande tends to become sentimental and is often carried away by the character. Both these flaws make him incompetent to observe the kind of artistic distance observed by Hemingway in his novelette. A few examples cited by Joshi are;

- 1) "Fish", he said, "I love you and respect you very much" becomes " masha, aare jiv jadlay re maza tuzyavarú! tasa mi manatohi tula (*Eka Koliyane* 1965: 62)
- 2) "You are feeling it now fish"
Becomes "kay re masha ! aata kalatay tula?" (*Eka Koliyane* 1965: 65)
- 3) "Better weather for me than for you, fish"
Becomes "kay re masha! hi hava" (*Eka Koliyane* 1965: 71)
- 4) "How do you feel fish?" He asked aloud
"I feel good...pull the boat fish"
Becomes ["kay re masha kasa kay vatatay tula, kasa kay vatatay!" mhatara, "mala tar chan vatatay baba... Tu aapali hodi odhat raha, bar ka masha ?"
- 5) "Half fish," he said, "fish that you were. I am sorry that I went too far out How many (sharks) did you ever kill, old fish? You do not have that spear on your head for nothing."
Becomes

‘aad-masha,’ to mhanala, “eke kalachya masha ! mi itakya durvar aalo tyacha wait vatatay re mala ...masedada, tumhi aajvar kitihi shark marlet?

Tumchya dokyavaracha to bhala kahi tumhi ugichach balagalela nahi.” (*Eka Koliyane* 1965: 139)

In all these examples, Joshi takes strong objection to expressions that affect unnecessary closeness such as ‘kay re masha,’ ‘sambhal re masha,’ ‘baba.... Bara ka’, “aad-masha ...eke kalachya masha”. Deshpande’s uncalled-for empathy gives way to looseness of effect.

Hemingway’s mode is simple and straightforward. Since Deshpande’s artistic sensibility indulges in excesses he cannot give satisfactory equivalents to Hemingway’s simple and solid details. Hemingway does not avoid repetitions of certain words. For example the verb ‘kill’. ‘I will kill you’ comes many times. Deshpande, however, translates the word as ‘thar karin,’ ‘marin’, ‘khatam karin,’ ‘mudada padin’, ‘thechun kadhin’. These Marathi expressions with their subtle shades of meaning delineate Santiago falsely.

Contrary to Hemingway’s, Deshpande’s use of Marathi in his translation is burdensome and artificial. It lacks the original flow and therefore, fails to render the original drama properly.

The translation also suffers from inaccurate grammatical and semantic expressions. Jog has congratulated Deshpande for honesty and faithfulness. Joshi, after a thorough reexamination of Deshpande’s translation, charges him of being careless and reckless in his rendering of Hemingway’s neat and tight prose. After a brief comparative analysis of the nature of literature produced both by Hemingway and Deshpande, she concludes that the very qualities that make Deshpande famous in Marathi have turned into his limitations as a translator of Hemingway’s novel. Deshpande over imposes his sentimental mode of fiction on Hemingway’s otherwise starkly realistic presentation of the struggle between Santiago and the marlin.

Vilas Sarang, writer, critic, scholar and translator, in *Bhashantarache kahi prashana* (A few problems of translation) examines Deshpande’s translation from stylistic point of view and finds it lacking in stylistic awareness. Firstly, Deshpande, who makes the reader identify himself with the old man, avoids the repetition of such expressions in ST as ‘He thought’ or ‘The Old Man thought’ and ‘He said’ and maintain a distance between the old man and the reader. In his translation, Hemingway’s simple ‘he thought’ becomes variously ‘mhataryala vichar aala’, ‘asa vichar tyachya manat aala!’ ‘asa tyachya manat aala’, ‘mhatara manat mhanala’, ‘manashi mhanala’, ‘manashich mhanala’, ‘manashi mhanat hota’, ‘manashich mhanat hota’, ‘mhanat hota’, ‘swatashich mhanat hota’, ‘tyala vateã’, ‘tyala vateã’, ‘tyala vatata’, ‘vatata’, ‘tyane swatachi samjut keli’. Similarly ‘he said aloud’ becomes ‘to oradala’, ‘mothyane oradala’, ‘zorat oradala’, ‘mothyane mhanala’, ‘ekdam mothyane udgarala!’ Not only does he introduce such variety, but also leaves these expressions untranslated many times. For example. ‘He thought’ has been left untranslated 68 times, i.e. more than half of its use. Secondly, Deshpande has made use of a tremendous number of exclamatory marks. Hemingway has limited the use of them to only two in the complete novel. Exclamatory marks tend to affect closeness with the reader. Hemingway drops them to maintain objectivity and serious atmosphere of the novel. Deshpande, on the contrary, by nature likes to befriend the reader and affect playfulness. Hence, so many exclamatory marks leading to lack of ‘tone’ of the original novel. One of Sarang’s examples is:

What I will do if he decides to go down, I don’t know. What I’ll do if he sounds and dies I don’t know. But I’ll do something. There are plenty of things I can do. (*The Old Man and the Sea* 1952: 42)

baki khali jayala lagala tar mi kay Karin kon jane! Aani tal gathun mela toä, tari mi kay karnarú ? nahi. Pan mi kahi tari karen ! khup karata yenyajoga aahe! (*Eka Koliyane* 1965: 50)

Again, Hemingway has not used dash at all. Dash creates false ‘suspense’ and loosens the sentence. Hemingway never writes sentences of phrases. Each sentence is verbally complete in itself. By using dashes and by breaking the sentences, Deshpande destroys the original organic effect. One of the many examples given by Sarang is:

... He dreamed of Africa when he was a boy and the long, golden beaches and the white beaches, so white they hurt your eyes, and the high caves and great brown mountains. He lived along that coast now every night and in his dreams he heard the surf roar and saw the native boats come riding through it. (*The Old Man and the Sea* 1952: 21)

... lahanpani afriket ghalavalelya divasanchi to swapne pahu lagala. --- lamb --- soneri samudrakinareäú – pandhareshubhra kinareú – tirip lagun dolyana tras hoil itake pandhare dhop! – uncha shikhareÆú, mothmothale karade dongarú – roj ratri to tyach kinaryavar rahi - - velearalya garjana swapnat aike - - tithalya rahivashanchya hodya kinaryavar yetana pahi. (*Eka Koliyane* 1965: 21)

Vilas Sarang draws attention to the one more characteristic feature of Hemingway’s style, i.e., his generous use of ‘and’. Deshpande has made some attempt to reproduce the characteristic in his translation but he is not consistent enough in his attempt. Achala Joshi, in her review, took objection to this attempt and found sentences joined by ‘aani’, ‘aana’, ‘na’ and ‘va’ would have appeared novel in Marathi translation. Hemingway uses ‘and’ not only for speed and rhythm but also for other effects. For example: They sat on the terrace and many of the fishermen made fun of the old man and he was not angry. (*The Old Man and the Sea* 1952: 7) ‘mag te tawranat gele . itar koli mhataryachi thatta karu lagale . pan tyala rag nhavata.’ Another example is: “Then he was sorry for the great fish that had nothing to eat and his determination to kill him never relaxed in his sorrow for him. (*The Old Man and the Sea* 1952: 74) nantar tyala upashipoti rahilelya tya mashachi daya yayala lagali. Pan tashi daya yet aasatana suddha tya mashala thechun kadhayachya nishchayapasun matra to zara suddha dhalala nahi. (*Eka Koliyane* 1965: 88 - 89) The original English ‘and’ suggests that there is no strain between sorrow for him and determination to kill him; both human responses are legitimate in themselves. That equilibrium that sublines aloofness with which the old man accepts life is reflected in them. The dramatic opposition in Deshpande’s ‘pan’ goes totally against this philosophical stand.

To conclude, the three Marathi translations suffer from inaccurate grammatical and semantic expressions but nevertheless, the translated texts leave the impression of creativity, innovation and experimentation. It can safely be claimed that despite different problems and difficulties in translation, the three Marathi translators V. V. Dalawi, D. B. Mokashi and P. L. Deshpande have succeeded in transferring different expressions and coordinates of American culture and society to the target Marathi culture and language to a large extent because of their skillful use of a variety of translation strategies.

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