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Translation Study of the Abuses and Swears in the Selected Dalit Autobiographies

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Abstract:

The present article studies the translation of abusive words and swears from the Marathi language to English. Dalit writers are not established writers like the other writers from the so-called upper castes. They write as it comes to them, without bothering much about style, narrative technique and register. As a result their writings have their own method and flavor. This article intends to comment on the translation of abusive words, sentences, expressions, and rhymes from the Marathi language to English. I have divided such expressions in four main groups to comment on their translation. This article is based on the texts of Laxman Mane's 'Upra: an Outsider', Laxman Gaikwad's 'The Branded', Urmila Pawar's 'The Weave of My Life', and Sharankumar Limbale's 'The Outcaste'. Some of the abuses and swears are uttered by the people of these community are collected from translated text.

Keywords: Kadu, raand, bhadya, mela, mada, shindalki.

Though it is difficult to define translation in exact words, it roughly means conversion of a text in one language to a text of another language. This may be a conversion of the content, form, style or language. We read great books from Marathi language. If we do not translate it; it will be limited to Marathi knowing people only. If we translate it in English, English readers can read it in translation.

Globalization has made it obligatory and convenient to learn more than one important languages of the world. Translation of a Marathi book in Hindi belongs to the primary phase of translation practice in India. Translation of a Marathi text in English belongs to the modern phase.

There are different theories of translations put forward by Nida E.A. and Catford J.C. People talk about linguistic equivalence, sense translation, literal translation etc.

J.C.Catford in his definition of translation says 'Translation may be defined as follows; the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL).....The central problem of translation practices is that of finding (TL) translational equivalents'.

Coming to translations from Marathi into English. St.Tukaram's 'Tuka Manhe', Jaywant Dalvi's 'Chakra', Bhalchandra Nemade's 'Kosla'. Mahesh Elkunchwar, Satish Alekar and Vijay Tendulkar's plays are translated into English. Various biographies and autobiographies are translated into English. Dalit autobiographies like Laxman Mane's 'Upra', Laxman Gaikwad's 'Uchlya', Sharankumar Limbale's 'Akkarmashi', Urmila Pawar's 'Aaydan', Daya Pawar's 'Baluta' and Bebi Kamble's 'Jina Amucha' are also translated in English. Dalit writers in Maharashtra began to write about their life after independence. Marathi that they employed in these books is the Marathi of their huts, shanties, far away from the everyday Marathi of the so called savrnas.

Translation of this language into an alien language like English was certainly a tough task. The culture represented in these books was also new to Marathi and English language and literature. Hence it posed special challenges before the translators. I would like to study these abusive words from language and culture point of view.

I have divided such expressions in four main groups to comment on their translation. First group consists of words taken from Laxman Mane's 'Upra: an Outsider'. Second group consists of sentences which are taken from Laxman Gaikwad's 'The Branded'. Third group consists of expressions from Urmila Pawar's 'The Weave of My Life' and fourth group consists of words which are taken from Sharankumar Limbale's 'The Outcaste'.

First group of abusive words are taken from Laxman Mane's *Upra*. *Upra* is translated as 'Upra: an Outsider' by A.K.Kamat. These words are *raand-raandachya*, *bhadya*, *icchya aaila* etc. The word *raand* and *raandachya* are commonly used in the Kaikady tribe. The dictionary meaning of the word *raand* is 'a woman whose husband is dead', 'a whore', 'a widow' etc. Word *raand* in Marathi is offensive. A person who misbehaves is called *raandachya* - At times it shows informal relations between speaker and listener. It is an abusive word in Marathi and is rarely used. Its dictionary meaning is 'bastard child', 'illegitimate child'. But translator translated it as 'lazy bones'. *raand* is translated as 'bitch', 'whore', 'bloody whore', and 'slut'. They have different connotative meanings in English. Any one of them fails to convey the same meaning as *jkaM* in the text.

Bhadya in Marathi means 'a man who forces his daughter or sister in prostitution and makes his living on her earning'. Translator has used 'lazy bones' for *bhadya*, which in English means 'a person who sleeps late'. It is noteworthy that *raandachya* and *bhadya* both are translated as 'lazy bones'. Translator should have made some distinction between the two. *Ichya aaila* is a common utterance in rawdy persons. People from Kaikady tribe use this word unintentionally very often. Translator has translated it as 'motherfuckers' without thinking about the seriousness of the expression.

Second group of abusive sentences is taken from 'Uchalya' translated by P.A.Kolharkar as 'The Branded'. *Mai mi raandani* converted as 'I am really unfortunate', *Laxmantata*

khekdyachi amti khata is transformed as ‘Lachmantata, crab curry khata’, “*hya uchalyachi jaat kay sudarnar anhi!*” is translated as ‘He is from the Uchalya community, will it ever mend itself!’

Nagnath Kottapalle says,

“A plane of rural society is felt here. In this society are seen the scattered islands of exploited Dalits. A different life style and dialect of that society is observed here. As the generation in this society goes on acquiring education, the pictures of that life along with its background will appear in literature.” (Page, 59)

Mai mi raandani is translated as ‘I am really unfortunate’. Woman from this tribe uses such words easily even in her mumblings. She has used this word out of habit because she is illiterate. She didn’t know, what it really means. There are various words in Marathi language that are spoken by these people even if they don’t know their implications. Translator has translated it word by word hence it does not carry the meaning correctly. This is an idiom used by common woman. It doesn’t convey the same meaning as it does in source text. This is a soliloquy. Translator had to translate this expression sense to sense. This can be reworded like ‘what a fool I am’, ‘I am careless’ etc.

Laxmantata khekdyachi amti khata is translated as ‘Lachmantata, crab curry khata’. This is wrongly translated, because it is translated word by word. Even if he translated word to word, he has not translated last word *khata* in English. He has kept this word as it is. He has tried to maintain poetic rhythm in translation.

“*Hya uchalyachi jaat kay sudarnar anhi!*”. This sentence is translated as ‘He is from the Uchalya community, will it ever mend itself!’ Synecdoche is used here. This expression is ostracized because caste is involved here. In India there are castes and sub castes as well as social discrimination under caste-category. In Hindu religion there are four classes. They are Savarna, Kshatriya, Vaishya and Shudra. People who did not belong to first three were called Shudras. People were distributed in these four classes according to their work. They are known as downtrodden because they were deprived of their fundamental rights. They were equated with dirty and filthy work. Some of them are still in this mud decaying their generations. They get angry if someone calls them by their caste names. People belonging to Mahar community are aggressive. They do not tolerate humiliations. This expression is particularly about a caste that can be never developed.

Third group consists of abusive expressions. These expressions are taken from Urmila Pawar’s ‘Aaydan’ translated as ‘The Weave of My Life’ by Maya Pandit. These expressions are translated wrongly by the translator. First group of expressions consists of incorrect translations.

These expressions are: '*Melyacha mada basavla te... mela hikda kutha maray aala? Jalla melyacha twand ta...*' '*raandachyacha kay dola phutla huta...?*' (Page, 02) expresses abuses and swears. This paragraph is translated as 'May his dead body rot....why did he have to come and stay here, in this godforsaken place?' 'May his face burn in the stove?' 'Was that bastard blind or what? Couldn't he see this bloody land for himself? 'Didn't that motherfucker see these deadly hills, paths, forests? How I wish somebody had slapped him hard for taking this decision!' (Page, 03)

These expressions are curses for their forefather who chose Konkan region for living. First utterance *Melyacha mada basavla te...* is translated as 'May his dead body rot...' this is translated incorrectly. *Marathi* expression expects the death of her forefather. In fact this expression conveys 'may his body rot after his death'. Statement begins with *melyacha*- It is not translated. In second expression word *mela* is used in source text but its translation is avoided in translated text. Same thing is with the third expression, *melyacha* which is not translated. She has avoided translation of this word in these three expressions. As a result they lose their effectiveness in English text.

Second expression *mela hikda kutha maray aala?* is translated as 'why did he have to come and stay here, in this godforsaken place?' When we think critically about this translation we come to know that author wrote about death of her forefather. It is 'why did he have to come and die here'. But translator translated it as 'why did he have to come and stay here, in this godforsaken place?' 'Godforsaken place' is added by translator.

Third expression *raandachyacha kay dola phutla huta...?* is translated as 'Was that bastard blind or what? Couldn't he see this bloody land for himself?' 'Was someone blind?' and 'were someone's eyes taken out?' are two separate expressions in effect. *dola phutla hut ka?* means physical eyes were intact but person refused to see with them. This expression has to do with the use of inner eyes rather than the actual eyes.

Generally there are same curses and abuses '*mudada basavla melyacha, vansha budel tuja, kharata phirel tujya gharavar, rakti shijavli tuji*' etc. These are generally used by illiterate people in Mahar community as curses. These swears hurt the people from other communities. So translation of these swears is difficult task for the translator. Even if they translate them, they could not carry the impact of original.

Fourth group consists of abusive words. These words are taken from Sharankumar Limbale's '*Akkarmashi*' translated as '*The Outcaste*' by Santosh Bhoomkar. First group of expressions consists of incorrect translations. For Example: *kadu* (p, 41), *shindalki* (p,41), *raand* (p,67), *kadu garbha* (p, 49), *vaybhichari*. These expressions are translated incorrectly.

First abusive word is *kadu* which is translated as 'Rascal'. (Page, 27) This is a bitter swear which means bastard. Usually people from Sangali, Kolhapur, Solapur and Latur region

use this swear quite often. If somebody calls person *kadu*] quarrel will take place. Dictionary meaning of 'rascal' is 'playful', 'dishonest', 'bad person', 'trickster' etc.

Second word *shindalki* is translated as 'Romance'. (Page, 27) This is quite wrong because romance is good form of love between a girl and a boy. The word *shindalki* however is considered as an illegal relationship between them. It also expresses woman's extramarital relations with men. Fourth word is a *raand* that is translated as 'a girl'. This is a completely wrong translation because every girl is not *raand*- The word *raand* has many shades of meanings such as a whore, a slut, a keep, a bitch etc.

Third, there are two words they are *kadu garbha* and *vaybhichari*. These two words are transformed wrongly. First word is translated as 'Bitter embryo' (Page, 37), and second word as 'A whore' (Page, 37). These translations are wrong because first word conveys 'impure seed' and second is 'a characterless woman' but not exactly whore. Translator has translated these two words straightway as word by word.

Here is another group of expressions which is translated wrongly. Sometimes it is not possible to translate each and every word but it can be considered at contextual level. There are expressions which are not to be left out. Some of these expressions are important in conveying message. I have selected some utterances from 'The Outcaste' for comments. These utterances are *rakheli* (p, 69), *khadus* (p, 75), *tumi nasake* (p, 103), *baramashi-akkarmashi* (p, 103) etc. These words are translated wrongly.

First word is *rakheli* which is translated as 'Whore'. (Page, 60) We must not translate word *rakheli* as 'whore' because *rakheli* means 'a woman kept by a Patil' or 'moneylender' or a political big wig. Second word is *khadus*. It is translated as 'Rascal'. Word *khadus* conveys that a person is a sign of mannerlessness, angry and has high temper towards his children. But rascal conveys something different. It refers to 'a person who shows a lack of respect for other people and enjoys playing tricks on them or dishonest man'. Here *khadus* is used for father by child. So thing of respect doesn't come between them. Honesty and dishonesty can be measured between two people.

Third utterance is *btumi nasake*---P is translated as 'You are rotten people'. (Page, 100) We could reword this as 'You bastards'. Words *baramashi-akkarmashi* are translated as 'Pure blood' and 'Impure'. (Page, 101) English reader may not understand them. Translation of these words should be 'legitimate child' and 'an illegitimate child'.

Above translation of words, sentences and expressions show that translation is not easy task. It is comparatively easy to translate standard and the usual variety of the language but the language restricted to limited section of the society creates special problems for the translator. This is obvious in the above case.

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