

Problems and Techniques in Translating Novel

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Introduction

Translation is an art which has its uniqueness. Many translations have emerged in all the Indian and European languages thus bringing development in both linguistics and literary features of the languages on one hand and on the other hand bridging the gap across the different cultures of the world. The translator plays a pivotal role in the task of translating from Source language to Target language. He has different roles to play in this endeavour. He should have a mastery in both the languages and at the same time he should do justice to the original text. Translation is the transfer of one idea, ideal, thought to another one without any distortion. The translation of prose is easier compared to the translation of poetry. Translation in the same family of languages is far more straightforward as the structures of the languages are identical. Translating from an Indian language to any European language is challenging and tedious. However all the problems can be overcome with the use of appropriate approaches and techniques.

Definition of Translation by Dictionary and Scholars

Translation has been defined by many persons based on their knowledge, experiences and surroundings. Translation has been defined in dictionaries as follows:

- “Change into another language” (World Book Dictionary - p. 1047)
- “The action or process of turning from one language into another, a version in different language” (Oxford Universal Dictionary - p. 1148)
- “An act or process into another language; that is produced by turning into another language.” (The Lexicon Webster Dictionary Vol 2 - p. 1049)

Translation has been defined by scholars as follows:

- “Translation is both a craft and an art, that is to say it involves an accurate and controlled manipulation of language, tempered by a degree of freedom. Imagination and creativeness.”
- Ian Finlay
- “All translation is a kind of illusion, more or less perfect according to circumstances and varying also with the skill of the translator.” - Higham
- “Every translation is inevitably an adaptation.” - Joseph T. Shipley
- “A good translation is that it should capture the style and atmosphere of the original.” - Ian Finlay
- “A translation should possess the style of the translator.” - Theodore Savory

- “Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.”
- Eugene Nida and Charles Taber
- “Translation is, of course, a rewriting of an original text. All rewritings, whatever their intention, reflect a certain ideology and a poetics and as such manipulate literature to function in a given society in a given way. Rewriting a manipulation, undertaken in the service of power, and its positive aspect can help in the evolution of a literature and society.”
- Basnett and Lefevere

Dryden said very clearly about what should be an ideal aim of a literary translator in the following words:

- “A translator that would write with any force or spirit of the original must never dwell on the words of his author. He ought to possess himself entirely, and perfectly comprehend the genius and sense of his author, the nature of the subject, and the terms of the art or subject treated of; and then express himself as justly, and with as much life, as if he wrote an original; whereas he who copes word for word losses all the spirit in the tedious translation.”

As stated earlier translation is a very important tool and this has benefitted many people. The benefits are as follows:

- To introduce the author to the world
- To learn about the history of other countries
- To create bilateral relationship
- To appreciate the masterpieces of renowned authors
- To understand science, technology, People’s language, race, culture and civilization
- To show the uniqueness of a language
- To develop awareness about the effort and success of other countries
- To coin new vocabulary
- To bring development in the language
- To show the trends of other languages and the literature

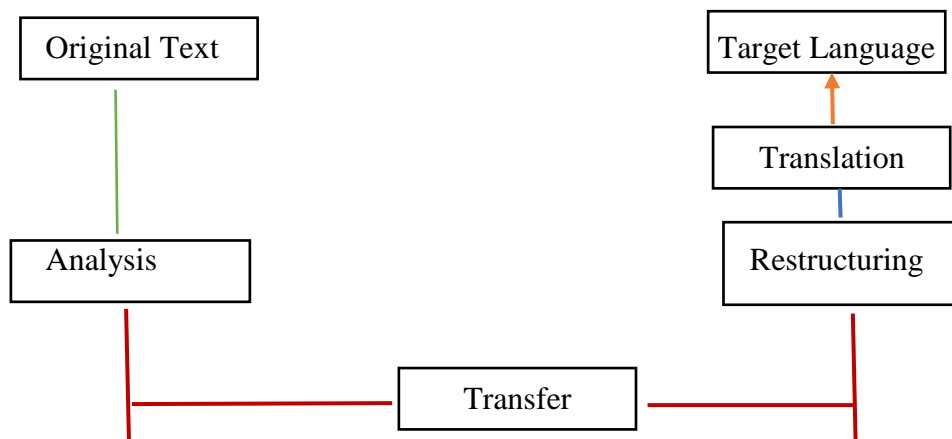
Many types of translation have been suggested by Roman Jakobson, Eugene Nida, J.C. Catford and Hendre Lefevere. They are explained below.

Roman Jakobson mentioned about three types of Translation based on Linguistics point of view. They are as follows:

1. **Intra-lingual translation**
This means to adapt a text to a new purpose in the same language.
2. **Inter-lingual translation**
This refers to translation from one language to another that is the interpretation of message in another linguistic code
3. **Inter-semiotic translation**

This deals with translation from one linguistic system to another; the transfer of meaning from verbal to non-verbal system/of signs and meaning)

While Roman Jakobson mentioned about three types Eugene Nida's talked about steps of translation which are as follows:



J. C. Catford refers to types of translation at different levels. They are as follows:

Content level:

- Full Translation
- Partial Translation

Language level:

- Total Translation
- Restricted Translation

He also makes references to the following:

- Free Translation
- Unbounded Translation

Media level:

- Phonological Translation
- Graphological Translation

Hendre Lefevere put much emphasis on the types of Translation based on Poetry. They are as follows:

- Phonemic Translation
- Literal Translation
- Metrical Translation
- Prose Translation
- Rhyming Translation
- Blank Verse Translation
- Interpretation

All these types of translation give scope to translators to embark in any type of translation depending upon the aims and mission of the translator.

Issues in Translating Creative Writing

Creative Writing is related to socio- cultural demands and to the emotions and feelings of the author. The author has the liberty to express and describe his ideas to the fullest based on his ideals, experience and surrounding. The translator must bear in mind that the choice of the text to be translated is very important as it is a creative activity. Translation is a passionate and independent type of activity. Translation principles should be viewed as a separate identity. The translator does not have the liberty to translate whatever he wishes to because he is bound by the original text; he has to be faithful to the author. But this translation will be original as it is happening in the language for the first time.

Problems of Translation

There are two ways to understand and solve the problem of translation. 1. Theory and 2. Practice. Translation problems differ from text to text. The translation of scientific texts to that of legal texts differ, therefore the types of problems would be entirely different. Certain types of translation like adaptation, modification were adhered by the ancient translators with a liberal mind-set. As an individual the translator has an individual capacity, intuition, own knowledge on which the translation is based. Before embarking on the translation, the translator should learn to translate; should get trained. It is only then that he will acquire practice; effort is needed on his part; he should cultivate the potential of being a good translator; he should keep on translating different types of texts; he should persevere in his endeavour and attain success.

In the process of translation, at the first instance, the translator should take an easy text and a prose text if possible. This will help him to gain confidence. The text should be read from different perspectives, the odd words should be noted down, the problems should be identified, a rough translation should be done and it should be revised as many times as possible. The constant revision of the translation should lead to perfection and it should not read like a translation, either the form of nativisation or the foreignisation should be adopted. The translation should be kept aside then afterwards relooked after critically. Then the full correction should be done and it should be read by another person. The comments of the person should be taken into consideration. This will help to produce a good translation.

What are the characteristics of language which affect the translator?

- Meaning components are impregnated with lexical items
- The meaning may not be lexicalized in the Target language
- The language may lack specific or subordinate word
- It is characteristic of language that the same meaning component will occur in several structure lexical items
- It is further characteristics of languages that one form will be used to represent several alternative meaning
- Whole sentence may have several functions

- A single meaning may be expressed in variety of forms

Translation from a Linguistic Point of View

In translation there is less problem in the word but more problem in the structure. In literary text the problem is dealt with instinct but in domains like legal, administration the translator cannot overlook the structure of the text. Sound, grammar and meaning are important aspects that should be considered. The sound of the grammar should be organised and it should be given a proper shape. The phonological, morphological, semantic and syntactic aspects should be dealt with carefully while doing translation. The phrase, the clause in a sentence, the types of sentences, discourse and socio linguistic aspect are to be considered while translating a text. It is only then that the translation work will be given its due.

Problems in Translating Titles of Books

Different problems arise while translating titles of books. However there are different ways that can be applied to make the translation possible. The meaning of the title, it's transliteration, it's idea, it's direct translation are some of the ways that can be considered while translating the titles of books. Some examples are given below:

1. **Apply the poetic style**
 - A defense of Poetry - மின்னல் கீற்று
2. **Tamil nativisation**
 - Macbeth - மகபதி
 - Hamlet - அமலாத்தியன்
3. **Transliteration**
 - Cilappatikaram - சிலப்பதிகாரம்
4. **Idea based**
 - Once an actress - ஒரு நடிகை நாடகம் பார்க்கிறாள்
5. **Meaning based**
 - A home in the sky- ஆகாச வீடு
6. **Explanation of title**
 - An Epic of an Anklet- சிலப்பதிகாரம்
7. **Direct translation**
 - Where there is love? - காதல் எங்கே?
 - A piece of Charcoal - கரித்துண்டு
 - A smile of beauty - சிரித்த முல்லை
 - Discovery of India - நேரு கண்ட இந்தியா
 - Glimpses of World History - உலக சரித்திரம்
 - Towards a Universal Man - அனைத்துலக மனிதனை நோக்கி

Translation Based on Theories

Translation theories have been established during the course of time with specific parameters based on content, principles, equivalence, intellectual and aesthetic values, linguistics, culture, arts and so forth. Some of the theories along with examples have been given below:

“The replacement of textual material in one language by equivalent textual material in another language.” J. C. Catford

“Take for instance the (plantain tree, Banana tree). It may give rise to seven or eight saplings at its root all of them when transplanted will sustain and grow handicrafts is like that, to whomsoever you impart skill in handicrafts they can have an existence and making a living. Take the case of Banyan or pipal tree. **It may yield millions of seeds. Among them, only three or four seeds will get the chance to come up and grow into very big and gigantic trees. All the rest, millions of such seeds will decay and get destroyed in so many ways.**” (bold letters were used to put Emphasis on idea)

“The aim of translation is to transfer certain intellectual and aesthetic values from one language to another.” - Anton Popovic

Vadai (a small food item) for an anna I ate.

Boys were playing “sadugudu” - A game akin to “kabadi” popular throughout TamilNadu
Tamil language is ancient and has got it’s specificity. Each author produces literature with his own style of writing and with a mastery in the language. The use of word which repeats twice has an impact upon the idea that the author wants to convey to the reader. In Tamil it is easy to understand the meaning but the equivalence should be brought in the target language. For example:

Problems in translating adukkut thodar

மெல்ல மெல்ல - slowly moved towards the

அணுக அணுக - near and near

நின்று நின்று - stopping a while every now and then

The current usage of words in Tamil shows the dynamism of the language. However to translate them in a foreign language needs a lot of consideration and practice so that the same essence is depicted in the target language. Some examples are as follows:

Problems in Translating Current Usage of Phrases

கண்மூடிக் கண் திறப்பதற்குள் - But within a few seconds

நெஞ்சம் துணுக்குற்றது - I was shocked and bewildered

வயிறார - A full and contented meal

Problems in Translating Idioms

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திரைமறைவில் - Behind the screen
நெல்லிக்காய்களாகச் சிதறுண்டு - as small pulses split out of a sack
அசையாத கல்லுப் பிள்ளையாராக - to be hard nuts to crack

Problems in Translating Proverbs

வெளுத்ததெல்லாம் பால் - all that glitters is not gold
வல்லவனுக்குப் புல்லும் ஆயுதம் - a genius in craftsmanship needs no special tool
கோடி வித்தையும் கூழுக்கு - Art is great because, it is art
நெல்லிக்காய்களாகச் சிதறுண்டு வீண் பேச்சுகளில் - Scattered as small pulses spit out of a sack; spent their time idle, engaged in useless talks

Problems in Translating *olikurrippu sorkkal*

மின் இரயில் கடகட என்று வேகமாக ஆடிக்கொண்டே ஓடியது - “the electric train was running fast slightly swaying this side and that, **to the rhythmic sound from the rails**”

மற்றொரு குடிசையில் தொப் தொப் என்ற ஒலியும் - inside another hut we heard the sound of beating (dop, dop)

குழந்தை விரென்று அழுதது - the child began to wail aloud

Kinship Terms

அண்ணா - anna
அப்பா - appa
அம்மா - amma
மாமா - ayya
அண்ணி - anni

Food Items

வடை - vadai
முறுக்கு - muruku
அல்வா - halwa
சப்பாத்தி - chapatti

Religion-related Words

கார்த்திகை	-	Karthigai
மந்திர	-	mantra
சாமியார்	-	swamyjee
பொங்கல்	-	pongal
கோலம்	-	kolam

Words Belonging to Other Indian Languages

சோளி	-	choli
ரிச்ஷாக்காரன்-	rickshaw-	wallah
சரிகை	-	should I come
சொக்கா	-	zari
இருக்கட்டுங்க	-	jibba

Problems in Translating Antonym

கரடு முரடு	-	hard and uneven surface of the ground
முன்பின்	-	this way and that way
இங்கும் அங்குமாக	-	here and there
இங்கும் அங்கும்	-	change of strokes

Problems in Translating the Usage of Spoken Variety

இப்பொ	-	now
போகணு	-	I have to go
வரணுமோ	-	should I come
ஊற வைக்கணு	-	have to get soaked
இருக்கட்டுங்க	-	don't bother I'll be there

Problems in Translating Slang

ஒத்து	-	keep aside and give way
ஓரகத்தி	-	my cousin sister wife of my brother- in- law
மச்சா	-	brother-in-law
எங்கே போச்சு	-	where has it gone
பாழாய்ப் போச்சு	-	hell with that

Problems in Translating Other Tamil Literature

Thirukkural is the most translated Literature. Silappathikaram and Bharathiyar poems are yet to be translated into many other languages. Some translated phrases are as follows:

மாசறு பொன்னே வலம்புரி முத்தே - purest of gold, Pearl of outstanding brightness, yielded by chank of right spiral, a rarity

பொன்னே கொடியே புனைபூங் கோதாய் - My dear sweet! Bright as gold! Great and soft as a creeper, having long tresses adorned with flower

பாரதி பாட்டைப் பாடு - On providing food for all, no single hand shall be deprived.

இனியொரு விதி செய்வோம் - அதை எந்நாளும் காப்போம்.

தனியொருவனுக்கு உணவில்லை எனில் ஜகத்தினை அழித்திடுவோம் -

We will frame a rule of radical effect, how this that, henceforth we will abide by it for ever, on providing food for all no single hand shall be deprived. If the rule is broken, then the whole earth will be destroyed.

Techniques in Translating Novel

The following techniques can be used in translating so as to put emphasis on word or ideas, show the difference, give explanation, elaboration of idea and so forth.

- ❖ Bold - **Silappathikaram**
- ❖ Capital - THIRUKKURAL, KALAI
- ❖ Italics - for emphasis or distinction and in foreign words
There is a misconception in our country that people in parties alone can talk on politics. But the real shall come forward to talk on politics well
- ❖ Underline - to captivate the attention of the reader
just as it was a criminal offence to deprive other's rights. It was equally offence to keep quiet doing nothing against it, and to be mute spectator, when others ause the deprivation of our rights.
- ❖ Bracket - bracket has been used to give the meaning of the word or phrases
அந்தக் கூடையில் அவனுடைய சும்மாட்டுத் துணி ஒருபறமும் சில பனிநீர்ப் பழங்கள் மற்றொரு புறமும் இருந்தன. (perhaps left unsold)
- ❖ Inverted comma - in case if necessity
“Broadway”; “aquifer of mercy”; “lame man”

- ❖ Hyphen - to join two words: Airy-fairy; Blue-collar; co-education
to give more explanation of a word: A couple- husband and wife; my cousin sister - wife of brother in law; the parents- the original parents I mean.
- ❖ Star mark - this is used as footnote to give further explanation which is lengthy. So as not to distort the style of writing the translator use the star * by the side of the word and give the explanation below the page.
- ❖ Dotted line - when there is no continuity in the idea or when there is another idea the dotted line has been used
“I have been down here, I thought I should not be a hindrance to your conversation”; “Had only the artist not learnt the art of swimming”; “But, my life with MOHAN – yes that was the name of that artist – the life spent with him”

Bold, capital letters, italics, underline, bracket, inverted comma, hyphen, star mark, dotted line are some of the different techniques that can be used by translators to convey their ideas to the audience with precision and to be in touch with the audience.

Conclusion

Translation has evolved as a field of study during the course of time, thus has opened an avenue for research and comparative study. However it is to be noted that there are a lot of issues related to translating of texts. These problems can be overcome by the appropriate use of techniques and theories. A translator has a primal role to play while translating and he should bear in mind different aspects while doing translation. While translating the appropriate equivalence should be considered so as there is no distortion in meaning. There are a lot of discussions about a perfect translation but in practice it is quite difficult. However a translator should do justice to the original and he should do his job with honesty. Translation is expanding in the long run and in a few decades it will take the lead in different fields.