

Difficulties and Problems Faced by the Translators while Translating Poem/Poetry

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There are many language problems encountered by the translator. The writers use of many dialectical terms which refers to the usage of vocabulary i.e characteristic of a specific group or community of people. In some cases the author uses some unexplained acronyms and abbreviations. The author also uses many proper names for people, organizations, places etc. For all such terms, transliteration is employed by the translator in order to maintain their sense.

For the classical words, the translator finds difficult to find the meaning of those classical words and the translator transliterated. These are certain expressions that are untransposable from one culture to another. Mainly, the words that pass effortlessly into everyday speech and some similes and metaphors in Tamil and some sayings and proverbs would be impossible to render in English as well as in other Indian languages. This cultural leap is the translator's most difficult one.

Cultural aspects can complicate translation. As these terms cannot be omitted, the translator has given the most suitable English equivalents for cultural terms and colloquial expression. The use of obscure jargons, a characteristic language of a particular group and obscure idiomatic expressions, whose meanings cannot be inferred from the meanings of the words that make it up and also posed a problem to the translator. For such cases, the contextual meaning is taken into account and the nearest English equivalents are given by the translator.

A problem of translation in poetry arises out of linguistic and semantic meanings. English and Tamil have totally different cultural backgrounds. The translator is forced to omit a few expressions that defy translation. The translator found difficult in translating some of the descriptions of the poet. Slang or informal language, consisting of words and expressions that are not considered appropriate for formal occasions, often vulgar, also, complicates the translation process.

In poetry metaphors, alliterations, assonance and onomatopoeia cannot be rendered from source language to target language. Proverbs are culture bound they cannot be successfully translated into a language with a different culture. Similarly names of plants, birds and bees in geographical locality and in a target language and at a particular time in history may not have equivalents. So they have to be w

ritten as such and have to be transliterated. Word for word translation of metaphors may lead to confusion, because the symbol of one bird or an animal in one culture may be entirely opposite in another culture or in another country.

There are problems related to stylistic differences like redundant phrases in a source language and differences between languages with respect to punctuations and conventions. The distinction between syntactical systems of the source language and target language pose problems. The art of translation continues to pose a variety of challenges to its practitioners, especially when the work to be translated to is a poem. The translation into rhyme requires more skill and time.

The translator has to catch the nuances, the titles, the suggestive, symbolic, the rhythmic and the unexpressed. Certain codes, symbols and some technical terms cannot be translated. In such cases only transliteration is required. The English and Tamil poetry are rhymed. The poetry translator gives importance to the meaning, matter and manner of the poem in another language. In this translated poetry, the poet uses the conversational method and colloquial language in some of the places so the translator also does not stick on to the rhyme while translating from the source language into target language.

Poetry presents special challenges to translators. There are number of problems in translating poetry. The first and foremost thing is “Rhyme”. It always composes a constraint upon the writer. To find a rhymed translation of a lyric is scarcely possible. Poetry is highly complex form of art. Poem constitutes of images, metaphors, rhymes, etc. The translator faces some difficulty in bringing the sameness of meaning in the target language text. The intention of the poet poses some problems to the translator because he must bring the exact idea in the ‘Target language’.

English poetry is rhymed but Greek and Latin are not. The translated work of a poem is a new product which shows its new dimension. The poetry translator gives importance to the meaning, matter and manner of a poem from another language. In poetry translation, the translator may face the linguistic, literary and aesthetic and socio-cultural problems in translating it. The linguistic problems include the collocation and obscured syntactic structure.

The aesthetic and literary problems are related with poetic structure, metaphorical expressions and sounds. While the socio-cultural problems arise when the translator translates expressions containing the major categories, ideas, ecology, behavior and products. As one genre, of literature, poetry has something special compared to the others. In a poem, the beauty is not only achieved with the choice of words and figurative language like in novels and short stories, but also with the creation of rhythm, rhyme, meter and specific expressions and structures that may not conform to the ones of the daily language. In short, the translation of poetry needs ‘something more’ than translating other genres of literature.

Linguistic issues are those when translating certain words from one language to another, there might be some issues with regards to the appropriate words to be used. In some cases, there are words that have no literal translation to another language. Socio-cultural issues. There are also some words in a poem that may not sound good when translated to another language. The words could also be very offensive or inappropriate. Sound is another element of poetry that makes it beautiful and engaging. Due to these rhyming words or attractive sounds, readers are glued to the poem. Sadly, there might be no word in another language that could retain these sounds. The translation of the words might have extremely different sounds that don't make sense when forced to sound alike.

Literal versus figurative translation are those in which Poems contain deeper meanings. There are words used but they serve as symbolisms or metaphors only. The underlying thought behind those words is what makes the entire poem beautiful. Thus, translators now have the dilemma of whether or not they are to translate the verse literally and make everything sound or awkward or translate the figurative meaning and limit the readers' opportunity to be more critical in reading the verses.

In short, there are a lot of things to be considered when translating poems. They might just be a few lines or stanzas, but it could take an even longer time for poems to be translated. It also helps a lot that the translator understands the thoughts of the poet and the cultural background of the people in which the poem will be translated for.

References

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