
Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 Vol. 19:1 January 2019 India's Higher Education Authority UGC Approved List of Journals Serial Number 49042

The Concept of India as a Translation Area: Translating Hyphenated Adjectives of English into Indian Languages

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Abstract

Hyphenated adjectives are two words joined together with a hyphen that modify a noun. They function as a single unit of adjective. Such terms are hyphenated to avoid confusion or ambiguity. The hyphenated adjectives in English are little difficult to translate because the structural formation of these hyphenated adjectives are different and finding the equivalent structures in the target languages remains challenging. The paper has suggested alternate structures for the nine types of hyphenated adjectives discussed in the paper in four Indian languages, each representing a language family of India. The suggested equivalents will help in machine translation and developing artificial intelligence as well. Additionally, this helps to support and establish the fact that India is a linguistic area in some syntactic features also. The similarities in the translation of hyphenated adjective, further, strengthens the concept of 'India as a translation area'.

Keywords: Hyphenated adjectives, ambiguity, structural differences, language family, alternate translation structures, India as a translation area.

1. Introduction

Hyphenated adjectives in English, otherwise called compound adjectives are two words joined together with a hyphen that modify a noun. They function as a single adjective. Such combination of two words is hyphenated to avoid confusion in comprehension or ambiguity. For example, without the hyphen, 'man eating tiger' means 'the man is eating a tiger' and with the hyphen, 'man-eating tiger' means 'the tiger which eats man', where it became a hyphenated adjective.

This kind of hyphenation is not very common in Indian languages. This structural gap has to be cemented by another adjectival structure in the Indian languages as target language. Hence, translation of these hyphenated adjectives poses many problems. This paper analyses and discusses the modus operandi in the processes of translation of these hyphenated adjectives.

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Further, it investigates the problems faced by the translators in the languages belonging to the four language families of India, namely, Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Austro-Asiatic families, represented by Hindi, Tamil, Manipuri and Santali languages respectively, and suggests certain strategies to solve these problems. This would also pave the way for further study of the pan-Indian linguistic features for translation. 'We may consider India as a translation area on the model of India as a linguistic area, with a lot of shared linguistic features which help in the translation from one Indian language to the other.' (Nadaraja Pillai, 2007). This point of 'India as a translation area' has not been focused on in the field, so far, properly.

When these compound adjectives are used before nouns, they are hyphenated and when they come after nouns, they are not hyphenated.

Example

- 1) She has a part-time job.
- 2) Her job in the office is part time.
- 3) It was life-changing decision of the Director.
- 4) The decision was life changing.

There are similarities among the hyphenated adjectives and compound words such as 'father-in-law' as noun; 'double-check' as verb; 'matter-of-fact' as adverb, etc. Compound adjectives also pose problems in translating. However, this paper restricts itself only to hyphenated adjectives, like heart-warming speech, snow-covered mountain, etc.

2. Hyphenated Adjectives

There are many types of hyphenated adjectives in English. Nevertheless, they may be classified, at least, into nine types based on their structure (Vasu, 2018). Understanding their formation would help while translating them into Indian languages.

- 1) Noun+ past participle
- 2) Noun + present participle
- 3) Noun + adjective
- 4) Adjective + noun
- 5) Adjective + past participle
- 6) Adverb + past participle
- 7) Preposition/adverb+ noun
- 8) Past participle + adverb /preposition
- 9) Numeral + noun

The formation and the translation of hyphenated adjectives are discussed hereunder. Hindi, Manipuri, Tamil and Santali are selected for discussion to have a pan Indian view on the problems of translating these adjectives.

3. Formation and Translation of Hyphenated Adjectives

The structure of the nine types of hyphenated adjectives and their translation into the above mentioned four languages, and the strategies followed are discussed in this section.

3.1. Noun + past participle

This is the most preferred structure of hyphenated adjective among the nine types. While translating them, the relative participle form of the verb (RP), which is otherwise called adjectival participle, is used in the Indian languages (IL), especially, Tamil and Manipuri. The first noun may be the subject or the object of the verb in the past participle form.

1. Rat-infested house

Hindi: cuuhe se aakraant ghar

rats ins. occupied house

Manipuri: uci-nə thəlləbə yum

rat-ins. filled-RP house

Tamil: elikaL niRainta viiDu

rats filled-RP house

Santali: hon te perec orak

rat filled-RP house

Though the Hindi structure, used here, is not exactly RP, it is an adjectival form. Instrumental case (ins.) is used for giving the sense of cause.

2. State-run hospitals

Hindi: raajya sancaalit aspataal

state run hospital

Manipuri: ləiŋak-nə cəlaibə əna-layeŋsəŋ

state-ins. run-RP hospital

Tamil: arasu naDattukiRa maruttuva manaikaL

government conduct-RP hospitals

Santali: raajya re caalu aakaan aaspaataalko

government-ins. run hospitals

3. Bullet-riddled body

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Hindi: goli se chalni kiya hua shariir

bullet ins. riddled-RP body

Manipuri: nonməi məru-sin palləbə həkcan

gun bullet-pl. riddled-RP body

Tamil: tuppaakki kuNDukaL tuLaitta uDal

gun bullets riddled-RP body

Santali: gulii te chachara hormo

bullet ins. riddled body

The concept of 'riddled' cannot be translated easily, but a descriptive equivalent in RP structure is preferred for translation. In Santali, almost equal structure is used. In Manipuri and Tamil, only the plural (pl.) form of the word 'bullet' can be used in this context.

4. Thought-charged face

Hindi: mananshiil cehraa

thought-full face

Manipuri: wakhəl-də lupləbə maython

thought-loc. filled-RP face

Tamil: sintanai vayappaTTa mukam

thought involved-RP face

Santali: gahiir vicaar methaa

deep thought face

In Hindi, the adjective with /-shiil/ is a common form in such contexts. In Santali, a noun is used as the adjectival form. In Manipuri and Tamil RP forms are used.

5. Disease-ridden village

Hindi: rog-grast gaa(n)v

disease full of/ailing village

Manipuri: laynasin-nə pumsən səlləbə khungən

diseases-ins. ailing (filled)-RP village

Tamil: nooykaL piiDittirukkiRa uur

diseases affected-RP village

Santali: aajaar te perec aatu.

disease ins. filled-RP village

This hyphenated structure is equated in Manipuri and Tamil with the relative participle form of the verb (Nadaraja Pillai, 1996). In Manipuri, the resultant forms of 'verb root + -pə/-bə has four functions, namely, relative participle, adjective, infinitive and gerund (Rebika, 2014).

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The context only decides the meaning expressed. In Hindi, though the relative participle form is discontinuous as in 'jo.....(verb) voh.....(verb)', the form with /-hua/ is preferred in such constructions, which also functions as relative participle.

3.2. Noun + present participle

6. Man-eating tiger

Hindi: narabhakshii baagh

man-eating tiger

Manipuri: mi cabə kəi

man eat-RP tiger

Tamil: manitanaic caappiDum puli

man-acc. eat-fut.RP tiger

Santali: hor jom tarup

man eat tiger

The use of accusative case marker with the first noun resolves the ambiguity in Tamil. Since no case marker is added, the order of the noun in the subject and object positions itself suggests the sense to be expressed in Manipuri (Rebika, 2012).

mi cabə kəi 'Tiger which eats man' kəi cabə mi 'Man who eats tiger'

7. Back-breaking work

Hindi: kamartoD mehnat

back break work

Manipuri: khwan tekpə thəbək

back break-RP work

Tamil: mutukai uDaikkum veelai

back-acc. break-fut.RP work

Santali: daandaa raput kami

back breaking work

8. Heart-rendering scene

Hindi: hridayvidaarak drishya

heart rendering scene

Manipuri: thəmmoy shokpə drisya

heart affected-RP scene

Tamil: manatai urukkum kaaTci

mind-acc. melt-fut.RP scene

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Santali: boko re baajaav ñeñel

heart attract scene

9. Eye-catching scene

Hindi: manohar drishya

attracting scene

Manipuri: mityen cinsinbə drishya

eye sight attract-RP scene

Tamil: kaNNai kavarum kaaTci

eye-acc. attract-fut.RP scene

Santali: met te ñeñel ñel.

eye attract scene

The hyphenated adjectives with this structure are translated using the future relative participle form of the verb in Tamil. In Manipuri, it is a relative participle form of the verb. Furthermore, the construction is taken as RP only, which may be either past or present.

3.3. Noun + adjective

10. Flower-soft iDli

Hindi: ati mulaayam iDli

very soft idli

Manipuri: ləi-gum thotpə iDli

Flower-like soft idli

Tamil: puu poonRa idli

flower like idli

Santali: baahaa lekaa norom iDlii

flower like soft idli

Equivalent adjectival form is used to translate this hyphenated adjective. In Tamil, there is a traditional use of the simile, namely, puu poonRa 'flower like' which itself gives the meaning of flower-soft. Since there is no such traditional comparison available in Manipuri and Santali, the translation is done with the form 'soft like flower'. It should be noted, here, that in Manipuri the adjective could also occur after the head noun (Rebika, 2011). Accordingly, the adjective thotpə 'soft' occurs after the noun. Whereas in Hindi, instead of the 'flower like', the intensifier ati 'very' is used with the adjective mulaayam 'soft'.

11. Knee-deep water

Hindi: ghuTnaa bhar paani

knee full water

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Manipuri: khu-u-muk lubə ishin

knee-upto deep water

or

khu mərep-ki ishin

knee measure-poss. water

Tamil: muTTi aLavu niir

knee measure water

or

muTTi aaza niir knee deep water

Santali: idii haabic dak

knee deep water

These translations in Indian languages associate to the formation of a compound noun, which functions as an adjective (adj.). The alternative structure in Tamil is also a compound noun form functioning as an adjective, which is a common feature in Tamil.

3.4. Adjective + noun

12. Early-morning walk

Hindi: praatah kaaliin Tahalnaa

early morning time-adj. walking

Manipuri: əyuk əŋənbə-də khoŋ-nə cətpə

morning early-loc. leg-nom. go

Tamil: viDi kaalai nadaip payirci

early morning walking exercise

Santali: setaak daaraan

morning walk

13. Our long-term plan

Hindi: hamaari diirghakaaliin yojnaa

our long-time-adj. plan

Manipuri: əikhoy-gi mətəm sannə-gi thəuran

we-poss. long time-poss. plan

Tamil: nam tolai nookku(t) tiTTam

our distant sight plan

Santali: abovaak sangiñ yojanaa.

our long time-adj. plan

As in the case of (3.3), these hyphenated adjectives are also translated using noun + noun compound in Tamil and with the form /mətəm saŋnə-gi/ to make the sense conveyed clear in Manipuri (Rebika, 2017). In Hindi and Santali, the adjectival forms are used.

3.5. Adjective + past participle

14. Short-lived desire

Hindi: kshaNabhangur icchaa

moment-adj. desire

Manipuri: ŋaihak ŋaihak-ki oibə əniŋbə

short time (reduplicated form)-poss. be-RP desire

Tamil: kuRukiya kaalam vaaznta aasai

short time live-RP desire

Santali: kom okte lagit aashaa

short time for desire

Since past participle form of the verb is used as the second component in English, the relative participle form of the verb is selected as the equivalent structure in Tamil and Manipuri. An adjective does not come before the relative participle in Indian languages and therefore, a descriptive translation is resorted to other languages as well.

3.6. Adverb + past participle

15. Hard-earned money

Hindi: mehnat se kamaayaa rupyaa

hard (difficulty) by earned rupees

Manipuri: wanə tanbə senphəm

hard-adv. (difficulty) earned-RP money

Tamil: kashTappaTTu sampaatitta paNam

hard (difficulty)-VP earned-RP money

Santali: kosTe te aarjaavaak kaavarii

hard (difficulty) by earned money

The adverb 'hard' cannot be translated into Tamil, but a verbal participle (VP) form of a verb is used.

16. Well-known leader

Hindi: khyaatipraapt netaa

fame got leader

Manipuri: miyam pumbənə khənnərəbə lucinbə

people all-nom. known-RP leader

Tamil: elloorukkum mikavum terinta talaivar

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all persons very known-RP leader

Santali: gaakhu riiyaa prodhaan

Well known leader

In Manipuri and Tamil, to be closer to the original, 'known to all' is necessary to convey the meaning, whereas in Hindi and Santali the phrase 'the person who got fame' is used. they are used as adjectives and are not equivalent to the English structure.

17. Well-placed picture

Hindi: suvyavasthit chavi

well placed picture

Manipuri: məphəm ca-nə thəmbə/thəmləbə lai

place suitable-adv. keep-RP picture

Tamil: sariyaana idattil vaikkappaTTa padam

suitable place-loc. keep-pass. RP picture

Santali: ves jaaygaa re doho citar

suitable place loc. placed picture

Corresponding to this construction is a passive relative participle form of the verb in Tamil. In Manipuri, the present or past RP form is used. Instead of a passive structure, an active sentence is used in Santali. Thus, the structures selected are different in all the four languages. This happens just because there is no equivalent structure available.

18. Brightly-lit room

Hindi: diipt kaksh

lighted room

Manipuri: mei-nə pumnan nanbə ka

electric/lamp-ins. brightly lit-RP (reduplicated form) room

Tamil: mika veLiccamaaka irukkiRa aRai

very lighted-adv. be-RP room

Santali: diyaar te maarsaal kaandhaat

light-ins. bright room

The deep structure of the phrase 'brightly-lit room' is a relative participle form with a relative pronoun as in 'the/a room which is brightly lit.......'. Since the second component of the hyphenated adjectives remain the past participle form of the verb, as discussed in (16) and (17), the structure preferred for translation into Tamil and Manipuri is the relative participle form of the verb. In Manipuri, the reduplicated form of the verb is used to bring out the intensity of brightness. Manipuri uses reduplication as a technique to intensify the action (Rebika, 2018). In Hindi, an adjectival form is used.

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19. Green-skinned banana

Hindi: kaccaa kelaa

unripe/green banana

Manipuri: məku səŋbə ləphoy

skin green banana

əsəŋbə ləphoy 'unripe banana'

unripe banana

Tamil: paccai vaazhaip pazham

green banana fruit

Santali: haariyar haartaa kaayraa

green skin/unripe banana

This hyphenated adjective describes that the banana in the construction is a fruit, though the skin is green in colour. It indicates that it is a variety of the banana fruit. The second component, namely, 'skinned' cannot be equated to an RP form in the Indian Languages. In Hindi and Santali, the meaning expressed is 'unripe banana' and it does not give the meaning of fruit, since there is no word for raw fruit which is /kaay/ 'unripe (banana)' and /pazham/ 'fruit' as in Tamil. However, the sense expressed is different from that of the source language. In Manipuri, the noun laphoy 'banana' denotes either unripe or ripe depending on the adjective.

20. Real-life incident

Hindi: vaastavik jiivan ki ghaTnaa

real life-poss. incident

Manipuri: punsi-də thokpə thəudok

life-loc. happen-RP incident

Tamil: uNmaic campavam

true incident

Santali: saaiyaak jiyon ghoTna

real life incident

The equivalent form used is a compound noun in Tamil and to make the sense expressed clearly, another descriptive translation is also possible with the RP structure in Tamil.

Tamil: uNmaiyaaka naDanta sampavam

truly happened incident

In Hindi, the possessive form is used to express 'the incident of life. In Manipuri, the locative form is used to express 'the incident that happened in life'. In Santali, it was a true translation of the original.

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Like the hyphenated adjectives with structure (1), here also, it is formed with past participle form of the verb.

In both the previous adjectives (19) and (20) discussed, the equivalent structure used for translation is either a relative participle form or a compound noun.

3.7. Preposition/adverb + Noun

21. *In-house translation*

Hindi: antar-saansthanik anuvaad

inside-institutional translation

Manipuri: loysən-nungi (minə) həndokpə

institution-poss. (person-inst.) translation

Tamil: aluvalakattinarin mozipeyarppu

office-employees-poss. translation

or aluvalaka mozipeyarppu

office translation

Santali: oraak re torjoma.

house in/at translation

Since most of the Indian languages do not have prepositions as in English, postpositions or case suffixes / markers as in Manipuri and Tamil represent them. In Hindi, there is an almost equivalent structure available. Santali has no such equivalent structure and hence a literal translation is given. In Tamil there are two types of translation: one with a compound noun construction and the other is translation by the officers.

22. After-school programmes

Hindi: pashc vidyaalayii kaaryakram

after school programme

Manipuri: skul-gi punphəm mətun-gi thəurəm-sin

school-poss. timing after-poss. programmes

or

skul mətuŋ-gi thəurəm-siŋ school after-poss. programmes

Tamil: paLLi neerattukkup piRakaana tiTTankaL

school time-dat. after programmes

Santali: itun aasraa taayom program

school after programme

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Since there is no equivalent form or structure to these combinations as in the case of (21), the translation into Indian languages resorts to a descriptive translation to avoid ambiguity. 'After-school' may mean 'after the school studies' or 'after the school hours' and hence the word for time is used.

3.8. Past participle + adverb /preposition

23. *Unaccounted-for money*

Hindi: aspashTiikrit dhan

unaccounted wealth

Manipuri: ekaunts yaodəbə selphəm

accounts include-neg.RP money

Tamil: kaNakkil varaata paNam

accounts come-neg.RP money

Santali: hisaab re ban hec kaavadi

account loc. not included money

24. Cooled-off coffee

Hindi: ThaNDaa kofii

cold-adj. coffee

Manipuri: intherebe kofi

became cold-RP coffee

Tamil: aaRina kaappi

became cold-RP coffee

Santali: reyaaraak kophii

cold-RP coffee

Constructions of these types (23 & 24) with 'for or off' as the second element are very rare or may not be possible at all in Indian languages. Therefore, the translation does not express the structure involved but an equivalent adjectival / RP form is used to give the same sense.

3.9. Numeral + noun

25. 100-page document

Hindi: 100 prishThon kaa dastaaveej

100 pages-poss. document

Manipuri: lamay 500 gi document

pages 100-poss. document

Tamil: 100 pakka aavaNam

100 pages document

Santali: saay kaagoc dokomenţ

100 page document

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26. Five-year-old boy

Hindi: paanc varshiiya baalak

five year-adj boy

Manipuri: cəhi məŋa-gi nupaməca

age five-poss. boy

or

cəhi məŋa surəbə nupaməca age five complete-RP boy

Tamil: aintu vayatu siRuvan.

five age boy

or

aintu vayataana siRuvan

five age-adj. boy

Santali: more jermaa koraa

five years boy

In Tamil the first one is a compound noun and in the second, an adjectival form is used. It is to be noted that in Manipuri, generally the numerals occur after the noun. Consequently, it is translated in the order 'age five-case marker boy or age five RP form boy'. In both the languages the possibility of having two structures is necessitated for bringing in the exact meaning.

4. Pseudo-hyphenated Adjectives and Translation

Erroneously hyphenated adjectival usage will be a problem in translation. There are some restrictions on the use of hyphens in the compound adjectives. Sometimes the sense expressed may not be appropriate also. When there is no need of hyphenation and still the hyphenation is used, the forms may be termed as 'pseudo-hyphenated adjectives'.

Restriction 1

27. Five-year-old girl

- a) The injured girl is five years of age.
- b) The five-year-old girl was injured.

In the first sentence the hyphens are unnecessary because the phrase 'five years of age' is not used as a single adjective whereas, in the second sentence, the phrase 'five-year-old' is used as a single adjective describing the 'girl'.

Tamil: aDipaTTa peNNukku aintu vayatu irukkum.

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injure-RP girl-dat. five age be-fut.t/PT

Manipuri: əsokpə nupiməcadu cəhi məŋa sure.

injure-adj. girl-det. age five complete-PT

Tamil: aintu vayataana peN kaayam aDaintaaL.

five age-adj. girl injure-pst.t-PT

Manipuri: cəhi məŋa surəbə nupiməcadu sokle.

age five complete girl-det. injure-PT

Whether it is pseudo-hyphenated or not, there is no confusion arise in translation. In 27 a), even in English it is not used as an adjective and hence in Tamil and Manipuri, it comes in the predicate of the sentence. Whereas in 27 b), the hyphenated adjective is translated as an ordinary adjective, namely, /vayataana/ 'aged' in Tamil and / cəhi (məŋa) surəbə/ 'aged' in Manipuri.

Restriction-2

28. 25-years old

The injured man is 25-years old.

The hyphen in this sentence is correct because in English, a hyphen is always used in compound numbers from twenty-one to ninety-nine. This means that there are pseudo-hyphenated adjectives also. This type of hyphenated compound number is not available in Indian languages and hence that is used in the predicate losing its adjectival quality.

Restriction-3

- 29. Easy-to-remember technique
 - a) Come up with an easy-to-remember technique.
 - b) Come up with a technique, which is easy-to-remember.

In the first sentence 29a), the phrase 'easy-to-remember' is used as a single adjective before the noun 'technique' whereas in the second sentence, the phrase 'easy-to-remember' follows the noun and hence it should not be hyphenated. The translation of both the sentences are with a relative participle form functioning as adjective. The difference does not affect the translation.

c) Tamil: eLitaaka(t) ninaivil vaittukoLLum uttiyooDu vaarunkaL.

easily memory-in keeping-RP technique-with come up

d) Manipuri: laynə niŋsiŋbə ŋəmgədəbə silləm əmə puthorəku.

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easily remember able-RP technique one introduce-PT

Restriction-4

30. Who is four-year-old

He saw a boy who is four-year-old.

The sentence is correctly hyphenated because the phrase modifies the elliptical noun 'boy' in the relative clause. The relative pronoun 'who' takes care of the elliptical noun. Thus, four-year-old is hyphenated as a multiword adjective. The translation uses RP construction as discussed earlier.

Restriction-5

31. Smartly dressed professor

Modifiers, which contain an adverb ending in /-ly/ followed by a past particle as in (31) are not hyphenated. In case, it is wrongly hyphenated also, it does not affect the translation. The problems or the restrictions are for English only, and the hyphenated adjective (31) is translated as,

31 a) Manipuri: təru-təhennə phijol thonləbə profesər

neat and clean-adv. dress wear-past RP professor

31 b) Tamil: neerttiyaayaka uDai aNinta peeraasiriyar.

smart-adv. dress wear-RP professor

This type of construction has no such restriction in Indian languages. The structure 'adverb + RP' is an accepted form since the adverb in the phrase modifies the verb in the RP form.

Restriction-6

Plural forms as the first component of the hyphenated adjectives are unaccepted in English. Thus, the following are considered as errors.

- 32. *five-years-old boy
- 33. *bullets-riddled body
- 34. *leaves-covered playground

Nevertheless, while translating such hyphenated adjectives in Indian languages, they do have the plural forms as an accepted phenomenon.

Manipuri: una-siŋ-nə puŋkup kupsilləbə sannəbuŋ

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leaf-pl.-nom. fully covered-RP (reduplicated form) playground

Tamil: ilai-kaL muuDiya viLaiyaaTTu maidaanam

leaf-pl. covered-RP play ground

The restrictions, normally, imposed on hyphenated adjectives do not affect the translation into Indian languages.

5. Ambiguity and Hyphenated Adjectives

Two words written as one unit called compound words or open adjectives, do not need hyphen; even if written with hyphen this does not lead to any ambiguity, even in translation.

35. Sunday morning walk

The above is an open adjective and hence no hyphen is needed between Sunday and morning. Whenever there is an ambiguity involved, they are resolved by the addition of a hyphen.

36. More-qualified workers

The sentence 'We need more qualified workers.' means 'we need more workers who are qualified' and it does not require hyphen; if we have to mean 'we need workers who are more qualified', it requires a hyphen as in 'We need more-qualified workers.' (Concordia).

Manipuri: əikhoy-nə məhəigi thak yamnə wanbə sinmisin pammi.

we-nom. qualification very high-RP workers want

Tamil: niRaiya takutivaaynta paNiyaaLarkaL engaLukku veeNDum.

many qualified workers for us want

In Manipuri, the sentence gives only one meaning whereas the translation in Tamil leads to ambiguous meanings. This is almost like the ambiguous phrases, which have been discussed in the field of Linguistics for decades, like, 'Flying planes are dangerous...' or 'Stout major's wife' ...or 'Large human graveyard.', etc. Such structural ambiguities can be solved only by the context of its occurrence or by adding a hyphen. Nevertheless, the translation of such adjectives also has the ambiguity unresolved.

6. Conclusion

This paper has demonstrated, with examples from four languages belonging to different families, that the hyphenated adjectives in English are little difficult to translate because the structural formations of such hyphenated adjectives are different and finding the equivalent structures in the target languages remains challenging. The paper has suggested alternate

Language in India www.languageinindia.com ISSN 1930-2940 19:1 January 2019

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structures in Indian languages for the nine types of hyphenated adjectives discussed here. The suggested equivalents will help in machine translation and developing artificial intelligence as well. Additionally, this helps to establish that India is a linguistic area with many syntactic features also. This paper, further, strengthens the concept of India as a translation area, which is a long due and yet to be analysed elaborately.

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Colophon: I am thankful to Dr. Sambhu Kumar Singh and Ms. Meenakshi Soren of the National Translation Mission, CIIL, Mysuru for the Hindi and Santali data and Prof. N. Nadaraja Pillai, Retd. Deputy Director, CIIL, Mysuru for the Tamil data.



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