



## TRANSLATION AS DISCOVERY

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### ABSTRACT



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Language is an inseparable part of human communication since the genesis of human birth and development, as it is an eminent part of human behaviour for intercommunication of feelings and attitudes; it plays a salient role in social development. Hence, the translation has become an essential pre-requisite of ever expanding social group speaking multiple languages. In the modern world, Inter-linguistic communication is not possible without suitable translation and interpretation processes. Translation is indispensable for both integration and preservation of multi-lingual societies, particularly in a country like India. Translation provides cohesive linkages for this purpose. Translation maintains the cultural identity across the multi lingual world.

The chief objectives of the present study are the following:

a). To analyze the linguistic, cultural and idiomatic problems that arises in the translation of literary texts between English and Telugu.

b). To examine the meta-functions of the language with reference to systemic functional linguistic theory and their applicability in translation.

However, this study is not theory-oriented as it is based on the practice of translation. It confines itself to the analysis of selected short story translated from Telugu to English and the application of *SFL Theory* to the practice of Translation. A story selected in this study is taken from the book entitled '*Political Stories*' [*Rajkeeya Kathalu*] by *Volga* published by Charita Graphics. This story deals with "*feminism*" and a woman's struggle for her rights. A close text analysis is made of this story comparing the translation with its original.

**keywords:** *Translation, Linguistics, Semantics.*

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### IMPORTANCE OF TRANSLATION

"Translating is not pouring wine from one bottle into another". Translating is more than a triple matching of words, grammatical structures and cultural contexts to a complex process. 'Eugene .A .Nida' speculates that it is likely that the message of language 'A' is decoded into a concept, and that this concept provides the basis for the generation of an utterance in language 'B'. Translation has always

been an adjunct of creative writing itself. Since, translation depends on two activities of reading and writing, each a variable, the translations will always vary with each translator. The reading of the source text provides the translator with the content which includes knowledge of the original devices. The writing of the target text requires the translators to make up a new form into which to pour the context.

'Translation is neither a creative art nor an imitative art'. But the translator must be a creative maker; at the same time, he must submit to the reality of the writer whom he is translating. A good translation always merits a careful study as does any other work of literary merits a careful study as does any other work of fine art, so that the translator's method may be discerned and his treatment of difficulties be compared with the treatment chosen by others. The fact is that a fresh translation of any work of literary merit is welcomed because the existing translations sound antiquated or obsolescent as in the case with Iliad and Odyssey. Which have been repeatedly translated by many like Homer in English.

### THE PRINCIPLES OF TRANSLATION

A statement of the principles of translation in succinct form is impossible and that a statement in any form is more difficult than might be imagined and further that this difficulty has arisen from the writings of the translators themselves. The truth is that there are no universally accepted principles of translation, because the only people who are qualified to formulate them have never agreed among themselves, but have so often and for so long contradicted each other that they have bequeathed to us a volume of confused thought which must be hard to parallel in other fields of literature. A convenient method is to state them shortly in contrasting pairs, as follows,

1. A translation must give the words of the original.
2. A translation must give the ideas of the original.
3. A translation should read like an original work.
4. A translation should read like a translation.
5. A translation should reflect the style of the original.
6. A translation should possess the style of the translator.
7. A translation should read as a contemporary of the original.
8. A translation should read as a contemporary of the translator.
9. A translation may add to or omit from the original.
10. A translation may never add to or omit from the original.
11. A translation of verse should be in prose.
12. A translation of verse should be in verse.

The pair of alternatives at the head of the list given above can be easily recognised as giving one form of the distinction between the literal or faithful translation and the idiomatic or free translation.

A more careful discussion of the characteristics of a translation which is both free and acceptable will bring to light three important points, they are; Firstly, the too brief and dogmatic statement that a translation must read like an original may be supported by a show of reason. The original needs to be like an original; hence a translation of it should do so too.

Secondly, while there is admittedly a distinction between the original author and this translator, who must constantly remember his debt to the former, a translator is equally the result of original thought and considerable work by the translator.

Thirdly, there is the fact that unlike the author, the translator is often one of a number, perhaps a large number of writers who have preceded him at his task, and a translator of Goethe or Maupassant works with the knowledge that he is the latest of a series of writers who in the past have tried to find the best solutions to the many problems that now face him.

### TRANSLATION IS A COMMUNICATION OF MESSAGE

Translation is not merely an imitation of text in one linguistic system but communication of message to his prospective target readers whose culture and language differ from the culture as used in the original message and so prevents direct communication of message between the sender and its recipient.

### PREREQUISITES OF TRANSLATIONS

A translator requires knowledge of literary and non literary textual criticism, since he has to assess the quality of a text. Many distinctions have been made between literary and technical translation. Both Savory and Reiss have written that the technical translator concerned with content and the literary; a literary translation must be free. A traditional English snobbery puts literary translation on a pedestal and regards other translation as hackwork or less important or easier.

A translator must respect good writing scrupulously by accounting for its language, structures and content, whether the piece is scientific or poetic, philosophical or fictional. If the writing is poor, it is normally his duty to improve it, whether it is technical or a routine, it is commercialized best seller. The basic difference between the artistic and the non – literary is that the first is symbolic or allegorical and the second representational in intention. The difference in translation is that more attention is paid to connotation and emotion in imaginative literature. The translator has to be a good judge of writing. He must assess not only the literary quality but the moral seriousness of a text in the sense of Arnold and Leavis.

### HISTORY OF TRANSLATION

“No introduction to translation studies could be complete without consideration of discipline in an historical perspective”. “Translation is almost as old as original authorship and has a history as honorable and complex as any other branch of literature”. A lot of evidence is available to prove that translation is five thousand years old. It is erroneous to conclude that translation is Roman invention, as claimed by Roman Jacobson. Archaeological evidences point to ancient Egyptian interest in translation.

### TRANSLATION IN ANTIQUITY

**THIRD MILLENNIUM B.C.:** There was found an inscription written on a sleep rock on the bank of the Nile in two languages and dated 3000B.C, the people of the city of Babylon spoke different languages about 2100B.C, the royal proclamations were rendered into various languages spoken by the people. The Jewish community carrying on international trade spoke a variety of Arabic languages. Those people on their return to their native region were unable to understand the classical Hebrew of the scripture. Therefore Nehemiah, a Jewish leader, got classical Hebrew translator into Arabic language for the sake of these Jews.

**THIRD CENTURY B.C.:** In this century Dargon, the king of Assyria, used to proclaim his conquests and exploits in many languages of his empire. For the sake of large speaking community in Alexandria, the Old Testament was translated from Hebrew into German.

**SECOND CENTURY B.C.:** In 179, the French soldiers through a shepherd found a stone near Rosetta on the western bank of the Nile; it contained translation from Egyptian languages into Greek.

**FIRST CENTURY B.C.:** Cicero, the Roman orator, translated Greek works into Latin; Cicero's approach was sense for sense. Catullus, a Roman poet, translated several Greek works into Latin.

**FIRST CENTURY A.D.:** Pliny, the young, a Roman writer practiced and propagated translating as a literary technique but he tended towards word for word translation.

**FOURTH CENTURY A.D.:** St. Jerome was commissioned by pope Damascus to translate the New Testament from Hebrew into the popular nonliterary Latin. St. Jerome's approach was sense for sense.

**EIGHTH AND NINTH CENTURIES:** These two centuries saw the rise and development of Arabian learning lead to a number of translations from Greek to Arabic. Scholars from Syria, a part of the Roman Empire, came to Baghdad and translated the works of Aristotle, Plato, Galen, Hippocrates and others into Arabic.

**FOURTEENTH CENTURY:** Wycliffe, the noted Oxford theologian, translated the Bible from Latin into English.

**FIFTEENTH CENTURY:** John Purview, the disciple of Wycliffe, revised the edition of the New Testament and brought out the second edition of the Wycliffe's bible in 1525 in an intelligent and idiomatic style.

**SIXTEENTH CENTURY:** With the invention of the printing press in the 16<sup>th</sup> century the bible was translated into a number of European languages – English, Dutch, Swedish, Spanish, and French.

**SEVENTEENTH CENTURY:** In 1603, John Florio produced his translation of montage's essays. In 1612, Thomas Shelton produced the first translation of Don Quixote.

**EIGHTEENTH CENTURY:** It witnessed a plethora of translation. Alexander Pope and William Cowper attempted to put Homer into English verse.

**NINETEENTH CENTURY:** In this century several translations were done from other languages into English. Byron, Shelly and Longfellow translated verse from other languages into English.

**TWENTIETH CENTURY:** In this century Russia remained the leading country in translation. Tolstoy and Dostoevsky have been translated in all the major languages. The bible is translated into hundreds of languages in the world.

### **HISTORY OF TRANSLATION IN INDIA WITH SPECIAL REFERENCE TO TELUGU LITERATURE**

Nannaya, the first Telugu poet in written tradition, translated the Sanskrit epic, Mahabharata, he was followed by Tikkana and Errana in completing the translation of Mahabharata in Telugu. Other Indian intellectuals like Raja Ram moan Roy and Ishwara Chandra Vidya Sagar translated or adapted works from English and Sanskrit. Raja Ram Mohan Roy translated the Vedanta treatises like Upanishads and the Bhagvad Gita.

### **TYPES OF TRANSLATION**

Translation theory attempts to give some insight into the relation between thought, meaning and language, the universal, cultural and individual aspects of language, behavior and understanding of cultures, the interpretation of texts that may be classified and even supplemented by way of translation

Translations can be formed as source language oriented and target language oriented depending on where the translator's emphasis lies. Some translators are biased towards the original, while others are biased towards the target readers. The following types of translation can be placed under source language oriented translations. They are four types, they are

1. Word – for – word translation
2. Literal translation
3. Faithful translation
4. Semantic translation

### **WORD – FOR-WORD TRANSLATION**

In this translation, the primary senses of all words in the original are translated as through out of context and the word order of the original is retained though it cannot give us a normal, total translation, it has its own function. Its main function is to help or to understand the mechanics of the source language or to comprise a retranslation procedure for a difficult source language text.

### **LITERAL TRANSLATION**

It literally translates words. Under this translation the translator searches for the equivalence of all words.

### **FAITHFUL TRANSLATION**

It is one that attempts to be completely faithful to the original both in the intention of the writer and the structure of the text. It preserves even the grammatical and lexical deviations of the source language text from language norms.

### **SEMANTIC TRANSLATION**

It attempts to produce the exact contextual meaning of the original. It preserves the structures of the source languages text intact.

### **TRANSLATION - TEXT ANALYSIS**

#### **TEXT ANALYSIS OF THE SELECTED SHORT STORY**

Volga is a successful writer in Telugu. 'Political Stories' [Rajakeeya Kathalu] is a collection of ten short stories. She took eight years to write these stories, she wrote all these stories from her experiences. Through these stories she felt that she could bring a cultural revolution in the society. It is just like a traditional war. She aptly described the domination of male over women, how these people are molding women or women body into 'Socio biological unit'.

Volga, a famous feminist writer in telugu opines that freedom is a forbidden fruit to women and the saying like ' half in the sky' , 'synonym of patience' , 'light of the house' are her beautiful descriptions.

Volga is not her name, her name is Lalitha Kumari. Her sister name was Volga [name of the river in Russia]. She died when Lalitha Kumari was at the age of 16. She used to send her writings on the name of Volga. As they were published Volga became her name.

Volga's short stories are framed around woman's body parts and the relation between men and women. Volga tried to reveal the myths which are strongly framed by men in the dominated society to crush women under the veils of sacredness and traditions. They imbibed that a woman is for the sake of a man. Men described each and every part of the woman and made them as luxurious things to men. She opines that a lady is being treated as a toy. The society never bothers about the feelings and individuality of the women. She has been trying her

level best to create some awareness among the women.

Even in mythologies, epics, dramas, novels writers described woman's body parts without leaving a single part in her body. As a part of description they used hyperbole and even clumsy words also. But when the revolution starts, when a woman questions the domination of men, when women plays an important role in the society then all these problems get solutions.

But women never thinks that, how she should be, how she has to take care of her body parts, how her body parts should be or shouldn't be, what work her body has to do or hasn't do. Instead she accustoms to, cultural, religion, traditional prohibitions. According to Hindu mythology or traditions woman is a synonym of patience which is supported by some feminists. Hence, she has maintained the same tempo till now. Consequently she has been developing a kind of prejudice over her body parts. She curses herself as if she made sin; she never tries to get relief from manacles. Hence it is time to analyze how to live in the society? At present how she is living? How to can note herself in this world? Thus Volga brought a revolution and gave a valuable judgment to women through her stories. Volga strongly agrees and recognizes how a woman should behave with her husband, children and society through these political stories.

I have selected a story 'Sita's Plait' as a part of translation practice. In this story writer used cultural words, traditional phrases. This story deals with the problems faced by an innocent woman in the traditional bond society. Here I made an effort to bring out "Translation as discovery" in this story.

The short story Sita's plait is a successful story. It is explained graphically. Sita's inner conflict and her tender feelings are exhibited. It is successfully portrayed by the writer naturally and traditionally. It is a detailed description of Sita's hair & plait. Writer is successful in portraying Sita's mother's enthusiasm on the day of head bath. i.e., how her mother would take care on her plait, preparation of special coconut oil, that she applied it to her scalp and from roots to bottom, she even used some traditional formalities to dry Sita's hair after head bath with benzoic smoke. Writer is also successful in portraying Sita's hair in

disheveled position. Writer is successful in adding a philosophical touch and tradition belief or formalities followed after Sita's husband's death. Writer aptly described Sita's terror over her plait in some situations. Thus the writer maintained the tempo of the inner conflict of Sita till the end.

The following are the areas in which I found myself difficult in translating the original essence into the targeted language. These problems are divided into three categories – viz... Linguistic problems, Cultural problems, and grammar problems.

### LINGUISTIC PROBLEMS

problems in this level are of the following types

#### I. LACK OF EQUIVALENT OR MORE THAN ONE EQUIVALENT

##### LACK OF EQUIVALENTS:

The following are the areas I can spot out, where a lot of effort is rendered on my part to maintain or bring the same fragrance to the translated work.

The introductory paragraph, which makes an artistic explanation of the situation, is itself a difficult task to translate for me. It is full of traditional phrases that cannot translated into a foreign language like English.

E.g.: 'Kucchulu Kucchuluga ralipothunna juttu' here 'Kucchulu, Kucchulu' is repeated, that cannot be translated as it is into target language, due to the absence of a lexical substitute in the target language for a source language word

Telugu: 'Kucchulu Kucchuluga Ralipothunna juttu'

English: tresses of falling hair

Actually 'Frills' is the right or equal word for 'Kucchulu' but in this context it is not suitable, 'Frills' goes with clothes but not with hair, I finally satisfied in translating the same phrase as 'tresses of falling hair'.

I find it difficult to translate enthusiasm of Sita's mother and finding equivalent words in English. For example in the story when Sita's mother decorated her hair with a cluster of flowers and kissed on her pate, Sita's mother uttered this phrase i.e., 'Aadadaaniki tala katte singaram' ,but the same effect is hardly possible in the target language owing to cultured and traditional disparities and lack of equivalents.

When Sita's mother started combing her hair to remove lice and embryo of lice, writer used



some specific words and phrases to describe the scene, they are like 'EERPENA', 'Thana Kharma Kaali', 'Paga vadiki', 'Saakshaatu Yamudu'. I felt difficult to find equivalent words in English. but some words are not translated exactly into English language.

Phrases that display telugu nativity are often used in the story that is quite difficult to be replaced in [TL] English language.

Eg : phrases like 'Savaraala Vadu', 'Jaajipoolu', 'Jada Kuchulu', 'Pettanaalu', 'Mungurulu', 'Poolajada' etc cannot be translated as it is.

### II. CULTURAL PROBLEMS

Cultural untranslatability is due to the absence of all relevant culture in target language for source language text culture oriented words cannot be translated from one to other which has different culture.

### III. GRAMMAR PROBLEMS

1. Some grammatical shifts are not translated exactly as they are from one language into another.
2. On grammatical grounds, this story is expressed in past tense, but sometimes present tense is also used. Hence, maintaining sequence of tense is also finds to be difficult.
3. In English the object normally follows the verb. The structure we generally use is Subject + verb + object.  
 Eg : 'Subhadra went to Sita's house'.  
 Where as in Telugu it was written as Subject + object + verb.  
 Subhadra Sita intiki vellenu.
4. The gender system in Telugu posses' difficulties. It should be specified whether a child is a male or female 'Pilla' or 'Pillavadu'. But in target language we use 'Child' for both.
5. Finally some grammatical shifts are not translated exactly as they are from one language into another. I feel it is not as effectively portrayed by me in the pattern of sentence construction in both the languages. In the process of translation, many problems crop up due to linguistic and cultural differences between the two languages.

### CONCLUSION

Though Translation is an age of old practice, the theory of translation is still in an infant stage.

Building up a theory of translation, especially a theory of literary translation is a futile exercise; yet many attempts are constantly being made by many linguists and translatoologists. Any good theory is based on systematic practice. Many a time theories may not work or show any effect on practice. Yet we cannot deny the existence of theories. They are like beacons, which show the way though they do not lead the practitioners to their practice. Most of the translators do not explicitly stage, what theory of translation they have adapted or the combination of different theories. Sometimes the translator may not know which theory of translation is working on him or his work. As a result there exists a gap between theory and practice of translation. There are a good number of translations between English and Telugu but very few researchers have done their research on the processes and problems of translation between these two languages. However, a comprehensive General Theory of Translation is a distant dream.

Translation is inevitably incomplete and an endless in satisfaction and another translation is always possible other than one. We have to consider that translation as an independent text. If the translator thinks himself as "translator – writer" he / she liberates herself / himself from the author of the source text.

We can also view that Translation as performance if we consider translation in this view; the source text should be read and interpreted differently by different translators. Even in many experiments I have made with my students, I found that no two students ever come up with the "Same" translation. In the same manner no two translators ever come up with the same translation of text into English, each "performance" is different in diction, style and treatment.

Thus we can say that literary translation is more complicated than any other type of translation with its variety of problems and issues. In any work of translation, there are many forces, factors, attitudes and motivations work together in deciding the type of translation and the procedure of translation.

### FINDINGS AND SUGGESTIONS:

Language is an expression of culture. Translation is conveying culture and situation by means of language. Hence, language serves not only

as a means of communication but also as a conveyor of culture and situation. Language plays a very important role in translation. It is primarily with the help of language that the translation activity functions. Without language there is no question of translation, language can only decide the tone of the translation.

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