

TRANSFORMED IN TRANSLATIONS: CULTURE AND LANGUAGE SPECIFIC EXPRESSIONS IN NIDADAVOLU MALATHI'S SELF-TRANSLATIONS

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Abstract:

Recent studies in translation create interest and many works are coming out basing on translation. These works include-translation methods or theories, which give a basic idea for the translation, translations from one language to another language. Nidaddavolu Malathi is a well-known Telugu short story writer. She translates some of her stories into English. Translator's job is to convey the author's intended meaning from ST to TT. Meaning of the story depends on culture, setting, tradition, dialects, metaphors, idioms, proverbs etc. These are different from ST to TT. The translator uses different methods to translate these issues without disturbing the theme of the story. I have taken her two stories "rangu tolu(color of skin)", "jEbu (Top pocket)" to discuss translation methods. I explained the translation methods by giving illustrative examples from her stories. Some methods are explained by referring to some translation theories and some are interpreted on my own.

Keywords: Translation, idiom, equivalent, perception, elaboration, metaphor.

Translation is not a new topic; it is a well-known concept in all literatures throughout the world. According to New Mark-a famous translation theorist, translation "is rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." (5) The translator's work is not only rendering the meaning but also taking care of conveying all the issues related to culture, tone, mood, expressions, rhythm, idiomatic expressions, proverbs etc. These issues are quite different from source language to target language.

Different techniques and methods given by many translation theorists make the translators' work easy. Still these techniques are not suitable to all the elements of the source text. Literature is not a theory. Following theories, while translating makes target text clumsy. The translator should not be bounded by the strategies or theories given by translation theorists. These theories only work at the ground level and give a basic idea to the translator. The translator has to apply the methods of these theorists that are suitable for the source text. At the same time he/she should have the free hand to invent his/her own strategies to convey the intended meaning of the author without creating any ambiguity in the target text.

Nidadavolu Malathi is a great Telugu short story writer. Her stories are published in different magazines. She translated many of her own stories into English. Two of her stories are taken for discussion. One is "RanguTolu", and the other one is "Jebu". Translation methods are discussed by giving some illustrations from ST & TT of these two stories.

The theme of the story "RanguTolu" is the effect of 'Rangu'(color) on a lady in India as well as in America. The heroine of the story, Neelaveni has dark complexion. Her parents felt that her marriage would become a big problem due to her color, but Sundarayya married her without thinking of color. When Neelaveni goes to America, she feels embarrassed, for treating her as one of the members of the black community. She is relieved from this embarrassment when she is saved by a black person from a danger.

The title "RanguTolu" is translated into English as "The Color of Skin". The title should convey the author's intention and should give the readers an idea about the context on which the author's focus is laid.

Keeping this in view, while translating the title, the author chose 'Color' instead of complexion. If the word-complexion is used, it would not be as effective as 'Color'. Selection of an appropriate equivalent word depends on the theme of the story.

The story is set in two different places-India and America. When the setting is changed, the theme is also changed. Whatever setting is native for ST, is foreign for Americans and the foreign setting of ST, is the native for Americans. This is the peculiarity of this story. The most difficult aspect in translation is representing the culture of the SL. Half of the story takes place in America and the theme is related to racial differences in America, the translator focuses mainly on theme rather than culture. Even in ST setting, the theme is highlighted rather than culture.

“Edo naa Takam-bhinna jaatula samgharshana gurunchi”(ST116)

“Color of Skin-a Play”(TT15)

A clause is changed as a phrase from ST to TT. Condensation technique is used. “Condensation is defined, . . . , as a source element or construction that corresponds to a tighter or more compact target counterpart. (Malone 59). It means that condensation directly gives the meaning and is more effective in TT. If she translates the phrase as-'the play is about disputes between different races-TL reader should extend his/her perception beyond the author's intended concept of color and may create different meanings.

“challanamma aa pillani tagalakunDaa gajam duuramloe nilabaDi oedaarchaDaaniki tanTaalu PaDutoendi”(ST116)

“A compassionate gentle lady is trying her best to calm her down, while keeping a safe distance from her to avoid any physical contact and possible contraction of some horrible disease.”(TT15)

The translator explicated the sentence in TT. The implied meaning in ST is elaborated in TT. Though this much of elaboration is not required, as the translator is also the author of the story, she freely uses the expressions which are not mentioned in the ST.

“mee pillani meeru chuusukoenakkarleaduu?”(ST116)

“It seems he is expressing his disapproval for neglecting the child.” (TT15)

This is a rhetorical question. New mark suggests that “Rhetorical questions are more common in many other languages than in English, and should frequently be translated into statements, are anaphoric or cataphoric, since they are often used to summarize an argument or to introduce a fresh subject.”(64) The rhetorical question is translated as an anaphoric sentence to carry out the intended purpose of using question mark in ST. The rhetorical question in ST has the hidden warning of the gentle man to the lady for her negligence towards the child. If this is translated as question form-Didn't you see your child?-it does not express the warning tone of the man behind asking the question. The anaphoric sentence is the right choice for the translator to translate rhetorical questions.

“guuDuchearina guvvalaaga”(ST117)

“like a baby duck under mother duck's wing”(TT16)

The above sentence is a simile. While translating similes, Pierini suggests some methods to translate similes. They are:

- S1: Literal translation (retention of the same vehicle)
- S2: Replacement of the vehicle with a different vehicle
- S3: *Reduction* of the simile, if idiomatic, to its sense
- S4: Retention of the same vehicle plus explication of similarity
- S5: Replacement of the vehicle with a gloss
- S6: Omission of the simile (p.29)

The simile from the source text is translated by replacing the vehicle with a different vehicle. Still it does not lose its meaning. When the vehicle of ST simile has ST dialect this method is suitable.

“sakala janulu samaanamea, kondaru konchem ekkuva samaanam”(ST118)

“All are equal but some are more equal”(TT16)

Author gives a quotation which is a very common practice of writing. The quotes are generally translated by using equivalent words in TT. This quote has resemblance with the quote “All animals are equal but some animals are more equal” made by George Orwell in his novel '*Animal Farm*'. Reverse technique is also an apt one for these kinds of sentences. Reverse technique is a frequently used technique in translation. When the TT phrase or clause is reversed to ST phrase or clause, it has to give the same meaning.

“niganigalaa Dutuu neelameagha Syaama varNam”(ST119)

“-the color of dark clouds on a spring day, the color of the dark-skinned Lord Krishna, the color of dark-lined lotus”(TT17)

Metaphorical expressions are very common in writing. Newmark divides metaphors into- “dead, cliché, stock, adapted, recent and original.”(100) He explains different methods for each metaphor. The above sentence comes under the category of stock metaphors. To change stock metaphors New mark suggests to “replace the SL image with another established TT image, if one exists that is equally frequent within the register.”(101) The stock metaphor is changed with an equivalent and registered metaphor in TT. This is also called naturalization which means using natural metaphors in the place of stock metaphors.

“nallanivaa Dupadmanayanammulavaa Du”(ST119)

“Dark Lord”(TT17)

This is another metaphorical expression. It is also a stock metaphor in ST. The translator uses a metonymy in TT, which does not change the meaning of the text. Though dark lord is not a familiar word for TT readers, they can understand it with the cohesiveness of the text.

“aapillapeLLi atisu Luvugaa ayipoeyindi kaalam, Kharmakalisochchi”(ST120)

“Strangely though, her marriage had been fixed very easily”(TT17)

The author use sarcasm in ST; when she translates, it does not carry any sarcastic tone. Every language has its own sarcastic expressions. The translation of these expressions is not easy, so the translator shows interest to give the meaning rather than using equivalent sarcastic expression.

“koe Dalu nalupayitea kulamantaa nalupu”(ST120)

“dark daughter-in-law-begets dark babies.”(TT17)

The translator quotes this as proverb in the TT. There are different kinds of proverbs related to culture, tradition, religion, history, language etc. This proverb has believed connotation, so the translator focuses on carrying the belief of the proverb by using equivalent words in TT.

“tallidan Drulu tama nettina paalavaana kurisindani murisipoyaaru”(ST120)

“For her parents, it was a *shower of milk*, as the saying goes”(TT18)

This is another example for condensation technique. But here only the meaning is conveyed, the happiness of the parents is expressed in ST along with the clause. As the clause is condensed to phrase, it fails to carry the happiness of the parents in TT. According to my opinion, the translator could not carry the expression of ST to TT.

“koepamochchi humkarinchinappu Du kempulutirigina mohamu

dikkulutoechanappu Du velatela poyea moham,,

laagi lempakaayoka Ti ichchukunnappu Du kamili neelima pulumukunea mohamu”(ST121)

“They are red in the face when angry, turn pale when lost, black and blue if beat up, yellow with jealousy”(TT19)

The binomial expressions are unique to any language for that matter, especially predominant for Dravidian languages. Telugu is a Dravidian language. But here the binomial expressions does not related to culture specific, so they got equivalents in TT. If they are culture specific, different strategies are used by

translators depending on the context of ST and TT.

“naa praaNaaniki tana praaNam aDDUveasina eemaanavuDevaru chepmaa?”(ST122)

“He was prepared to trade his life for mine or so it seems.”(TT19)

The cultural specific connotation is hidden in ST. In ST context, there is no other compensation with life. The translator uses 'trade' in TT to highlight the material culture which is very common in America. When the language is changed her opinion is also changed, she gives preference to use the word 'trade' which gives more emphasis than life and also very close to TT readers.

Borrowing technique is generally used in translation to retain the cultural context of the Source text. As the story's half of the setting is in America, the writer directly uses some English words in Source language. She uses the same words in TT. Examples for such words are “Stereo Type, driver license, Checker and Colored.”

Next story for the study is “*Jebu*”. The main character of the story is Parimala. She is warned by her English master not to bring geometry box to English class because of its hasty noise, if it suddenly falls on the ground. Parimala thinks that jebu can be the alternative for geometry box. So she convinces her mother to have jebu for her top. Jebu is not common for girls in ST culture. This new practice creates humor in Parimala's life. This story is translated into English. The translation methods which are applicable to this story are discussed.

According to New mark about titles; “a descriptive title should be literally kept”(7) to get the attention of the readers. The title of the story “*Jebu*” is translated into English as “Top Pocket”. This is a descriptive title which implies that the whole story is related to 'Jebu'(pocket). While translating the translator adds an adjective to give clear description in TT.

“baagundi varusa roejukoe kottajata kaavaleamiTi raaNigaariki”(ST97)

“That's cute. Princess wants a dress a day?”(TT25)

The ST contains sarcastic expression, which is generally used by common people in villages. This village native sarcasm cannot be translated into TT. Princess-this word has positive tone in English language. But in ST it is used to express sarcasm. To carry out this sarcastic tone, the translator uses question mark at the end of the sentence.

“baaganeundi varusa. leaDiki leachindea prayaaNam”(ST97)

“Nice, very nice, as they say, like the deer up and run in the same moment”(TT25)

This is a very well-known proverb in ST. Translator translates it word to word. Word to word translation gives only meaning and does not carry out any proverbial sense. It becomes a common sentence in TT due to its word to word translation.

“gunDelu chukchukmanTu chinna railinJanula koTTUkunTunnayi”(ST98)

“Her heart was beating like engine . . . chuk, chuk . . .”(TT26)

The sentence has native dialectical usage of sounds. Every person who speaks Telugu language is familiar with the train game. This game is played by humming 'chuk, chuk.' As these sounds are familiar to school children, the writer uses them to express the sound of Parimala's heartbeat. In TT, the translator keeps the same words, because the train is known to everyone and can easily relate these words to train sound.

The expression also comes under the category of onomatopoeia. Valero Garcés divides onomatopoeia into four categories-sounds produced by animals (bow-quack), unarticulated sounds by humans (smack, plaf), sounds related to feelings and attitudes (um, hush), and sounds produces artificially (bang, kick). He also mentions that as English is the dynamic language, it can freely take any onomatopoeia words into it. In the above sentence she retains onomatopoeic words in TT.

In the following sentences, she does not use onomatopoeia words directly in TT. She has given preference to meaning rather than expression.

“kisakisa laaDukunTunnaaru”(ST100)

“making funny noises in a low pitch”(TT26)

“gunDe dhandhan manireTTimpu veagamutoe koTTukumToemdi”(ST99)

“her heart started beating twice as fast”(TT26)

Though the onomatopoeic words are not used in the TT the meaning is not affected. It is the choice of the translator to choose meaning or onomatopoeic expressions of ST. The train sound-'chuk-chuk' is familiar to everyone, the other sounds; 'kisa-kisa', 'dhan-dhan' are not well-known sounds to all TT readers. Familiar words can be taken directly to TT, the other words are given meaning in TT.

“klaasulo mottam muppaijatala kaLLu tanavaipea tirigeayi “neeninchea' anTu.”(ST100)

“Twenty pairs of eyes turned toward Parimala. They all said, “All this, because of you!” (TT27)

Every language has its own peculiar quality of expressive dialects. These expressive dialects carry sarcasm, irony, doubt, amazement, exclamation, amazement etc. When these expressive dialects are translated, it is not possible for the translator to carry the same expression in TT. The translator has to use question mark, exclamatory mark, colon etc to carry the expression up to some extent. Still this technique does not carry the complete expression of ST. The translator gives description to these kinds of expressions.

“ponleddu opaniayipoinaayi poyiddi”(ST101)

“Might as well get it done now. One errand done is one less thing to worry about”(TT27)

The above sentence is an example for informal usage of language and particularly related to village people. This is also called habitual language. The habitual language is suitable to ST, the translator does not find an equivalent expression in TT. Generally, for habitual language, translator gives more importance to meaning rather than the language. If the language is more important, translator uses ST words in TT and gives note for it. This is explained with the following examples.

“magavaaDu”(ST101)

“magavaaDu”(TT28)

The translator has given note for magavaaDu, because she retains the ST word in TT.

“aaDavaaDu”(ST102)

“aaDavaaDu”(TT28)

This is also another new word in TT which is a direct extraction from ST. Both 'magavaaDu' and 'aaDavaaDu' are inter linked, she gives meaning for 'aaDavaaDu' in the note of 'magavaaDu'. As these two words are very important and have meaningful connection with the theme of the story, she transliterates them to TT. Use of translation method depends on the importance and connection of ST words with the theme. Too many ST words in TT create ambiguity and TT reader cannot comprehend them properly.

“EDukoTTeasariki kanchammundu kuuchoepoetea soeSha vaccheastundi aayanagaariki”(ST102)

“He must eat on time, always as a matter of principle”(TT28)

The above sentence is another example for habitual practice in villages. Village people give their own illustrations to explain the consequences for not following these habits. This sentence has two types of connotations-one is related to habit and the other one is consequence. The translator avoids consequence and explains the sentence as a principle in TT. This is called generalizing the sentence to make the work simple.

“ea chemmachekkanoe aaDutunappuDu”(ST102)

“when you jump and skip”(TT28)

Chemmachekka is a folk game. Folk games are special to particular places. In ST, the game is used to explain that the players' objects will fall down, when they play the game. Folk games cannot get any equivalent words in TT as these words are not directly related to theme, the translator uses semantic words

jump and skip. This is another technique mostly used by translators. If ST words do not have equivalent words they prefer to use semantic words in TT.

“paripoorNa chandrabimbamuvole Saantamai kaLakaLalaaDu mogambuvaDu
unna toeraskunDayi chuuDanga tagu meani sobaguvaaDu
aa saayaa maayaasamanaka guru vara padaabja SuSruusha nerapuvaaDu
gaani adi eami paapamoe gaDagi yokka paaThamayina appaginchina paapamuna
boDu”(ST103)

“His face was like full moon, peaceful and bright, he was tall and well-built, he would serve the teacher nonstop and without complaint; however he could never recite a single poem in his life”(TT28)

The poem is told by a Telugu teacher in Telugu class. So the translator gives the meaning of the poem in TT text. Though the translator gives it's meaning, it does not bring any changes in the theme of the text.

“aarshaprayogam”(ST104)

“aarshaprayogam (Poetic License)”(TT29)

This is the best example for equivalent translation. As this is related to figures of speech in literature, she gets an equivalent translation for this.

“mashTaaru chatvaaram kaLLaddaalu savarinchukunTuu”(ST106)

“adjusting his glasses”(TT30)

The above sentence is an example for one of the familiar expressions in many Telugu stories. The old teacher is indicated by using spectacles. Spectacles are common for old man but description of it using an adjective is a special dialectic usage in ST. she avoids this special usage of ST and uses general word in TT.

“joele”(ST107)

“bag”(TT30)

This word signifies many meanings. In Indian context this meaning varies from person to person. When this is with the beggar, it gets informal meaning. The same object obtains another meaning when it is with a sage. A sage bag is a symbolic representation for sanctity. In this story, it is used to represent the knowledge of a writer hidden in the bag. This meaning of ST is not carried properly to TT. As the word signifies multiple meanings in different contexts, she uses a general word for it.

“boTTupeTTi, taambuulam chetiloepeTTaaru”(ST107)

“She put *kumkum* on their foreheads and gave them the *paan* leaves”(TT31)

This sentence reflects the ST culture. When a woman comes to house, it is a practicing ritual of putting *kumkum* on the forehead and giving *paan* leaves to her. The translator uses the familiar words in TT. *Kumkum* conveys the ST meaning in TT. But *paan* leaves creates ambiguity for TT readers. If she used them directly and gave note for them, it would have given great effect.

The difference in the translation methods of the two stories is discussed with illustrations from the story. The first story is mainly focused on theme, so general translation methods are suitable and they work out well. When it comes to the second story, the theme is related to village culture. Village dialects are frequently used by the author in ST. When these are translated, the translator gives preference to meaning rather than language. Sometimes it works out well and in some cases it creates ambiguity. This ambiguity is cleared when the entire story is read by TT reader.

From the above observations, it is clearly understood that while translating the texts, the translating theories helps only in some aspects. The translator has to choose his/her own methods to communicate the message of the author properly without creating any ambiguity even after reading the entire text.

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