

THE DIALECTICS OF CULTURAL AND EMOTIONAL EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION FROM ODISIA TO ENGLISH

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Abstract:

Translation in general brings to mind writing or saying the theme or message in another language. But literary translation has other sub texts, such as description, elaboration, imitation, retrospection, narration, analysis etc. Translation in English is a wide spectrum of constructing the meaning in another linguistic code. This undertaking spreads over an intense expanse of creative modulation/composition. Giving melody to lyrics, transforming a novel to dramatic or film script, staging and choreographing a play, rewriting an ancient text also comes under the ambit of translation. To define translation is to expand its connotation.

The genre of translation has traversed centuries of eulogy and calumny. And in the process, the art of translation has subsumed the symphony of languages, culture, tone and epistemological viewpoints prevalent in different lands and people. Wycliffe's Bible was there before Tyndale Bible and has since been translated into 670 languages. Similarly, the ancient Indian Sanskrit epic the Mahabharata was translated in the 19th c by Kishori Mohan Ganguli. In the new millennium, Clay Sanskrit Library Oxford, achieved, refined and comprehensive translation of the Mahabharata, the longest epic in human history with 200000 verses.

In the meantime, the digital platforms and dedicated portals evoked potent surges of enthusiasm among translators to translate regional literature, folk tales, and archived documents into English. Translation is a catalyst that has aided the understanding of an increasingly fragmented world. It has reduced the physical expanse to an intellectual microcosm. It is through translation alone that great writers of the world have become accessible and comprehensible to us. If heritage preservation is the theme translation would emerge as an international aesthetic pursuit today towards that objective.

Keywords: *Equivalence, Odia literature, Translation, Classical language, Cultural Complexes.*

When we talk of translation from one language to another, we are sure to come cross the problem of equivalence or non equivalence. Equivalence, by dictionary definition means, "equal or interchangeable in value, quantity, significance etc." Vinay and Darbelnet stated that, "equivalence refers to cases where languages describe the same situation by different stylistic or structural means".

Religion, culture and other literary aspects of a language make it difficult to find an effective, equivalent in another language. For a translation to be rooted in its cultural and social milieu, it is better to not replace the native words, for the sake of equivalence. As opposed to the views of Bolanos, equivalence in translation can be symmetrical, culturally multidimensional notion of equivalence and non equivalence both contribute to the efficacy of translation depending on the cultural context or background against which the narrative is set.

To delineate the dialectics of cultural and emotional equivalence of translation, this paper attempts to explore the nuances of Odia to English translation. The Odia language has been recently granted the

status of a “classical language” (Shahstriya Bhasa) in India. Earlier five languages were accorded this status: Sanskrit, Kannada, Telugu, Tamil and Malayalam.

The translation of Odia stories and texts necessarily involves translating the cultural ambience and emotive aspects in which characters and the themes become meaningful. In “The Art of Translation” in *Comparative Literature: Method and Perspective* (pp. 98 - 121) Horst Frenz, the renowned critic and scholar of another. No two languages are alike to signify or express the same emotion, tone or cultural connotation. However translation is a catalyst that is bringing the world of literature together. The undertaking is ambitious and illuminating when viewed in the global context. It is a part of an international trend to preserve the scantily known works of art, folk tales, songs and the cultural complexes typical of a community. Language is a reflection of the culture, heritage, history and the way of life of a particular region or country. Hence translation demands a thorough understanding of both the languages and the cultural context and background of the text. The biggest challenge in the process of translation is of equivalence. It being an attempt to express an already defined content, tone and connotation in a different language, keeping the essence and meaning unchanged. The main challenge is to translate the diction, sequence and cadence of a text into English.

In the case of Odia literature, there are many words which express an emotion and not just a meaning. The cultural undertone is deeply embedded in the word. It becomes difficult to find an equivalent of the same word in any other language. Odia words like, “Panata kani” (the loose end of the sari when worn by a woman), “tulasi chaunra” (the holy basil), “mana basa” (a ritual done on Thursdays for Goddess Laxmi) etc are so culture specific that it becomes difficult to translate it to express the same in the target language. For example, the Odia word “aintha”. It means if someone tastes the food or touches it; another person may not want to eat it. There can never be an exact equivalent of this in English. The most that a translator can do in this regard is to adhere to certain guidelines.

There should be in depth and thorough understanding of not just the source language but also about its cultural heritage and its impact over the native dialect. Simply being able to speak or read both the languages is certainly of no help to the pursuit of translation. “Translation is not just a linguistic phenomenon, rather more of cultural phenomena”. Apart from this, there are idioms, phrases, proverbs which are typical of a particular region or cultural community. Hence the translator should be able to decode the connotations in the source language to enable him to encode it effectively in the target language. Lack of cultural equivalence leads to loss of meaning intended to convey or the words that are emotionally charged. The beauty of translation involves thematic, stylistics, practice and theory. The lack of any of these would render the text as a bland piece of art.

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