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THE TRANSLATION APPROACH TO ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING: OPPORTUNITIES AND CHALLENGES

(With special reference to Abdul Bismillah's Hindi novel *Samar Shesh Hai*'s English translation)

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Abstract:

The paper intends to deal with the translation as an indigenous theory and its challenges with special reference to Abdul Bismillah's Hindi novel Samar Shesh Hai's English translation. The author 1 translated the Hindi novel into English and would like to enumerate the various problems generally faced in the process of translation. The paper focuses on the need and purpose of teaching translation method in the learning of English language. English, being a target language, requires a lot of hard work and dedication. The translation method is the oldest one in teaching and learning English language. In fact, the method is a great success. The source language users depend on the structural and grammatical usage of the target language. In this process, the translation method helps them out with proper guidelines. In no two languages can one find exact equivalents thus, making translation a very complex and tedious process. But, translation is a very good medium in acquiring the target language, as the learners have to rack their minds in order to find closest and most appropriate phrases in the target language to describe the text in the source language. The aim of the paper is to discuss the translation theory with its pros and cons with the examples taken from the selected Hindi text.

Translation may be defined as follows: the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)... The central problem of translation practice is that of finding TL translational equivalents.¹

Translation is an art of reproducing a text of one language in another along with its entire baggage of meanings, feelings, ideas, style, drift and diction. Not only this, it is expected to transfer the original text's ethno-linguistic and socio-cultural elements to the translated version. The aim is to retain, as far as possible, the aesthetic value of the source language material. Translation of a literary text is expected to fulfil all these requirements which, no doubt, are a very tall order.

The Target language of the Indians remains same for the last many centuries i.e. English. The Target language enjoys a special place in the whole world. But the Indians find it really difficult to acquire the language properly. They have to study the language to clear the exam and to outshine in academics and other fields. Many methods have been adopted to teach and learn English language. The Translation method is one of them and has succeeded in the task. Translation method is the indigenous method that was introduced in the 19th century. Translation is getting momentum these days. Except from only learning and teaching English, the translators translate the various regional works into English so as to spread the awareness of Indian culture worldwide. The method is time taking but provides good and definite results. The students should learn the different tenses of the target language, and then practise the method. Translation enables a person to understand the nuances of the two languages.

The present paper focuses on the translation as an indigenous method to teach and learn English language. The method has some challenges to face as the source and the target language belong to two different cultures. In fact, the dimensions of translation as a creative art are still being debated. One point of view is that it should be literal translation. The translator must transfer the whole source language material

into the target language. It means that he has to find word for word, coma for coma and phrase for phrase. This kind of translation may be, to some extent only, possible in case of scientific and technical texts. In case of literary texts, it is impossible. If it is aimed at, the whole text might be destroyed in the process. No two languages have identical lexicon except noun synonyms.

A language is not only a system of words and sentences, but it has also its own evolved system of cultural and ethno-linguistic paraphernalia. It is deeply rooted in the ethos of a community. There are words and expressions which don't have their exact equivalents in the other language. The students really feel traumatised while learning the language. Same is the case with the teachers. They find it difficult to make students learn and use the language efficiently. But the translation method has sought out the things for both the learners and the teachers. When translator is talked about, he is the learner as well as the professional translator. In fact, in the act of translation, it is important for a translator to confine himself to the writer's perspective. A translator is supposed to be a mediator between the two different language users. M.P. Pande in his essay "Some Problems of Theory and Practice of Translation," quotes L.S. Barkhudorov from *Inostranniye Yazyki v Shkole No. 3* (Moscow, 1972):

The main problem while translating is to convey the exact information, the actual content, and the means used for conveying the information depend on the norms of the target language.²

He clarifies that translation is a very responsible practice which ensures that the translation of fiction and other. The statement of creative writings should be handled by a translator familiar with the diction, idiom and nuances of the two languages. The learners should focus on the translation first, rest of the problems are secondary in nature. One should know the language, only then he will be able to think and react in the target language with proper effect.

A translator faces a lot of problems in the process of translation. If it comes to the translation of a Hindi text into English, it is even more challenging. The two languages are very different on a number of grounds. They have grown in entirely different linguistic environments. A language evolves in a culture and it carries its own cultural connotations and denotations. It has its own ethnic roots and extension. Words are symbols carrying meanings. The reader decodes words and deciphers the meaning. Through this process of decoding, he enters the world of the author.

A translator has to take the reader into the world of the writer through the Target Language. He has to employ all practicable approaches to do the job successfully. At some places, he may be able to do literal translation also. At other places free translation may be the answer. There may be areas where translation is simply not possible. He has to explain the meaning to the reader of the TL to make him understand the text.

So the translator has to create communicative values in the TL text to match as closely as possible the communicative values of the message in the SL text. Translation is an act of reproduction and it is unidirectional. It is hoped that it should be a fairly exact copy of the original text which is not possible. The translator shouldn't stress it either. The reason is that it involves a change in the medium of expression which has its own vocabulary, grammar, literary devices and cultural background. Secondly, she should translate the text and reasonably not the language only. If he tries to change SL in to TL word by word, it can be predicted that he will miserably fail in the task. The biggest problem that confronts him is the problem of equivalence. Two verbal objects denoting sameness in semantic representation can be called equivalents. The rules of tense sequence differ in the two languages. The translator has to follow the rules of the TL in such cases.

The dress and food items also challenge the translators. *Lungi, dhoti, saree, garara, roti, tikkar*, etc. are some problematic words. Though some of them have been accepted in the TL, yet they need to be explained in Glossary. Actually speaking, in case of Hindi to English translation, one feels traumatized if his translation reduces or enhances the essence of the SL text. This problem arises from the two languages' completely different ethno-linguistic backgrounds, as also geography. Consequently, there is no one to one

correspondence between the grammatical and lexical units of the two languages. Besides, the grammatical and lexical structures of the two languages convey their particular meaning. Lexis is concerned with meaning; therefore it plays an important role in the process of translation. The words in the languages have different shades and nuances which act as a hindrance in providing exact equivalents in translation. The following examples have been cited from the selected Hindi novel *Samar Shesh Hai* in order to prove the challenges in the process of translation. These challenges help the learner to understand the target language's different culture. It is very important to have a good knowledge of the two languages' disparities.

Mein nihayat behaya bankar wahan rahne lage.

In the above sentence, the lexical item *behayabankar* effectively brings out the pitiable condition of the person. This kind of expressions is in vogue in Hindi writings. Its English equivalent "shameless" does not produce the same effect as the SL. No doubt, words in each language have their own intensity and tradition of existence. The sentence was finally got translated keeping in mind the real essence of it.

I bade goodbye to my self-respect and continued to live there.

Likewise, the expression *choosna* in the following sentence has no appropriate equivalent.

Pehli baar lagaki mujhe aaj kisi ras-bhare
ganne ki tarah choosa gaya hai.

In this case also, the literal translation might destroy the basic meaning of the statement.

For the first time in my life, I felt completely cheated.

Another expression in Hindi language which is slightly difficult to handle is given below:

Main kisi fatey huey gharey ki bhati sadak par khara tha.

The expression *fatey huey* as given in the above expression poses difficulty about its equivalent in English. We have various English words for "fatna" that is "burst" or "explode" or "flare up", but neither of these words suits the situation. It has been translated as:

I stood there utterly disappointed.

This expression finely presents the essence of the statement. Literature is not an easy thing to deal with. It consists of various problematic areas. The transference of one culture into the other is definitely a difficult task. So, while translation, conveying the real flavour of the literary text is far more important than the only word to word translation. George P. Kahari in his essay "Cultural Identity and Problems of Cross-Cultural Communication" believes: "In literature, language is used in a way that is aesthetically appealing but it also invokes our personal attention to its use, especially as a medium for the making of folk-tales, at oral level, and for making fiction at the literate level."³

In addition to this problem, there are a number of more difficult areas where the translator has to tread very carefully. Hindi idioms, phrases, literary devices like similes and metaphors, culture-specific terms, slang words and abuses make the translator's task more challenging. In the process of the effort to render a truthful correspondence between the SL text and the TL text, there is the risk of reducing or enhancing the real meaning of the original work.

Actually an author is a creator in the process of writing. The words that he coins or invents and the expressions that he creates come from the depth of his heart and mind. It is very difficult for the translator to reach the same depth and intensity of feeling and then to transfer the same into the TL. The effect of sounds produced by words is very important in a work of art. The author chooses sounds purposefully to create the intended effect. The translator finds it very difficult to create the same effect in the TL. However, if she is able to transfer the text into the TL with an overall meaning, it is considered her success.

There are some terms that are untranslatable at the conceptual level. *Chooa* is a very important cultural term which has no corresponding word in English. The best it could be translated as 'left over' or 'dirty' in the context of food. But in Indian cultural system, it has a very complex sense. It refers to the Indian caste system where the food touched by the member of a low caste is regarded as polluted and unfit

to eat. In a broader context, it becomes unfit for eating if someone else has eaten from it. The concept of 'untouchability' is at the root of this term. The suffering people are also aware of this fact. The writer explains this fact by making dalit lady speak:

Hum logo ka chooa khaogey.

Since the English socio-cultural system doesn't have this concept, we find no word there to convey the actual cultural meaning. It has been constructed as:

Will you eat food cooked in our kitchen?

This re-construction of the sentence is an effort in the direction of creating the similar kind of tone as is created by the original. The word 'chooa' does not only refer to 'eating from some body's hands' rather it comments on the social structure where castism still prevails which prohibits eating at a dalit's house. Translation is not only re-production of a text rather it is a creation of new thoughts and deals with moulded expressions. Sujit Mukherjee in his book *Translation as Recovery* firmly believes, "Creative translation seen as producing a new version of the original work."⁴

The word jhoota, used in the SL text is a problematic word. A part of a cooked food if eaten by someone and left becomes jhoota. It is thrown away.

wah jhoota pani pee gayey

We do have equivalents for the word jhoota like 'left over' or 'not suitable to drink' but it does not match the situation. The translated sentence reads as:

She drank my left over water.

The translated sentence lacks the depth of love. It simply shows that there was remaining water that she drank. But we, Indians, if say that, mean the other way round. The love, affection enabled her to drink the jhoota water. Sometimes, a translator has to be very careful in giving the real flavour of the SL. It is always aimed at. How far a translator gets success is a different issue.

There is another area where the translator has to tread cautiously. Metaphors and similes also carry symbolic meanings at various places. N.K. Shastri in one of his essays "Translation: Mode of Literary Communication" justifies the problem of translating metaphors: "Metaphor is one of the indirect figures and like all other indirect figures, it communicates in an indirect way what might have been communicated directly in terms of the conventions of a language and for that reason it has "an effect over and above what would accompany the direct accomplishment of the intended effect."⁵

In the process of translation, a translator encounters various problems where he is about to reduce or enhance the effect of the sentence in the SL text. There are many sentences that read directly but convey different ideas.

Hindi is a very rich language in which wide range of variations are available. These variations provide a significant literary effect in Hindi language. A writer can express himself in many different ways and that too beautifully. The treatment hyperbolic language in expressing certain situations and feelings plays an important role in translation. This enhancing practice makes the task of translation difficult. The translator tends to resort to reduction of the intended meaning. e.g.

Paav bhune ja rahe the.

My feet burnt.

Such expressions present a problem before the translator. If he tries to give the same degree of intensity, he might enhance the effect further. If she puts it in an ordinary manner, she might reduce the effect. But this is part of the business of translation.

This kind of reduction in the intended sense of the SL is also possible in dealing with the religion related cultural expressions. Another problem area in translation is the transference of abuses as in the SL. The writers use abuses to provide extreme intensity to the situation. It is a practice frequent in Hindi language to use abusive words while describing one's depressed state of mind.

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These two are well-known abuses in Hindi language. The first one is generally used to humiliate someone, calling him good for nothing. The latter gives meaning of “sadness” prevailing in the atmosphere. But this equivalent is not suitable to the context. The SL abuses cannot be transferred into TL as they are. They are given meanings rather than an expression. In English language we do have abuses, slang, but that are not similar to those in Hindi. Thus, their transference asks a translator to tread cautiously while giving sense, lest it should destroy the essence of the sentence.

Last but not the least, translators face the problem of dealing with dialect particularly used in the dialogues. Standard English is the only possible option. Obviously, it may have resulted in the loss of the transference of the elements of the writer's style. They make all possible efforts to fulfil the needs of translation by striking a balance between the two languages so as to enable the readers to participate in the traditions and style of the Target Language text, and enjoy a full rapport with them.

Having experienced the joys and despair of the act of translation, one may still feel tempted to say that the endeavour of translation is an endeavour worth undertaking. The losses, however grave they may be, do not outnumber the gains of translation. The undeniable truth of the activity of translation is that it enriches the TL and introduces the SL texts to a larger audience the world over. The learners get benefited in the whole process of translation. As regards Hindi-English translation, the gains are really huge. There is an ever increasing number of Hindi works in all areas of literature. Their English translations will make them available to the English readers across the globe and the translation method can easily enable the Hindi users to grasp the knowledge of the target language with precision. The fact cannot be ignored that translation method provides different situations to the translator or the learner. The method comes out with great results.

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