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TRANSLATIONS OF POEMS AND PLAYS IN ENGLISH LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

Translation refers to communication of the meaning of a source-language text by means of an equivalent target-language text. In simple terms, translation can be defined as the transmittal of written text from one language into another. Exact equivalents are very rare in translations. Translations are undertaken in order to get information. Some translations are meant for the general readers and some translations are literary. They are meant to be read by the students of literature. Translation has proved very useful because famous books in one language are made available to the readers belonging to other languages. If there is no translation, there would not have any inter-communication among speakers of different languages. Translation ideas have flown from one cultural group to other cultural groups. Cultural fusion is possible only because of Translation. However, Translation is a complex and complicated process. Many theories of translation have been put forward by the experts. This paper throws light on the translations of some literary texts of poems and plays in English literature into other languages.

KEYWORDS

culture, literature, source-language, target-language, translation.

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INTRODUCTION

Translation is finding exact equivalents between the language of the source language text and the target language text. Foster (1958) defined translation as a mental activity in which a meaning of given linguistic discourse is translated from one language to another. Alwazna, R. Y. (2013) recorded that translation is found to be an important means of communication among all the nations. Ordudari, M. (2008) stated that throughout history, translation has made inter-linguistic communication among people and also considered translation a science. Odinye, S. I. (2019) found that translation was used by humans for centuries since the appearance of written literature. In simple terms, translation can be defined as the transmittal of written text from one language into another. Exact equivalents are very rare in translations. The translator's task becomes difficult when he attempts to translate poems and is also quite complicated to devise the same rhyme in the target language. Also, translating the historical and mythological allusions from SL text to the TL text is very challenging. Above all, culture turns to be a great barrier between the two languages sometimes. In an adaptation, the original text is reproduced with some alterations or modification.

OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

The objectives of the study are:

1. To convey the original tone and intent of a message, taking into account of cultural and regional differences between source and target languages.
2. To exhibit knowledge in the field of Translation studies.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**SCOPE OF THE STUDY**

The scope of the study is confined to the translation works of some literary texts of poems and plays in English literature into other languages.

NATURE OF THE STUDY

This study is qualitative in nature. Since this study is qualitative in nature sampling techniques, data collection method, statistical tool applications cannot be applied in the present study. The researchers described the essence of a few translation texts like Kavimani's Translation of Edwin Arnold's Light of Asia into Asia Jothi, A.K Ramanujan's Translation of Sangam Poems, Poet Subramania Bharati's Translation, Tamil Translations of Shakespeare's Comedies and Tamil Translations of Shakespeare's Tragedies.

TRANSLATION STUDIES

Translation studies constitute a separate discipline. This branch is neither linguistics nor grammar. Translation has come to be regard as a scientific pursuit. James S. Holmes was the first to use the term "translation studies". He used this term in his essay, "Forms of verse Translation and Translation of verse Forms". Holmes insists that the language of translation text is different from the language of the source text. He used the term 'meta language' to describe this new language. There were many experts expressed their view on translation. They are Dryden, Matthew Arnold, S. S. Praver, Horst, Susan Bassnet, McGuire, Eugene Nida, Peter Newmark, J.C. Catford, Theodore Savory, Hilaire Belloc.

TRANSLATION OF POETRY

It is generally believed that poetry is untranslatable. Poetry is characterized by elements like rhythm, metre, figures of speech, etc. These elements are untranslatable. The ideas in a poem can be translated but the poetic elements cannot be transferred from the Source language text to the Target language text. The melody is the most attractive feature of the poetry and it is the outcome of sibilants, liquid consonants, vowels, etc. Melody is the essential part of the poetry of Spenser, Tennyson and many other poets. Melody cannot be transferred in poetry.

Some scholars believe that a poem is being highly emotive. It can be translated only by a sensitive and translated poet. Many poets have done this. Shelley translated many Greek, Spanish and German poems into English. The Bengali poet Buddhadev Bose translated the poems of Baudelaire into Bengali. Rabindranath Tagore translated his own Bengali poem *Gitanjali* into English.

KAVIMANI'S TRANSLATION OF EDWIN ARNOLD'S LIGHT OF ASIA INTO ASIA JOTHI

Kavimani Desigavinayagam Pillai was an eminent Tamil poet. Asia Jothi, Nanjil Nattu Marumakkal Vazhil Manmiyam, and the translation of the work of Omar Khayyam are his masterpieces. In 1940, the Tamil Sangam at its 7th annual conference held at Madras honored Desigavinayagam Pillai with the title Kavimani. Kavimani's Translation of Edwin Arnold's "Light of Asia" in to "Asia Jothi" is one of the milestone in his translation. In this "Light of Asia", Edwin Arnold deals with Siddhartha's renunciation of his princely life, his seeking of enlightenment and finally becoming the Buddha. Kavimani Desigavinayagam Pillai follows these main details in his Tamil Translation, "Asia Jothi".

Kavimani divinizes Siddhartha by calling him an avatar or an incarnation of God. This is not found in the English version. In Edwin Arnold's poem, Siddhartha is an ordinary mortal who becomes sick of princely pleasures on seeing the sufferings of the people around him. Kavimani makes some additions in his translation. He takes pain to describe the charms of Siddhartha's wife, Maya. He closely describes the harrowing sights such as an old man, a sick man and a deadbody which transform Siddhartha. Edwin Arnold also touches these things but does not invest them with such great significance as Kavimani does.

In conformity with the Indian ethos, Kavimani introduces many supernatural touches into the translation. He talks of Maya hearing whisperings which are premonitions of Siddhartha's leaving the palace. Kavimani's translation is not a word-word translation. He takes liberties with the original by making such changes as suit to Indian culture.

A.K RAMANUJAN'S TRANSLATION OF SANGAM POEMS

Sangam poetry is divisible into 'Aham' poems and 'puram' poems. Aham poetry deals with love, marriage and complications arising out of pre-marital and post-marital man-woman relationships. Puram poetry deals with kings, the duties of an ideal king, the clash between kings, the king's relationship with his subject, etc. A.K Ramanujan translated many Aham and puram poems of the Sangam age under the title, Poems of Love and War.

In his essays and prefaces, Ramanujam draws attention to the difficulties in translating poems especially classical poems from Tamil into English. Ramanujam thinks that metaphrase is unrealizable as well as undesirable. It is difficult to transfer syntax, structure, design and shape from one language to another. He recommends translating a text 'phrase by phrase' to articulate the whole poem. Ramanujam carefully uses 'Ullurai Uvamam' or implied inset. This is clear in his translation of a Kurntokai poem about the mysterious union of lovers as follows:

"What could my mother be

to yours? What kin my father is

to yours anyway? And how did you and I meet ever?

But in love

Out hearts have mingled

Like red earth and pouring rain." (Kurntokai 40)

The comparison which is functional and central to the poem occurs at the very end.

POET SUBRAMANIA BHARATI'S TRANSLATION

Subramania Bharathi was an esteemed Tamil poet. He wrote many poems in support of the Gandhian struggle for the independence of India. Bharathi was famous for his translation of foreign books and making them available to Indian readers. Bharathiyar's manjor translations are *Srimath Bhagavad Gita*, *Patanjali Yoga Sutra*, The Poetic works of Poetic Rishis, The short stories of Tagore, Tagore's *Panja Vyasankal*, *Nattukulvi*, *Jatiya Gitam*, *Karpanaiyur*, *Kadal*(Translated work of Shri Aurobindo's poems, *Agni* and other poems.

Subramania Bharathi avoided word-for-word and sentence-by-sentence translation. He practiced transferring the essence of the original. He made all his translations in a simple language. In his translations, he gave explanations of technical terms whenever necessary. For example, in his translation of the *Rig Veda*, which he entitled as *Veda Rishikalin Kavitai*, he gave foot-notes explaining terms in the translation. Bharati used only prose in his translations of *Pathanjali Yoga Sutra* and *Bhagavad Gita*. He used plenty of Sanskrit terms also in his translation. Shakespeare borrowed stories from famous Greek and Latin classics. They had been translated into English and read

TAMIL TRANSLATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S COMEDIES

Shakespeare borrowed stories from famous Greek and Latin classics. North's translation of Plutarch's Lives supplied many stories for Shakespeare's Roman plays. They had been translated into English by Shakespeare and made them available for readers.

Shakespeare has been very popular among Tamil readers ever since English was introduced in schools and colleges in the nineteenth century. Shakespeare's works were translated into Tamil. The first Shakespeare play to be translated into Tamil was *The Merchant of Venice*. It was translated by Venugopala Charryar in 1874. It does not have the elegance of the original. This was followed by Narayanasamy Aiyer's prose rendering entitled *Venice Vanikan Katal*. It is in five chapters. Another Shakespeare comedy that attracted Tamil translators was *A mid-summer Night's Dream*. It was rendered as *Naduvener Kanavu* by S. Narayanasamy Iyer in 1893. This translation contains critical and explanatory notes.

Much Ado About Nothing was translated as *Onrumilla Amali* by Ganesamurti in 1969. This is a literal translation. It was hard for translator to put into transferring the humour and puns of the original. Another popular translation was that of As You Like It. Muthiah Mudaliar translated it as *Raja Rajeswari*. It was an adaptation. It was flexible enough to suit Tamil culture. Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar adapted it as *Virumpia Vitame*. Somasundaram translated it as *Ennia Enniangu*. *Twelfth Night* was translated as *Ambujavalli* by Saila. *The Tempest* was translated by Viswanatha Pillai as *Pirasanda Marutham*. All these translations are adaptations. The characters and the situations are changed in such a way as to suit Tamil culture.

TAMIL TRANSLATIONS OF SHAKESPEARE'S TRAGEDIES

The translations of the tragedies are also broad adaptations. Julius Caesar was translated as Julius Caesar in Tamil by Narayanasami Naidu who worked as Professor of Tamil in Virudhunager for many years. It contains many references to parallel situations in Silappathikaram and Purananuru. Hamlet was translated as *Ama-ladityan* by Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar. It has a profusion of Sanskrit words. Othello was translated as *Yuta Locan*. V.R. Chettiar translated it as *Virumbia Vanname*. Macbeth was rendered as *Megapathi* by Pammal P. Sambhanda Mudaliar. King Lear was translated as *Lear Arasan* by S. Maharajan. This is viewed as the best translation in Tamil.

The translations of Shakespeare's tragedies are also, like those of the comedies, free adaptations. Both the characters and the situations harmonize with Tamil culture. The obscene passages in the original are either removed or considerably softened so as not to shock the conservative-minded Tamil readers. There is a considerable mixture of Sanskrit Tamil words in these translations for giving them a touch of moral elevation. Unfamiliar allusions in Shakespeare's plays are explained in footnotes by Vaduvor Duraisamy Lyengar. But they were translated into Tamil by Pammal Sambanda Mudaliar. For example, in *The Merchant of Venice*, Hercules is changed to Beema, Troilus and Cressida to Nala and Damayanti. The characters Medea and Jason are changed to Sakuntala and Dushyanta.

CONTEMPORARY TRANSLATORS

On earlier days, the translator's name was not even mentioned in any book. But today, it's significantly displayed together with the author's name on the cover. Even independent publishers such as Niyogi Books are now looking at translations. On the occasion of 13th anniversary, Niyogi Books launched its Thornbird imprint, which looks into translations. Specifically, it offers writings range from Rabindranath Tagore to contemporary authors like A Sethu Madhavan.

Works of creative writers like Bankim Chandra Chatterjee, Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay, Munshi Premchand, Subramanian Bharati and Saadat Hasan Manto reached many readers only through translations. There are other works of translation that have been very successful. Vivek Shanbhag's *Ghachar Ghochar*, translated from Kannada to English in 2016 by Srinath Perur. It has been hailed by literary critics in the UK and US as the "great Indian novel".

Kiran Nagarkar, often described as one of the most powerful post-colonial writers, is the author of acclaimed novels like *Cuckold*, *Ravan* and *Eddie*. He wrote his first book *Saat Sakkam Trechalis* in Marathi in 1974. It was later translated into English as *Seven Sixes Are Forty Three* and published by Katha in 2003.

Rita Kothari won Vani Foundation Distinguished Translator Award in 2018 at the Jaipur Literature Festival (JLF). It was two decades of her hard work that had finally paid off. Expressing her gratitude, Kothari said, "In my days, doing a PhD in translation was a big thing. I was the only student who was pursuing translation from Hindi to English. Now that I have got an award, it explains that we are finally getting some recognition."

Perumal Murugan, an award-winning Tamil writer, who remained unknown to the larger Indian readers. Juggernaut Books translated a few of his short stories. Today, Murugan is as widely known author in English in his native state. Jayanthasri Balakrishnan was able to bring an updated translated version of Tamil traditional classical work *kuruntokai* in English. She also translated Mahakavi Subramania Bharathi's poem, *Bharatha Desam* in English.

LIMITATIONS OF TRANSLATION

Translation has many limitations. There is much dissimilarity in the use of words between the source language and the target language. It is very difficult to find exact equivalents between the two languages. Sometimes the cultures of the two languages are entirely different. Translating poems, rhyme to rhyme of the source language cannot transfer to the target language. The historical and mythological allusions in a poem cannot be literally translated into the target language. The genre of the source text cannot be maintained in the target language. For example, the thoughts and images packed in the couplets of *Thirukkural* are hard to be compressed into a similar mould in another language. Philosophical concepts are also difficult to translate. Hard-hitting advertisements and quotations are difficult to translate with all their original verse and vigor.

CONCLUSION

Translation has proved very useful because famous books in one language are made available to the readers belonging to other languages. If there is no translation, there would not have any inter-communication among speakers of different languages. Translation ideas have flown from one cultural group to other cultural groups. Cultural fusion is possible only because of Translation. Westernization took place in India and many other eastern countries because of books in English were translated and read by people in these countries. Originally *the Bible* was available only in Greek and Latin. King James appointed forty-seven scholars in 1607 to translate into English. It took the scholars four years to finish the task. *The Bhagvad Gita* and *Vedas* also have been translated into English.

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