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## **Cultural Ideologies: Major Hindrance for Translation**

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*'Translation is the wandering existence of a text in a perpetual exile'*

*(J. Hillis Miller)*

## **Introduction:**

'Translation' is derived from the Latin term '*translatus*'. The prefix 'tran' means passing something, while the stem 'slate' means cover. The generic term translation has several implications such as alteration, change, conversion, interpretation, paraphrase, rendering, rephrasing, rewording, transcription, transformation and transliteration. While the specific meanings of the word are: translating, rephrasing, interpretation, rendering, decoding etc.

Word to word denotative translation is easier in comparison to a translation from one language to the other keeping all its context-tone, effect, theme, value, irony, satire, punch etc. as they are. Literature exemplifies culture and culture transcends all other interest of any social class. Literature is experienced in terms of the belief and value of the society. Literature could be the link between the two societies, cultures, countries or religions. Though the literature of different regions/ countries portrait in different languages. But the bias of languages could be removed through translation.

There was a time when literary translation was considered as a secondary activity; less creative and more mechanical. Even critics and readers response were seriously not worthy. But during the recent decades the literary translation has been drawing great public and academic interest. One great reason may be the globalization. In the global village, age of technology translation and the role of translation has become the essential part of communication as well as of literary work.

The literature of every region is highly affected by the culture that reflects in it and is the same case with Gujarati literature. Atom Stories are the typical literature form in Gujarati this is quite different from Anecdote and short stories. It is very short stories with a striking end, which is not complete and clear also. So, I would like to work on translation and the problems related to the process.



In this paper, I have discussed the issues and challenges faced by the researcher while going through the process translation of selected Gujarati Atom Stories. It also discusses different problem areas and the problems faced by the researcher. It also points out the untranslatability of different terms related to the culture, religion, kinship, etc.

## **Problems Of Translation:**

Translation very first is transference of meaning from the Source Language to the Target Language. But what matters is not a translation of words from SL to TL, for exact equivalence of words of the former is hard to get in the latter. Translation is both linguistic and culture activity and it is concerned with communication of meaning. It is not merely lexical equivalent of source language to the target language but much more.

The translator faces many problems while rendering a text from the source language to the target language. His task is more difficult than a creative writer for the latter thinks and writes in one language while the former has to make a tight-rope walking between two languages. In this paper an attempt has been made to outline the problems faced by translations in general and difficulties involved in the process of translation – particularly of jokes, humorous statements, poetry, drama and fiction. Culture and culture-words create a good deal of problems in translation.

The translator has to make a balance between maintaining close fidelity to the original and utter freedom from it. Sri Aurobindo is in favour of taking liberty with the original. He states that “a translator is not necessarily bound to the original he chooses; he can make his own poem out of it, if he likes, and that is what is generally done”. (Taken from the Magazine Kumar:65).

Translation is neither “transliteration” nor “transcreation” and it has to guard against the danger of word for word literal translation as well as taking too much liberty. In the name of creation in the light of recent literary criticism which holds indeterminacy of meaning as its central concept, the art of translation has become increasingly and a signified and again a signified is also a signifier then which meaning should one take in translation? Should one take the signification of a word or its value into consideration for translation?



According to Catford “The central problem of translation-practice is that of finding TL translation equivalents. A central task of translation theory is that of defining the nature and conditions of translation equivalence.”

M.P. Pande also states that “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”

According to Meenakshi Mukherjee “the act of translation is voluntary, that is the material has been chosen by the translator himself and the prime mover is a compelling desire to recreate”. PramodTelgeri has presented his comment that “language in social communication always operates at different stylistic levels, involving “infra-culture divergence of nuances”. Any translation process is faced with the most crucial problem of the source language literature into the Target language translation.

A translator has to be conscious mainly about two dimensions: language and culture. Understanding both these aspects is very essential to any translation. ‘Learning’ a culture is perhaps more difficult than learning a language. What is required of a translator is not merely the knowledge of SL and TL, but also through association and understanding of source and target culture.

Language is largely culture oriented and therefore, translators face the problems of translating certain culture-based words into another language with a different culture. Colloquial expression, culture-words, slangs, proverbs are difficult to translate for there is one to one correspondence between one culture and another or one language to another. Equivalence of words in two or more languages is hard to come by. Hence, the difficulty arises in finding equivalent swear words in another language. Socio-culture matrix plays a vital role in checking the nuances of the words in both languages – Source Language and Target Language [SL and TL].

Cultural words create problems, as the impact of them gets lost in the process of translation. For example, the simple word ‘you’ in English has three corresponding words in most of the Indian languages including Gujarati. In Gujarati it means, ‘*tu*’, ‘*tame*’, in Hindi it means ‘*tum*’, ‘*tu*’, and ‘*aap*’ depending upon the relationship with the person to whom the speaker addresses. English words like ‘cousin’, ‘uncle’, ‘aunt’ have a number of corresponding words in Indian languages becomes ambiguous. In languages uncle means



father's brother/ cousin/ brother-in-law or mother's brother/ cousin/ brother-in-law. In English we have no equivalent terms for these words. To translate these words is a Herculean task.

In English the sentence pattern is SVO (subject, verb, and object) but most of the Indian languages have SOV (subject, object, and verb) pattern. And moreover, when we use simple present tense in English, in Indian languages we use present progressive tense. An enormous problem for the translator, while doing literal translation is the typical expressions, rhyming words and homonyms of Indian languages create problems for the translators.

'To translate is to change into another language, retaining as much of the sense as one can' says A.H. Smith. But retaining the sense alone is not enough. We have to maintain the semantic compatibility along with grammaticality.

### **Problems of Untranslatability:**

Translator faces many problems of translatability like equivalence of lexical item of kinship term, household object, cultural, religious, building structure, food, clothes etc., Syntax sentence pattern, Phonological, cultural items, tenses, indirect speech etc.

### **Kinship Terms:**

There are varieties of kinship words are used in the Atom Stories taken for the study. Kinship terms are the key portion of any social system. Although all the languages have kinship terms but it may not able to present the exact equivalence between any two cultures/ system/ language involved in the process of translation. As English and Gujarati belongs to the different cultures; translator finds difficulty in finding the exact kinship terms. Here translator may find lack of many kinship terms in comparison of Gujarati. In Gujarati many kinship words were based on the respect, anger, social division of classes etc. for each and every relation has one or another term and not a single term used for more than one relation.

For some of the Gujarati kinship terms there are no available corresponding terms in English. Translator cannot use even the synonyms. For example, the term *foi* taken from the story 'co-sufferers' simply means aunt. But in the western culture 'aunt' is a common word for both maternal and paternal relations. Whereas



in our culture it has a specific connotation i.e Father's sister. To add to the complication the term 'foiba' with suffix 'ba' is used. The suffix makes the term an honorific address which is not possible in English.

In the stories 'Key', 'Distance'. 'co-sufferers' and 'The Difference' terms *Bapa*, *Bapuji*, *Bapu*, *Baap*, *papa*, *pappa*, *daddy* and *Pita* terms are used. In English all these terms mean Father. There are some more terms related to father are daddy or dad and papa. In Gujarati the term 'Bapuji' and 'Bapu' refer not only to our biological parent or father but it is used to give a degree of respect to the main male member of the family. Further on it is also used by daughter -in-law to address the father-in-law. The 'Bapu' term is also used for elders in the village. It also has community specification. The Rajputs of Gujarat are addressed as 'bapu' too.

Another kinship term which is used in the story 'Blemish' is *Vyvai*. *Vyvai* term is used for the husband's and wife's parents and relatives. In English the suitable term or synonym is not found.

In the stories 'co-sufferers' and 'Photo' the name of the central character, it seems is actually Pintu and Nita but mother addressed as *Pintuda* and *Nitadi*. In the story 'Key' Pintuda shows the love and joy of mother and the complete contrast in the story 'co-sufferers' step mother's call Nita as Nitadi which conveys irritation and anger. Changing the names to various forms that closer to the original names is very common / typical practice of many Indians in several parts of India. English reader does not have any such practice so for foreign reader it would be difficult to realize the changes of names although character remains the same.

In the story 'Dussehra' the way narrator addresses his wife as 'Shrimatiji' and it's a very typical form of address which is used in a light manner, which can be translated as my dear wife, my sweet wife, my loving wife. The suffix 'ji' is used as respect in many Indian languages.

### **Food item:**

Food items are based on geographical surroundings. In India it is also based on culture, religion, festivals and region. Indian people are very fond of having different food items on different festivals. In the story 'Dussehra' the term '*fafada*' and '*Jalebi*', *Chavanu*, *Daalvada* have no any synonym in the English language. In certain regions of Gujarat people have this combination of snacks and sweet on the day of Dussehra. 'Rotli' is a form of bread found only in Gujarat. Which is a paper-thin flat bread made out of wheat flour.



## Names of the Locations:

There are many words which connote a specific area in the village which cannot be translated effectively into the target language. Words like *Sim*, *Padar* [in the story 'Door'] in villages Padar is a place where village ends. And *Sim* is a place from where onwards the farms starts and it starts after *Padar*. *Farsan* Certain shops are named according to the products sold in them. e.g., Shop word is used in the story 'Dussehra'. The word *Farsan* means fried dry snacks with longer shelf life and also fresh snacks to be consumed in a short duration.

## Terms related to religion:

In the story 'Door' vessels are not used in the house but in the specifically Shiva temple and especially of Shiva's temple. The terms '*kamandle*' (a brass or copper vessel shaped like a pot having a clanging handle used to carry holy water) and '*jaladhari*' (a pot made of brass or copper with a hole in the center tied above the deity of Shiva as to pour the combination of milk and water drop by drop). has no equivalent term can be found in English. The same way the term '*pitamber*' (Udhav tell me...) has its specific meaning in Hinduism. It is a kind of attire use for worshipping God by Brahmins. '*Kesher ni Adacha*' is a holy mark smeared on the forehead by only male. '*Maanata*' (Tricycle) and '*badha*' (Door) terms are also related with religion. For both the similar term vows are used here.

## Cultural terms: -

It is rightly said that translator has to get the knowledge of the culture of Source Language and Target Language. And even more difficult task for the translator is to get the knowledge of different dialects of the target language.

In Gujarati culture it is common use of the beginning numbers '*Ekado*', '*Bagado*', '*Tagado*' Etc. It is like A for apple, B for Ball, C for Cat. The title of the story is 'Bagado' which mean number two '2'. Another term for number two in Gujarati is 'bay'. But 'Bagado' is very typical way of saying and specially while teaching a child in the beginning.



## Idiomatic use of language:

To translate idioms and idiomatic use of language from source language to target language is a difficult part for the translator. There are number of idioms and idiomatic usages of language is used in the selected stories. To get the exact or the similar idiom becomes tough for the translator. To give the exact essence of the idiom translator tried to present it in descriptive way so that the story or sentence willnot lose its appeal.

In the story 'Blessings' the idiom is used is '*Aankh Aada Kaan Karva*'. There is no equivalent idiom is found in English language. It means to ignore the matter. Another idiom is '*Khuda ne pyaro thai gayo*' which simply mean to death. In the story 'Key' '*Hat Prabh Bani Gayo*' means feels sudden panic.

The idiomatic uses are '*Chad bhad sharu thai gay*' and '*AanBanavadhvalagyo*' (Shall we both...). These both idioms have quite same meanings and also related with each other. It can be translated as 'to developed discord between the members.

## Miscellaneous:

The name of the person like '*sarpanch*', '*harijan*', '*Bhangi*' Vaaghari, has no any equivalence in English language. Lower caste people are called *harijan*. Harijan word is given by Gandhiji which means People of God. The head of the village that look after the law is called *sarpanch*.

In English language phrasal words have its own space. The meanings of phrasal verbs depend on the preposition used with it. In Gujarati language there are no phrasal verbs but a word can have more than one meaning which depends on the context. For example, the word '*Fanfosu*', '*Fendavu*' and '*Fanfosi*' in the stories 'To Rummaging means...', 'Bill' and 'Hunger' all these words have translated as:

Fanfosu: To Rummage

Fendavu: to look/ peep

Fanfosi: searched

There are many words go in pairs with a special binary opposition and description in Gujarati language. To found the equivalents of these pair of words in the target language became a difficult task for the translator. These words are Desi-vedesi, Sasu-Sasara, Aakhe-Aakhi, Chapo-Chap, and Gando-Gobro etc. Few terms





already have the similar word in the English language but it is single not in pair as they were given in the source language. The term *Desi-vedesi* has no any relevant term in English language so it was presented as it is. *Chapo-chap* term would omit while translating because equivalent term is not found in the target language and omission of this term wouldn't affect the story. Though *Sasu-Sasara* term is available in English but while translating instead of Father-in-law and Mother-in-law, in- laws term becomes more suitable to the context.

Sasu-Sasara	Father-in-law and Mother-in-law
Aakhe-Aakhi	Completely
Gando-Gobro	Dirty/ very dirty

A very common game in Gujarat is "*Andhdi Khiskoli*" is translated as Hide and seeks. But it is not exact translation of the "*Andhdi Khiskoli*". This game is quite similar to the Hide and seeks so this term is placed by the translator.

There are many sentences which could not be translated word to word by translator. Many a time to translate one sentence translator takes the support of two or three sentence to convey the meaning. There are many common usages of sentences spoken in day-to-day life by Gujarati people but the translation of those sentences hardly used by the English speakers. The examples are:

*"Mari-machedi ne SansartakavirakhavanosuAarth?"*

*"Rita nu kyaynethekanepadtunohtu"*

*"Pet ma kasutaktunohtu"*

*"Bhalay no jamano je nathi"*

*"Enemohmachkodiya hoy"*

*"dodhdyainathaish"*

*"Emenamotaputra per varsipadya"*



## **Conclusion:**

Language and culture are inseparable like the body and soul of a person. Language is ruled by the culture and circumstances it is used in. A translator can justify his/her work only when s/he is well versed with the source language and target language along with their cultural ideologies and its concepts. Further s/he has to have the knowledge of history of the language, its dialects and the emotions ruling that dialect.

To maintain the essence of the word the translator many a time faces a loggerhead situation. In such situations, a translator many a times has to use a word as it is in the target language and then give a detailed description with examples or pictures in the glossary section to capture the equivalence of the word in the target language.

To justify the literary work the theories of translation are not sufficient. So along with translation theories, the theory of Transcreation should also be applied.



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