RE-STRUCTURING TRANSLATION EQUIVALENCE

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Abstract

Recently, it has been fully accepted that translation is as significant as any other branch of literature or linguistics. The critics and scholars are agreed upon the status of the translation that it cannot be inferior to creative writing. Since last three decades translation is expanding its scope with new dimensions and became able to spread in the professional areas. It is an essential part of not only literature but also trade and commerce, science and technology, education, business, politics, entertainment and advertisement, international and bilateral relations, and many others. With the rising scope of translation, many issues relating to its problems appeared on the scene in the form of old and emerging theories. Earlier the problems of translation have been discussed on the level of language only but today it is necessary to study them on different levels—stylistic, socio-cultural, mythical and symbolic, etc. Here our main concern will be literary translations. Equivalence being an old theoretical notion in translation, an attempt is made to redefine, categorize and re-structure the concept to translation equivalence (TE) in the present paper.

Keywords: equivalence, translation equivalence, linguistic equivalence, semantic equivalence, stylistic equivalence, social and cultural equivalence, mythical and symbolic equivalence.

Almost all theories of and around translation have been discussing the role and place of TE in the practice. Translation scholars like Nida and Popovic has discussed the very role of equivalence in translation and many later theories are based on the concept of equivalence. The selection and appropriation is an eminent research area in Translation Studies, hence it becomes necessary to investigate what is mean by equivalence, its relation to translation and how is it perceived in translation? Let us begin with the meaning of the word equivalence explained in various dictionaries for everyday use and general purpose: equivalence is considered equal in value, power, amount, function and meaning and in literary sense or in literature it is used for

equal or most similar or nearest in meaning and having the same or similar effect. But in translation it is more, according to Mundy, it is:

"A key concept in modern translation theory which defines the translational connection between either an entire ST or a TT or between an ST unit and a TT unit in terms of the degree of correspondence between the texts or the text units. For instance, a full degree of (referential/ **denotative**) equivalence at the word level would mean that an SL word and a TL word refer to the same (non-linguistic) object in the real world (e.g. English *apple* – German *Apfel*)…." (185).

TE can be studied on different levels—word, phrase, clause, sentence or statement, part of the text or the entire text. It is a unit of measurement of the correspondence between SL and TL material. Thus, it becomes necessary to study the role of equivalences—a very crucial aspect in translation as the process of translation is entirely depend on the various types of equivalences. Some of the equivalences are just untranslatable, e.g. social and cultural equivalences due to its lack in target culture. Here, the term equivalence has broader implications regarding its role and significance in the act of translation. Equivalences are those elements which are same or similar in amount, value, purpose, qualities, meaning or substitutable to all these elements into TL; e.g. the equivalent word for 'Anuvad' in English is 'Translation'. TE can be categorized into five types and a general theory of all inclusive equivalences is developed: linguistic equivalence (LE), semantic equivalence (SemaE), stylistic equivalence (StyE), social and cultural equivalence (SCE), and mythical and symbolic equivalence (MSE). Let's see the types in detail:

Linguistic Equivalence (LE): LEs include the elements of grammar, syntax or structure and sound system. Grammar consists of the items like word classes (noun, verb, pronoun, adjective, adverb, conjunction, interjection and exclamation), types of tenses (simple, progressive and perfect present, past and future) synthesis of words, phrases and sentences (as soon/ early/ possible, hardly, when, no sooner…than, and, if, which, that, a lot, as well as, etc.), types of sentences (simple, compound, complex, active-passive, direct-indirect, exclamatory, assertive, comparative, positive, imperative, etc.), questions (wh, tag, yes-no) and many other aspects. All these aspects have major role to play in the process of translating into TL. Grammar involves the study and analysis of the structures found in a language, e.g. as distinct from the grammar of any other language, say Marathi or Hindi. The study of grammar, in the sense of the structure of expression in a language, has a very long tradition, e.g. Sanskrit. The structure of a language depends upon its grammar, e.g. English has S+V+O+C as its general structure, its grammatical analysis is, in a sentence, first place occupied by subject and then verb, then object and then complement. But in case of Marathi place or order of a particular element is not important, for instance, subject of a sentence (in Marathi) can be placed at the beginning or end or in the middle of a sentence and same is true of object and complement. Thus:

"Linguistic untranslatability is apparent when SL sentences involve structures that do not exist in the TL. Also cultural untranslatability surfaces when it involves absence in the TL culture of a relevant situational feature for the SL text. It may also be difficult if not impossible to reconcile the demands of the two disparate geniuses of the two different languages." (Kundu 106-07).

Above is the consideration of general grammatical categories and relations to specific methods of describing the structure of phrases and sentences. The next part of the linguistic equivalence is sound effect. Sound or phonetic equivalences are just untranslatable, and in case of poetry it becomes more difficult. Every language has its own sound (phonetic) system and so to English and Marathi. There are 44 sounds in English whereas in Marathi there are 50 sounds,

hence it is difficult to find equivalent of each sound from Marathi into English or vice-versa, e.g. Marathi sounds like त, ध, ठ,ण , ढ, ळ and छ (Devnagari Script) does not exist in English sound system.

Semantic Equivalence (SemaE): In translation both meaning and context are essential to render SL material into TL. This category is derived from meaning component of translation because without interpretation or meaning translation of SL text is impossible. According to Paz, "every text is… the translation of another text." (38). In literature meaning is depend on various factors for there are many theories of how to derive meaning from a particular text or poem. Meaning has multiple facets, but in translation one has to interpret meaning of a text. SemaE is related to the meaning part of the process of translating SL text on the basis of interpretation of meaning. Words are embedded with different types of meanings e.g. general, figurative, etc. SemaE is to be understood on different levels; because literature involves more than one layer of meaning. Meaning changes with context. Pragmatic equivalence determines the contextual meaning of the utterance or written statement. Words collectively form meaning are significant elements of SemaE. We have different types of word categories like hyponymy, synonymy, antonym, polysemy, symmetry, etc. which contribute to the layers of meaning. A language often judged on its flexibility and flexibility has been exploited by creative users of the language. "Flexibility is the norm in language, rather than exception, and there are a variety of ways of describing and referring to different types of lexical flexibility." (Malmkjar 107). Flexibility causes variation in meaning. Many literary authors play with the words and meaning and the same thing becomes problematic while rendering into TL. Hence a translator has to dissect meaning out of the context and make analysis of SemaE so as to render it into the language he wants. We have to analyze different types of meanings to achieve SemaE. Linguistic and translation scholars have provided a number of types of meanings like literal meaning, logical meaning, denotative meaning, semantic meaning, positivist meaning, pragmatic meaning, intentional meaning, connotative meaning, emotive meaning, functional meaning, conceptual meaning, expressive meaning, thematic meaning, intralingual meaning, informative meaning, vocative meaning so and so forth. All these types can be broadly categorized into six types as the part of SemaE—grammatical and structural meaning, surface level meaning, implied meaning, contextual meaning, figurative meaning and ambiguity. These types prove useful tool to analyze and interpret SemaE in translation. These categories seem alike or counteract over each other but there is way here to distinguish among all types of meanings by considering them separate entities.

Stylistic Equivalence (StyE): Every author has his/ her own style of writing. In prose as well as in verse, style is a significant area of analysis. The dissection of style helps to understand various facets of a piece of writing. Most of the times poets and writers are recognized by their writing style; e.g. Shakespearean style, Miltonic style, Brownian style, so and so forth. Translating any SLT, a translator has to adopt or at least consider the style of the writer chosen. Style has an artistic function in translation. The important factors of style and stylistics are explained in detail by Leech and Short. Stylistics is a branch of linguistics and the style is an object of linguistic study. The main concern of style is the use of language. The style of an author conveys the relationship between the use of language and its artistic function; the role of linguistic patterns in conveying the particular message. According to stylistic analysis, the content or matter is not as important as why and how it is incorporated through language has to be considered more significant. The way of expression is a major part of stylistic analysis. It is a relational concept in

accordance with language and artistic function. Stylistic analysis consists with the linguistic constituents—grammar, phonology, vocabulary, figures, etc. and the repetition of any linguistic pattern (e.g. repetition of particular words or phrases) can be analyzed on the level of style. For instance, in *The White Tiger*, we read 'what a fucking joke!' many times on each major event or occasion. These constituents of language form as a whole and it functions on multilevel; thus, it becomes a bunch of various stylistic features:

"The style of a text is the totality of these patterns especially patterns which are variables, not constants. We can compare styles as the sums of several stylistic features, taking each in turn as an individual feature for comparison." (Fowler 23).

Different types of narrative techniques—first person, second person, third person—are employed by authors of prose-fiction. The narrative technique also forms an essential element of style. The narrator's point of view marks the whole text; the presentation of events and its actuality with its plot—how events are happened or the chain of events—concerned with an author's selection of narrative which helps to analyze the style of the text. Here in translation, StyE consists of the components of style of writing—grammar and vocabulary, sentence structure, figures of language, context and cohesion, and other styles (hypotactic and paratactic style) which work in combination as whole. No separate element forms a distinct; if it forms, it has to be studied under LE. StyE is an important equivalence type in translation. With the help of StyE, the suitable/ appropriate translation version is possible.

Social and Cultural Equivalence (SCE): According to Krishnaswami and others, "Language and society are so intertwined that it is impossible to understand one without the other. There is no human society that does not depend upon, is not shaped by, and does not itself shape language." (13). Human being, society, culture and language are inseparable ingredients to each-other. A person cannot be separated from all these ingredients. As wo/man is a social animal, s/he has created various types of societies on the earth. Every society is distinct (in many respects) to the other. It has its own way of living with various traditions and ethics. And it also has its own culture. In general, society and culture has been defined as a way of living of a community of the people living together. With the emergence of Cultural Studies as a distinct branch of humanities, the thought of culture embedded first in language and then in translation appeared on the scene. There are many social traditions and sometimes situations which are just untranslatable, e.g. in India there are many festivals, in fact every social or religious group has their own festivals which can only be described into TL but cannot be produced verbally as it is; take the festival of Holi. It can be described as the festival of colours in India, but the whole theme and scene is not captured in this description; because the festival has different types of conventions and shades in different parts of India and also it varies from society to society. Festivals reflect culture of a society. Many times, the social or cultural item of the SL is absent in TL, there comes untranslatability. SCEs are divided into two broad categories—restricted and non-restricted. Restricted category includes dialect, register, accent; idiolect and diglossia directly belong to language and hence linguistic elements. Non-restricted types deal with kinship, emotion terms, sex/ taboo terms, cultural figures, images, festivals, rituals, traditions, honorific terms, cultural metaphors, idioms, phrases, food and drinks, etc. which directly do not belong to linguistic variation as restricted types do. This distinction is made for understanding sake showing a clear bifurcation among various SCEs. The said categorization is not a strict one which does not include or exclude another element. It is a flexible one which can include or exclude any element referring to SCEs.

Mythical and Symbolic Equivalence (MSE): Myth is any story or plot or a piece (of writing) may be true or invented derived from the mythology and mythology is a system of hereditary stories of ancient origin which were once believed to be true by a particular cultural group and which served to explain in terms of the intentions and actions of deities and other supernatural beings. Most myths are related to social rituals—set forms and procedures in sacred ceremonies. There is great influence of Hindu myths on Indian literature, in fact the Ramayana and the Mahabharata is the base of Indian literature and so are the Greek myths and Christian myths for English literature. It is most difficult to find the exact equivalents of Hindu mythology from Greek mythology or vice-versa; the problem of mythical equivalences are engaged, such elements (stories) which cannot be rendered wholly or perfectly into TL text are to be called mythical (mythological) equivalences.

Symbol, in the broadest sense, is anything which signifies something; but in literature the term is applied only to a word or phrase that signifies an object or event. Generally, symbols are of two types: conventional (i.e. public) and personal (private), e.g. public symbols like the Cross, the Good Shepherd in Christianity, symbols often do so by exploiting widely shared associations between an object or event or action and a particular concept; for example, the general association of peacock with pride, an eagle with heroic endeavor, the rising sun with birth and the setting sun with death, climbing with effort with progress and descent with surrender with failure. Some poets and writers, however, repeatedly use symbols whose significance they largely produce on their own and this personal symbols stand a more trying problem in translating. These affiliations alter with culture, society and situation, because it is not necessary that the peacock stands for pride to an Englishman does not stand for the same to an Indian or eagle stands for heroic endeavor but in many parts of India it is considered an ill-omen.

When we translate from one mythology i.e. mythical elements into another, we find difficult to find the same elements into target mythology. No exact equivalence on the level of myth can be possible, e.g. Greek mythical elements are absent in the Hindu mythology or vice versa. Same is the case with symbols. Myths are primary and foundational or fundamental cultural material of a social group hence deeply rooted in culture and society. Myths are studied on various psychological dimensions as it directly relates to human psyche. The elements of MSE include tales, folktales, legends, archetypes and symbols, metaphor as symbol, metaphor as allegory, mythical images and mythical characters.

The above equivalence types—linguistic, semantic, stylistic, social, cultural, mythological and symbolic—are formed for theorization of the problem of equivalence. The present equivalence types are not built on very strict rules of dissection of the objects of study. It is a general categorization on the basis of various translation elements which poses the problems of translating. Though all the equivalence types are given separately, they are interconnected to one-another; e.g. grammatical and structural equivalence can be the part of LE and at the same time StyE. It can also be studied under SemaE. The difference among these categories is very thin, e.g. in LE, grammar or structure or phonology is studied separately on the level of language only whereas StyE is a combination of all elements or bunch of elements which are studied as whole instead of separate parts contributing to define the style of an author. There are many crossroads interlinked to these equivalence categorization as again, it is noted that there is an analogy between SCEs and MSEs with rituals, festivals, cultural figures and images, cultural metaphors, etc. But this analogy can be studied in combination as well as separately.

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