CHAPTER VI

Summing Up
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Any attempt to formulate a translation theory with particular reference to a text, based on the study of its translation problems, is bound to end up suggesting appropriate translation methods. The present study has so far analysed the various problems a translator is confronted with while translating the ancient Tamil literary classics, using as a case study the Kurundokai anthology as source text and the three different translations of the poems into English as target texts. From the problems discussed one can relive the multiplicity of problems and the varied and various approaches the translators had in tackling them. To form a common base of approach for such problems, an overall view of the problems and a summing up of the discussions is furnished below.

From the problems discussed under three broad divisions viz. culture, literary devices and stylistic features one can notice that untranslatability occurs mainly in problems relating to culture. The problem discussed with reference to "kālavu" in the translation of poem 47 is an example. Such concepts which are totally alien to the target language society need a creation of an equivalence in the target language and one equivalence may be adopted by all translators while referring to
that concept. Thus the equivalence in the target language will get fixed for the corresponding word in the source language. So in arriving at it all possibilities to get the closest natural equivalent should be examined. This has to start with the reconstruction of the problem. The problem is to be studied simultaneously in connection with the two languages concerned which will identify the components of the word that elude the equivalence in the target language. Broeck's discussion on translation description provides a starting point in this process. One should take into account "the multiple relations between the source text and the system as similar and other texts originating from the same language, culture and tradition;..."¹ Since the attempts are to fix an equivalent to be used at all times, the occurrence and the usage of the word in other contemporary texts of the source language need to be assessed so that the equivalence in the target language carries the entire meaning of the word. To revert to the example quoted above, the word "kaLavu" is a concept that is found in all love poems of ancient Tamil literary classics and carry the same connotation; hence in fixing an equivalence one has to analyse all occurrences, also identify the semantic components of the word and then the search for the equivalence must end up in locating an equivalence in the target language that would satisfy the concept in all its occurrences in the source text.

The discussion on the problems relating to culture further shows that the names of certain features of flora also pose problems of untranslatability. There may be corresponding equivalent features of flora in the target audience area too. But the significance of its usage in the source poem cannot be indicated by just employing the corresponding name of the plant or tree in the target language. As an example, the discussion took up the word "paaci" which occurs in poem 399 to reveal the inadequacy of a simple substitution. From this discussion emerges the need for adapting the following steps to tackle such problems:

a) preparing an exhaustive list of flora in the source language matching names with their equivalences in the target language if available.

b) using either the transliteration or the corresponding equivalent in the target language, and

c) pointing out the significance of the usage in the end-notes, indicating any special connotation it carries.

Care should be taken to avoid using corresponding equivalences in the target language if the equivalents have already acquired some significance which may be totally different from the significance its corresponding form in the source language carries. The use of the transliterated form of "punnai" instead of the corresponding plant name "laurel" in poem 123 of Kukundokai was discussed as an example. Such occurrences also need to be listed, discussed and decided upon.
There are also occurrences where terms relating to culture convey more than their semantic components, with the equivalents offered by the translators fulfilling only one aspect. The examples discussed such as viz. "unkaN", "pari" and "maTalu:rtai" etc., do pose such problems. These need to be either substituted with descriptive phrases in the target text or explained in the endnotes. Corresponding equivalents to these terms may be found but the cultural similarity is lacking in such pairs of terms. Hence a thorough examination of such features in all the poems and their corresponding features in the target language and their use in both the environments have to be made at the outset so that an effective translation may result.

The study of the literary devices and the problems in translating them focusses on the question of deciding the format and content of the source text itself. There exists the problem of including or not including the colophons as part of the poems and the study reveals that they form an integral part of the poems and have an intrinsic function. Hence they need to be translated along with the lines of the poem and presented in the same form as in the source text. Yet another formal feature relates to the tripartite division in the structure of these poems. The investigation of the problems shows that a change in the presentation of this arrangement is justified only in certain
contexts. Hence there cannot be any rule-of-thumb procedure regarding the retention or otherwise of reproducing the same form and the translator has to decide it according to the context and the semantic output it produces in translation.

With reference to the literary devices the study shows that they are unique to the source language and hence need to be interpreted taking into consideration the entire anthology for arriving at corresponding and effective equivalences. Often they need to be substituted with additional lines in the target text as literary devices like similes and metaphors convey different layers of meaning and the use of a single simile or metaphor in the target language may be inadequate to cover the entire range of signification in the source language. Moreover the emotive response of the source reader to the poem while encountering the literary devices is something that is difficult to be brought out in the target text since the target audience is not accustomed to the type of experience evoked by such literary devices. Hence for a proper response the translation is to be augmented with end-notes on the significance of the use of the particular literary device. The attempt by the investigator of this dissertation at the end of the relevant chapter was yet another way of tackling this problem.
The analysis of the problems relating to stylistic features also reveals almost the same types of problems discussed in the earlier chapters. This part of the study shows that the semantic components of a word differ from one anthology to another. The usage of the word "aHangku" and the corresponding equivalence in the target text discussed illustrates the difference. A problem that is observed and tackled by the translators themselves is in the use of the gender equivalents which in the source language have semantic significance. But a serious problem noted in the analysis is the influence of the change of meaning of certain words over the course of centuries which have led the translators towards providing inappropriate equivalents. Since the text under translation is an ancient one, with passages of time, some of the words have acquired new meanings different from the meaning that was current at the time of composition of the source text. To avoid the problem the translator needs a thorough knowledge of the words through familiarity with the works of that age and an etymological expertise regarding words that have undergone a change in their semantic components. For this purpose the translators could profitably adopt the method of componential analysis of words which is strongly recommended by Nida.
The foregoing summing up indicates that a centralised effort is needed for providing certain guidelines in identifying equivalences while translating the ancient Tamil literary classics. Out of this effort should emerge a glossary of words, phrases, similes, and metaphors which find a unique place in the literature of the source text with their corresponding equivalences in the target language. This will facilitate the employment of right equivalences in translation and this will enable the translator to devote himself to aesthetic aspects and not be constrained by linguistic hurdles in locating appropriate equivalences and this will in turn lead to a greater translation output, both quantitatively and qualitatively. Such a centralised task could be carried out in institutions like the International Institute for Tamil Studies, Madras or the Tamil University, Thanjavur, by a team comprising scholars of ancient Tamil literary classics, scholars of the target language concerned and specialists in translation science. When completed such glossaries will also become authenticated textual guides for the translators. Additional problems too may be identified, studied and analysed by such a team. As each period has to create its own translations of the texts, to accommodate changed modes of expression in the target language (as in the case of periodic translations of the Bible, supplementing earlier versions which have become archaic or even obsolete,) each period has to find
solutions for the problems it faces. The steps that are taken towards solving the problems form one side of the translation process viz. scholarship. The other side of the process viz. poetry remains to be taken care of only by poets who translate or transcreate and make the literary experiences of one section of humanity come alive in another.

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