CHAPTER II
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Types of Translation

Language, being a vehicle of sending or receiving information, facilitates human communication. There are various kinds of translation and each has its own place in the manifold ways of human communication. In fact, we are translating all the time, especially when we try to transform our thoughts and mental images into words. Often, we seem to succeed in the act and our words fully convey what we want to communicate. At other times, we fail to put across our intended message.

When oral communication throws out such a challenge then ‘translation’ into different languages within drawn margins and peripheries becomes an overwhelming issue. Translation activity, in its earliest manifestation, has always been governed by perspicuous theories. Traditional translation theorists affirmed the requirement for an intimate relationship between the theory and the practice of translation. These theorists divided translation, basically, into two broad categories: literary and non-literary. In literary translation (i.e. the translation of literature) the translators were generally concerned with ‘sense’ and ‘style’ whereas in non-literary translation, stress was laid on ‘sense’ only. As far as translation activity is concerned, both literary and non-literary texts get translated. If the difference lies in the approach; then the translation of literary text naturally involves a more complicated activity. In their eagerness to cast the SL text into a piece of literature in the TL, the translators move along predefined aesthetic lines.
with emphasis on semiotics, syntax, rhetoric and socio-cultural matrix. G.E. Wellworth points out that in a literary translation, "what is required is the recreation of a situation of cohesive semantic block in the new language in terms of the cultural setting of that language." (143) On the other hand, the translation of non-literary text is governed by a fairly simpler activity of change in language use. It is never challenged on the ground of 'fidelity' or 'faithfulness'. Since meaning is the main goal in translation, there is not much difficulty in non-literary translation. I wish to cite here two examples (one each from 'literary' and 'non-literary' type) and juxtapose them in a way that would clearly highlight the linguistic limitation of literary translation activity.

Example 1 (non-literary translation)

Parts of a Letter – A letter consists of six different parts.

i) The Heading or writer’s address and date.
ii) The Salutation
iii) The Body of the letter
iv) The Ending
v) The Signature
vi) The Superscription or the addressee’s name and address on the envelope.

(An excerpt from ‘How to write a letter’)

Hindi translation

Patra ke bhag – patra ke chey bhag hote hein.

i) Shirshak ya patra likhnevale vyakti ka pata aur tithi
ii) Abhivadan
iii) Patra ka pradhan ang
iv) Anta
v) Hastakshar
vi) Lifafe par patra panewale vyakti ka naam aur pata

Translatability is the apotheosis of non-literary textual materials. Only the translation of literary texts poses a plethora of challenging situation.

Example 2 (literary translation)
Taar pare, bhider dine statione gadi asile dor khola paile third classer jatira potla – potli loyia pagoler moto jebhabe lokjonke dolito pishto koriya jhapaiya ashite thake, temni mar-mar shobdo koriya tahar mogojer modhye dushchinta rashi hahu koriya dhukite lagilo. Mone podilo, goto batsar tahar dwitiya kanyar subho bibahe bowbazaarer aei dwital bhadasantuku bandha podiyache ebong taharo choye maser sood baki.

(Sarat Chandra Chattopadhyay's: Parinita, Prothom Pariched)

Thereafter, just like all hell breaks loose as the train arrives on a busy day, and the swarming passengers of a third class compartment recklessly surge ahead trampling and pounding others, a similar coalesce of anxieties let loose a reckless assault on his mind. He remembered how this two storey homestead in Bow Bazaar had been mortgaged during the marriage of his second daughter, and even then, six months interest was in arrears.

(Translated into English by me, 1992)
In the former case translation did not pose any difficulty. While translating Sarat Chandra’s immortal work, I was filled with diffidence and words like ‘potlapotli’, ‘dushchinta rashi’, ‘huhu koriya’, ‘bhodrasantuku’ etc. generated a fear of non-translation of evidentiary visual information in front of me. There were other such countless words like- ‘annapurna’, ‘kaliyug’, ‘lajja’, ‘abhiman’ etc. that had chilled me to the marrow. That is the crux of the matter, there is normally no full equivalence through translation. Even apparent synonymous words do not serve as equivalents and often a translator has to combine different code units to completely interpret the meaning of a single excerpt.

Apart from literary and non-literary translations, there are a number of other types of translation. Bijay Kumar Das further elucidates:

...a number of other types of translation such as literal translation (which aims to be basically “word for word”), Phonological translation [which is “restricted” translation where the phonology of the (SL) text is substituted by an equivalent phonology in the (TL) text], Graphological translation [which is “restricted” translation where the graphology of the (SL) text is substituted by equivalent graphology in the (TL) text], and Grammatical translation (which is “restricted” translation where the grammar of the source language text is substituted by
equivalent grammar in the target language but the lexis is not replaced). (27)

Acting on the premise, translators in the recent years have extended the significance of translation by foraying into different kinds of translation, such as "phonological", "graphological", "total", "partial", "restricted", "transliteration" etc.

As mentioned earlier, in the past there was a great contention among linguists on the nature of translation. It developed right from the Roman times with Horace and Cicero, who made a distinction between 'word for word' and 'sense for sense' translation. Some even voted for transmission of sense across diverse tongues. Though close study reveals that translation activity should hinge on some viable theory at the same time it must also emphasise on translation of meanings rather than of words.

With a view to tackle the problems confronted by a translator, John Dryden divided translation into three categories. In his preface to Ovid’s Epistles (1680) he formulates them into Metaphrase (word by word), Paraphrase (sense-for-sense) and Imitation (where the translator can abandon the text). The three divisions with its implication and magnitude has been cited and discussed in the ‘Introductory Chapter’.

The entire translation process has become gradually more systematic and self-conscious. Thus, it has become imperative on the part of a translator to bear
in mind the explicitly codified rules and maxims of literature. While translating a literary text, a translator must aim at metaphorical breakdown of the textual material. As there is a variety of approach, it calls for a close reading. In order to create an appropriate rhetoric in the TL text and retain the 'feel' of the original in the TL text, the translator must first explore the cultural grounding of rhetoric in the SL text. Literature is a skilled subject and a paranoid misreading of the SL text leads to mistranslation or translation failure. That is exactly why Chandra Sekhar Patil terms literary translation 'a transplantation of experience' (170) from one linguistic plain to another. Literary translation is a continuous process of epistemic shift and is rightly considered as a method of 'avant-garde writing'.

A cursory look at the non-literary translation practice reveals the fact that it basically takes place within the realms of Economics, Social-Science, Law, Physical Science, Journalism etc. In these disciplines a translator is not overly dependent on the framework of language (rhetoric) as in these subjects a concrete question has a concrete answer. Here we are concerned with the 'meanings' (often synonyms) and with the style. In non-literary translation fact prevails over form. Thus, while translating scientific, political or economic theories from SL to TL the translator is concerned only with the 'faithful' transference of meaning. The same is applicable in the case of different articles, office memorandums, reviews etc.

Literary translation from SL to TL is fraught with unforeseen challenges at every step. Das claims that translation activity must be studied both as a product
and a process from the semiotic point of view. In his seminal article *On Linguistic Aspects of Translation*, Roman Jakobson devised three types of translation. They are:

i) Intralingual translation or rewording (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of other signs in the same language).

ii) Interlingual translation or translation proper (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of some other language).

iii) Intersemiotic translation or transmutation (an interpretation of verbal signs by means of signs of nonverbal sign systems).

(qtd. in Pandit, 57)

B. K. Das cites some brilliant examples to elucidate the substantive difference in the following words:

The Intralingual translation of a word uses either another more or less synonymous word or resorts to a circumlocution (or Periphrasis). And yet synonymy, as a rule, is not complete equivalence: for example, ‘every celibate is a bachelor, but not every bachelor is a celibate’. A word or an idiomatic phrase-word, briefly a code-unit of the highest level, may be fully interpreted only by means of an equivalent combination of code-units; i.e., a message referring to this code-unit: ‘every bachelor is an unmarried man, and every unmarried man is a bachelor,’ or ‘every celibate is
bound not to marry, and everyone who is bound not to marry is a celibate'. (29)

Having established the three different modes of translation, Jakobson draws our attention to the central problem in all types: the problem of finding complete equivalent terminology in TL version. The underlying truth is: all form of art is 'technically untranslatable' From the above discussion it becomes crystal clear that any work of translation, however accurate it may be, fails to provide exact equivalence. Therefore, the central problem faced by the translator is to establish equivalence between SL and TL text. In order to tide over this insurmountable problem, a translator must acknowledge the untranslatability of the SL text in the TL on the linguistic level and lack of a similar cultural custom in the TL. It has been aptly pointed out that all types of translation involve, viz., 'loss of meaning', 'addition of meaning' and finally 'skewing of meaning'. Total translation is nothing but myth and a translator assumes the role of a 'decoder' of the SL text and 'recoder' of the TL text and between these two figures the semantic/cultural gap which the translator must try to overcome.

The entire process of translation can be outlined in the following manner:
Apart from literary and non-literary translation, there are some other forms like 'total' and 'restricted translation' or 'full and partial' translation. J.C.Catford classified translation on the basis of extent, level and ranks. The 'destination' between 'full' and 'partial' translation is judged in terms of extent. In a 'full' translation, the entire body of SL text is 'replaced' by the material in the TL text. J.C.Catford writes:

In a partial translation, some part or parts of the SL text are left untranslated: they are simply transferred to and incorporated in the TL text. In literary translation it is not uncommon for some SL lexical items to be treated in this way, either because they are regarded as 'untranslatable' or for the deliberate purpose of introducing 'local colour' into the TL text. This process of transferring SL lexical items into a TL text is more complex than appears at first sight, and it is only approximately true to say that they remain untranslated. The distinction between 'full' and 'partial' translation is not technical. (21)
Catford distinguishes between ‘total’ and ‘restricted’ translation which is concerned with the levels of language in translation. He defines ‘total’ translation as “replacement of SL grammar and lexis by equivalent TL grammar and lexis with consequential replacement of SL phonology/graphology by (non-equivalent) TL phonology/graphology”. (22) A restricted translation may be defined as the replacement of SL textual material by equivalent TL textual material at one level only.

Catford goes on to suggest another type of equivalence in translation which connects the rank in a grammatical hierarchy with the translation formed. This is termed as ‘rank-bound’ translation. In ‘rank-bound’ translation, the selection of TL equivalents is made at the same rank. B.K.Das rightly points out that:

A ‘word-rank-bound’ translation is necessary for showing the differences between the source language and the target language in the construction of higher-rank units. The rank-bound translation is often considered as bad translation, because it uses TL equivalents which are not proper to their position in the text of the target language, and they are not justified by the inter-changeability of the texts in the source language and the target language in one and the same position (31).
The 'unbounded' translation is often considered as 'free' translation. In case of 'free-translation', equivalents shift up and down the rank scale in an unrestricted manner. 'Word-for-word' translation can also be termed as 'rank-bound translation'. The position of 'literal' translation is in between 'rank-bound' and 'free translation'. The chief aim of 'literal' translation is to be lexically 'word-for-word'.

As we delve deep into the various types, we come across some other types of translation like 'phonological', 'graphological' and 'transliteration'. 'Phonological' translation is otherwise known as 'restricted' translation where the phonology of the source language text is substituted by equivalent phonology in the target language. It is so because in case of phonological translation the grammar and lexis of the SL text remain same except 'the random grammatical or lexical deviations'. B.K.Das observes:

Phonological translation may change the rank or reorganise the aspects of substance into the target language's formal units. In normal total translation the phonology of the source language is not translated, but only replaced by whatever phonology of the target language is needed when selecting the grammatical and lexical items of the target language. (32)

However, in certain cases, the translator tries to recreate some characteristic features of the phonology of the SL text in the TL text. This again has an impact on the grammatical and lexical translation as translation equivalents
at these levels are selected by the necessity for their phonological exponents to be translation equivalents of phonological items in the SL. This takes place typically in film-dubbing. Catford points out that in case of dubbing “the translator may select lexical translation equivalents in the TL which have labials, for example, in their phonological forms, to match labials in the phonological forms of the SL items”. (61) While translating poetry also, some endeavours may be made to carefully pick equivalents in the TL text to rhyme with the SL text items; the prerequisite being some degree of phonological translation.

Graphological translation is ‘restricted translation’ where the graphology of the source language text is substituted by equivalent graphology in the target language. It is more difficult to analyse graphological translation than phonological translation as we lack systematic theory of graphic substance. An approximate graphological translation is normally performed by typographers who want to lend an ‘exotic’ flavour to the TL texts. The equivalence hinges on the relationship to the same graphic substance. Catford cites a beautiful example and states that “books about Islam or the Arab world sometimes have their titles written in some what Arabic looking script – a graphological semi translation. Whereas the straight lines and sharp angles of Armenian script, have little substance in common with the curves and circles of Burmese, or some South Indian scripts”. (64-65)

Transliteration is quite different from graphological translation. Catford rightly points out that “In transliteration, SL graphological units are replaced by TL graphological units; but these are not translation equivalents, since they are not
Transliteration may be defined as the process by which one reads and pronounces the words and sentences of one language by taking help of the letters and special symbols of another language. The chief aim of transliteration is to provide an alternate means of reading text using a different script. It is meant to preserve the sounds. In practice, the same word may be written differently in different scripts. It is due to the conventionally (local) employed set of rules for pronouncing the letters / 'aksharas ' or symbols.

B.K. Das points out that "the transliteration rules specify transliteration – equivalents in two ways: first, in not necessarily being relatable to the same graphic substance as the SL letters; secondly, in being (in good transliteration) in one-to-one correspondence with SL letters or other units". (33)

According to Catford, the process of transliteration system set up involves three steps. They are:

i) SL letters are replaced by SL phonological units; this is the normal literate process of converting from the written to the spoken medium.

ii) The SL phonological units are translated into TL phonological units.

iii) The TL phonological units are converted into TL letters, or other graphological units (66)
In the writing-system, where the letters/symbols or graphological units correlate one-to-one with phonological units or with parts of phonic substance, it is treated as 'transcription'. Phonological units are naturally represented by this method, but graphological units are represented through 'transliteration' only. 'Grammatical' translation can be defined as 'restricted' translation where the grammar of the source language text is replaced by equivalent grammar in the target language text. However, in this type of translation the lexis is not replaced. The equivalence is founded on the relationship to the 'same situation-substance'. Lexical translation is also 'restricted' translation where the lexis of the source language text is replaced by equivalent lexis in the target language text. In this type of translation the grammar remains unchanged. The equivalence is founded on the relationship to the 'same situation-substance'.

Some scholars have further distinguished translation into two types, namely horizontal and vertical translation. This distinction is immensely useful as it shows the way translation could be linked to two different yet co-existent literary systems. The translation into the local language from the source language that has a 'special value' may be termed as vertical translation. Whereas, when both Source Language and Target Language have equal value, it is known as horizontal translation. The vertical approach further splits into two different types – 'the word for - word method' and 'sense-for-sense' (Ciceronian) or 'paraphrase' (Quintilian). The horizontal translation method also includes two types – imitation and borrowing.
Medieval translations were either horizontal or vertical type. Mc-Guine makes the two distinct approaches more clear by citing the view of Gianfranco Folena.

In his useful article on vulgarization and translation, Gianfranco Folena suggests that "medieval translation might be described either as vertical, by which he intends translation into the vernacular from a SL that has a special prestige or value (e.g. Latin), or as horizontal, where both SL and TL have a similar value (e.g. Provencal into Italian, Norman – French into English)". (qtd. in Bassnett, 52)

Andre Lefevere in *Translating Poetry, Seven Strategies and a Blue Print* gives an account of seven different methods of translation. They are as follows:

i) Phonemic translation, which attempts to reproduce the SL sound in the TL while at the same time producing an acceptable paraphrase of the sense. Lefevere comes to the conclusion that although this works moderately well in the translation of onomatopoeia, the overall result is clumsy and often devoid of sense altogether.

ii) Literal translation, where the emphasis on word-for-word translation distorts the sense and the syntax of the original.

iii) Metrical translation, where the dominant criterion is the reproduction of the SL metre. Lefevere concludes that, like
literal translation, this method concentrates on one aspect of the SL text at the expense of the text as a whole.

iv) Poetry into prose. Here Lefevere concludes that distortion of the senses, communicative value and syntax of the SL text results from this method, although not to the same extent as with the literal or metrical types of translation.

v) Rhymed translation where the translator 'enters into a double bondage' of metre and rhyme. Lefevere's conclusions here are particularly harsh, since he feels that the end product is merely a 'caricature' of Catullus.

vi) Blank verse translation. Again the restrictions imposed on the translator by the choice of structure are emphasized although the greater accuracy and higher degree of literalness obtained are also noted.

vii) Interpretation. Under this heading, Lefevere discusses what he calls versions where the substance of the SL text is retained but the form is changed, and imitations where the translator produces a poem of his own which has 'only title and point of departure, if those, in common with the source text'. (qtd. in Bassnett, 81-82)

It is an established fact that poetry loses much of its verbal music in translation, especially where great emphasis is put on rhyme, metre and word play (for e.g. Urdu poetry). Nevertheless, translations are a must. I would like to cite one
example of translation from Urdu poem into English, following the basic lines laid down by ‘interpretation’ method.

Transliteration:

Kuch din to baso meri aankho mein
Phir khwab agar ho jayo to kya
Koi rang to do mere chehre ko
Phir zakham agar mehakao to kya
Jab hum hi na meheke phir sahab
Tum baade-saba kahlao to kya
Ek aina tha so tut gaya
Ab khud se agar sharmao to kya
Tum aas bandhane wale the
Ab tum hi hame thukrao to kya (Alim)

Though not a very promising start, I managed to weave together a somewhat readable version of the Urdu poem. It goes like this,

Translation:

Linger a while in my eyes,
And then fade into a dream if you please...
Lend a hue to my countenance,
And then fragrantly wound me if you please...
If fragrance deserts me O my dear!
You being the murmuring breeze is never dear.
The mirror that was ..., is broken now,
What use is it blushing now?
Of my hopes you were the maker
Break them now, if you please...

(Translated into English by me, 1992)

It is pointless to mention here that if a dozen translators were asked to tackle the same piece, the outcome would be dozen different versions (precondition being that they are better than the one done earlier).

Another distinguished scholar Popovic catalogues four types of translation in his discussion about translation equivalence. On the basis of distinction made by Popovic, McGuire expresses the main concept in the following words:

i) Linguistic equivalence, where there is homogeneity on the linguistic level of both SL and TL texts i.e. word for word translation.

ii) Paradigmatic equivalence, where there is equivalence of 'the elements of a paradigmatic expressive axis', i.e. elements of grammar, which Popovic sees as being a higher category than lexical equivalence.

iii) Stylistic (translational) equivalence, where there is 'functional equivalence of elements in both original and translation
aiming at an expressive identity with an invariant of identical meaning.'

iv) Textual (syntagmatic) equivalence, where there is equivalence of the syntagmatic structuring of a text, i.e. equivalence of form and shape (25)

It is glaringly obvious that the primary objective of translation is communication. If the TL text is beyond the comprehension of TL readers then translation becomes a self-defeating exercise. Apart from written-translation, oral-translation is also equally important. For example, international interpreters are nothing but oral translators. Political leaders need these interpreters to communicate with foreign delegates. Thus, different kinds of translation have gained remarkable significance in the present era. The search for equivalence is inextricably intertwined with various types of translation. However, it should never culminate into search for ‘sameness’ as sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions of the same text, let alone between the SL and the TL version.

In comparison to Western attitude, Indian approach is less complex. G.N.Devy gives an interesting account of the different types of literary translations in the Indian situation. He divides literary translations into three types which have been discussed in detail in the introductory chapter.

The national and cultural past guides the translation work. Translation for Indians is new life and thus the tradition of translation in India cannot be explicitly
differentiated into water tight compartments. Prema Nandakumar reminds us of our ancient literary tradition and implicitly suggests that translation in India was always given the status of New Writing. She writes:

The roots of India's sanatana dharma are to be found in the Vedas, the Upanishads and the Itihasas (the Ramayana and the Mahabharata), all of which were originally indicated in Sanskrit. Through these many centuries enterprising translators have acted as life-giving rays of the Sun to produce this unparalleled Indian literature of today, truly an immense banyan three with its luscious foliage of many languages. (61)

In ancient Indian tradition, translation was considered as a new writing. Indian approach towards translation was essentially 'horizontal' which involved 'imitation' and 'borrowing'. It is through Sanskrit that Indian sensibility was transmitted to other regional languages and literatures. The period of colonial domination saw an inclination towards 'westernising' Indian languages and literature.

We can trace two types of translators in our country. First, the self translators who 'transcreate' their own works into English like Rabindranath Tagore. There was yet another class of translators who were primarily interested in 'nationalizing' literature in modern Indian languages. (or Bhasha literatures). These translators translated others' works into English. Sincere efforts were made to translate
regional literatures (or Bhasha literatures) into English so that they become Indian Literature in English Translation. In the light of recent developments, translation has become creative. It recreates an SL text in a new way in the target language. A translator, above all is a reader, an interpreter and a creator. Sri Aurobindo is quoted to have said 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". (qtd. in Das, 65) Thus, the most successful rendition/translation will be one, which though based on an original writing (keeping in mind the division of translation into different types) never reads like a translation.

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Works Cited:


