CHAPTER III
CHAPTER III

Problems of Translation

Translation in the first place, may be termed as the process of taking various kind of texts – including religious, literary, scientific, and philosophical texts in one language (SL) and converting it into another language. Thus making them available to wider readers. Translation, then mainly concerns itself in transferring something in fact anything from one setup to another. A close examination of the definitions of translation suggests that producing the same meaning or message in the target language text as intended by the original author is the main objective of a translator. This notion of 'sameness' is often comprehended as an equivalence relation between the source text and the target text. This relation is generally considered the most important feature of a quality translation.

Translation is both linguistic and cultural activity. Therefore the process of translation is not merely restricted to lexical equivalent of words/phrases of one language to that of another but much more than that. The principle that a translation should have an equivalence relation with the source language text in itself is problematic. Problems of equivalence figure at different levels, ranging from word to textual level. The equivalence problems emerge due to semantic, grammatical and socio-cultural differences between the source language and the target language. These three areas of equivalence problems are intertwined with one another. The meaning that a word refers to is culturally bound, and in most
cases the meaning of a word can only be understood through its context of use. Since each word is charged with culture-specific concepts and literary echoes, it is most challenging to find full equivalence of an SL word in another word in TL.

What then are the problems of a translator? Should he be faithful to the words? To the culture-specific concepts? To the chapters? To the ideas? A translator, in the first place, should make a conscious attempt to capture the spirit of translation as any good translation doesn't simply line up language equivalences; it takes the feel of a work from one language and culture and tries to reproduce its effect in another language and culture.

The translator faces many problems while rendering a text from the source language into the target language. In this chapter an attempt has been made to outline the problems faced by translations in general and the difficulties involved in the process of translation-particularly of poetry, prose, play, jokes, proverbs, cultural words and linguistic words. Though problems of translating any literary text are colossal, nevertheless, it is an enlightening work to compare languages and to rethink the axioms of the source language. B.K.Das aptly points out:

It is not merely lexical equivalent of words of one language to that of another, (say, TL equivalent of SL words) but much more. Since, each word is charged with memory, associations, and literary echoes; it is difficult to find full equivalence of an SL word in another word in TL. That is why; total or full translation is a myth. (37)
Translation is a complex task involving a great deal of skill in determining translation equivalents for SL and TL texts or items, interchangeable in a given situation. Equivalence in translation should not be approached as a search for sameness as sameness cannot even exist between two TL versions. However, Popovic's four types namely, linguistic equivalence, paradigmatic equivalence, stylistic equivalence and textual equivalence, offer a useful starting point. Neubert's three-semiotic categories point the way towards an approach that perceives equivalence as dialectic between the signs and the structures within and surrounding the SL and TL texts. In this connection McGuire observes:

In trying to solve the problem of translation equivalence, Neubert postulates that from the point of view of a theory of texts, translation equivalence must be considered a semiotic category, comprising a syntactic, semantic and pragmatic component, following Pierce's categories. These components are arranged in a hierarchical relationship, where semantic equivalence takes priority over syntactic equivalence, and pragmatic equivalence conditions and modifies both the other elements. (27)

Equivalence, therefore, results from the relationship between signs themselves, the relationship between signs and what they denote and those who use them.
In general there are three main reasons why an exact equivalence or effect is difficult to achieve. Firstly, it is impossible for a text to have uniform interpretations even by the same person on two different occasions. Secondly, translation is a matter of subjective interpretation of translators of the source language text. Thus, producing an objective effect on the target text readers, which is the same as that on the source text readers is an unrealistic expectation. Thirdly, it will be very difficult for a translator to fathom the response of the source text readers when the source text was first produced. Then what should be the role of a translator? Catford views the translator's task as that of establishing 'TL equivalents for SL textual elements.' He generalizes the conditions for translation equivalence in terms of the situational features saying:

Translation equivalence occurs when an SL and a TL text or item are relatable (at least some of) the same features of substance. (50)

In this connection, K.Lotfipour-Saedi observes that translation equivalence occurs when an SL and a TL text have 'equivalent' communicative value; and the communicative value of a text is determined by many more factors, some of which are relatable to Catford's "situational features". K.Lotfipour Saedi proposes nine factors that are likely to be involved in the establishment of the communicate value of a text and thus they can be considered as the conditions for translation equivalence. According to Saedi they are:

(i) word-meaning
A TL element is considered to be equivalent to an SL one when it is equivalent in terms of all of these conditions. It should, however, be pointed out that all these conditions, rather than operating in isolation, act in relation to each other for the establishment of the equivalence. (123)

Saedi has further expanded the above mentioned conditions and I have provided suitable examples to reinforce them.

(i) **Word-meaning:** All components of the word-meaning should be considered, like the denotative and connotative meanings, the syntagmatic relations and the paradigmatic relations between words (synonymy, antonymy, hyponymy etc.) while determining the translation equivalence.
(ii) **Structure**: This would encompass the grammatical features such as ‘tense’, ‘gender’, ‘case’, ‘word-order’, ‘voice’, ‘modality’ and so on. A TL equivalent of an SL item needn’t have to be equivalent in terms of each of these features. The translator, first of all, should take into account the ‘communicative value’ of each of these features in both languages and determine their equivalence in terms of their use. For example, English is SVO (subject, verb, object) language and Indian languages are SOV languages. Therefore while translating from Bhasha literatures into English the translator faces two types of problems: linguistic and cultural. Let us examine the following lines from *Gita*:

> Pasya etam pandu-putranam acarya mahatim camum
> Behold this of the sons of Pandu O teacher great military force
> Vyudham drupada-putrena tava sisyena dhi-meta
> Arranged by the sons of Dhrupada your disciple very intelligent.

Paraphrase: O my teacher, behold the great army of the sons of Pandu, so expertly arranged by your intelligent disciple the son of Dhrupada. (*Bhagvad Gita*, 38)

(iii) **Texture**: This includes features such as textual hierarchy, thematization strategies; paralinguistic features (typographics
including underlining, italicizing etc.) etc. The sentence is considered to be the basic organizational unit. Therefore, the relationships between sentences in a text, the elements which occupy the 'theme' position in each sentence, etc. are important factors in the textualization process.

(iv)-(v) **Sentence meaning and Utterance meaning:** The translator should consider the fact that what a sentence means literally might be quite different from what the speaker intends to convey by using a sentence. The former is called the 'literal' or 'word-for-word' meaning of the sentence whereas latter is termed the 'illocutionary force' (Searle 1969) or the 'communicative value' of the utterance. For e.g.: ‘It is hot in here’ can be interpreted as a request to open the windows. Thus, these two types of meaning should be considered while determining the translation equivalents.

(vi) **Presupposition:** It is a well accepted fact in the philosophy of language that 'every assertion has certain presuppositions lying behind it. The translator should take care that the SL statements and their proposed TL equivalents should be equivalent in terms of their presuppositions too. For example: "My daughter is married' has 'I have a daughter' as its presupposition.
(vii) **Style:** This refers to the variety of the language used, for example, formal, informal, slang, colloquial. These factors (the type of relationship and the degree of intimacy, solidarity etc. between the interlocutors) would affect the textual strategies employed for the surface realization of the discourse. Among these strategies may be included: type of addressing (e.g. 'tu', 'tum', 'aap', 'jahaanpana'), lexical choice (e.g. 'guzar gaye', 'dehant ho gaya', 'mrit'), syntactic features (e.g. use of double negatives, short or elaborated sentences) phonological features (e.g. use of class-specific pronunciation) and many others. The translator should take into account of all such variations while determining the TL equivalent for an SL text.

(viii) **Cognition:** The notion of difficulty of a text and its degree of comprehensibility is not inherent to the text; it rather depends on many factors, the most important of which is the reader and his background knowledge. The basic approach to different texts may vary in terms of their comprehensibility for a specific reader. It mainly depends on the nature and number of textual strategies a writer employs for conveying his message. (for example, the amount of elaboration, the number of reiterations, the nature of clause or sentence, the degree of prominence given to an element in its textual presentation or whether it is presented as a full clause or reduced to a word or even a morpheme level – and many others. For e.g. A
sentence such as ‘the arrogance of his assertion completely offended me.’ The word assertion is characterized by ‘arrogance’ and the focus is on the verb ‘offended’. Thus a translator should not irresponsibly handle such textual features.

(ix) **Literary effect:** What differentiates literature from non-literature is the novel and specific (phonological, syntactic, semantic and textual) patterns used in it which create meanings and effects beyond the capacity of the every day use of language. This aspect or the literary effect should also be taken into consideration in the process of establishing the equivalent for an SL text (123-126).

The translator first reads and interprets the text in the source language, and then through further analysis and process of decoding, he translates the text into the Target Language. The SL text is being approached by the translator in more than one set of systems. A person who translates is both a translator and an interpreter and no attempt, whatsoever, should be made to treat them as separate exercises. McGuire observes, “the degree to which the translator reproduces the form, metre, rhythm, tone, register, etc. of the SL text, will be as much determined by the TL system as by the SL system and will also depend on the function of the translation”. (80) Thus, the above mentioned conditions cannot work in isolation. Languages are not all equivalent in expressive power. It becomes very difficult to find equivalent words because of certain factors. Firstly the disparity among languages (the way they are structured-phonological, lexico-semantical and so on). Secondly, the bigger the gap between the source language and the target
language (English to any Indian regional language), the more difficult the transfer of message from the former to latter will be. Due to these differences between the source language and the target language loss and addition of information in translation cannot be avoided.

The translation of literature involves not only the transference of meaning but a host of associations charged with the meaning which need to be translated from SL text into TL text. In order to delve deep into the problems encountered in the translation of literature, I wish to divide it genre wise. First, I take up the problems of poetry translation.

**Translation of Poetry.** Translation of literary texts poses a good deal of problems and within the purview of literary translation, more time has been devoted to explore the problems of translating poetry than any other literary practice. Once Robert Frost said, 'Poetry is that which is lost in translation'. B.K.Das counteracts the statement by claiming that, 'If a good deal of poetry is lost, enough is retained in translation'. (44) Andre Lefevere has catalogued seven different strategies to overcome the problem of translating poetry (cited in the chapter 'Kinds of Translation'). He believes, if the translator focuses on some elements at the expense of others and fails to consider the entire work as an organic structure then the translated version will be 'demonstrably unbalanced'.

Any given poem basically operates on two levels: level of ideas and the level of language. The poem is an assimilation of these two aspects. Again the
'level of language' abounds in figures of speech such as metaphors, similes, irony etc. and phonological syntactic and semantic patterns such as rhyming, alliteration, versification etc. In Jayanta Mahapatra's opinion, only a poet can serve another poet best in translation as he can not only 'recreate the words' but also 'the emotion held inside those very words'. And these two codes (ideas and language) have to be effectively interpreted by the translator poet, from the naked substance of experience that the original poem imposes on the translator's mind. The act of translation therefore, constitutes the art of balance, and this balance is achieved precariously as the poet tries to fit his own sensibilities into the circumference of another imagination. This brings into the translation process a very subjective demand, which taxes the faculties of the translator. Nevertheless, it cannot be denied that only a poet is capable of reproducing the complex essence of poetry in another framework of thought.

The most formidable aspect of poetry translation is to find equivalent words of literary echoes in target language. The problem is compounded when one translates a literary text from a period remote in time. It may not be possible for translators to determine how readers responded to the source text when it was first produced. Moreover, if an original was written centuries ago and the language of the original is difficult to comprehend for modern readers then a simplified translation may well have greater impact on its readers that the original had on the readers in the source culture.
There are certain indispensable factors that a translator should take into consideration in his attempt to establish the TL equivalents. To clarify my point, let us examine the following verse from John Keats's Ode on a Grecian Urn.

O Attic Shape! Fair attitude! With brede
Of marble men and maidens overwrought,
With forest branches and the trodden weed;
Thou, silent form, dost tease us out of thought
As doth eternity: Cold Pastoral!
When old age shall this generation waste,
Thou shalt remain, in midst of other woe

We all are aware that this ode is written in a regular stanza of ten lines, consisting of a quatrain and a sestet. Now the most important question that looms large in my mind is that how will a translator do justice to the striking, appropriate phrases like 'Fair attitude' or 'Cold Pastoral'. There are other such phrases throughout the poem, for instance 'Sylvan historian', 'leaf-fringed legend', 'a heart high-sorrowful and cloy'd' etc. It represents an exquisite fusion of the imaginative, emotional and intellectual elements. Moreover, the statement –

'Brightness truth, truth beauty' – that is all

Ye know on earth, and all ye need to know.
It is a neat and compact expression of a profound fact and his main contribution to speculative thought. The Ode is completely imbued with the spirit of Hellenism and the well chosen epithets make the pictures leap into imagination.

Now the question arises, how can one establish a TL equivalent for the above text keeping in mind all the conditions? Different ways of translating poetry has been suggested by various people depending on the ‘function of translation’. They can be categorized as follows:

Firstly, it is important to determine what the poem is about, and one restricted reading will not lead to the true evaluation of the poem. It is a known fact that layers of meaning emerge only from several readings.

Secondly, once the translator has decided on a ‘clear-cut approach’ to the poem he has to determine the form of the poem. What constitutes the total structure?

Thirdly, he has to take into account the rich patterns of figures of speech (similes, metaphors, irony, etc.) and syntactic-semantic patterns (such as rhyming, alliteration, syntagmatic and paradigmatic relations between words etc.) woven into the tapestry of the poem with great finesse.

Finally, to decide on what to do when translating a particular poem which depends heavily on a series of rules that are non-existent in the TL. Often we see
that the poem is imbued with cultural meanings. For instance, *Ode on a Grecian Urn* has something to do with the immortality of Grecian art, but it actually becomes a universal symbol of eternity.

Two distinguished scholar-critics Sri Aurobindo and K.R.S. Iyengar have made intellectual observations in this regard. Iyengar says:

Poetry by its very nature is untranslatable. Ideas can be translated from language to language, but poetry is the idea touched with the magic of phrase and incantatory music. Competent translator can, however, play the good broker between the poet and the reader, and surpassing the mere prose of statement can give intimations of the poet's sovereign utterance. Good translation can create trust and it can stimulate interest. (qtd.in Das, 54-55)

Sri Aurobindo is of the opinion that we can translate a particular poem in two ways: 'One to keep it strictly to the manner and turn of the original, (and) the other is to take its spirit, sense and imagery and produce them freely so as to suit the new language. (432) Aurobindo prefers the second method to the first.

Thus, the translator of poetry must take into consideration both the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of a poem and make an attempt to recreate the poem in target language. Some translators vouch for translating poetry into prose i.e. a word-for-word or line by line translation of poetry, while others are in favour of
'verse for verse' translation. Though translation of poetry is understandably very
difficult, nevertheless the poet should continue with the good work as it is
undertaken to benefit the readers of the target language. While translating a poem,
a translator may use the SL text (poem) as a starting point from which to set out
and recreate a poem with its own system of meaning. This way a translator can
free himself from the restrictions of those conventions that have prevailed at
different points in time. While the translator struggles to amalgamate his own
pragmatic reading with the dictates of the TL culture system, various criteria come
into play during the translation process. As a resultant, there is necessarily a shift
of expression. In McGuire's words:

The success or failure of these attempts must be left to the discretion of the
reader, but the variations in method do serve to emphasize the point that there is
no single right way of translating a poem just as there is no single right way of
writing one either, (101)

Translation of Prose: Although we observe a great hullabaloo over the issues
that surround the translation of poetry, there is much less debate in case of
translating literary prose. The probable reasons may be:

(a) Poetry commands a higher status.
(b) Mythical notion that perhaps a novel is much simpler in structure in
comparison to poem, as a result easier to translate.
(c) In comparison to a number of detailed statements by poet translators (regarding their methodology) we have fewer statements from prose translators.

While translating a prose piece, the translator should be aware of the fact that the content and form of a novel are inseparable. He should not stress on the content at the expense of the total structure. When the translator begins his work with the TL text, at the beginning he must consider how the opening section relates to the structure of the work as a whole. Hilaire Belloc has laid down six general rules for the benefit of the translator of prose texts. They are as follows:

1) The translator should not 'plod on', word by word or sentence by sentence, but should ‘always “block out” his work’. By ‘block out’, Belloc means that that the translator should consider the work as an integral unit and translate in sections, asking himself ‘before each what the whole sense is he has to render’.

2) The translator should render idiom by idiom ‘and idioms of their nature demand translation into another form from that of the original’. For eg. A literal translation of the idiom ‘turn a deaf ear to’ into Hindi will become comic but when substituted by ‘suni ansuni kar dena’ comes very close to the original.
3) The translator must render intention by intention, bearing in mind that ‘the intention of a phrase’ in one language may be less emphatic than the form of the phrase or it may be more emphatic. He points out that in the translation of ‘intention’, it is often necessary to add words not in the original ‘to conform to the idiom of one’s own tongue’. Likewise an English translation of the sentence ‘Bala se Jado marenge, bala to sir se talegi?’ reads as ‘So what did it matter if they died in the cold weather as long as they could just take care of this calamity right now?’. The assertive changes into interrogative and becomes less emphatic, nevertheless it confirms to the idiom in TL.

4) Belloc warns against the *les faux amis*, those words or structures that may appear to correspond in both SL and TL but actually do not, for eg. ‘uphar’ (Refreshment) in Marathi is quite different from ‘uphar’ in Hindi. (Presentation).

5) The translator is advised to ‘transmute boldly’ and Belloc suggests that the essence of translating is ‘the resurrection of an alien thing in a native body.’

6) The translator should never embellish. (qtd. in McGuire 116-117)
The six general rules proposed by Belloc cover both points of technique and points of principle. Belloc's first point, in which he discusses the need for the translator to 'block out' his work, rises what is perhaps the central problem for the prose translator: the difficulty of determining translation units. He admits that there is a moral responsibility to the original. But at the same time he believes that the translator has the right to considerably alter the text in the translation process. This is done judiciously to provide the TL reader with a text that conforms to TL stylistic and idiomatic norms.

However, during the process of prose translation, a translator must necessarily avoid the pitfalls. A novel/prose piece should not be treated as a paraphrasable material content that can be translated straightforwardly. A sentence does not consist solely of a statement 'but aims at something beyond what it actually says'. Thus, if the translator handles sentences for their specific content alone, it is likely that there will be a loss of dimension. A translator must, therefore, first determine the function of the SL system and then find a TL system that will adequately render that function.

**Translation of Dramatic texts:** It is often believed that the methodology adopted in the translation process of a dramatic text is same as that used to approach prose text. The truth is, a dramatic text cannot be translated in the same way as the prose text. A dramatic text is read differently as it remains incomplete if not judged on the basis of its performability. It is only in performance that the full potential of the text is realized. Anne Ubersfeld, for example, points out how it is
impossible to separate text from performance, since theatre consists of the
dialectical relationship between both. She asserts:

The task of the director, therefore, is to 'translate into another language' a
text to which he has a prime duty to remain 'faithful'. This position is based on the
concept of semantic equivalence between the written text and its performance;
only the 'mode of expression' in the Hjelmslevian sense of the term will be altered,
the form and content of the expression will remain identical when transferred from
a system of test-signs to a system of performance – signs. (qtd. in McGuire, 121)

The problem of performability gives a new dimension of complexity to the
text. Though playability is a prerequisite criterion, there are other distinguishable
features (structural) that make the text performable, beyond the stage directions.
Apart from playability, the interrelationship between the characters and the
relationship of the play to the established conventions of the theatre with relation to
time and space are of pivotal importance. McGuire claims that:

Since the play text is written for voices, the literary text contains also
a set of paralinguistic systems, where pitch, intonation, speed of
delivery, accent, etc. are all signifiers. In addition, the play text
contains within it the under text or what we have called the gestural
text that determines the movements an actor speaking that text can
make.' (132)
Truly then, not only the context but also the ‘coded gestural patterning’ within the language itself contributes to the actor’s work. A third dimension would be that ‘public dimension’, first and second being ‘performance oriented’ and ‘reader oriented’ respectively. The role of the audience assumes a public dimension not shared by the reader. A reader’s approach to the text is essentially a personal affair. We may then hypothesize that the central issue that a theatre translator must be concerned with is the performance aspect of the text and its relationship with a reader and an audience.

Furthermore, the dialogues in dialects of a language that is far removed from the target language pose another kind of problem. B.K.Das observes:

Apart from language, the thought-content of a dramatic text couched in one culture pose serious problems for the translator. For example, it is difficult to translate Shakespeare and his contemporaries into any Indian language because of the linguistic and cultural differences. For example, how does one translate the magical words of Shakespeare, 'Ripeness is all', or 'Forget and Forgive' or 'Thou art soul in bliss / I'm bound upon wheel of Fire' or 'Fair is Foul and Foul is Fair' or 'The rest is silence' etc. into our languages which are so vastly different form English language? (49)

Changing concepts of performability has further complicated the problems. The approach of modern absurd dramatists and dramatists of Angry Young Man
Movement further aggravate the dilemma of the theatre translator. The performance and the dialogues create special problems for the translator.

B.K. Das aptly questions,

"How does one translate the dialogues of Lucky and Pozzo or Estragon and Vladimir of Beckett's *Waiting for Godot* into Indian languages?" (50)

The translator of a theatre text must take into account the function of a text in totality, first the dialogues including the colloquial and conversational language, the gestural-patterning, intonation, accent etc. and the performability including stage-craft, inter-relationship between the characters and the historical backdrop of it.

Translation activity just like Pandora's Box has a plethora of problems ranging from problems of structure, lexis etc. to the most sophisticated problems of cultural differences. Translation theories in recent years consider translation as 'intracultural activity'. Translation is now perceived as 'transformation' and transposition of culture rather than as a purely linguistic activity. Any given language, represented by its structural, stylistic and lexical features, is actually a reflection of a certain culture. Hamid M. Hawas aptly remarks:

"...it is illogical to split culture from its means of expression, i.e. language. Cultural features can be seen in the way people talk, eat, think, names of dishes,
reaction to atmospheric conditions and accordingly the vocabulary used in describing weather conditions". (59)

Then translation is a way of establishing contacts between cultures. As mentioned above, language and culture are inextricably interwoven. Vladimir Ivir states, "that the integration of an element into a culture (and into the conceptual framework of its members as individuals) cannot be said to have been achieved unless and until the linguistic expression of that element has been integrated into the language of that culture". (35)

The ease or difficulty experienced during the translation process chiefly depends on the degree of closeness or similarity of the cultures in question. Generally, a translator is concerned with the presence or absence of particular elements in the source and target culture. He does not deal with the totality of a culture; rather he deals with individual elements of a particular text. A translator should also possess a deep insight into the SL culture as well as the TL culture, since the target reader is not likely to know the culture-embedded 'Source Text' and it depends on the translator how he can best transform the source text characterized by its cultural idiosyncrasies into Target language to make it palatable to the target reader embedded in another culture. Thus, functions of the target text are decided by the nature of its target-readers and by the role it is expected to play in the target culture. Translation activity actually involves much more than the honest engagement of a translator with any available text (source text) and a bilingual dictionary.
While translating a literary text, a translator often comes across various types of culturally bound items. Often a careless handling of these items leads to nontranslation, mistranslation or disputed translation. I shall categorize different kinds of culturally bound items with examples in the following paragraph. The categorization of items into different groups has been done following Aulis Rantanen's proposition. (54) However, I have further added a few more categories to it and thus the final category is to some extent different.

(1) Ecology (i.e. flora, fauna, geographical features, etc.) – the way people treat the names of places, historical events, describe the flora and fauna of a typical country differs invariably from that of other countries. Take for example, in R.S. Pathak’s words: ‘Block’ in American English means ‘a rectangular section of a city or town bounded on each side by consecutive streets’ or ‘a segment of a street bounded by successive cross streets’. It will then be difficult to translate a sentence like “we used to live on the same block” in Hindi since there is no appropriate equivalent word for block in Hindi.(qtd. in Das, 41)

(2) Material culture (food, clothes, housing, transport, communications) – let us consider this particular sentence from Saratchandra’s Parinita: ‘Chayer mojlish hoite ni-shabde palaiya asiya Lolita shekhorer ghore dhukiya ujjwal gaser niche ekta torongo aniya shekhorer gorom bastroguli pat koriya guchaiya rakhitechilo....’ – the story was written...
when there was no electricity in the city and the translator has to be aware of the historical time frame while translating material culture oriented phrases like: ‘Chayer mojlish’ (boisterous gathering of people while sharing evening tea), ‘uijwal gaser niche’ (gaslight) or ‘gorom bastroguli’ (woollen garments). I translated the above line as follows: ‘Lalita after quietly escaping from the congregation, went to Shekhar’s room, brought the suitcase under the gaslight and started folding his woollen garments and was packing them neatly, when Shekhar entered.’ Since the stress was on ‘mojlish’ rather then ‘chayer’, I chose the word ‘congregation’ to drive the idea home. Also typical food items of India like ‘Pantha- Bhaat’, ‘dahi-vada’, ‘halwa’, ‘puri’, ‘jalebi’ etc. are untranslatable.

(3) Social culture (work and leisure, organisations, customs, ideas) – let us examine the following sentences. (a) Dinu aaro bismito hoyiya bolilo, ‘Ange, se desher nam-i aami shuni nai kakhono’. (b) Dinu abak hoyiya bhabitechilo. Sahosha se bolilo,’ ange, dekhi babu ekbar’. (lines taken from Tarashankar Bandopadhyay’s Dak-Harkara) (c) ‘toybe aaji aamake kaashi pathiye de’ (d) ‘...Kal shokaler gadi tei aami make niye poshchime jachchi’, (e) ‘dekhilo Lolita golae aanchal diya make pronam koribar udyog Koreche’ (lines taken from Saratchandra Chattopadhyaye’s Parinita) . If one translates these sentences (a and b) into any other Bhasha language (say Oriya or Hindi) then it wouldn’t pose much problem as words like ‘ange’ or ‘babu’ can be translated as
'angya', 'babu' in Oriya (which comes very close to Bengali culture) and 'ji', 'babu' in Hindi. Similarly 'Kaashi' is a symbol for a 'place for widows', 'paschim' refers to places like Madhupur, Shimultala etc., which is a symbol for places meant for recovering one's health. Finally 'golae aanchal diya pronam' is highly embedded in Bengali culture and equally shared by other cultures in India. It is a show of reverence. The English habit of calling everybody by first name and vast cultural gap makes it difficult to translate these sentences appropriately into English. In this connection, B.K. Das observes:

The simple word 'you' in English has three corresponding words in most of the Indian languages including Oriya. In Oriya, it means 'Tu', 'Tame' and 'Apana' 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 and therefore, translation of these words into Indian languages becomes ambiguous. (43-44)

(4) Descriptions of non-verbal communication (facial expressions, gestures, etc.) – Aulis Rantanen cites the following example: 'Beryl was thankful and showed it with a flash of white teeth'. (Dorothy Sayers et al. 1983:64). The description of facial expression and gestures differs from language to language. A literal translation of the above sentence might
be rather amusing to most Finns, since they would interpret it to mean that the young lady in question grinned at her saviour.

Similarly, in Indian context, gestures like 'bhuru kunchan' may denote different meanings or emotions like anger, a pensive mood, making queries, disapproval, act of recollection etc.

(5) Mythological characters / aspects (serve as symbols) – World literature is resplendent with myths and mythological characters that is a resultant product of cultural beliefs. For example: The two great epics of India namely the Ramayana and the Mahabharata have provided national (shared by all) myths like Lakshman Rekha (line of control, not meant to be trespassed), Ghorshatru (Bhibishan – one who causes harm to the inmates of the house), Bhishama Pratigya (an oath never to be broken) and Dharmaputra (Yudhishtar – symbol of honesty and truth). Often these terms are used directly to denote the inner layers of meaning. Similarly, Greek mythological characters like Apollo (Sun God associated with music, prophecy etc.), Aphrodite (Greek Goddess of beauty, fertility who is a Roman equivalent of Venus), Oedipus (King of Thebes who unwittingly killed his father and married his mother and often unusual desire of a child for the parent of the opposite sex translates into Oedipus Complex) and Tower of Babel (linguistic bridge-building) etc. etc. If the translator wants to avoid unforeseen pitfalls he
has to be on his guard for these types of mythical symbols. He must possess the knowledge of the world.

(6) Culturally embedded proverbs and idioms (colloquial expressions, slang's) – A translator must also consider the various proverbs and idioms which has varied connotation. Sometimes we can successfully translate idioms and proverbs from regional / Bhasha language (say Hindi) into English. Take for example: (a) Rai Ka pahad banana (Hindi) / Til ka tad Karna (Hindi) – Make a mountain out of a mole hill (English) or Ent ti marle, patkel ti khete hoye (Bengali) – As you sow, so shall you reap. (English) – But what about 'muhavre and Lokoktis' like: Jiski lathī, uski bhaynse? It is a Hindi proverb, where 'lathī' is a symbol of power and India being a country where agriculture gets precedence over any other occupation, importance of 'Bhaynse' is to be understood against the cultural backdrop.

(7) Erotic Vocabulary (feelings, emotions, expression of love) – Indian languages especially Sanskrit are rich in erotic vocabulary. As a result, Vatsyayan's Kamasutra into English fails to transcreate the magic of the original writing. Although English is a rich and luxuriant language, it is woefully short of erotic words. Thus, there is no practical equivalence for words and phrases like 'rasa-krida', 'rasa-lila', 'Radhar-nagar', 'abhiman',
vatsalya 'anurag' etc. When translated into English it often appears inadequate.

(8) Homonyms of Indian Languages – Homonyms of Indian languages need to be handled with utmost care. R.S.Rathak gives an interesting list of homonyms in the following passage:

The problem gets compounded because the same form gives different meanings in different languages. For example ‘uphar’ in Marathi signifies 'refreshment' but it means in Hindi 'a present' and ‘Uttejit’ means ‘inspired’ in Marathi and ‘angry or agitated’ in Hindi, ‘Shiksha’ in Hindi is ‘teaching or education’ and in Marathi ‘punishment’. (qtd.in Das,42)

The list seems to be endless and the translator has to take into consideration all these subtle differences. Apart from the above mentioned aspects, often there are cultural words that are intricately woven into the texture of the literary text to lend it local flavour. A phrase of endearment like ‘mera chand’, ‘mera aankho ka tara’ or ‘meri lado’, ‘mera jaan’ when translated literally can become jarring and ludicrous. Similarly a phrase of blessing such as ‘dudho nahao puto phalo’ or a phrase of curse like ‘teri samne matki phute’ is deeply embedded in Indian (northern to be specific) culture. Thus, cultural transference should be performed by keeping in mind the reading public and in the process a translator becomes a creative writer.
Vladimir Ivir proposes various procedures by which the problems confronted while tackling cultural oriented words / phrases can be dealt with. He says:

Faced with differences in the extra-linguistic reality of the two cultures or its lexical mapping, the translator tries to reconcile them by relying on the following procedures: borrowing, definition, literal translation, substitution, lexical creation, omission and addition. (37)

It would not be out of place to record here that apart from poetry, prose, play etc. critical terms are also difficult to translate into another language. For example, terms like 'romanticism', 'deconstruction', and 'affective fallacy' etc cannot be translated into other languages without footnotes. Thus, one major problem of translation is that it cannot successfully transform professional jargons, critical terms and idioms from source language to target language.

It is also most challenging to translate humours based on a particular culture and jokes of a particular community. When they are translated from source language they lose their force, vigour and appeal in the target language. Unless the translator knows the exact nature or origin of the joke it would not be possible for him to recreate it into the target language. A research on jokes based on group studies conducted by M.Radhika and Udaynarayana Singh classified jokes into thirteen types namely ethnic jokes, political jokes, sexual jokes, religious jokes, economy jokes, stupid or aging jokes, clever repartees, anti-social jokes, uniform
jokes, academic jokes, professional jokes, family jokes and linguistic jokes. (qtd. in Das, 53)

I wish to briefly categorize them by citing some interesting examples in each case to bring home the idea. It will immensely help to establish the fact that humour is universal but joke is local. A translator should know the exact origin of the joke in order to translate it into another language.

(i) Ethnic jokes include jokes on people who are miserly, dirty, dumb, language distortion or are cunning etc. These are normally associated with a particular community or a group. Take for example in the following joke we can trace the very essence of Hyderabad city.

It goes like this:

If William Shakespeare was born in Hyderabad by what name would he be called?

Answer: “Valli Mian Sheikh Peer”.

(ii) Political jokes reveal political situations, national traits, political gimmick etc. Since politics affects the whole nation, these are immensely popular jokes.

For example:

Common Man: “Sir, who is a traitor in politics?”

Politician: (angrily) “One who leaves his party and joins another.”
Common Man: “And, the one who leaves his party to join yours?”

Politician: “A loyal and understanding party worker!”

(iii) Sexual jokes include jokes on adultery, obscenity etc.

For example:

Neighbour: “It is alleged that you maintained illicit relationship and then cheated your husband”.

Accused Wife: “In fact, the situation is quite contrary to what you have stated. He cheated me by saying that he was going out of town.”

(iv) Religious jokes cover jokes that deal with religious subjects including priests, Gods, religious faith and beliefs as the butts.

For example:

Three boys were sailing down a river in a country boat. Suddenly, the planks at the bottom of the boat gave way and water started filling into the boat.

One of the boys started praying to Lord Ganesha.

First Boy: “O Lord Ganesha! Save us from drowning.”

Lord Ganesha appears but starts dancing on the hull of the boat.

Second Boy: “O Lord, you are dancing instead of saving us!”

Lord Ganesha: “Why that is what you all do every year after Ganesh Chaturthi!”
(v) Economy jokes relate to poverty, shortage etc. of a particular group of community or nation.

For example:

"When you went abroad with your family did you see poverty there?"

"Oh! We not only saw but experienced it too. That is why we returned early."

(vi) Stupid or Aging jokes cover jokes on idiocy, aging, irrationality etc.

For example:

Vicky: "Do you know what difficulty Ravan had to face for having ten heads?"

Nitin: "No."

Vicky: "He couldn't wear a T-shirt."

(vii) Clever repartees are actually witty, funny and deliberate insults.

For example:

"Do you make up these jokes yourself?"

"Yes, out of my head."

"You must be."

(viii) Anti-social jokes cover jokes on terrorism, drinking, stealing etc.
For example:

After looting a bank one burglar spoke to the other,

"Come, let us count the notes."

"Fool, forget it. As such, the newspapers will report the figure, tomorrow."

(ix) Uniform jokes are about defence personnel sailing crews, waiters etc.

For example:

"I cut legs of 20 soldiers," said a soldier with pride.

"Why legs and not heads?"

"They never had any," replied the soldier.

(x) Academic jokes are about academic institutions. They relate especially to student-student and student-teacher interactions.

For example:

Teacher: "I am beautiful. What tense is it?"

Student: "Past."

(xi) Professional jokes cover all professions such as engineers, doctors, lawyers, bureaucrats, and others.

For example:
"Doctors and Advocates are never clever."

"Why?"

"They keep practising!"

(xii) Family jokes deal with all members of a family-grand parents, parents and children, grand children or other relatives.

For example:

"Sorry to learn about the sad demise of your dear father. Was he able to speak till his last breath?"

"No dear! My mother was at his bedside."

(xiii) Linguistic jokes i.e. puns, spoonerisms, misprints, parodies, daffy definition etc. may come under this category.

For example:

"What kind of stories do sailors' children listen to at bedtime?"

"Ferry Tales."

The problematic jokes, based on homonymy, polysemy and with double meaning due to literal and figurative interpretations, are very difficult to translate. However, a close study shows that all jokes are translatable. The translator must aim for dynamic equivalence (neither too free nor very faithful). He also has to translate the punch line in such a way that humour is retained as in the source
Translation of jokes or retelling of jokes chiefly depends on the fun or humour they generate in the Target text rather than on the faithfulness to the Source Language Text. Jokes, slang's etc. can be rendered into another language through transliteration and free translation.

Translation of metaphors poses another kind of problem and the translator’s dilemma is how to translate metaphors without affecting the SL discourse. Cultural factors cause difficulties in the translation of metaphors. The differences between a Source Language text and a Target Language text and the variation in their cultures make the process of translation a real challenge.

Translation of advertisements also seriously curtails the freedom of translators. Research reveals that the language-patterns used for accomplishing the advertisers, is fairly limited in its selection. Thereafter, the scope of deviation is also very limited. The translator has to keep certain things in his mind like readability, memorability and selling ability in the target language. But it cannot be achieved easily.

To conclude I should say that the problems of translation are manifold but inspite of all the problems that challenge the authenticity of translation and undermine its position, the compelling urge to translate on the part of translators has shown an upward trend. When a translator is sucked into the whirlpool of converging theories, and disappearing boundaries, he must make an attempt to remain faithful to the original text. The crux of the matter is how to get under the
skin of the original text and recreate it in the target language remaining faithful to the nuances (retaining every peculiar quality of the original) of the original text?

Creativity is innate in the human mind and therefore each translator takes on a text in his own unique way and is guided solely by his instinct. Propelled by the global cultural matrix of the society, a translator who is also a creator should stick to his vision, his own conviction. He must create his 'own music'.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Author/Title</th>
<th>Source/Details</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>


