Chapter-IV
Readers’ Role in Translation
Chapter-4

Readers' Role in Translation

4.0

The translation strategies that take the reader's perspective into account are always effective.

4.1

In his essay 'The Principles of Translation' T.H. Savory vividly analyses the problems of translation. He discusses the faithfulness as a concept in translation. He also stresses the importance of reader’s point of view and also the need for multiple translations for one and the same text.

Savory admits, “there are no universally accepted principles of translation, because the only people who are qualified to formulate them have never agreed among themselves, but have so often and for so long contradicted each other that they have bequeathed to us a volume of confused thought which must be hard to parallel in other fields of literature.” (49)

“There is no such thing as a law of translation, since laws admit no exception.”

(Newmark, Approaches to Translation).

4.1 Alternative Principles

Savory lists the alternative principles of translation in contrasting pairs:

“i). A translator must give the words of the original.

ii). A translator must give the ideas of the original
iii) A translation should read like an original work.
iv) A translation should read like a translation.
v) A translation should reflect the style of the original.
vi) A translator should possess the style of the translator.
vii) A translation should read as a contemporary of the original.
viii) A translation should read as a contemporary of the translator.
ix) A translation may add to or omit from the original
x) A translation may never add to or omit from the original
xi) A translation of verse should be in prose.
 xii) A translation of verse should be in verse."

(Source: Savory. T.H. The Art of Translation)

4.1.1

The first pair (i &ii) makes a distinction between a literal or faithful translation and an idiomatic or free translation. It has been widely accepted that a translation should be faithful to its original, in fact it is considered that it is the duty of the translator to be faithful to his original. Here what ‘faithfulness’ implies is a moot point. Can we consider a word for word translation as faithful one? That type of translation would suffice for the most mundane and prosaic texts. Further if ‘faithfulness’ has an effect on the readability of the text, does the translator still have to adhere to faithfulness? The main reason for
the advocacy of faithfulness is that a translator is ‘... not, he recognises, the original author, and the work in hand was never his own; he is an interpreter, one whose duty is to act as a bridge or channel between the minds of readers.’ (p.no51) Here if the aspect of faithfulness is stressed beyond the limit, it may affect the very purpose of the translation, that is there is no point in translating a work, however great it may be in SL, if it has no readability in TL. Here the translator's discretion plays a vital role, he should do a tight ropewalk so that he could sustain the readability of the work and at the same time be faithful to the original, a task which is very difficult to achieve. This is one of the reasons why the process of translation is termed as a 'fascinating failure' by many.

The choice (and it goes back to Classical times; Cicero 46BC) is between translating word-for-word (literal translation) or meaning-for meaning (free translation). Pick the first and the translator is criticized for the 'ugliness' of a 'faithful' translation; pick the second and there is criticism of the 'inaccuracy' of a 'beautiful' translation. Either way it seems, the translator cannot win, even though we recognise that the crucial variable is the purpose for which the translation is being made, not some inherent characteristics of the text itself.

(Roger T. Bell -Translation and Translating-Theory and Practice 7)

4.1.2

The statement (iii) though sounds dogmatic is supported by a show of reason.

When the original reads like an original, a translation of it should do so. But in making a translation read like the original, the primary purpose of translation, the readability of the text should not suffer.
4.1.3

The third pair (v&vi) poses the problem whether a translation should reflect the
style of the translator or the original writer. As the style often involves various linguistic
features that are unique to that particular language, a translator may find it difficult to
imitate the style of the original writer. But it is undeniable that the style of the translator
should come as near as possible to that of the original writer. Moreover it is the
translator's obligation to accept the proprietorship of the original writer. The problem
becomes more intense while translating the classics whose writers have earned a niche
of their unique style in SL.

An attempt is made to analyse a translation of a paragraph from Viswanatha
Satyanarayana's 'eekaveera' This romantic novel was written during 1929-31. This is
the only novel by Viswanatha Satyanarayana (1895-1976) where in he took three years
to complete it. His other famous novel, 'veeyipaDgalu' was written with in a month's
time. Viswanatha Satyanarayana, Kavi Samrat, the poet king as he was popularly
called, writes about the Madura Kingdom and the intimate relations of two bosom
friends, Veera Bhupathi and Kuttan Setupathi. Ekaveera is the heroine who was torn
between the two friends and eventually meets her tragic end.
Viswanatha Satyanarayana's style is unique in Telugu language. It stands apart even
with in the SL texts. When such a work is translated the translator may find it difficult to
imitate the style of the original writer. An attempt is made here to translate a paragraph
from his famous novel 'Ekaveera'
It was widely believed that literary works in Telugu should use the standard form of
language which is quite different from the language that is spoken. Viswanatha
Satyanarayana is an ardent supporter of that argument and his works are written in Telugu language that is termed as 'grandhikam' language that was supposed to be used in literary works which is different from 'vyavaharikam' i.e. the language as it is spoken by the people.

An attempt is made to elevate the style in TL so that the effect may be nearer to that of SL text. Here two factors have an effect, first the theme itself is a remote and historical one, and secondly the original writer's style makes it further distant. The passage also contains innumerable historical and mythological references in SL. The degree of untranslatability is more in this case. The style of the writer will add to the translator's woes. Viswanatha's style is unique and an attempt is made to avoid using too familiar expressions in TL. As the text has many references to Hindu mythology an attempt is made to tag on an explanatory addition to a few expressions such as 'the primal mendicant' to adibikshuvu, 'a demon' to a rakshasa, 'the mass of matted hair' to jatasamuham. Instead of providing glossary or notes, the explanation is integrated in the context itself.

Regarding the proper nouns 'Sundareswara' is an incarnation of Lord Parameswara. As the readers of SL text are familiar with the myth that Sundareswara is none other than Parameswara, the writer casually refers to him as Parameswara. This may create a problem for the TL readers as they may consider Parameswara as another character. The translation as 'Sundareswara who is also called Parameswara' makes it clear to the TL readers.
4.1.3.1

**eekaweera**

adi vesagi. 'vaigai nadi' kruSinci proSita bhartruka wale saNNagillinadi. ee nadi puTTuTaku kaaraNamugaa madhuraa nagaramuna seewinciyunna srii meenaakShi sumdareeswarula wiwaahamunaku saṁbhaṇḍicīna yokka kata yunnadi. meenakShi deewi paanDya raaju komarita; paarwati deewi yawataaramu. aame puTTina naaTi numDi looka naayakuDunu, naadi bHikSuwunagu srii sumdareeswarunee warimci yunnadi. aame buddi maralimcuTaku sakyamu kaaka raaju kuuDaa naamenu sumdareeswaruna kiccuTaku sammatimcenu. aame yanna gaari kiSTamee leedu. wiwaahamunaku srii sumdareeswarulu tarali waccinaaru. pariwaaramu leedu. aadi bhikShuwu taanokkaDee waccinaaDu. tanaku taginaTlugaa nemtayoo peddagaa wiwaaha prayatnamu ceesina paamDya raaju nissara paDipooyi naaDu. ceesina prayatnamulu cuupi, teccina padaartamulu cuusi iwanniyyu neemi kaawalenani nimdímcinaaDu. parameswaruDu nawwi tana wemTa goni waccina yoka kurrawaanini cuupi yaa padaartamulanniyyu naa kurrawaaDu bhujímcunannaDu. ataDoka raakShaDu. ataDi peeru kamDodaruDu. ataniloo bhagawamtuDu kShdhaagni sahasramkhambuluga prajwaliṁpaceesinaaDu. kumDoodaruDu sakala padaarthamuluu naaragimci daahamani yaracinaaDu, madhura looni bhaawulu ceruwulu caalaleedu. KumDoodaruni ceeyi paTTumani parameswaruDu tana siroobhaagamuna bhaagiradhii maha prawahamu naDDágímcu jaTaa samuuhamuloo noka jaTa saDalímcinaaDu. aa riitigaa parameswaruDu jaTawiwraagrawinisprutayagu gamgaa nadi madhuraa
Ekaveera

It was summer. The river Vegai was emaciated like a proshitha bhartrika, a woman whose husband is away. There is a story related to the marriage of Sri Meenakshi and Sundereswara who had deigned to visit/condescended to visit Madhura as the cause of the birth of the river.

Meenakshi Devi was the daughter of the Pandya king, the incarnation of Goddess Parvathi Devi. Since her childhood she was devoted to the Lord of the world and the adibikshuvu, the primal mendicant Sri Sundaraeswara. Unable to change her mind the king too agreed to give her in marriage to Sri Sundareswara. Her elder brother, however, did not like it. Sri Sundareswara arrived for the marriage, with neither entourage nor relatives. He/the primal mendicant appeared/arrived unaccompanied. The Pandya king was crest-fallen as he had made grand preparations befitting his stature. Showing the preparations he had made for the marriage, the king of Pandya blamed his son-in-law and asked what should be done with those things. Sundareswara who is also called Parameswara smiled and showed him a boy who came along with him and said that he would eat all the victuals/items of food. He was a rakshasa, a demon whose name was Kundodara. God had lighted a thousand
tongued flame of hunger\(^1\) in him. After consuming all the items when Kundodara cried for water, all the wells and tanks in Madhura could not quench his thirst. Asking Kundodara to stretch his hand Parameswara loosened a braid of hair from his *jatamuham*, the mass of matted hair that restrains the grand flow of river Bhagirathi. So the river Ganga liberated from the end of the braid of Parameswara became the river Vegai near Madhura.

Like the water streams cascading from the hilltops/ mountain peaks Vegai was so swift. Vegai means "hold your hand" in a Dravidian language.

Note: hunger! It is believed that hunger in humans would be of the size of a grain. Bheema was supposed to have hunger of the size of a thumb. How much of hunger the *rakshasa* has can only be imagined by this.

4.1.4

When the translation involves two contemporary languages, the choice offered by the fourth pair makes no difference. While translating the work belongs to a different time period, the translator may have to choose between- whether to use the contemporary language or a language that belongs to that period. Here the task of the translator is to bridge the time gap.

"'Style' is influenced not only by the personality of the writer but also by the period of history in which he lives and translation includes the bridging of time as well as the bridging of space." (Savory, 56)
But one cannot translate a speech of Cicero, a Roman orator as to sound as if it had been delivered in English by Winston Churchill though he is considered the most eloquent speaker of English now.

4.1.5

The fifth pair poses a problem regarding the rights of a translator. Whether a translator can add or omit from the original has different opinions. Some feel that a translator may feel free to rectify the mistakes that the original has and the original is not a sacrosanct document. But the problem is that in the name of rectifying mistakes a translator may be tempted to meddle with the original and then it may hardly be called a translation. So the addition or omission from the original is not determined by the will of the translator, but by the readers for whom it is intended and the nature of text that is to be translated. Where ever the translator feels that the TL readers need further explanation he can add to the original. A translator is also "...justified in pruning or eliminating redundancy in poorly written information texts, in particular jargon, provided it is not used for emphasis." (Newmark, 1981). Further when the narrative techniques in SL and TL are so different, as in the case of Telugu and English, the translator may have to prune his translation to suit the trend of TL. In Telugu language mainly oral tradition of narration is vogue, which involves repetition of the statements. On the other hand in English understatement is widely used and if everything as narrated in SL is translated in to TL, it may sound jarring to the TL readers.

Another aspect that has to be examined in this regard is whether a writer of the original can alter his own work after its publication. As an after thought the original writer has a right to improve up on his own work and he may change it in future
publications. While translating a Telugu short story 'maramanishi' (Robot) by Dr. Kommuri VenugopalaRao into English as 'The Living Robot', it occurred. It is a story of a man who becomes mechanical, and he does not like to have children. So he dissuades his wife from having children. But her wife gives birth to a mentally retarded child who dies afterwards. He is so unemotional that he even keeps the corpse of his own son as a specimen in his museum of pathology. Towards the end of the story he realises his mistake and consoles his wife who is sentimental. In the first version of the story, the narration ends at the point where the protagonist, Sridhar takes the body of his son in his car from the museum to the burial ground.

"He took the boy on his shoulders and walked out of the museum. The guard of the museum stood puzzled to see the Professor placing a specimen in his car at that hour. The car raced towards the burial ground." (The Living Robot, Sarasa 2002)

Here the narrator suggestively hints at the change in the character, Sridhar. The problem is that the writer in his next publication of the same story in another collection, extended the story, in which he explicitly states that Sridhar is changed and his wife is stated to be pregnant again. When Sridhar is informed about it, he becomes elated, an event, which overemphasizes the transformation of the character. When the writer was asked about the two versions of the endings, one suggestive and the other explicit, he said that he changed it as he felt it appropriate to make the transformation of the character more emphatic. However he gave permission to the
translator to use any of the endings. As it was felt that the first ending which is suggestive and also fits in the pattern of TL narration, it has been followed. As the writer could be contacted and more over he was kind enough to clarify promptly, the translator could take a decision. Had it been a work of a writer who is not accessible or who is no more, what should be done? Can a translator go according to his own choice? First of all can a translator change it to suit the requirements of the TL readers as an original writer himself has a right to alter his own work? Here it is important that ultimate judge of the work is the reader. When the readers’ point of view is taken in to consideration, such problems can easily be resolved. Even when the changes viz. additions or omissions are not liked by the original writer, they may have to be carried out keeping the TL readers’ interests in mind. This should not be viewed as trespassing into the rights of the original writer and also it is not an expression of disloyalty to the original.

4.1.6

The final pair poses a hard choice, as the translation of poetry itself is a difficult task. “The translation of poetry is often more difficult than any other kind of translation. Only because poetry is the only literary form that uses all the resources of language, and therefore there are more levels of language to be accounted for.” (Newmark, 1981). As the translation of poetry is a difficult task a translator is tempted to opt for the translation of poetry in prose. This topic is discussed in chapter-9 of this thesis.

4.2 Readers Groups

The reason for so wide a divergence of opinions, according to savoury, is neglect of the readers’ point of view. “Readers of translations donot differ only in their personal preferences, they differ also, and most significantly, in the reasons for which they are
reading a translation at all." (Savory, 57) the form of translation should meet their purpose of reading the translation. Savoury classifies the readers of translations into four groups and he mentions their purpose of reading the translation and suggests the form of translation. The reader analysis of savory can be represented thus:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>S.No</th>
<th>Reader Group</th>
<th>Knowledge of SL</th>
<th>Purpose of Reading translation</th>
<th>Form of Translation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Reader I</td>
<td>No Knowledge of SL</td>
<td>Out of curiosity and interest in literature</td>
<td>Free Translation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Reader II</td>
<td>A little knowledge of SL (Student of SL)</td>
<td>Learning SL by reading its literature with the help of translations.</td>
<td>Literal Translation in readable form.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Reader III</td>
<td>Knows SL</td>
<td>To recollect the past experiences of reading the text.</td>
<td>Translation that sounds like translation.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Reader IV</td>
<td>Knows SL and TL (Scholar)</td>
<td>To find pleasure in occasional touches of scholarship or making comments.</td>
<td>Translation with a touch of scholarship</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>