



TRANSCENDING LANGUAGE AND CULTURAL BOUNDARIES THROUGH TRANSLATION

DUTT ALKA

Master in Foreign Languages and English Lang. & Lit.
125, Navjivan Vihar, New Delhi-110017



ABSTRACT

Translation as means of communication has achieved its goal. Ends met on cultural level have justified the means. Modern day societies have lost touch with their culture and tradition; new lease to the dying cultures and traditional values has been provided by translated works of notable writers. Women translators have done much good to the fair sex by removing what is termed as 'taboo writing'. Publishing houses like Radhakrishna, Vani and Rajkamal, are publishing translations of French, Russian, English, Latin American, German and African languages. Dalit literature has found voice in Hindi translations. Linguistic clusters have benefitted the most due to efforts put in by translators. Award winning literature is reaching every nook and corner of the world; a vote of thanks for this goes to the translators. Earlier translations came with hues of Colonial complexes. Today translation has broken away from the old ties. Translation services have not only kept alive age old literature but have also managed to infuse a new life into them. Evolving of new methods of translation has added to the already flourishing profession. This field has touched all wakes of life. Though our discussion is about literary texts, yet it is essential to say that translation has contributed much to scientific, medicinal, technical, and psychological fields of study. Biology, Chemistry, Physics and Social Sciences along with many more subjects of high importance have been touched by translators to help man live in a comfortable and decent manner. Many special institutions and publishing houses are involved in the promotion of translation works.

© Copyright KY Publications

Article Info

Received on :10/03/2015

Revised on: 17/03/2015

Accepted on: 23/03/2015

1. INTRODUCTION

It is not easy to define literature. Definition of what "true literature" is has always been under a scanner. For different people, literature comes with a different meaning and a whole set of new explanations. All words that appear on paper are not part of literature. General definition of literature for a graduate student means that he is going to study

drama, poetry and novel during the duration of his course. Without the support of a strong and good language, good literature is not possible. And by using the word "language" we commonly understand that it is all about correct usage of punctuation, a good command over vocabulary and well-formed sentences to capture a reader's attention.

2. RESEARCH

All good poetry, drama, fiction and other forms of writing are generally true expressions of a writer's feelings. Literature portrays a reality and that reality cannot be negated. What is "reality" for a writer? Perhaps it is what he sees, perceives, reads about, talks about, hears from others and learns from other sources. After getting all facts together he pens them down on a paper. Anything that delights a reader is considered to be literature by many avid readers. If this is true, then why aren't students taught common romantic novels that were at one time a craze with almost every teenage girl and housewives too. Mills and Boons came with an imaginative world of a dashing 30 year old man and a beautiful damsel in her 20s; they live happily in the end but only after an explosive relationship that keeps sparks flaring-up throughout the story.

Literature has come a long way since it was recorded on dried leaves. Bards had preserved old myths, tales of valour and folklores by relating them by word of mouth. Written word spread far and wide on the advent of printing press. National literature travelled to other parts of the world under the hands of good translators. Johann Wolfgang Von Goethe had already predicted that in years to come literature would be available for international circulation. Today original translated works are being re-translated and this is further enriching the literary world.

3. FINDINGS

In colonies under British regime, translation had an important role to play in the governance of a territory. Work could easily be carried out by the administrators with the help of few literate locals. Scope of misunderstanding between the governing bodies and those being governed was less. Though, at times some people misused this power to reap benefits out of it. After the abolition of colonies, English assumed the role of a global language. People readily accepted it as a medium of communication. Culturally divided world became one under its common banner.

Lot was written in English language as people had been subjected to it for a long period. Elite of the society were the first to use it. Need for translation however rose quickly due to various reasons.

Each language had its own specific structure. A typified world is conceptualized by a language. History of a place, cultural and religious practices also influence a language. Translation is certainly not an ordinary process. It is a time consuming and tedious activity. All senses are alert for a translator during his work. A native translator not only translates his own language to a foreign one; but during the whole process he is mentally translating all thoughts that are flitting through his mind, all that he eyes are taking in, all that he is feeling and perceiving, all that his culture has given to him down the years and all rites and rituals that his community has given to him. It does not end here, he also takes into account the words spoken around him and the spoken interaction that he has had with other people. Hence, a supposedly mundane activity assumes and plays the role of a grand activity.

Aim of a translator is to give to the readers the same kind of understanding and pleasure that he has received on reading the original text. Just like any other profession, a translator too faces lots of problems from the start of his work to its finish. There can be many reasons behind this. No matter how good a translator might be, first and foremost it is very essential for him to know about the author's point of view regarding his own writing. Difficulty arises when one wants to translate a novel like *Pride and Prejudice* but its writer, Jane Austen, is not around. In such a case one falls back upon all the material that is available on the author and on all kind of criticism the novel has gone through, what opinion the readers hold about the book and the author in question.

A bad translated work can be due to lack of finances, lack of time, lack of resources, an uncompromising publisher and lack of targeted readers. Sometimes an author is in a hurry to get his work translated in order to make money. He thinks his original works have sold well and so why not strike when the iron is still hot? And here is where the problem starts. Translator needs to understand the political and cultural background of the people before presenting to them a text which would not hurt their sensibilities in any manner. During translation process he might need to change some facts to avoid unwanted publicity. Sometimes an overseas

reader might not be interested in a book that is talking about something that is of importance to only one niche of a community of some country. If he does not understand what an Indian custom is like, why would he like to read about it? Such problems certainly do not bode well for the translated work.

Translation of idioms, phrases and local jargon can pose a lot of problem as there is no particular dictionary to deal with this problem. Shakespeare, master of puns, poses mighty barriers for translators. The same can perhaps be said for John Donne, the great metaphysical poet.

Translating plays requires great artistic skill. To be a good translator of a play like Shakespeare's "Hamlet", a person needs to be of a sympathetic and understanding nature. Knowing a character inside out is very essential for a person who is trying to decipher what a character like Hamlet is trying to say. Psychology of Prince of Denmark, language that he uses and particular characteristic that makes him stand out, has to be understood clearly for the success of this translated work. Remarkable approach by two Chinese translators namely Wang and Huang in translating this difficult work is highly laudable in modern day translations. While Wang relies on ancient traditional Chinese novel criticism for translating the play, Huang uses images, theatre art, structure, performance effect, language, characters and stage details for his success as a translator of this great play.

Writer, who is under an emotional spell, keeps writing about each and every thought that flits across his mind. Later on revising his work, he realises that much is there that is unsuited to the creation or unwanted for the targeted readers. Lot of editing is done before the final script is ready for publication. A translator translating a piece of writing has a heavier task at hand as he needs to keep in mind that the original meaning of the text has to be retained along with translation done in a manner that would generate and maintain readers' interest in the piece of translated writing.

Translated books have assumed an identity of their own down the years. People are always looking forward to something new to read; yet some translations that are trying to come out with

something extraordinarily new, fail to capture the attention of their readers. Rabindranath Tagore translated his own writings and people loved to read even those because they knew that they will only gain out of reading them. But even though he translated his own works, yet he was always cautious in leaving out the most difficult passages. Beauty of some Bengali verses could not be reproduced in a foreign language in the same manner.

There was a time when Indian books were only translated from one Indian language to another. Global acceptance of a book requires a book to be translated into English in today's competitive age. Good and mediocre translations of Indian literature can be found on the shelves of foreign bookstores and libraries. It has also been noticed that many of these translated versions have been re-translated into Indian languages. This process of re-translation at times takes away true meaning out of the original writing. Misplaced or displaced words are death knell to original beauty of the work

4. CONCLUSION

For translators translation is all about transference or transmigration of a spirit from old body to a new one; it is also about making another's thoughts, beliefs, ideas and ideology etc. into one's own. Moreover translation is a translator's dialogue with one's own thinking and that of the other's.

REFERENCES

- Boom Translation and Postcolonialities - Orient
Black Swan
www.ntm.org.in/download/ttvol/volume3/Articles
www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/world-_literature
www.dlibrary.acu.edu.an
www.jsto-org/stable/10 Journal of South Asian Lit,
Vol.21, N2
www.tranlationdirectory.com
www.translation.babylon.com
www.rjelal.com