



RESEARCH ARTICLE

IS POETRY LOST IN TRANSLATION? WITH REFERENCE TO BHARATHIYAR'S
"KAANI NILAM VENDUM"

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ABSTRACT

Translation is an art of transcreating the source text and making it readable for the target language audience. In other words, it is a process of decoding the source language text and encoding it in the target language. The main objective of this paper is to discuss the problems faced by the translator while translating poetry. The essence of poetry lies behind the experience of the poet. Similarly, the translation and the translator may not have the same experience, which has been undergone by the original author. Yet, there may be loss of emotions that the translator must be well-read and should have the mastery over the languages. The problems faced by the translator will be discussed in detail in this paper with regard to the theoretical approach.

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INTRODUCTION

"In translation, the language facility is not enough; blood and sweat are the secret."

-Samuel Putman.

The vocal sounds from which the languages are produced are inborn. Each sound has a rhythmic pattern, in collaboration with every other sound, a language is born. In accordance to the language, there are dialects, idiolect, Creole and so on. Obviously, language plays a pivotal role in every man's life. Without language, man is let loose in this world because the role of communication is pivotal. Every language has given birth to literature. For instance, English literature comprises of the works by and far by the inhabitants of the British Isles in the English language from days immemorial. Thereby, literature is an artistic form of aesthetic excellence. It is the reflection of life and mirrors the society. It is largely divided into prose and poetry, and further classified as fiction, nonfiction, biographies and quite lot number of genre. Each form has significant features in it. Every literature is distinctly differentiated from the other by the high fence of language which has an intimate and inevitable interconnection with the nation. Though, English is considered as second language to the orient i.e. the people of the East.

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The usage of the universal language is multidimensional either it be official or unofficial. In some cases, the language has been localized which has the impact of the regional culture and customs in it. In the present scenario, there are many translators and translations highlighting the importance of translation. As the range of the reading public increases, the translation of the source language text to the target language increases in proportion. Translation paves way for an individual to familiarize oneself with the words or phrases those are used in other countries. For illustration, adieu, bon voyage etc., has come into common use in formal occasions. It is beyond question that translation has become an important discipline in the present situation. The art of translation entails accuracy, flexibility, correctness and clarity, in order to produce the translation readable. Subsidiarily, the translation should fulfill the ultimate expectations of the foreign readers who would accept and recognize the artistic feasibility of the translator and translation. Translation is an art of transcreating the source text and making it readable for the target language audience. While commenting on a new enterprise, all translators undergo this universal dilemma: Is the translator faithful to the original text or does he create a new one? This is an unanswered question in the art of translation. When the text is more literary, it is more challenging to translate because a literary text is different from other kinds of discourse. When it switches over to professional texts that include scientific and factual data, the chief aim of the translator becomes simpler than the literary text. The translator concentrates on those

details and makes the information of the original accessible to the target language audience or monolingual reader. In that sense, the original or the novelty of the text does not matter, but the information weighs. On the other hand, when it comes to literature, the translator rebuts simplicity and the process of translation becomes a mere test of the translator's creativity rather than the skills employed. This is the reason why many translators of literature end up as a creator of their own. Some translators wish to produce the exactness of the original in the target language failing to look after its literariness. This is evident in P.R. Ramachander's translation particularly when it is compared with the more literary translation of the same poem produced by another translator. The former believes that addition, omission or change on the original text may distort its beauty in it. However, according to the latter, who translates the same content, the translation is close to the original, without marring its poetic beauty. In other words, the latter is considered to be more faithful to the source text rather than to the target language. At the outset, the composition of the two translated version of the same poem is entirely different. Linguistic or structural comparison will render a deformed version. Focussing on this thought, the translation of an individual can be recognized as close kin to, if not the direct an offspring of the original. Nevertheless, what seems to be P.R. Ramachander's pitfall actually is the true asset of his translation. He has messed with the poem's basic structure; changing the distinguishing features that given the poem its charm and strength for decades. The latter has managed to grasp the crux of the poem and has attempted to translate the true spirit of the poem. The former has employed 'prosody' whereas 'free verse' becomes the tool of the latter. Thus, the basic need for the translation, highlighted here is making a poem from a poem.

While analyzing P.R. Ramachander's to that of the original, it is evident that he has done 'transliteration', for instance, "four pretty pillars and several floors". In the art of translation, form or the structure lies with more importance, because when the reader reads the source language text and target language text, the mind of the reader is stereotyped. The original has stanzas which are not in case with his translation. It is obvious that P.R. Ramachander has attempted to suit his to the vernacular readers. Similarly, in his translation "Nightingale" cannot be considered, because he had employed the concept of "borrowing". Such that in his translation the poetic essence is lost. While analyzing an individual's translation of Bharathiyar's "Kaani NilamVendum", the poetic essence is retrieved. It has closeness to that of the original. Though the vocabulary may seem to be bombastic, the actual scenery presented by the original writer is brought into limelight when the words are decoded; for instance, "postulate me with Splendiferous colonnade". In this case, the source language text and target language text go hand in hand with each other. To some extent, in this latter translation, a poem is made from a poem. The translation of poetry is basically considered as the most difficult; nevertheless, it is highly demanding. Especially in the field of literary translation, the translation of poetry has become a significant subject for a great deal of discussion, where translated poetry is universally accepted and has become the part of the target language poetic tradition. Some notable examples are Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat of Omarkhayam* (1859) and Pound's *Cantos* (1925-70). Indeed, Robert Frost defines poetry as 'that which is lost in translation.' It is discussed that translation of poetry with regard to literary translation involves more challenges than translating poetry, the translator is

expected to produce a text that will function as a poem in the target language. While approaching the problems faced by the translator of poetry, it is divided into two phases that includes pragmatic and theoretical approaches. The former is widely favoured by the practicing translators and the theoretical approach by the linguists. A typical example of pragmatic approach is the view expressed by W.S. Merwin as in Weissbord 1989:139, "I continue in the belief, you know, that I don't know how to translate, and that nobody does. It is an impossible but necessary process, there is no perfect way to do it, and much of it must be found for each particular poem as we go."

It is noticeable because the practicing translators tend to identify the specific problems while they encounter in translating a particular poet, and with solutions they come forth in the process of translation. The process involved in the art of translating poetry is presented by Jones (1989) in three stages. It comprises of the understanding stage, where the close analysis of source text is significant. Secondly, in the interpretation stage the translator works on item by item throughout the text and toggles with the continual reference to the source text and the target text. The consecutive stage is the stage of creation in which it is evident that only in this stage the target language text becomes a sculptured artifact, adopting the target culture terms.

In the art of translating poetry, style holds a significant place. Poetry can either be translated into verse or prose as well. In the process of decoding the original and estimating the crux of it, prose acts as a medium. Stanley Burnshaw, one who advocates the translation of verse into prose in his *The Poem Itself* (1960) states that 'only way to experience the poetry of an alien language is to hear the sounds of the original while reading literal renditions.'

The source text and the target text can be further approached by applying theories in it. According to the sociolinguistic approach to translation, the social context defines what can be and cannot be translated. It also defines what can or cannot be accepted through selection, filtering and even censorship. In this perspective, a translator inevitably becomes the product of his or her society inclusive of his or her own socio cultural background which is present in the text. This approach is attributed with the school of Tel Aviv that includes figures such as Annie Brisset, Even Zohar and Gideon Toury.

With regard to this approach in the selected work of art, the translation done by Mr. P.R. Ramachander can be taken into consideration. Though the original author and the translator share the similar cultural background, there is loss of ardentness and ferventless enterprise. In case of the latter translator, there is presence of socio cultural difference marks the closeness to that of the original. With the use of vocabulary, it is evident that one can admit and mark the socio-cultural differences in the second translation. Following this, the paper highlights the semiotic approach which is a science that studies signs and its significance. In this approach, the collaboration of a sign, an object and an interpreter constitutes a meaning. From the perspective of semiotics, translation is thought of as a way of interpreting text in which encyclopedic content varies where each socio-cultural context is unique. It is discernible that, uniqueness and differentiation in the context is obviously seen. A noticeable aspect is that signifier and signified projects a transcendental sign that can be visualized

in imagination. Thus, the role of poetry with regard to imagination makes the reader feel replenished.

English translation

Translated by

P.R.Ramachander
Ragam Ragamalika
Thalam Aadhi/Thisra

- I need a small piece of land, Oh divine mother, A small piece of land, and there, In the midst of that small piece of land you should build me a house with, Four pretty pillars and several floors and there near the small pond, Coconut tree leaves should shine in small plants.

I pray thee Lord, for the purlieu:

Where you'd postulate me with splendiferous colonnade –
That the galleria colorized woodlet throughout;

Amidst that tillage, pauper me:
With a dwelling- abode;

Like sylvian aqueous, surround me with
Shades of flora ne'st the well.

Amidst that floral beds –
Unto that twilight, there arises

The flames of pearl as –
Cynthia turns up with grace.

Tis' music of linet soothes
That had filled the tranquility.

In that serene resilience, the Zephyrus
Breeze fills my will.

My honeybunch, go on, let's
Rejoice in the ally – oh! Divine lord

Thy surround us through;
Such that divinity and music

Shall foresee this expanse.

-G. PRIYADHARSHINI

- Near ten or twelve coconut trees, moon light should come Like a shining pearl and there the soft song of the nightingales, Should come and fall in my ears to make mind happy, Good light breeze should blow to make me further happy.
- To mix music there, there should be a virtuous wife there And in our play together, you should bring and give poems, And in that forest expanse, Oh mother you should provide guard, And by the great knowledge of music, you should look after this world.

காணி நிலம் வேண்டும் - பராசக்தி காணி நிலம் வேண்டும்; அங்கு
தூணி லழகியதாய் - நன்மாடங்கள்
துய்ய நிறத்தினதாய் - அந்தக்
காணி நிலத்தினிடையே - ஓர் மாளிகை கட்டித் தரவேண்டும் - அங்கு

கேணி யருகினிலே - தென்னைமரம் கீற்று மிளநீரும்
காணி நிலம் வேண்டும் - பராசக்தி காணி நிலம் வேண்டும்;

பத்துப் பன்னிரண்டு தென்னைமரம்-அதன்
பக்கத்திலே வேணும் - நல்ல

முத்துச் சுடர்போலே - நிலாவொளி முன்பு வரவேணும் - அங்கு
கத்துங் குயிலோசை - சற்றே வந்து காதிற் படவேணும், - என்றன்
சித்தம் மகிழ்ந்திடவே - நன்றாயிளந் தென்றல் வரவேணும்

பாட்டுக் கலந்திடவே அங்கே யொரு

பத்தினிப் பெண்வேணும் - எங்கள்

கூட்டுக் களியினிலே - கவிதைகள் கொண்டுதர வேணும் - அந்தக்

காட்டு வெளியினிலே - அம்மா, நின்றன் காவ லுறவேணும்- என்றன்
பாட்டுத் திறத்தாலே - இவ்வையத்தைப் பாலித்திட வேணும்

- சுப்ரமணிய பாரதியார்

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