

Culture Based Translation and Its Strategies

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Translation can be defined as the action or process of delivering text or message from one language into another. The process of translation is mainly a process of communication between different languages. J. C. Catford regards translation as "the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL). (Catford 20) Catford's approach is the notion of 'equivalence' from SL (source language) to T L (target language).

The theory of translation has developed from the purely linguistic approach of 1960's through the textual focus of the late 1970's to the culturally based orientation of today. Translation is viewed by exponents of this approach as a way of establishing contacts between cultures.

Language and culture being inextricably interwoven, the transference of the linguistic expression is precisely an attempt to integrate elements of one culture into another. In this respect a translator must not be only multilingual but multicultural also. Translation involves translation of culture as, "One does not translate languages, one translates culture (...). That it is possible to translate one language into another at all attests to the universalities in culture, to common vicissitudes of human life, and to the like capabilities of men throughout the earth, as well as to the inherent nature of language and the character of the communication process itself..." (Casagrande 338).

Translation, thus, becomes a cross cultural event and the translator has to formulate his translation strategies to translate source culture into target culture. It begins from the very choice of the text to be translated by the translator who has to keep acceptability and readability of the translated text in mind.

Translations from and to culturally closer linguistic system may be preferred at this stage. He should perceive and visualize contextual cultural intentions of the source text and then effect cultural contextual shift by finding out its closest corresponding cultural and contextual equivalents or to borrow E. J. Nida's phrase the "closest natural equivalent" (Nida 12).

To deal with these cultural problems translator is supposed to insert cultural filter in the initial stage of understanding and analyzing codification of the source text in the first stance. Here the cultural filter helps him in obtain various elements of source culture

which cannot go as they are in the target culture because of cultural differences. He can then tackle them by working on them and by finding out similar cultural equivalents or by depending on procedures such as importation of source language/culture expressions for precise communication of cultural information in case of exigency, literal substitution, lexical creation in the target language, omission and addition of cultural information.

A translator should be able to avail himself of language experts in source language/culture and target language/culture whom he can approach in trying times when he has no choice or finds it difficult to make a choice pertaining to cultural equivalent or employment of certain strategic procedure like substitution, addition or omission etc.

To translate one language into another language translator must be aware of the culture of both languages S L (source language) and T L (target language) without which it would be quite difficult job. For example 'Uphar' in Marathi signifies 'refreshment' but in Hindi it means 'a present'. And 'Shiksha' in Hindi means 'teaching or education' but in Marathi it means 'punishment'. In Marathi 'Razinama' is used in the sense of 'resignation', but in Hindi it means 'agreement'. Similarly the word 'Ashud' in Hindi means 'incorrect or impure', but in Kashmiri it means 'very precious' thing or 'medicine'. In Kashmiri 'Manhoos' means 'unsocial, gloomy' and in Hindi it means 'ominous' or 'inauspicious'. Such deceptive cognates will only make the translator's task complicated unless he has not a linguistic as well as cultural acquaintance.

The translator therefore has to bear in mind that there are no exact synonyms even in the same language and its dialects and that a language is not merely a medium through which experience is communicated but is something inseparable from the experience it communicates.

Translation is a kind of cultural bridge between languages. Culture includes language, worldview and social and linguistic norms. Cultural anthropologists have stressed on the socio-cultural significance of translation. "Translation is a way of establishing contacts between cultures (Ivir 36). Linguistic equivalence and cultural communication are complementary to each other as language is culture generative

and culture bound. The reader of a target language text looks for a total effect. No target language text is valued either for linguistic equivalence alone or for cultural transmission only. They are the two sides of the same coin. Culture becomes the goal and linguistic items become the medium to convey the cultural ethos. The cultural incongruence of the source language and of the target language has to be bridged by linguistic strategies.

Translation as an independent discipline, it has proved to be a bridge between different people, and, as a unifying medium, it has made literatures written in diverse languages accessible. The value of translation in practical matters like diplomatic and commercial relations can hardly be exaggerated today.

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