

Translation Works in Sanskrit Literature and Contemporary Literary Forms: An Analytical Study

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ABSTRACT

This paper deals with the translation of Sanskrit works to the other languages. It discuss the need of the translation for the survival, existence in the world scenario of the language where the rapid changes occur. It also go through the problems arise during the translation process due th cultural differences of languages. The paper takes different forms and matters for the application. It concludes with contemporary trends in translation.

KEYWORDS

Existence and survival of language, Cultural exchange, contemporary relevance,

ABBREVIATIONS

1: AS - Abijnanaśākuntalam2: MS - Maṇipravālaśākuntalam

INTRODUCTION

For the sake of scholarly discussions, Sanskrit literature may be studied in any one of the three forms namely, prose (gaḍyam) poetry, (padḍyam) and the combination of two (miśram). In Sanskrit, the form of literature is generally determined by its theme and structure. Mahākāvyas, Saṅgśakāvyas, Khandakāvyas, Akhyāyika, Campūs, Rūpakas etc. are commonly found in the corpus of Sanskrit literature in different forms. In later developments of poetics, the forms of these genres were defined and writers followed these definitions. The structure of poetics was framed and embellished with grammar, meter etc. In addition, the thematic structure was decided by Alaṅkāra, Dhvani, Rasa etc. All these constitute the traditional style of writing in Sanskrit Literature. In later times, the influence of foreign languages introduced new literary forms both into poetry and prose. If sonnets, epic, ode, lyric, ballad, elegy, idyll, pastoral elegy etc. were introduced into poetry, genres like novels and short stories were introduced into the prose. Among them, while the sonnet is structurally defined, other poetic forms are defined based on their themes. Attempts have been made and are still being made to translate novels, short stories and poems into Sanskrit.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The need for the translation for the survival and existence of the language

Language in its wider sense has been a medium of communication for several millennia and is believed to have started from 3000 BC. In Assyria, a land of multi-language culture, the inscriptions of the Emperor were translated from Assyrian to the other languages of the State. This is considered to be the first attempt in translation, in the recorded annals of history.¹

In this context, the word translation also should be verified. If we translate a pictorial structure to a literary form it is not a translation. It can be called trans-figure or trans-structure. So translation is a process of exchange between two languages, that is, between the source language and the target language.

"Translation is the effort to express the ideas of the source language in the target language, without lacking the ends and means, in an appropriate way."²

Different methods of translation are possible. For instance, faithful translation (translating the ideas exactly as in the source language), free translation, recreation etc. are some models. All these are relevant according to the needs of the situation. In the current scenario of global communication, the need for translation is very high. As language is the most important medium for mutual exchange, in every field, translators have an important and decisive role in that exchange. Through these exchanges, languages, both source and target, find new platform for their existence. Here the universal significance of the statement of Dandin, can be remembered.

"Iḍamanṭham ṭamahkr̥ṣnam jāyēṭa bhuvanaṭrayam

Yaḍi śabdāhvayam jyōtirāsamsāram na ḍīpyaṭē"³

STATEMENT OF RESEARCH PROBLEM

Cultural exchanges in Translation

"Literary translation is also a form of real-world context. This context may be examined in terms of gradually widening networks: translation production teams: the communities of interests, field, and systems with which teams interact; and the imagined communities in which they operate."⁴

From these, imagined communities can be selected for translational purposes. These communities can communicate their cultures to each other. They make the link between these communities in a social context. A genuine affection towards nature has prompted the translation of Ode to the West Wind to Sanskrit as MāruṭaSanḍēśa.

"Intercultural embassy literary translation as bridging intercultural divides by representing the best interests of source writer and culture to the receptor culture."⁵

Translations of Kalidasa's Abhijñānaśāakunṭalam introduced Indian style of narrating the relation between pristine nature and pure love to the receptors of different nations. If translation is possible between two different cultures eg., Indian and English, which can be called inter-cultural translation, intra-cultural translations are also very common. This intra-cultural translation is found when Nāṭyaśāstra was translated to Malayalam for the performers who practice Nāṭya with their dimensions. The formation of the Natāṅkuśa can be attributed to the result of this development.

In India, collaborations with other countries paved the way for new trends. Translations arose out of a need for mutual understanding and cultural exchange. Many Sanskrit literary texts were translated into other languages. Sanskrit also adopted the method of translation for the existence of language in multilingual cultures of the Global and National scenario.

METHODOLOGY

Here taking sanskrit works and its translations I experiment through the conversion of languages. By comparative method an attempt is made to different approaches of translation. An analysis is made to derive the merits and demerits of the approaches

ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

The problems arising while translating from other languages with different cultures.

While considering translation of a text, equivalence, effective communication and stylistic features of the source and target texts are to be closely examined. Aligning to the concept of equivalence, it should be sought whether the target text can be the replica of the source. Word-to-word or sense-to-sense are the two main approaches determining the equivalence. But the frame, style, culture, and everything can be the determinants of this aspect. The aesthetic experience, aesthetic enjoyment, aesthetic pleasure, sentiments etc. conveyed by words are tested with the Sanskrit word Rasa. It may be concluded that the word Rasa can be equivalent only to Rasa.

With the sense-to-sense approach, we can compare two translations of the same text-

"Cīyatē bālīśasyāpi satkṣētrapatitā kṛṣiḥ

Na śālēhstambakaritā vapturguṇamapēkṣatē." ⁶

Translation I

"The tillage of even a blockhead will prosper in fertile soil. The luxuriant growth of the rice does not depend upon the talents of the sower." ⁷

Translation II

"The cultivation of (seed sown by) even a foolish person when bestowed (scattered) on a good field(ie. a fertile soil), thrives the being formed into ears (ie. luxuriant growth) śālī stands not in need of (does not depend upon)any excellence on the part of the sower." ⁸

Source text	Translation I	Translation II
kṛṣih	Tillage	The cultivation of (seed sown by)
bālīśa	Block-head	foolish person
satkṣētra,	Fertile soil	on a good field (ie. a fertile soil)
stambakaritā	Luxuriant growth	the being formed into ears (ie. luxuriant growth)
śālēh	Of rice	Of śāli
vaptuh	Of sower	on the part of sower
guṇa	talent	excellence
patitā		bestowed (scattered)
apēkṣatē	does not depend upon	stands not in need of (does not depend upon)
Cīyatē	prosper	thrives

The first translation does not consider the word-to-word approach. It concentrates on the total sense of the verses. The literal meaning of the words is not a subject matter of this translation. The reader can see the minimum usage of words for communication in this approach. The omission of certain words like patitā will not affect the communication process. But the second translation takes the word meaning also into account. See-Stambakaritā -the being formed into ears, satkṣētra-on a good field, apēkṣatē-stands not in need of. But this translation is aware of the intended meaning which is given in brackets. This clarifies the type of rice denoting śāli for śāli where the difference with vṛihī can be noticed. When a scientific text is translated technical problems may occur at times. For example, Paribhāṣā-

"Gouṇamukhyayōrmukhyēkāryasamptatyayah" (15)

"When a word besides its primary meaning possesses a secondary meaning, an operation (which may be taught in grammar concerning words) takes effect (only) when the latter conveys its primary (but not conveys its secondary) meaning."⁹

We can see an explanatory sentence, for Gouṇamukhyayōh- when a word besides its primary meaning possesses a secondary meaning and mukhyē- the latter conveys its primary (but not conveys its secondary) meaning. Though the words, mukhya and gouṇa, are technical they are not found in common usages of the Sanskrit language. But, to understand the technicality, such explanatory sentences are needed.

We can move to another translation of Vyākaraṇa-

"Na dhātulōpārdhadhātukē"¹⁰

The guṇa and vṛddhi substitutions which otherwise would have presented themselves, do not take place when such an ārdhadhātuka (ārdhadhātukamśēṣah 3-4-114) affix follows which causes a portion of the root to be elided

This is an exception to sūtra 3. By that sūtraiks were to be guṇated or vṛddhīd and by sūtra 7-3-84the root is to be guṇated before all ārdhadhātuka termination."¹¹

Here we find that difficulty arises for the translator to explain the words ārdhadhātuka, guṇa and vṛddhi which are technically related only to Vyākaraṇa. We can explore more examples but the concise nature of the paper prompts us to limit the discussion to the above examples.

3. Analysis, structural and thematic, of traditional Sanskrit writings and new translations.

Earlier works, though accepted themes different from traditional style, preserved the traditional structure eg- Mugalābharaṇam, Āṅgalasāmrājyam, etc. Earlier translation works from Sanskrit to other regional languages are found to keep the idea and structure in the traditional style, also. But there can be some deviations as seen in the translation of the following verses-

"Anukāriṇipūrvēṣāmyuktarūpamidamtvai.

Āpannābhayasatreṣupouravāhkhaldīkṣitāh."¹²

Translation of Maṇipravālasākuntalam of KeralavarmaValiyakoyittampuran can be examined.-

"Guruvartmaniniṣṭhayōtirikumpuruṣōttamsabhavānuuyuktamētat

Puruvamṣyaraṣramārtibhājāmurubhadrāyagrhitadīkṣarallō"¹³

We can compare.

Abijnanaśākuntalam (AS)	Maṇipravālasākuntalam (MS)	Additional words in MS	Omitted words from AS in MS
Anukāriṇipūrvēṣām	Guruvartmaniniṣṭhayōtirikum	Urubhadrāya	satreṣu
tvayi	bhavānu	puruṣōttamsa	
yuktarūpamidam	yuktamētat		
dīkṣitāh.	grhitadīkṣarallō	grhīta for prtyayaitac	
pouravāh	Puruvamṣyar		
Āpannābhaya	ārtibhājām	ajasram	

Here the translation is almost in Sanskrit but with different meter. Some ideas like puruṣōttamsa, Urubhadrāya are added. Important ideas like satreṣu are omitted.

There are possibilities to experiment with structural conversion in the translation of other language poetry to Sanskrit. Example-

"O wild west wind, thou breathe of autumns being

Thou from whose unseen presence, the leaves dead

Are driven like, ghosts from an enchanter fleeing"

(Ode to the west wind, PB Shelly)

Sanskrit verses-

"Pracanda hē paścimavāta tē prabhābharaśśaratprāṇadharāyatē tava

Adṛśyasattā harati praparnikām jirnām yathā mantrakarah pisācinim "¹⁴

Here prabhābharaṣ is an addition. But the change to Sanskrit restructure to possess the characteristic

features of Sanskrit meter, linings, rhymes etc. New creations in modern Sanskrit imitate the styles of novels, free poetry etc. But the translations, though rare, can experiment with such possible styles. Structures of Western poetries can also be adopted. But the sonnets may be the type of poetry which concerns with both structure and sentiment. In Sanskrit, the meter and the emotion are more closely related, as Viyōginī used in Vilāpakāvya. Here we can remember the words of Anandavardhana-

"Śṛṅgārē vipralambhākhyē yamakādinibandhanam

Śaktāvapi pramāditvam vipralambhē viśēṣavat" ¹⁵

So, the cultural difference in poetical approaches may hinder when Sanskrit text is translated to other languages. As Sanskrit has a well-defined structure the conversion of other poetry to Sanskrit with its characteristics is convenient. The creative process of Western styles like sonnets, epic, ode, lyric, ballad, elegy, idyll, pastoral elegy etc. in Sanskrit can be experimented with.

FINDING AND CONCLUSIONS

Contemporary trends in Sanskrit translations and whether they are contemporary compared with the literature of other languages.

From the above discussions we can conclude that for the existence of the classical language Sanskrit, we have enough sources in the world. Translation is one of the best methods for the perpetration of any language. Structure is not a matter of concern in creative writing anymore. But we can write in many styles. We now use the translation of Sanskrit texts to other languages only for communication. This translation style may be data-driven which denotes the translation process as a behavior. Sometimes it may be an interpretation to the reader. At other times it may be theory-driven which can be termed as cognitive –pragmatic. But translation works from other sources to Sanskrit can surely recapture its identity keeping its traditional style intact and as a result, there exists the possibility of redefining the tradition to suit contemporary trends. Consequently, we can expect an increase in the number translated works in Sanskrit as well as a proportionate increase in the number of readers too.

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