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Problems of Translation in Case of Translating Poetry

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Abstract:

This paper deals with the problems of translation in case of translating poetry from source language to target language. Since the dawn of civilization poetry has been composing by so many poets. Poetry is the first genre of the world. But in case of translating poetry it is very difficult to translate the feelings, rhetorical language, phonological, syntactic and semantic patterns inherent in the poem. So the translator has to face so many boundings, sometimes s/he can overcomes it and sometimes not.

Translation means transference of meaning from one language to another. It does not mean exact translation of words from Source language to Target language, there may be some addition or rejection from source language to target language. But the translator should possess enough knowledge in both Source language and target language. Translation is associated with both linguistic and cultural activity and it helps to communicate with persons of various cultures. But in case of translation, a translator feels so many problems- Many ages ago Cicero has summed up a translator's dilemma:

"If I tender word for word, the result will sound uncouth and if compelled by necessity I alter anything in the order or wording. I shall seem to have departed from the function of a translator."

Key words: Phonological, syntactic, semantic, cultural activity

According to Meenakshi Mukherjee- "the act of translation is voluntary, that is the material has been chosen by the translator himself and the prime mover is a compelling desire to recreate."

In case of any kind of genre, translation from source language to target language is difficult but it is most difficult in case of translating poetry.

If we go through the four lines of Oriya poem "Chilika" by Radhanath Ray, we can understand how each and every word has been weaved with deeper passion and there is a sense perception with archaic flavour.

"Utkata – kamala – bilasa – dirghika,
Marala – malini - nilambu- chilika,
Utkalara thui charu alankara,
Utkala bhuvane shovara bhandara."

This verse is similar to many petalled flower in which each petal has its own fragrance which is comprehensible by one's sensual organs.

Similarly if we go through history of Bengali Literature, there are so many poems whose each and every word cannot be translated accurately into English or any other vernacular language. If it is translated into prose, the translated text will loss its original sense. So how can a text without original meaning provide pleasure to the reader? There will be no value of the text to the reader. E.g., if we go through the poem of Vidyapati, we can realize this.

"Kantaka gari kamala sama-pada-tala,
কনটক গাড়ি কমল সম পদ তল
Manjiro chirohi jhanpi.
মনজির চিরহি ঝাঁপি,
Gagori bari dhari kori pichol,
গাগরি বারি ধারি করি পিছল
Choloto hi anguli chapi."
চলত হি অংগুলি চাপি

How can one translate the inner meaning of the poem properly? If we go through Bengali poet Kamini Roy's poem "Sukh", we will be unable to translate some words of the poem-

"Nai kire sukh? Nai kire sukh?—

নাই কিরে সুখ? নাই কিরে সুখ?—

Key words- Voluntary, genra.

E dhora ki sudhu bishadmoi?

এ ধরা কি শুধু বিষাদময়?

Jotone jwolia kandia morite

যতনে জ্বলিয়া কাঁদিয়া মরিতে

Keboli ki noro janam loi? -

কেবলি কি নর জনম লয়?—

Kandaite sudhu biswacharita

কাঁদাইতে শুধু বিশ্বচরিতা

Srijen ki nore emon kore?

সৃজন কি নরে এমন করে?

Mayar chholone uthite porite

মায়ার ছলনে উঠিতে পড়িতে

Manabjiban abani pore?

মানবজীবন অবনী 'পরে'?

...

Porer karane swartha diya boli

পরের কারণে স্বার্থে দিয়া বলি

Ejiban mon sokoli dao,

এ জীবন মন সকলি দাও,

Tar moto sukh kothao ki ache?

তার মত সুখ কোথাও কি আছে?

Apanar kotha vulia jao.

আপনার কথা ভুলিয়া যাও।

Porer karane moroneor sukh;

পরের কারণে মরণের সুখ ;

Sukh sukh kori kendo na ar

'সুখ' 'সুখ' করি কেঁদনা আর,

Jotoi kandibe jotoi vabibe

যতই কাঁদিবে ততই ভাবিবে

totoi baribe hridoy – vhar.

ততই বাড়িবে হৃদয়-ভার।

...

Apanare loye bibrata roHITE

আপনারে লয়ে বিব্রত রহিতে

Ase nai keu abani pore,

আসে নাই কেহ অবনী 'পরে

Sokoler tore sokole amra,

সকলের তরে সকলে আমরা

Proteke amra porer tore."

প্রত্যেকে আমরা পরের তরে।

Key words- Bishadmoy, biswacharita, bibrata.

Here in the first line the meaning of the very word 'sukh' is pleasure. But there is no English synonym of the word 'bishadmoy' and 'biswacharita' in the second line and fifth line respectively.

If we go through the greatest poet Rabindranath Tagore's poetry, we can see that Tagore being an expert of English, writes so many poems in Indian vernacular Bengali because some cases it is easy to express each and every minute feelings in vernacular language but not in English. E.g., in *Kheya*, Rabindranath Tagore describes the dawn in the following words:-

“Aj buker boson chinre fele
 আজ বুকের বসন ছিড়ে ফেলে
 Danriyeche ei pravatkhani.
 দাঁড়িয়েছে এই পরভাত খানি
 Akashete sonar aloi
 আকাশেতে সোনার আলোয়
 Chhoriye gelo tanhar bani.”
 ছড়িয়ে গেল তাঁহার বাণী (“Bikash”)

Here Dawn is described as a woman who tears the cover of her breast and stands before us in her full glory. Hearing the message from her, the sky is flooded with golden light.

Probably the poet had no chance of knowing the some thousands of years ago when Visvamisra had worshipped the dawn in Sanskrit language. This kind of feelings and emotions cannot be described in English.

In case of great poetry, human experience is merged with experience which provides a meta language for social and cultural meanings. If we go through Keats' Ode to A Nightingale, we find that the poem is imbued with cultural meanings.

The very first stanza is as followed:

“My heart aches and a numbness pains
 My sense, as though of hemlock I had drunk,
 Or emptied some dull opiate to the drunks
 One minute past, and Lethe-wards had sunk:
 'Tis not through envy of thy happy lot,
 But being too happy in thine happiness,-
 That thou, light-winged Dryad of the trees
 In some melodious plot
 Of beechen green, and shadows numberless,
 Singest of Summer in full-throated ease.”

--These lines of the poem are full of rhetoric and symbols. It is impossible to translate even the rhetoric and symbols of these lines into another language. The purpose of the translator should be to reproduce what the author says but not what he means. According to K. Chellappan-

Key words- Hemlock, opiate, Lethe-wards, Dryad.

“this basic symbol is evolved in relation to other symbols in the poem, which again are generated in the context of the poem, though they also have traditional links. If the ultimate meaning of the poem depends on all these facts, and if some of the components like Ruth or Hippocrene belong to the particular milieu, what do we do with the equivalents in the target culture may not do, because they bring a whole world of associations.”

So in case of poetry translation, especially in translation of rhetorical language the problem of language is not easy to overcome. Jayanta Mahapatra rightly says-

“Any poem will not move fluently into translation, my own experience reveals the many hazards and difficulties encountered in the process.”

The most big problem which a translator faces in case of translating poetry is that he has to take into account both the linguistic and non-linguistic aspects of the poem and the recreation of the poem is must. The linguistic aspect includes sound pattern of the words, rhyming and rhythming while non-linguistic aspect deals with images, ideas and symbols based on culture of SL poem. In some cases the translator favours of 'verse for verse' translation. This brings to our mind the difference between the poetry of earlier ages which was written in metre and rhyme and modern poetry in free-verse. Poetry is actually abounds in figures of speech such as similes, metaphors, irony, paradox and full of phonological, syntactic and semantic patterns such as rhyming alliteration, versification, morphological parallelism, syntactic parallelism and above all syntagmatic and paradigmatic relation between words. So, Aurobindo has given two options of translating poetry: “one to keep it strictly to the manner and turn of the original, (and) the other is to take its spirit, sense and imagery and produce them freely so as to suit the new language.”

At the end we can say that in spite of all these problems, the translator tries to translate with the sense of original text. It is such problem that make the art of translation challenging and really amazing.

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- Key words-Ruth,Hippocrene,syntagmatic.paradigmatic