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Language, Literature, and Knowledge: The Role of Translation in Regional Contexts

Nandini
Research Scholar
Central University of Haryana,
Mahendergarh, Haryana
ynandini871@gmail.com

Abstract

India is a vast country with numerous regional languages, and to pass on local traditions, wisdom, and cultural practices to a larger public, translation is very important. Translation has been a boon in transferring knowledge traditionally written in one language to every corner of the globe. It is not merely a linguistic exercise, but also a means of producing and exchanging knowledge. Translation has made it possible for a regional text, written in a language limited to a particular area and accessible to few people, to cross boundaries and reach a large audience worldwide. This paper tries to examine the link between regional literature, the importance of translation, its limitations, and the spread of knowledge made possible by translation. The paper strongly suggests that translation is not only a change of language but also a translation of work that conveys the social and cultural meaning of a language along with it. Translation strengthens the objectives of a particular text to all over the world. Translation can help in understanding of literature, cultures of the field which are not familiar to us. As far as Indian languages are audiences and the texts have been understood and writers have been appreciated as well. At the same time, translation does raise some questions that how can a different language can match the authenticity and emotions of a particular language that are attached with it to a particular set of community through centuries. It is to be mentioned here that translation must be seen as a creative work not only technical, as choices of words and by how much it matches the similarity with the original texts can influence understanding of the language. The paper discusses how translation can facilitate knowledge expansion and serve as an important bridge between regional texts and a wide audience, including intellectuals around the world.

Keywords: Translation, Regional Literatures, Knowledge Circulation, Mu Cultural Exchange, Indian Literatures

Introduction:

Language does not work only as a tool for communication, but with language, emotions of the people are also involved. Language carries the culture, tradition, and knowledge of the people. India, a

land of diversity in cultures and have uncountable dialects, that changes roughly in every 5km radius, language holds a deeper connection with the people as it represents their thoughts and insights about their surroundings. But, the knowledge and wisdom is only get limited to a particular area lacking a larger audience.

Then, translation of language becomes hugely significant. With the help of translation, a piece of literature can move across linguistic boundries, which will allow the knowledge restricted to few people to all over the world. Translation allows the blending of different literary cultures with the people and gives the opportunities to know about various adaptations of texts. It can be said that rather being a simple method of replacing the words with one language to other, translation is a complex process which involves the acceptance of thoughts of people not only of present times but also born centuries ago.

As regional literature is also considered, the relationship between translation and the pass on of knowledge becomes more vital. Several important works written in Bengali, Tamil, Marathi, and Malayalam, which are relatively regional, have reached a wide audience through translation. Readers from diverse linguistic backgrounds can now engage with these regional literatures. Also, it brings on the local experiences of literature and intellect at the national and global levels.

However, translation cannot be thought of as a simple and direct process. It consists of several decisions that can affect how a particular text can be understood in different contexts. It becomes the duty of translators to find proper words that are equivalent to any term, as a poor choice of words cannot retain the original context. Thus, wrong translations can change the meaning of literature in the sense of how it is presumed.

Some vital questions also arise about power and who represents it through translation. It is an open-known fact that some texts of a particular language are widely translated and circulated as it has big audience but on the other hand, some texts with fewer audiences are not given much attention. This uneven distribution of translated work shows that the translation process works on the audience demand of the translation work. So, it is important to study not only how translation facilitates the transmission of knowledge but also how a translated work retains its value.

This study will analyze how translation can connect various languages and literatures, whether regional or widely spread throughout the world. The study examines multilingual texts and how literary communities gather, facilitating the movement of knowledge and shaping society's intellectual level.

Interpretive Translation Practice:

Translation should be looked as interpretive rather as a mechanical process. It is often seen as translation is seen only as the change of words of one language to the other, but it is far more deep and complex process that it suggests. It is not the changing of words, but translation is more about understanding the texts and making the best interpretations.

Every language has its own texts that develop over a long history, are shaped by culture, and are informed by native speakers' experiences with certain words. Each language has its own slang for a particular activity and expressions. Words carry a deep connection to customs and cultural traditions, but they can be lost in other languages due to a lack of similar expressions and ways of saying things. For example, words used for kinship, rituals, and customs, as well as other local rituals, have deep meanings that are limited to the specific region where the language is used. Still, if we try to find a translation for these words, it may not necessarily capture the emotion they evoke in the indigenous community. In situations like these, it is the duty of translators to carefully understand and find suitable

words or words that are most related in the first language. They can retain the original word, explaining that suitable words are not found to match the feelings.

The duty of the translator, thus, is not limited to that of a converter of language. The translators have to perform and bear the responsibilities of a reader, a writer, and an interpreter simultaneously. They first need to understand the text in its original form, including minute details like the tone, style, and meaning.

After that, the text is to be translated into its own native language taking care of not changing the original meaning and nature. This whole process is complicated, and a deep knowledge of different languages is needed to ensure the authenticity and true essence of the text does not change.

Also, at that time, translators must balance two important goals: making the translation accessible to a large audience and preserving the original meaning and sense. It must be noted that, along with translation, comes negotiation, as a very academic change of words may sound unnatural, even if it aims to maintain the originality of the text. However, on the other hand, a slightly flexible translation may look smooth and maintain the natural flow, but it then lacks originality. It becomes the translator's responsibility to find a middle path that fulfils the demands of maintaining originality while keeping the flow smooth and natural.

How a text is understood is largely determined by these interpretive decisions. It should be noted that any translation is not a replica of the original but is produced from the translator's understanding of the text. It does not mean that translation is false. Still, it offers a new perspective in a new language without altering the original, as texts that circulate in multiple languages can take on new meanings depending on the audience.

When any text is translated, it is not merely replaced by words but also transformed into something else. The knowledge it has is interpreted in light of the new culture and region. Therefore, when something is translated, it not only carries the knowledge of previous texts but also helps shape the understanding and mindset of the new language and region.

Regional Literature as Site of Knowledge:

The Regional Literature is often seen as the medium for expressing artistic talent, but in reality, it holds important sites of knowledge. It demonstrates what local communities feels of the wider world and their understanding of it, it shows that their reach is limited to small area but the traditions and cultural heritage are rich. It is the regional literature only that’s helps us in knowing the lifestyle of the local communities through the reginal texts , including the poems, folk songs, plays that cover not only the historical aspect of the society but also gives the insights of imaginations of the regional authors. So, regional literature hold a big knowledge bank that is to be known to world and translation is one mean of it.

In a big country like India, the regional literature is not just what is written but also about the local lifestyles. The text written in a particular language by a local writer who has lived all his llife in the same area, depicts the lifestyle of a community in a true form. The depiction of agricultural activities, casteism in the rural society, role of women in the daily living, all these things can be seen through the writing of a local member. Regional literature is very important as it provides the minute details of the lifestyle of the people in a particular society, the cultures and traditions they belong to, and the rituals they follow. The regional literature is the place where one can find about the social hierarchy and how much of it is embedded in the minds of people. It is to be noted that the regional literature is not limited to specific areas but it it does addresses the core topics spread in Indian society. However, the works

are not well known to the public due to limited availability and accessibility, as they are written in languages only some people can read.

Here is when, translation plays a crucial role. It allows knowledge that was available only in one language and limited to a few people to be accessed and read widely by people from different backgrounds and countries, and provides them with the opportunity to read literature from a distant land and learn about the uniqueness of cultures they are not familiar with. Translation has made regional literature available to people of different linguistic backgrounds in their own language and helped in the widespread dissemination of stories.

It should be noted that, translation is a complex process and it is not merely replacing of words. Some challenges do arise during the translation process, such as finding suitable idiomatic expressions; connecting the literature to a new language with the same meaning and essence is not an easy task. The chances of losing the originality of the text are never zero, as replacing a text in a new language somehow loses its connection with the original. Nonetheless, translation has led to the widespread recognition of otherwise limited texts.

Translation and the Circulation of Knowledge:

The smooth flow of knowledge, ideas, stories, different cultures from one place to other can be done through the translation of literature as it is understood that any text held its importance only when it could be read and understood by people of different linguistic background than the original language in which the text is written. It is due to translation only that the knowledge of text is not limited to a particular region but is spread all over the globe, with wider audience and recognition of the work by people of different linguistic and cultural background.

For a regional literature, translation plays a very significant role as it is translation that can help in the spreading of its text beyond a specific boundary. The regional literature contains text which describe the daily lifestyle of the concerned area, about the historical aspects, legends and the customs with every minute details. Translation helps in availability of these texts to people belonging to different linguistic backgrounds. The translation of the text of a particular language, gives opportunities to people having different linguistic background to study and anlyze the text and potentially provide the commentary on it.

Here, it should be noted that translation does not mean merely substituting of words and phrases of a particular language but also in introducing the new cultural as well as intellectual context in the fray. People read a translated text and they form a image in their mind about all new cultures and traditions of a area to which they are not familiar with it. This leads to formation of new understanding and intrepretations, and also it establishes the fact that knowledge is not fixed but it continues to evolve.

In India, where a diverse linguistic society lives, translation has helped people understand the cultures of different states and geographical regions. Translation has also helped in reaching the international audiences as far as regional languages of India are concerned which were once confined to a particular state and were not having their literary presence in the country itself.

It should be taken into consideration that the circulation of knowledge through translation is not always as balanced. Few languages, especially those which are worldwide read and understood and have a strong base holds the upper hand in determining the works that need to be translated in which language. For instance, English is considered as an international language and with readers of English language is evenly spread out in the world, so most of the regional or language having less audience base are overpassed for translation into their language and English is preferred.

The other important aspect which should be seen is that not every text is selected for the translation process. The availability of a text in large volumes, the demand of that work in the public and the value it holds in the current scenarios are some of the factors which are taken in translation and publication.

But it should be noted that translation continues in the circulation of knowledge. It is translation which makes it possible in linking multiple viewpoints, forming literary relationships and acceptance of knowledge not in a country but internationally as well. Translation have made literature accessible to almost every person and it is thus make a significant step in recognising a literature throughout the world.

Translator as Cultural Mediator:

A translator holds a vital position as they act like a connecting link between two languages that represent different cultures during translation. Translator is not limited to changing words of one language and replacing them with other words of different language, but it their duty to act as a mediator, that could make understand the different language and cultures. This is very important for a translator as in regional literature, words hold a deep meaning with its culture.

The translator begins its work by reading of a text with deep concentration and interpreting the texts. Before the work moves towards the translation process, the translator is required to read it deeply and understand all aspects of the work, including its cultural background, the historical background, and its language and acceptance in the modern world. The translator should also think of the intellectual level of its potential audience and how things will pan out after the release of the work with carefully planning and deliberation.

The translator should decide how much of the original work to retain during the translation, as he/she also acts as a cultural mediator and should omit some cultural references that may seem unnecessary to the audience. Also, a translator on the other hand should also understand that how much the references needed to be explained in the translated work as it might feel very new and confusing for the readers as far as different cultures are concerned. The authenticity of the text is also important, but to make the text more viable and understandable, some text can be removed from the original part to make it more substantive.

The choices of what to edit and omit from the original text to make it more substantive provides a good creative mindset of the translator. As it is widely understood and accepted that translation is not only copying of the text from the original but also shaping it afresh for newer version. In doing so, the readers get exposed to the new culture and knowledge through the translated work. It makes the translation process a process of shaping the knowledge of its readers with new knowledge.

The other important duty of a translator is to discuss and negotiate the availability of a work and to measure its correctness. If a translated work is highly connected to the rules and originality, it tends to lose its effectiveness to cater to new audiences. But a flexible text that links to the original form and adds newer aspects without altering the original text will make the text smoother and easier to read and understand. A translator should abide itself to a text which is close to original and holds meaning in the new context.

The translator's appearance is very important. It is seen that translators' contributions are not well received and acknowledged as they remain in the background. It should be noted that translated work is a creative productivity and the translator should get the appreciation and acknowledgement it deserved. The translated works speak to the mindset and hard work of the translator, and it should not be ignored.

In the regional literature, the work of translator becomes very important. As they work as the link between two or more linguistic communities, this makes knowledge to travel across

borders. If translation were not present, it would have been impossible for regional literature to been accessible to large audiences.

It can be said that translators are not only an expert of languages but also works as a cultural mediator who shapes the world with intermixing two or more cultures together and tend to bring people close to each other's region and culture.

Challenges and Limitations Faced during Translations:

Although translation plays a significant role in connecting different languages and moving knowledge, it is not a simple process. Along with it come many obstacles to understanding a text in other languages. The challenges faced are not only limited to linguistic aspects but also include cultural, social, historical, and political aspects. If we understand these limitations on translation and find afind a more realistic and flawless procedure, then it will serve its purpose more effectively.

Finding equivalent words in a different language is a common problem for translators. Because each language has its own words, phrases, and idioms, and the meanings of words cannot be directly translated, translation is difficult. For instance, some idioms and phrases in one language have meanings that apply only to people in one region, but they do not translate into other languages in the same form. If these expressions are translated into a new language solely based on dictionary definitions, they tend to lose their originality and essence. It becomes the task of the translator to decide what to keep from the original form and what not, along with proper explanations in the target language.

Differences in the cultures of two languages and peoples also complicate translation. Any work written in history is likely to include references to customs and traditions that may sound alien to readers from a different cultural background. Descriptions of ethical values, social norms, and traditions may not hold or be relatable to people from different cultures. The translators, should be smart enough to find these differences and make them into new text which could be understandable and not change the originality.

The other big challenge faced during translation is the tone and style in which it is written. Religious texts often employ a special type of narration, including rhymes, wordplay, and images. This is because it is written on the established structure of the native language. When one text is translated into another, there is always a fear of matching the realness in the target language. A poem written in a native language will lose its rhyming patterns in the target language, while prose will seem to lose its connection to the local culture if introduced into a new culture. The translator has to decide which priorities to set for what is needed in the translation and what can be left behind.

The challenges in translation are not limited to linguistic and cultural aspects but also to power and hierarchy. It is a known fact that not all languages hold equal value in the translation world. It can be seen that languages with larger audiences and global use have greater influence. The result is that texts from particular languages are translated more regularly and on a larger scale than those from languages with smaller audiences. In India, English as the major influence of being an international language and the work translated in English get larger audiences than the work translated in other regional language. This give rise to imbalance in the movement of a language where biasness can be seen based on the audience demands.

Also, it is evident that texts which comes in the translation process have some restrictions also. It is not that every text goes into the translation process always goes into the process. It is determined by multiple factors like the demand of the work. The impact it would have on the society and

importantly the publishing trends in the market. It provides the information that knowledge is also selective and various impactful works does not even get published as they do not follow the modern demands and trend of the market.

Challenges can be seen in how the audience views and accepts it. The works that are simplified as the purpose for easy reading avoiding the complex words and reach large audience, sometimes lack accuracies and could not easily explain a particular complex cultural ritual, a character in a story or a complex scene of an epic. This raises doubts over the originality and authenticity of a translated work.

Though these challenges exist as in every field, they in no way undermine the value of translations and translators. Translators work very hard, and their efforts should be recognized for how they enable different linguistic backgrounds to be read and understood. The translation process is highly commendable, as, despite facing restrictions and challenges, it continues to grow and share knowledge, breaking linguistic barriers. It is not always about full accuracy but about the spread of knowledge.

Conclusion:

India, a country with multiple languages and cultures, translation plays a huge role in binding them all together. As the paper argues, literature is a national asset and if the regional literature confines to a limited space and audience, it will not be possible to cater the treasure to the world and also not to the other parts of the country. It is due to translation that these linguistic boundries can be broken and texts cold move from one place to other, reach a global audience and also ideas and knowledge of different communities can be studied at one place. Translation is not a natural process and is very complex. During translation, an understanding of the text is required, decisions are made about what to include and omit from the original texts so it becomes feasible to the current audience without diminishing the authenticity of the original text. Also, the translator needs to work as a cultural mediator who not only replace the words with other, but studies the whole new culture. The paper discusses how the movement of knowledge through translation is not the same. On one hand, a few languages have bigger audiences, and the replaced words and meaning can be easily found whereas on the other hand, in some languages, words with more impact and precise meanings are difficult to find. Despite it being a complex process and with limitations, the significance of translations cannot be minimized. Literature that was limited to a particular area and those were long back forgotten find a new life and audience with recognition, all due to translation. The blending of cultures and backgrounds is only possible through the translation. In the end, it can be concluded that translation acts as the connecting link between different linguistic and knowledge systems. It is due to translation only that it has become possible to understand the literature and cultures across regions.

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