Negotiating 'Equivalence' from Source Language to Target Language: Referring a Translation of George Herbert's Poem 'Virtue' in Punjabi

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Abstract

Translators tend to bring ideas by translating source texts into their own language. It is a fact that translation from a source language to the target language is a complex process. This complexity generates the obstacles for the translator at syntactic, semantic, conceptual or even communicative levels. The idea behind the paper is whether a translation of a text is 'semantic' or 'communicative', the obstacles negatively affect the operative procedures of translation. One of such obstacles is related with the idea of 'equivalence'. The idea determines the acceptability of a translated text and the motif of acceptability happens to be the compelling force behind the venture of every translation.

Introduction

It is an established truth that translation from a source language to the target language is a complex process. However, keeping in view the ideas of Broek and Jakobson, a suggestion of Gorjan can be exploited, when adopting translation procedures. But how the problem of 'equivalence' should be dealt, the concern remains alive. However, while negotiating with the problem of 'equivalence'. 'Equivalence' in translation should not be defined in terms of sameness and identity, but should rather be viewed as an approximate rendering of a text from a source language to a target language. But what should be the conditions of such an 'approximate rendering'? The paper suggests that a translator can rely on the illustrations of Savory. Savory (1957, 49) offers two principles – (a) A translation should render the words of the original, and (b) A translation should render the ideas of the original. Tytler, too states three fundamental requirements. (1) A translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original. (2) The style and manner of writing should be of the same character as that of the original. (3) A translation should have all the ease of the original.

The Main Paper

Rendering of texts from one language to another, through translation is a continuous activity from the past to the present. One of the reasons for the activity is perhaps; people assign certain values to the ideas in the texts of other languages. Thus they tend to bring those ideas, by translating the source text into their own language. It is a fact that translation from a source language to the target language is a complex process. This complexity generates the obstacles for the translator at syntactic, semantic, conceptual or even communicative levels. These obstacles also become the basis to express distinction between communicative and semantic translation.

According to Newmark, "Communicative translation is that which "attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original", whereas semantic translation is that which "attempts to render as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second 1anguage allow, the exact contextual meaning of the original" (1982, p39). Thus communicative translation is a free translation. It accentuates on the force and the effect of the message. It has a grace that is "smoother, clearer, more direct, more conventional conforming to a particular register of Language" (Newmark, 1982, 39). Semantic translation is a literal and handy translation. It highlights the content of the message. In addition, "it tends to be more complex, more awkward, more detailed, more concentrated and pursues the thought-process rather than the intention of the transmitter. It tends to be more specific than the original" (p39).

The current paper however is not aimed to reflect on various definitions of translation. The idea behind the paper is whether a translation of a text is 'semantic' or 'communicative' or of any other type, the obstacles negatively affect the operative procedures of translation. This position creates doubts in the mind of translator. In other words, a translator may not decide to adhere "either to the original text with its textual relations and the norms expressed by it and contained in it, or to the linguistic and literary norms active in the target language and in the target literary poly-system" (Toury, 1980: 54). If the translator subjects himself to the source text, the translation will tend to subscribe to the norms of the source text, and through them to the norms of the source language and culture. Such a choice results in what has been characterized as "adequate" translation (Even-Zohar 1990:46). If, on the other hand,

the translator subjects himself to the norms in the target culture, the result would be what has equally been referred to as an "acceptable" translation (Even-Zohar 1990: 46).

The motif of acceptability happens to be the compelling force behind the venture of every translation. However for a translation to be adequate or acceptable even at some level, in the 'target literary poly-system', the hurdle of 'equivalence' must be negotiated, if not crossed. The word equivalence' is a major terminological ambiguity in the field of translation. Contrasting its precise meaning in mathematics and logic, this term becomes ambiguous, vague and subject to various interpretations when used in the field of language and translation. Van Der Broek (1978, 32-33) writes, "It is the precise definition of equivalence in mathematics which forms the main obstacle of its use in translation theory. The properties of a strict equivalence relationship (symmetry, transitivity, reflectivity) does not apply to the translation relationship".

In the same way, Jakobson (1966, 232 — 239) considers that equivalence cannot be defined in terms of sameness. He sees that translation can be a complete version of the original, for translation is no more than "a creative transposition". The translation of poetic art, for instance, according to him can only be a creative transposition from one poetic shape to another in the case of rewording.

However, keeping in view the ideas of Broek and Jakobson, a suggestion of Gorjan can be exploited while negotiating with the problem of 'equivalence'. Gorjan (1970, 201) states, "translators can strive to come as close to the origina1 as possible, but they never can or will achieve complete identity in their translations". Therefore, though 'equivalence' in translation should not be defined in terms of sameness and identity, but should rather be viewed as an approximate rendering of a text from a source language to a target language. But what should be the conditions of such an 'approximate rendering'?

A translator can rely on the illustrations of Savory. Savory (1957, 49) offers two principles – (a) A translation should render the words of the original, and (b) A translation should render the ideas of the original. Tytler, too states three fundamental requirements. (1) A translation should give a complete transcript of the ideas of the original. (2) The style and manner of writing should be of the same character as that of the original. (3) A translation should have all the ease of the original. In the light of these ideas the authour has made

efforts and has translated George Herbert's poem, "Virtue" in Punjabi language. The original English version is immediately followed by the translated version.

Virtue

Sweet day, so cool, so calm, so bright,

The bridal of the earth and sky:

The dew shall weep thy fall tonight;

     For though must die.

Sweet rose, whose hue angry and brave

Bids the rash gazer wipe his eye:

Thy root is ever in its grave,

And thou must die.

Sweet spring, full of sweet days and roses,

A box where sweets compacted lie;

My music shows ye have your closes,

     And all must die.

Only a sweet and virtuous soul,

Like seasoned timber, never gives;

But though the whole world turn to coal,

Then chiefly lives.

(George Herbert)

ਸਦਗੁਣ

ਸੋਹਣਾ ਦਿਨ, ਏਨਾ ਸੀਤਲ, ਏਨਾ ਸ਼ਾਂਤ, ਏਨਾ ਰੋਸ਼ਨ,

ਦੰਪਤ ਧਰਤੀ ਅਤੇ ਅੰਬਰ ਦਾ:

ਓਸ ਦੀ ਬੂੰਦ ਕਰੇਗੀ ਰੁਦਨ ਅੱਜ ਦੀ ਰਾਤ ਤੇਰਾ ਪਤਨ;

ਤੂੰ ਤਾਂ ਜਰੂਰ ਮਰੇਂਗਾ।

ਸੱਜਰਾ ਗੁਲਾਬ, ਜਿਸਦਾ ਰੰਗ ਕੋਪੀ ਅਤੇ ਨਿਡਰ

ਆਦੇਸ਼ ਹੈ ਕਰਦਾ, ਕਾਹਲੇ ਤਾੜਕ ਨੂੰ ਪੂੰਝ ਲਵੇ ਆਪਣੀ ਨਿਗਾਹ

ਇਸ ਦੀ ਕਬਰ 'ਚ ਹੈ ਤੇਰੀ ਜੜ੍ਹ

ਅਤੇ ਤੂੰ ਜਰੂਰ ਮਰੇਂਗਾ।

ਦਿਲਕਸ਼ ਬਸੰਤ, ਪੁਰ ਖਿੜੇ ਦਿਨਾਂ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਲਾਬਾਂ ਨਾਲ,

ਡੱਬਾ ਜਿਸ ਵਿਚ ਮਿਸ਼ਠਾਨ ਨੱਕੋ-ਨਕ ਭਰੇ;

ਮੇਰੀ ਤਾਨ ਵਿਖਾਂਓਦੀ ਤੇਰੇ ਨੇ ਅਪਣੇ ਤਾਲ,

ਅਤੇ ਸਭ ਜਰੂਰ ਮਰਨਗੇ।

ਕੇਵਲ ਇਕ ਸੋਹਣੀ ਅਤੇ ਗੁਣਵੰਤੀ ਜਾਨ,

ਹੰਢੀ-ਪੱਕੀ ਲੱਕੜ ਵਾਂਗ, ਕਦੀ ਕਰੇ ਨਾ ਅਰਪਣ;

ਐਪਰ ਭਾਂਵੇ ਕੋਲਾ ਹੋ ਜਾਏ ਕੁਲ ਜਹਾਨ,

ਤਾਂ ਖ਼ਾਸ ਕਰਕੇ ਰਹਿਣ।

ਅਨੁਵਾਦ

ਗੁਰਦੀਪ ਸਿੰਘ

The principal focus of the original poem is on the idea of permanence of virtuous and noble qualities, ought to be possessed by mankind. The translated version too accentuates on same thematic concerns. The original version conveys the idea of decay and death, by citing examples from the world of nature and culture. The same, too, is reciprocated in the translated version. The stylistic features, such as simplicity, ease, and poetic shape has also

been maintained in the translated text. The principle of transitivity has been exploited as the words, ideas and manner have been kept that of the original in the rendered text. In the author's estimation, the problem of 'equivalence' on semantic, lexical and conceptual planes has been negotiated at the level of approximation.

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