THE USE OF 'NATURALNESS' IN TRANSLATING ENGLISH ANECDOTES FROM ENGLISH TO TELUGU

Dr. P. Sarath Chandra

Assistant Professor of English
Maulana Azad National Urdu University, Hyderabad
sarathenglishmanuu@gmail.com

Abstract

Anecdotes are stories and very convincing and true indeed. They add authenticity and authority when told. It is said as short account, a biographical one, of an incident. An anecdote is a brief tale narrating an interesting or amusing biographical incident. The present paper discusses the problems while translating anecdotes from English to Telugu. The main aim is to find out the complete natural equivalent expression in the target text and conclusions are drawn based on the discussion.

Introduction

We enjoy telling stories and also more interested to hear them from others. We relate ourselves to stories most of the time and get involved in them. Edmund Fuller (1980) states that, 'many jokes are anecdotes but not all anecdotes are jokes'. According to Shabdkosh – English Telugu Dictionary, "An **anecdote** is "a story with a point," such as to communicate an abstract idea about a person, place, or thing through the concrete details of a short narrative or to characterize by delineating a specific quirk or trait. Occasionally humorous, anecdotes differ from jokes because their primary purpose is not simply to provoke laughter but to reveal a truth more general than the brief tale itself." In Telugu, an anecdote is *caritra, poDikatha, vruthantamu.* The Oxford English Dictionary gives us a useful definition: "The narrative of a detached incident, or of a single event, told as being in itself interesting or striking."

Anecdotes are different and difficult to translate from one language to another. The present paper discusses the problems while translating anecdotes from English to Telugu. The main aim is to find out the complete natural equivalent expression in the target text and conclusions are drawn based on the discussion.

Method

For this study, 20 anecdotes with different titles are selected from '2500 anecdotes for all occasions' edited by Edmund Fuller (1980), which is a classified collection of the best anecdotes, from ancient times to the present day. We have also used another useful collection for this study, 'Oxford book of literary anecdotes' edited by James Sutherland (1976).

The same set of 20 anecdotes is given to 15 respondents all have got training in doing translation from English to Telugu. They belong to the age group between 30 and 40 years among whom nine were males and six were females. All of them are school teachers with Telugu and English as their specializations.

The main aim is to find out the complete natural equivalent expression when the anecdotes are translated from English to Telugu. According the Nida (1964a: 166, Nida and Taber 1969: 12), the term 'Naturalness' is a key requirement. "For Nida, the success of the translation depends on achieving equivalent response. It is one of the 'four basic requirements of a translation', which are (p. 164):

1. making sense;
2. conveying the spirit and manner of the original;
3. having a natural and easy form of expression;
4. producing a similar response.

Nida underlines that, 'correspondence in meaning must have priority over correspondence in style' if equivalent effect is to be achieved." The definition of the word "natural" is, "Translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message." (Nida and Taber 1969: 12)

Analysis and discussion

The detailed analysis of 15 different Telugu translations of the same set of 20 English anecdotes was collected as follows:

English	Telugu
'Anecdotes'	*Kathalu* *viDi vrutthaantamulu* *anekDoTlu* *viDi kathalu*
'another lawyer'	*veeree vakiilu* *veeroka nyaayavaadi* *tooTi nyaayavaadi* *veeroka laayaru* and *maroka nyaayavaadi*
'facetiously'	*saarasamuga,* *haasyamuga*
'subscription'	*canda* *sammati* *sammati* or *ceevraalu ceeyuTa*
'federal judgeship'	*jadji* *samaakhya nyaayamu* *samyukta nyaayamu* *samaakhya nyaayamu*
'defeated'	*ooDipooyanu* *ooTami cendenu*

'bid'	*pooTiiceeyaTam*
"House Speaker'	*Spiikar* *šaasana sabhaadhyakSuDu*
'generosity'	*Audhaaryamu* *Udaarata* *Dayaarasam* *tyaagabuddi* *mancimanasu* *daatrutvamu*
'confederates'	*Sahacarulu* *Sannihitulu* *tooTi adhikaarulu*
'quick thinking'	*tondaragaa aaloocincaDam* *siighra aaloocana* *samayasphuurti,* *tvaraga aaloocincaDam* *tondgarapaaTu aaloocana* *veegamaina aaloocana* *aaloocana* *aaloocincaDam*
'Repeatedly making remarks'	*padeepadee ceppaDam* *maralaa maralaa anaDam* *palumaarulu etticuupaDam*
'urged emancipation'	*svatantrulani ceeyamani balavanta peTTaga* *daasya vimoocana ceeyamani ardhincaga* *daasya vimoocana ceeyamanaga*
'a piece of my mind'	*naaloo unna maaTalanu* *naa manasuloo unnadi* *anaalanukunnavi* *anaalanukunnavi aNTaanu*
'proportion'	*vantu* *bhaagamu* *paalu sariyagunaTlu* *saamyamu* *pottu* *kolatalu*
'the correct proportion'	*samaana pottu*
'Greed'	*aaša* *atyaasa/aaguDu* *peeraasa/lokam tiiru*
'wailing aloud'	*pillalu peddagaa eeDustunnaaru* *booruna eeDustunnaaru* *gaTTigaa eeDustunnaaru* *eDpulu*
'walnuts'	*aakrooTlu* *vaalnuTlu*

‘congress’	*Sabha* *sabha/kaangres*
‘Lincoln ran for congress as a Whig’	*linkan oka raajakiiya paarTi sabhyuniga paniceesinappuDu* *raajakiiya paarTiini linkan naDipaaDu* *linkan kaangreslo viggiiga paniceesaaDu* *linkan oka raajakiiya sabhaku viggiiga vunnappuDu*
‘courtroom’	*nyaayasabha gadi* *nyaayasthaanamu* *raajasabha gadi*
‘pestered’	*baandhincenu visigincenu* *piiDincenu* *veedhincenu*
‘I’m sorry’	*nannu kSamincu* *kSamincaNDi* *kSamincu* *nannu kSamincu*
‘too late’	*caalaa aalasyamainadi* *caalaa aalasyangaa vaccaavu*

Let us see the term ‘Anecdotes’. Eight respondents have translated it as *kathalu*, two respondents as *viDi vrutthaantamulu*, three as *anekDoTlu*, and remaining two as *viDi kathalu*. There are different meanings in Telugu for ‘anecdotes’ which are *aitihyamulu, viDi vruttaantamulu, prasaktamu kaani katha, caritra taaluuku aprakaTita vivaramulu*. Since this term implies personal experience of a particular person, *viDi vrutthaantamulu’* is the closest equivalent.

The phrase ‘another lawyer’ has been translated as *veeree vakiilu, veeroka nyaayavaadi, tooTi nyaayavaadi, veeroka laayaru* and *maroka nyaayavaadi*. However, here in this context it means *tooTi nyaayavaadi* but not *veeroka nyaayavaadi* and based on the contextual consistency we can consider the natural closest equivalent as *tooTi nyaayavaadi*. The lexical item ‘facetiously’ means *sarasamuga, haasyamuga* or *parihaasamuga*. This has been translated by only four respondents that too as *veTakaaranga*. Another significant word is ‘subscription’, that is written as *canda* by all the fifteen respondents. However, the dictionary meaning of ‘subscription’ is *sammati* or *ceevraalu ceeyuTa*.

Another interesting term in this sentence is ‘federal judgeship’. Though as a title it has different translation, in sentence it is different. Seven respondents wrote the contradiction here is *jadji*. The remaining translations given by the respondents are *samaakhya nyaayamu* by three respondents, *samyukta nyaayamu* by five. Here the natural closest equivalent is considered as *samaakhya nyaayamu*. The integral terms are ‘defeated’, ‘bid’ and ‘House Speaker’. It is interesting to note that all the fifteen respondents have written the verb ‘defeated’ as *ooDipooyanu* but not *ooTami cendenu*. And yes, the natural closest equivalent

is *ooDipooyaanu.* Though the correct meaning of the verb 'bid' is *aagnaapincu,* in this context 'bid' means *pooTiiceeyaTam,* only five respondents have translated it. It seems that the remaining ten respondents felt no equivalent regarding this term so they did not translate it. The noun phrase "House Speaker' was translated as the same by five respondents while three has given it as *spiikar,* the remaining as *šaasana sabhaadhyakSuDu.* The closest natural equivalence is *'šaasana sabhaadhyakSuDiga pooTiiceesi ooDipooyanu.*

Six respondents translated the lexical term 'generosity' as *audhaaryamu.* Four respondents translated it as *udaarata,* two as *dayaarasam* and the remaining translated each as *tyaagabuddi, mancimanasu,daatrutvamu.* So, *audhaarayamu* is chosen as the natural closest equivalent. For the lexical item 'confederates' thirteen respondents has been translated as *sahacarulu,* one as *sannihitulu* and the other as *tooTi adhikaarulu.* It is interesting that in spite of the dictionary meaning being *sahaaparaadi/sahakaari.* Hence, *sahacarulu* can be the natural closest equivalent. It is a simple and known fact that 'quick thinking' means 'to think fast or soon', where translation would be as *tondaragaa aaloocincaDam.* Six respondents have written as *siighra aaloocana*, four as *samayasphuurti,* while two have translated *tvaraga aaloocincaDam* and *tondgarapaaTu aaloocana* and one respondent has translated as *veegamaina aaloocana*. It is noted that though eleven respondents have written *aaloocana* and *aaloocincaDam* four respondents have translated as *samayasphuurti.* The closest natural equivalent can be *samayasphuurti* implying the dynamic equivalence as priority.

'Repeatedly making remarks' has been translated as *padeepadee ceppaDam* by six respondents. *maralaa maralaa anaDam* by six and *palumaarulu etticuupaDam* by three respondents. This means according to the respondents the lexical term 'remarks' means *anaDam* or *ceppaDam.* The closest natural equivalence can be *palumaarulu etticuupaDam.* The verb phrase 'urged emancipation' has been translated as *svatantrulani ceeyamani balavanta peTTaga* by seven respondents, *daasya vimoocana ceeyamani ardhincaga* by six, *daasya vimoocana ceeyamanaga* by two respondents. The closest natural equivalence can be *daasya vimoocana ceeyamani ardhincaga.*

The noun phrase 'a piece of my mind' has been translated as *naaloo unna maaTalanu* by seven respondents *naa manasuloo unnadi* by five and *anaalanukunnavi* by three respondents. In this context *anaalanukunnavi aNTaanu* is the closest natural equivalent though it is translated by three respondents. The noun 'proportion' has different equivalents in Telugu. *vantu, bhaagamu, paalu sariyagunaTlu, saamyamu, pottu, kolatalu.* Among all these equivalents, only three equivalents have been taken by the respondents those are *saamyamu, pottu, kolatalu.* The closest natural equivalent for the phrase 'the correct proportion' can be *samaana pottu*.

Eight have given the meaning for the lexical item 'Greed' as *aaša.* While five translated it as *atyaasa/aaguDu* and two have written as *peeraasa/lokam tiiru.* This reveals that the closest natural equivalent for 'Greed' is *atyaaša.* The phrase 'wailing aloud' has been translated as

pillalu peddagaa eeDustunnaaru by eight respondents, four respondents as *booruna eeDustunnaaru,* remaining two and one respondent have written it as *gaTTigaa eeDustunnaaru* and *eDpulu.* Here the closest natural equivalent is *booruna eeDustunnaaru.* For the lexical item 'walnuts' ten respondents has termed it as *aakrooTlu,* and five respondents transliterated it as *vaalnuTlu.* The closest natural equivalent is obviously *aakroTlu.*

It is known fact that the title 'congress' means a political party. Interestingly nine respondents have transliterated the title *'congress'.* Three respondents have translated it as *sabha* while the remaining three as *sabha/kaangres.* The closest natural equivalent can be *sabha* which was given by only three respondents. The translation for the sentence 'Lincoln ran for congress as a Whig' is *linkan oka raajakiiya paarTi sabhyuniga paniceesinappuDu* given by six respondents. *raajakiiya paarTiini linkan naDipaaDu* by four respondents, *linkan kaangreslo viggiiga paniceesaaDu* by three respondents and *linkan oka raajakiiya sabhaku viggiiga vunnappuDu* by two respondents. The closest natural equivalent can be *linkan oka raajakiiya paarTi sabhyuniga paniceesaaDu.*

The respondents have translated the compound noun 'courtroom' in different ways. *nyaayasabha gadi* by seven respondents, *nyaayasthaanamu* by five, *raajasabha gadi* by three. The closest natural equivalent among all the three translations is *nyaayasabha gadi.* The vital term is 'pestered'. For the term 'pestered' two respondents have translated as *baandhincenu visigincenu* by four, *piiDincenu* by four and *veedhincenu* by the remaining two respondents. The closest natural equivalent is *visigincenu.* The expression 'I'm sorry' has been translated as *nannu kSamincu* by eight respondents, *kSamincaNDi* by three and *kSamincu* by four respondents. The closest natural equivalent can be *nannu kSamincu.* Similarly, the phrase 'too late' has been written as *caalaa aalasyamainadi* by three respondents and a maximum of ten respondents have written *caalaa aalasyangaa vaccaavu.* The closest natural equivalent can be *caalaa aalasyanga vaccaavu'* in Telugu.

Conclusion

The present paper discusses the problems while translating anecdotes from English to Telugu. The main aim is to find out the complete natural equivalent expression in the target text i.e. Telugu. The differences arise when there is more than one TL closest equivalents existed for the SL item. So we find that each of the translated versions of the same anecdote is different. The statement by Nida, "translating consists in reproducing in the receptor language to the closest natural equivalent of the source-language message" is seen and proved from the above discussion.

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