Issues in translation and translatability of texts

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Abstract
This paper critically examines the problems of translation and translatability of texts, highlighting on different types of texts. It also distinguishes between the four broad areas of languages. It analyses views of scholars on translation and translatability of texts such as Jakobson and Bassnet. It explains what translatability of text means and types of untranslatability. It discusses the linguistic and cultural untranslatability. The paper also classified the translatability of texts into four as indicated by Wiles. It concluded that not everything in the source text can be reproduced in the target text if the translation could possibly survive.

Introduction

Translation is the activity of human that enables human beings to understand and exchange ideas, thoughts and knowledge regardless of their difference in ethnic background. It is generally accepted that translation means more than getting two languages together. It implies bringing two cultures together. Al Wassary (2011) views the phenomenon of translation as a legitimate offspring of the phenomenon of languages, since originally, when humans spread over the earth, their languages differed and they needed a means through which people speaking a certain language would interact with others who spoke a different language. Edward Sapir (2010), the noted linguist states: "No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality". Translation involves two equivalent messages in two different codes. Translation is specifically subjective art, especially when it deals with matters outside the realm of science where concepts are more often expressed by terms that are commonly accepted.

Translation is a science, an art and also a skill. It is a science because it necessitates complete knowledge of structure together with the two languages involved. It is also an art because it requires artistic talent to construct the original language in the form of a product that is presentable to the reader who is not supposed to be with the original. It is a skill in the sense that it involves the ability to get over any difficulty and provide a product that is equivalent to the target language. A translator needs to have rich vocabulary, an in-depth in the culture of the text to be translated. There are certain text that have inherent problems when it comes to translation such texts include phonetic language (unlike English, it is spoken exactly like the way it is written) the phonetic spellings cannot be reproduced

either. Most phonetic text do not represent the cultural milieu when translated. Hence, there are problems that lies in the translatability of texts:

- Translator is traitor: This implies that the translator is limited by the restraints imposed by language which make him/her to deviate from the original thereby "betraying" the text and hence become a traitor. Moreover each language has its own specific structure and pattern with respect to semantics and grammar. Gasset J. (2015) opines that "two words belonging to different languages and which the dictionary gives us as translation of each other, refer to exactly the same objects". What Gasset proposes is that a translation bring the Target Language (TL) reader closer to the Source Language (SL) by means of an "imitation" or "paraphrase" rather than a translation.

- Translation as Communication: Generally, translation is an act of communication between two codes; that of the source language and target language Brisset (2015) pointed out that when the two codes of two different languages are not "isomorphic" or do not share similar patterns, a problem occurs. Languages differ essentially in what they must convey and not in what they may convey. The space between the Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL) is the hurdle that raises the problem of translatability. Jakobson (2014) pointed out that even a category like grammatical gender is a problem. He emphasized that the situation becomes more complex with literary texts as the language has other factors like play and puns. Poetry, according to Jakobson is untranslatable, but only creative transposition is possible.

- Inadequacy of target language: The target language can be inadequate in its range of vocabulary. It might also fail to recapture the linguistic peculiarities of the Source Language (SL), like slang words. Translatability is based on the notion that the Target Language (TL) is however inadequate to be a suitable tool for the ideas, concepts, or stylistic nuances of the Source Language (SL) text. The problem of translation is consistence. This is because our languages have not kept up with the advancement made especially in the field of science and technology which is English for dissemination of information.

- Translations as stimulants of languages: According to Brisset, (2015) "A linguistic community is a market. Its vernacular and referential languages are its symbolic commodities, each with its own use value and its own exchange value". This implies that translations can stimulate the growth and development of languages. They can shape and help evolve a language that is in its nascent form. Translation helps to enhance the rough contours of many languages that were in their infancy. Brisset distinguishes between four broad areas of languages:

1. Vernacular – a language that is spoken locally and spontaneously for communing rather than communication. This can be considered the mother-tongue.

2. Vehicular – a natural or regional language learned for the purpose of communication.
3. Referential – language that is tied up with the cultural traditions of a society.
4. Mythical – a language that is largely incomprehensible as it is the language of the sacred texts.

In India, for example, with multiplicity linguistics, all these categories of languages exist. A translator has to decide the linguistic register into which he or she wishes to translate. Brisset opines that the duty of the translator is to substitute the language of the "other" by a native language. People's language is also a marker of identity, and translation an act of assertion or reclamation of identity.

- The Invariant Core: Before undertaking the duty of translation, the translator must be confident of being able to convey some part of the message of the Source Language (SL) text to Target Language (TL) text. This salvageable part of the text is termed the "invariant" part of the translation process. According to Lecercle (2014) "Any translation will have change in the style and dialect of the Target Language (TL), which are termed "remainders". The remainder in literary texts is much more complicated, of course, usually sedimentation of formal elements and generic discourses, past as well as present.

- Translatability of poetry: Translatability of a text is guaranteed by the existence of universal categories in syntax, semantic and the (natural) logic of experience. Bassnet (2014) opined that "the greatest problem when translating a text from a period remote in time is not only that poet and his contemporaries are dead, but the significance of the poem in its context is dead too". It is difficult to translate poetry than prose. Lefevere (2010) classified seven strategies of translation of poetry. These include phonemic translation, literal translation, metrical translation, poetry into prose, rhymed translation, blank verse translation and interpretation. Nevertheless, a translator resorts to one of these strategies, based on his/her understanding of the poem and the choice of component that he/she wants to apply. Normally, a poem has a fine tension between form and content and a careless approach by the translator can upset this balance. When a text is given a literal translation, it would be definite0 to the detriment to the spirit of the poem. When much emphasis is placed on dynamic equivalence, the stylistic beauty will be destroy.

- Translation of Drama: Translation of a play includes both the translation of verbal and the non-verbal components. Being a purely literary work, the text and the performance cannot be disconnected, so any translation that looks at the text alone is an inadequate One – Bogatyrev (2011) pointed out how a character's social situation is brought out not just by the text alone but extra-textual factors like "the actor's gestures, finished off by his costumes, the scenery, etc". The dramatic text

also has undertone that reveals the nature of relationship or the mental state of a character. To have a good translation of drama, the translator must consider the paralinguistic aspects of dramatic performance. In terms of translatability, dramatic texts pose more difficulty than the poetry.

- Translation of Prose: The rudiment of prose fiction and non-fiction does not have the complexity or density of poetic style and is more malleable as far as the translator is concerned. All the problems associated with translation are also applicable to the translation of prose but there are relatively fewer as the genre allows greater flexibility. Translator can be a contain extent focus on the content translating a novel. A translator has to be alive to the currents and counter-currents of language that eddy and churu to yield meaning. Which areas has to be fore grounded – the content or form or both is ultimately the translator's discretionary choice. This in turn depends on the aim and audience of the translation. If the purpose is to introduce a classic in a foreign language to the reader, the translator can make exercise his/her freedom in translating it. But if it is meant to highlight the stylistic and semantic aspects of the text, domestication is not the method. One thing that is clear is that there is no universal criterion to determine whether a language has translatability or not. It only depends on the nature of language that is translated, the genre, the purpose and finally the readership to which it caters.

Translatability is an essential quality of works, which is not to say it is important that they be translated; it means rather that a particular significance inherent in the original shows itself in its translatability. The question of the significance of a text must be manifested in both the content and the form of the text. The law governing the translation is its translatability because of its dual meaning. The translatability of a text is independent of whether or not such text can be translated.

Literary translation is threatened by the boundaries that exist between languages. However, the art of translation have to cope with the reality of untranslatability from one language to another. Pedro (2016) in Catford, proposed a method in order to assess the translatability of texts based on the degree to which a given text can be contextualized in the target language, taking into consideration all linguistic and extra-linguistic factors. He considered that the validity of the above differentiation between linguistic and cultural untranslatability is questionable. He further classified the following definitions in a linguistic theory of translation.

- Linguistic Untranslatability: "Failure to find a target language equivalent is due entirely to differences between the source language and the Target Language (TL)". Some examples of this type of untranslatability would ambiguity, plays on words, oligosemy etc.
- Cultural untranslatability: arises when a situational feature, functionally relevant for source language (SL) text, is completely absent from the culture of which the Target

Language (TL) is a part. For example, the name of some institutions, cloths, foods, and concepts, amongst others. The cultural untranslatability deals with the impossibility of finding an equivalent collocation in the Target Language (TL). According to Popovic (2011), he defined cultural untranslatability as "a situation where the relation of expressing the meaning, i.e. the relation between the creative subject and its linguistic expression in the original does not find an adequate linguist expression in the translation", while the linguistic untranslatability is "a situation in which the linguistic elements of the original cannot be replaced adequately in structural, linear, functional or semantic terms in consequence of a lack of denotation or connotation".

Wilss, (1982) classified the issue of translatability of text into four different categories

1. Texts which are exclusively source language oriented; Relatively untranslatable.
2. Texts which are mainly source-language oriented (for example literary texts); partially translatable.
3. Texts which are both source-language oriented (as the texts written in language for specific purposes): optimum translatability.
4. Texts which are mainly or solely target – language oriented (propaganda for example) optimum translatability.

At present, there is a tendency to presuppose that most texts are translatable, however different in the understanding of the nature of translation may vary. The notion of taking culture as a translation issue is very insignificant because culture can be explained or interpreted in its specific manifestation.

Finally, the notion of untranslatability of texts has been unpopular in this contemporary world mainly due to ideological reasons. With the increase in the concept of translation, the argument on translatability of text has lost its weight and also since translators can resort to various strategies to have a better translation, a perfect translation can be achieved. A practical approach to translation must accept that since not everything that appears in the source text can be reproduced in the target text. According to Senn (1989) "that nothing is negligible … is not a principle that could possibly survive in translation.

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