

Loss And Gain In The Process Of Translation

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Abstract- *This article aims to show that in the translation process loss and addition takes place in a translated work; to prove this claim I have selected a text created and translated by a renowned poet of Nepal who is entitled as 'Mahakavi'(great poet). In the translation process something from Source Language can be added to the Target Language and something can be omitted. This article observes and analyses and proves by showing how in the process of translation of a text from one language to another- loses and gains takes place. Here, I discuss and show what is lost and what is gained in the translation of a Nepali text -Laxmi Prasad Devkota's poem—"Saghan Tamisraprati" translated into English as "To a Dark Clouded Night" - translated by the poet himself. I present a theoretical insight of translation theory and apply it to a literary text. Here, the transfer of a text is from Source Language (SL) - Nepali to Target Language (TL) – English.*

Keywords- translation, structures, expression, images, transcription, consciousness

I. INTRODUCTION

Laxmi Prasad Devkota has created a big number of literary works in various different languages in different genres and also has translated many of his own works and works authored by other people. There is an established principle that sameness cannot exist between two languages; therefore, it becomes likely and usual to approach the issue of 'loss and gain' in the translation process. A lot of things can be seen omitted or lost from the SL and similarly a lot of things can be found added or gained in TL in the translation process. The translator can, at times, enrich or clarify the SL text as a direct result of the translation process. About the problems of loss in translation, in particular about the difficulties faced by the translator while dealing with terms or concepts in the SL that do not exist in the TL, are of great significance in this context.

Translation: Theoretical Insights

Translation - an operation performed on languages- is a complex process of negotiation during which meanings, claims, and interests change and gain ground. M. Callon rightly says that translation is a process of, "creating

convergences and homologies by relating things that were previously different" (Callon 1980)

Translation theory considers that translation is a kind of transcription of the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author envisioned the text. A translation sometimes becomes complicated, artificial and false, since by using another language the translator is pretending to be someone he is not. The purpose is to transfer as many source language words to the target language as possible. Nord (2007) differentiates between two senses of translation: wide and narrow and considers translation as, in a narrow sense, any translational action where a source text is transferred into a target culture and language. According to the form and presentation of the source text and to the correctibility of the target text we distinguish between oral translation ('interpreting') and written translation ('translation' in the narrow sense).

The problem is that the translation cannot simply copy, or be the original. A translator is always trying to extend his knowledge and improve his means of expression; he is mostly pursuing facts and words. (Nida and Taber 1969) say that translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style.

There are mostly two ways of translating a text. In a literal or free translation, the spirit, not the letter, the sense not the words, the message rather than the form, the matter not the manner are taken into consideration. Contrary to this, word-for-word translation uses equivalent TL word for each SL word.

Merminod, V. and F. Rowe (2012) consider translation as a knowledge sharing process that links two or more groups of people separated by location, hierarchy, or function. They define it as an activity that involves sharing evolving objects that are minimally codified, and a semantic capacity for developing common meanings. A faithful translation endeavors to reproduce the exact relative meaning of the original within the limitations of the TL grammatical structures. It transfers cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical 'abnormality' -deviation from SL norms- in the translation.

Word-for-word translation transfers SL grammar and word order, as well as the primary meanings of all the SL words, into the translation, and it is normally effective only for brief simple neutral sentences. In one-to-one translation, a broader form of translation, each SL word has a corresponding TL word, but their primary/isolated meanings may differ. Unlike this, literal translation goes beyond one-to-one translation. This type falls on the category of semantic translation, as it is personal and individual, follows the thought processes of the author, tends to over-translate, and pursues nuances of meaning. Semantic translation is used for 'expressive' texts. The expressive components of 'expressive' texts -- unusual syntactic structures, collocations, metaphors, words peculiarly used, neologisms -- are rendered closely, if not literally.

It has sometimes been said that the dominant purpose of any translation should be to achieve equivalent effect, i.e. to produce the same effect or one as close as possible. Translation theory stresses that the translator's last resource: contextual re-creation is likely to be more common in interpretation.

As poetry is the most personal and concentrated of the four forms, and there is no redundancy, no phatic language, where, as a unit, the word has greater importance than in any other type of text. The word is the first unit of meaning, the second is usually the line.

A translator translates a text with four levels more or less deliberately bearing in mind:

- (1) The referential level, the level of objects and events: may be real or may be imaginary,
- (2) The cohesive level: grammatical, which traces the train of thought, the feeling tone -positive or negative- and the various assumptions of the SL text,
- (3) The level of naturalness, of common language appropriate to the writer or the speaker in a certain situation, and
- (4) The SL text level, the level of language.

When a poem is thoughtfully translated into a poem, translation is most clearly an art. Any skilful transfusion of an imaginative piece of writing is artistic. In free translation it reproduces the matter without the manner, or the content without the form of the original. Usually it is a paraphrase much longer than the original. It attempts to be completely faithful to the intentions and the text-realization of the SL writer which can be seen in this translation. The translator has succeeded brilliantly and with vitality in reproducing propositions of the original, but often with stronger contrasts and a greater impact. In some instances he has gone over

beyond the original. The translator has not accepted the principle that fundamentally translation is an enforced deviation from literal translation which can be considered as a matter of an applause and admiration of his skill in translating as recreating. Juan Sager (1994) argues that translation should reflect the environment in which the professional translation activity occurs. He says translation is an extremely motivated industrial activity, supported by information technology, which is diversified in response to the particular needs of this form of communication.

In the course of translating a text, there occurs two types of untranslatability: 'linguistic' and 'cultural'. On the linguistic level, untranslatability occurs when there is no lexical or syntactical substitute in the TL for a SL item. Linguistic untranslatability occurs due to differences in the SL and the TL, whereas cultural untranslatability is due to the absence in the TL culture of a relevant situational feature for the SL text.

Translation of "Saghan Tamisraprati" as "To a Dark Clouded Night"

It would be justifiable to say that in some works, Devkota is more understandable in translation than in the original as Kant, Hegel, Heidegger and Gadamer were initially in their translation. What is believed in many of the cases is that a successfully translated poem is always another poem; it is highly applicable in the translation of "Saghan Tamisraprati" as "To a Dark Clouded Night."

In the 'Introduction' of an anthology of Devkota's sonnets entitled *Bapu and other Sonnets*, (Devkota 2006) points out: "Besides writing originally in English, Devkota also translated his own works and those of his colleagues into English". Devkota was the leading literary figure of his time. Ammaraj Joshirightly remarks: "Devkota is the most important poet of the 20th century Nepali literature"(Joshi 2019)). Joshi further says: "Devkota's works . . . have no parallels as yet in Nepali literature and they are regarded as classics of Nepali literature".

The translation here is a re-creative translation as it mostly does 'contextual re-creation' by translating the thoughts behind the words, sometimes between the words, or translating the sub-text. It has attempted to get as far away as possible from the words due to the lack of proper/exact English words for some of the Nepali words. It endeavors to 'interpret the sense' and 'translating the words' as well.

The translator's main attempt is seen as to translate the effect the poem made on himself. He has achieved a

parallel effect in poetry in the two languages despite the clash in syntax, lexis, sound, and culture with each other. He has reproduced the figurative meaning and the concrete images of the poem as a dark clouded night. In this translation the truth, in fact, is that however good the translation is its meaning is differed in many ways from the original; it can be understood like an echo of the original, with its own independent strength.

Loss and Gain in the Process of Translation of "Saghan Tamisraprati"

The items often seen as 'lost' from the SL context may be replaced in the TL context. The translator has reviewed the formulation of the title, the lengths of paragraphs, length and number of lines, clauses, punctuations and sentences. (Jensen, Sandstrom and Helin 2009) argue that translation means simplifying a construct so that something is lost in translation. To translate something is to actively modify an object within the context and complexities. Let us study how the translator has changed—omitted and added -- the SL text. I do not take the points successively; I have grouped them selectively under general heads which are discussed in brief.

1) of the light of day! // Dark Night whose eyes are umbered with the sable cloud.

You, lifeless frame of day, so still and pulseless, //Have you the varied wealth of form and colour//Burnt down upon the sunset peak? //And, like an eremite brooding over an immense cremation ground//Scattered your tangled tresses rich and dark, //Smearred with the ashes of the world? //And thus have you upon the snowy peak//Lost to the world, taken your seat entranced, //Immovable, breathless and still? //You shadow of all-swallowing death! //You, visible outline of vast, vast Nought!

The original text contains twelve lines and thirty-seven words which has been translated in thirteen lines and ninety-nine words. It shows that the translation has gained one line and sixty-two words.

2) Oh! You comparable to a shoreless ocean//Heaving from Earth to Heaven! //Made up of darkness dense, whose frame is formed//Of shadows hundred-fold that are the parents of Horror! //You dash against the rocks of consciousness in us, Beat after beat, //To startle the poor children of the earth! Stanza II of the Nepali version consists of six lines and twenty-two words and its translation contains seven lines and fifty-three words. In this stanza, one line and thirty-one words are gained in the translation.

3) who on motionless feet//Descend to earth to envelope the globe!//

Negation of the light, belonging to the nether world.//Before your terrifying frame, //Creatures of the earth must close their eyes//And suffer a swoon in life, // A loss of consciousness.

In the third stanza, there are six lines and nineteen words in the original text and as one line and twenty seven words are added, the translation comprises of seven lines and forty-six words.

4) Is this the varied history of this world? //Is that colourful thing all come to this? //You invisible heart of ineffable mystery.//Speak, dark and breathless Night! //Do the inaudible waves of a vast, vast Void//Erode the solid shores and gulp them up? //As the billowy darkness rises, surges up and floods and pours? //

Oh, is the vessel of this life all filled with nought?

In the fourth stanza, there are nine lines in both the original text and translation but in the case of words, twenty-eight words are added to the SL text.

5) Oh, Earth! Oh, Earth! //A mustard seed, I feel suppressed, compressed.//I feel a splitting in the head.//Obscured and choked!

One line and ten words are gained in the translation in the fifth stanza.

6) I feel a choking in the dark, dark brine, //Doubting my own existence faintly twinkling, //Like a tiny grain of light, //Like that insignificant star//In the cracks of the cloud—//A miniature point of light, //Like one without a hope.

In the sixth stanza, one line and twenty-three words are gained in the English version.

7) Oh, you! The stealer of all the wealth I lost, //Dark prison house of things that are all past, //Oh, break and burst, //Oh, all consuming beauty of the world's cremation//Split ope your cruel breast, //Behold! Unconscious Night, //Within you find//The imperishable and the immortal ones, //The stars, the stars!

TL text has gained two lines and twenty-three words in the last stanza of the poem.

The title: there is complete change in the translation of the title: two-word title of the original text-"Saghan Tamisraprati"- has been translated into five-word title-*To a Dark Clouded Night*. Both in the SL and TL the theme of the title is the same that the poem is about the night that is too dark.

Punctuation: The translator has abundantly used punctuation marks in the translation rejecting and challenging the limited punctuation of the original: in the first stanza of the original text there are only twelve punctuations (six exclamations, four commas and two question marks) whereas there are nineteen (four exclamations, eleven commas, three question marks and one full stop) in the translation. There is a remarkable variation in punctuation in other stanzas as well. Except in the sixth stanza, the translated text has gained punctuations; the sixth stanzas of both the texts comprise six equal punctuations.

Lines and words: stanza I-12 lines, 37 words (SL text), 13 lines, 99 words TL text).

stanza II- 6 lines, 22 words (SL text), 7 lines, 53 words TL text).

stanza III- 6 lines, 19 words (SL text), 7 lines, 46 words TL text).

stanza IV- 9 lines, 35 words (SL text), 9 lines, 63 words TL text).

stanza V- 3 lines, 11 words (SL text), 4 lines, 21 words TL text).

stanza VI- 6 lines, 18 words (SL text), 7 lines, 41 words TL text).

stanza VII- 7 lines, 29 words (SL text), 9 lines, 52 words TL text).

It has been clear that 11 lines and 181 words are gained in the translation.

The structure: In the very first line the translator, by standardizing the clause-order, has lost the suspense and tension of the original 'alokbilopini' has been normalized in the translation as 'dissolver of the light of the day'.

Ambiguity: I take ambiguity in the sense of an elasticity of SL text, normally a word or a syntactic structure, having apparently more than one meaning. In some stanzas and lines the translator has made changes in the grammar and makes unnecessary changes in the language; in line 6 'mahasmanakimai' 'jabaka' has been translated as 'an eremite brooding over an immense cremation ground' in which due to lack of proper term for the translation of the expression the translator has used eight words for its translation of a two-word original text but still it is vague.

'Untranslatable' words: 'nispanda', 'dhwantajata' and 'talupada' are some of the instances of untranslatable words in the original text; they are translated as 'whose eyes are umbered with the sable cloud', 'so still and pulseless', 'tangled tresses', and 'splitting in the head' respectively.

Conclusion: Loss and Gain in Translation Hints to Recreation

The translation of a text particularly a poetry is the action where emphasis is usually put on the creation of a new poem, and where exact translation is usually ruined. In this translation some words and some lines are lost; some new words and lines are added. Even in conceptions, there are some changes. The translator's intention is to reproduce the contextual meaning in the translation. Most shifts from SL to TL are in conformity with the norms of the target language and do not require innovative expression. The translator has attempted an accurate, smooth and natural version of the original, strengthening and over-translating many lexical details.

The facts or its ideas of the SL text are adequately represented in the translation. The translation is successful in its own terms: standards of referential and pragmatic accuracy. This translation assumes that the original is powerful and the style is personal. In fact the stanzas in the original and the lexical words are most of the times sensitively translated. This text is both 'authoritative' and 'expressive' in the sense that it has authority and expresses a personality. The translation is uneven, and the translator has avoided some lines in the original, and altogether eleven lines and one hundred eighty-one words are added to the original. The addition and omission of words and lines and some changes in meaning makes this translation both –a translation and a recreation.

The original text is an expression of the writer's perceptions and feelings to a dark clouded night. The poem includes seven stanzas, fifty-two lines and one hundred forty-two words all with standard written discourse rather than the implications of spoken. The SL grammatical constructions are converted to their nearest TL equivalents but the lexical words are mostly translated singly, out of context as well.

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