

Problems while Translating Selected Short Stories of Gujarati Female Writers

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Abstract

Gujarati language has been enriched through translation from other Indian languages and world languages. Every Gujarati reader is familiar with literature such as Bengali, Tamil, Punjabi, Hindi, English, Russian, and Latin American, however not much Gujarati literature has been translated into English and other world languages. Therefore, Gujarati literature remains unrepresented at national and international level. The short story from though came from the West has been a popular form in India. Gujarati writers including women have written beautiful stories which have remain untranslated. This is an area which calls for a change. Researcher therefore has decided to translate a few Gujarati short stories into English to bridge up the gap. Researcher is aware that translating short stories is a challenge, therefore she has decided to select a few stories which represent the world of female. Especially the problems they face in day to day life.

Introduction

In the period of globalization, activity of translation has become extremely important because of world has become smaller due to advance technology communication and transport. However, there are cultural differences which make the culture full of diversity. In order to understand diversity especially culture, one needs to understand the various dimension of other cultures, so translation of important texts becomes paramount importance.

Translation has become a major discipline which is being taught in various universities. Similarly, there are many scholars and translators and theories who have put forward different theories of translating text.

This paper researcher focus on the problems of translation especially, the culture terms. The researcher would include review of related materials regarding translation of short stories. Selected Gujarati short stories of the leading Gujarati female writers are under. This paper includes translation summary of selected story of Gujarati women writers from Gujarati into English. It identifies and discusses major issues such as linguistic, stylistic, semantic, and sociocultural which pose challenges to the translator.

➤ Kundanika Kapadia

1. Tears of the Love: ‘Prem na Anshu - પ્રેમ નાં અંશુ’
2. The Sun Will Rise :: ‘Suraj Ugshe - સુરજ ઉગશે’
3. Will Let You Go: ‘Java Daisu Tamne - જવા દઈશું તમને’

➤ Ila Aarab Maheta

1. Marginalized: માર્જિનલાઈઝડ
2. Vienna Woods: (વિયેના વૂડ્સ)

➤ Himanshi Shelat

1. The Frozen Whites in dark Alley :: (અંધારી ગલીમાં સફેદ ટપકા)
2. Infatuation.

Researcher would include a brief history of Gujarati short stories and contribution of women writers. It could also focus on the problems of translation especially, the culture terms. The researcher would include review of related materials regarding translation of short stories.

Problems of Translation:

The study covers the translation of selected Gujarati short stories, Researcher focusing on problems of cultural nuance, Gujarati words, idioms, proverbs etc.; along with effective techniques, so the study will helpful to researchers, translators, readers

and non Gujarati readers of the Gujarati literature. It proves that each language has its own system to express various concepts, with different linguistic grammatical, semantic and phonetic levels. A word is always loaded with various connotations, denotations in a specific culture or society. Secondly, besides conveying the dictionary meaning, within a sentence, a word conveys a special meaning. It tells one whether it is a subject, object or denotes action within a sentence. The position of a word in a sentence could make the entire sentence meaningless or meaningful. Theoretically, the weight and position given to the word in a sentence; or the tone and stress expressed on a particular word also can change its meaning to certain extent.

Looking from another angle, any language is rooted in the culture where it is spoken, and expresses the typical cultural attributes. In this way, each language carries a different culture. And this makes the process of translation more complex. A simple and natural expression in the original text may look artificial or strained or at the most even unintelligible in the translated version. Apart from taxis, there are other categories too that give birth to inevitable changes during the process of translation. These categories relate to grammar and the nature of content involved. Nida (1975) identifies several categories responsible for the changes:

3.2 Lexical Problems

Lexical units are the basic units for the translation. It refers to the Lexical and Semantic equivalence between two languages. It is the first step for translation. However, at some degree, the structures of Gujarati and English match astonishingly. So here, the problems are not so much with "word – classes." Well, but certain words need attention for two reasons: either they do not have exact equivalent in English or the equivalent does not convey the meaning of the original. One can list many words of this kind in any translation. Such words are actually rooted in the culture, and they refer to an object which may be alien to the target culture. Some such words taken from the Gujarati stories to be translated can be classified as follows:

3.2.1. Terms Showing Specific Relations

Indian culture is highly social. There are a lot of highly complex relations, and each relation is given certain specific name. Each word defines the relationship among the persons very clearly. English culture, on the other hand is not so social and well-knit so naturally, English language carries a very limited number of kinship terms. Even sometimes, we do find the equivalents; yet the term fails to bring out its emotional value. For example, the term used "ma". We can translate it as 'mother'; same way in the story "Andhari Gali maa Safed Tapka (Frozen White in Dark Alley)", the woman who working within Spiritual Ashram addressed as "Maiya" but in the form of address, the term loses its special emotional significance. In the same way, in the story "Prem Na Anshu (Tears of Love)", the Grand Father is, again and again, referred as "Doshha". Here, there is a kind of annoyance and hatred toward the grand father when he is addressed or referred like this. This feeling cannot be translated while translating the term as "Doshha".

Likewise, there are ample evidence of some complex relationships for which we cannot find English equivalents, and they must be explained in detail; and in doing so, we lose its special effect. For instance, there is a sentence in "Prem Na Anshu " [Tears of Love]

- ❖ અલબત્ત ત્યાં સાસુ, નણાંદ, દિયર અને ઘણા બધા હતા અને કુટુંબ મોટું હતું.
- ❖ "Of course, there was mother-in-law, Sister-in-law, Brother in law all were there and the family was too big,"

Now, the word "Nanand" must be translated as "sister-in-law" In the same way, and the "Diyar" is referred as "Brother-in-law" – and this cannot be translated. There is no such word in English to define this relationship – "Diyar".

In "Marginalized" the teenager boy who paid attention Indu while crossing the and address her as take care mam.

- ❖ “ટેક કેર માંમ ” મને કહ્યું. ન માજી, ન માસી, ન આંટી, ન બા... માત્ર માંમ એક સંસ્કારી મનુષ્ય તેની વધતી જતી ઉંમર તેની થોડી શારીરિક અક્ષમતા તરફ અણગમતો ઈશારો કર્યા વગર વાત કરે તેમ !
- ❖ He told me take care ma'am, not a 'Maji', not an aunty, Not a 'Mausi, not a 'Baa' only Ma'am. - As civilized person will use such notations while talking with strangers without pin pointing on old age or physical inability.

Here, "Ba" has a specific connotative value; it is a tradition of Indian rural culture to call the aged lady with such suffixes as "Baa" or "Maasi" – which when translated as "Mother" or "Aunty" is inadequate. So, while translating such typical Indian relationship, the researcher has kept the words as they are – with explanations or foot notes, or they have been translated with nearest equivalent found – and loss in the meaning is inevitable.

3.2.2 Proper Names and Nick Names

In certain stories, the writer intentionally gives some particular name to the character, which conveys a specific meaning. And the name is naturally deeply rooted in the culture and tradition of the SL – with some special connections of meanings – and this name cannot be translated. So in TL, it loses its effect. e.g. In the story *marginalized*, In Gujarati culture, it is a tradition to address some mischievous person as ‘*salu...*’. Sometimes also speaker also uses some extra notation behind in real name to address such person. E.g the Student Gandhi stated as *Gandhido*

- ❖ સા...લો ગાંધીડો.... છ - માસિકમાં દરેક પ્રશ્નનાં જવાબમાં તેને કોઈ ફિલ્મ ની વાર્તા લખેલી .
- ❖ *Sa..lo Gandhido.....* in the half yearly exam,he wrote the story of a movie against every question in answer sheet.

e.g. in "*Prem Na Anshu (Tears of Love)*" In Indian culture, it is a tradition to *Laxmi* (Goddess of wealth) traditionally connected with bride especially who recently married.

In other the story the eldest brother is often referred as "*Mota bhai*". If every time, we translate it as the eldest brother" – the harmony of the sentence structure would be lost along with the specific meaning.

3.2.3. The House Hold Objects

In these stories, the description of the household items conveys a lot of information about the living style and condition of the people. Certain things regarding building and constructions are typically Indian, and such things are alien to the target language that is English. Same way, cannot be translated with the same effect of meaning. There are other terms also like.

- ❖ ચૂલો - Stove
- ❖ કડછા , તાલેથા - Large ladles and Spatulas.(*Andhari Galimaa Safed Kapdaa*)
- ❖ માટલી - Water pot. (*Andhari Galimaa Safed Kapdaa*)
- ❖ માળા - rosary (*Andhari Galimaa Safed Kapdaa*)
- ❖ પાદુકા - The holy clogs (*Andhari Galimaa Safed Kapdaa*)
- ❖ શેતરંજી - Cotton Carpet
- ❖ અગરબતી - incense stick
- ❖ રુનું પૂમડું - A cotton palate (*Marginalized*)
- ❖ તુલસી - A holy herbal plants considered by Hindus (*Andhari Galimaa Safed Tapkaa*)

3.2.4. Names of the Food Items

Each and even locality has got a different food habits. So, it is always a problem to translate the name of the specific food items. Therefore, it is advisable not to translate such words, but it needed, some explanation can be given about it in the form of foot notes. There are some examples of such words in these stories. So, without translating it, it is better to explain its meaning. Another food item referred to in the same.

For example, In "*Java daishu tamne.(Will Let you Go)*" it is said –

- ❖ ખાં, તને સાંભરે છે ? એક દિવસ હું બહુ રખડીને કપડા ફાડીને આવ્યો ત્યારે મને ખુબ વઢેલા અને ત્યારે તે પાછળથી કેવો મને શીરો ખવડાવેલો ? ’
- ❖ “Do you remember *Ba*, one day *Bapu* scolded me as I came home in torn clothes later on after wondering the whole day and you had given me *sheera** to eat?”

Here, we can not translate - the word “*sheera*”, but it meant – A halwa made with wheat flour.

3.2.5. Names of the Dressing Items and Ornaments

Dressing items and name of the ornaments are culture specific and so they have to be retained with their original names. However, cross cultural contacts may loan the words to another language. The words like 'Saree' and 'lungi' find a place in the OED (The New OED, 2002)

Then there are some examples of Typical Indian Ornaments like,

❖ मैयानी यूडीओ सोल वरसे तूटेवी - Maiyaa had donned her widow's weeds at the age of sixteen

❖ પંજાબી પહેરે છે. - The Dress Style Famous in Panjab State.

It is not proper to translate such typical names of dresses or ornaments. It is better to keep them as they are with explanations.

3.2.6. Terms deeply rooted in the social cultures

Some ideas and traditions are connected with the society, and it is better to transliterate such terms. The term referred to is "sasaru" – husband's home. But in Indian context, as we know, "sasaru" means the house and complete family of in - laws, and so it does not carry the proper meaning.

In Ila, Kundanika Kapadia and Himashi shelat certain terms regarding

marriage ceremony is referred as:

- ❖ વિવાહ - Marriage
- ❖ જાન - Mmarriage-procession
- ❖ વિદાય - Sending Away the daughter to the home of in laws.
- ❖ સૌભાગ્યવતી - Woman who dies while her husband is still Alive
- ❖ મોસાળ - Maternal Grand Father and Mother Home.
- ❖ પિયર - parents home.

3.4 Cultural Problems

The dichotomy of whether a language defines culture or a culture gives birth to a language is not easy to solve. This dichotomy makes the process of translation more complex. However, we can divide the problems related to culture in the following sections.

3.4.1 Material Culture

Names of food, clothes, housing, transport etc. are typical to certain cultures and may not found equivalents in SL. We have already discussed

3.4.2. Social Culture

Certain customs, rites and rituals ideas and relations are culture specific. For example, in "Prem na Anshu" [Tears of the Love] there are so many customs narrated about the marriage ceremony. Some complex relations like "nanand", "Bhabhi" , "Diyar" etc. may also not find equivalents in English, so they pose problems. The topic is discussed deeply with many examples in 3.1.6. Almost all the stories are woven deeply with the Indian, especially Gujarati culture. But the stories – "Marginalized", "Suraj ugse", and "java Daeshu Tamne" are deeply rooted in the culture and social background. To understand the pain of group of widow women ("Andhari galimaa Safed Tapkaa"), the reader must be familiar with her society and its traditions, which represents the backward and socially degraded class, they represent the loope hole of the social structure of the higher middle class society. In short, each and every story is deeply rooted in its social environment, and it is almost impossible to translate it with exact effects. Without having the first-hand experience of this particular society, it is almost impossible to understand the story with true effects. Naturally, foreign readers do not have this first-hand experience – and so the translation, to certain extent, must fail to reproduce the same effect.

3.5. Linguistic Problems

The translator faces the problems at linguistic level as well. However, every word in a language is embalmed in its sociocultural particularities. Strictly speaking there is no problem which can be labeled as purely linguistic or cultural as the two are

interconnected. In short language and culture are so much intermingled that it is not possible to separate them. C. Catford holds that within the concept of the "whole language" there can be varieties of languages such as – idiolects, dialects, registers and style.

3.5.1. Idiolect

It is a language variety, which is related to the personal identity of the speaker. The translator may have to stretch his creativity too far to produce the similar effect in TL. For example, in "Marginalized" we find such expression –

- ❖ બેઠીખાટે ફરી વળી બધે
- ❖ I moved surrounding while sitting on the bench within my thought
Here the expression ‘બેઠીખાટે’ is really difficult to translate. Here, only meaning can be explained as she moved somewhere in her thoughts.

3.5.2 Dialect

Dialects may be geographical temporal, or social. It is almost impossible to reproduce this special dialect in TL. The standard language must be used most of the time loosing the special effect of SL. Here example In Marginalized.

- ❖ બસ હવે થાળીપીરસ
- ❖ Stop! Give me a lunch Here ‘થાળી’ researcher can’t take it as dish, so its only convey the meaning of SL In ‘Ten-thirty’ ample example as below
- ❖ મારો વર હોય ને તો ધડીના છઠ્ઠા ભાગમાં ઠેકાણે લાવી દઉં
- ❖ Had it been my husband, I would have tamed him no time.

Here only translator convey the meaning not the exact word.

- ❖ ‘વેવલો વર’
- ❖ ‘Silly husband’

Here, the expression ‘વેવલો’ is really difficult to translate. The term carries a mixture of meaning i.e. foolish, nonsense, stupid. So it is translated as ‘Silly’ because no equivalent is found.

It is a translation of meaning only, not of the sense, tone and hidden meaning of the words. While translating, such dialectical expressions are converted into simple meaning, which definitely spoils the meaning of the original. But we must bear this situation, as it is not possible to find out equivalent dialectical expressions in any other – especially foreign language.

3.6 Expression of Deepest Experiences

Ultimately literature is the reflection of human life and feelings. When the emotions are deeply rooted, they become really difficult to translate.

For example,

- ❖ ને વિયેનામાં પાક્કા યુરોપિયન ને ના શોભે તેવું મોતીભાઈ એ કર્યુંતેઓ રસ્તા પર જોરથી થૂંક્યા.
- ❖ And he did the same which not suits to the perfect European in Vienna. He spits on the road. (Viyenaa Woods)

The extreme anger hidden in the sentence cannot be translated.

Such other examples are –

- ❖ ...છતાં હૈયું ભારે હતું

- ❖ Even heart is so heavy. (Viyenaa Woods)
- ❖ ...પગ જાણે જમીન સાથે જડાઈ ગયા- .
- ❖ his .feet were tied with the ground (Viyenaa Woods)
- ❖ બે દિવસ કિરણના અસહ્ય તરફડાટમાં વીત્યા
- ❖ Kiran's two days passed with unbearable pain. (Tears of Love).
- ❖ દબાઈ ને ઉભા રહેવું , બીજાને માર્ગ આપવો તે તો નોકરી કરતા કરતા શીખવું પડેવું .
- ❖ Standing by force,giving way to others , - Learn this parallel while performing theduty.

Above sentences expresses extreme pain in inner side but can't translate in a proper way. The story "Marginalized " is the best example as the story is rich in expressing the deep, complex and ever changing feelings, pain and excitement of the heroine. It is very difficult to recreate the same emotional appeal though the literal translation of the sentence is quite apparent. In short, stories loaded with deep feelings and emotions really test the

ability of the translator; as it is extremely difficult to carry forward these emotional appeals.

3.7. Localised Situations

Some situations are strictly local, and tough to translate and Sometimes, some images or similes employed are also highly local.

For example, in "Marginalized", the character expresses her anger about illiterate lady's misbehavior

- ❖ સોરી , વાઈસ પ્રિન્સીપાલ નહિ થવાય.પરણી નથી.ફેકો કાદવ...અભણ કર્કશા મંગળસૂત્ર ઝૂલાવતી તેને ગાળ દઈ જાય .
- ❖ Sorry you do not become vice principal. Throw her into the mud. Illiterate, virago woman swinging the auspicious *mangalsutra* (marriage-string round bride's neck) and use abusive language.
- ❖ પતિ જીવંત હોય ત્યાં સુધીમાં પત્ની મારવા – કરવાનું પતાવી દે,તો તેણે સૌભાગ્યવતી કહેવાય.
- ❖ People say that a woman whose dies while her husband is still Alive is *saubhagyawati*

The literal translation would not be enough to clarify the meaning to a foreign reader who does not know what is *Mangalsutra* and *Saubhagyawati*.

In the same way, in "Tears of Love". There is a description of a second marriage.

- ❖ સરયુને આંગણે જાન આવી પહોંચી,
- ❖ Saryu's Jan came in courtyard
- ❖ માતાપિતા અને ભાઈબહેનોની આંસુભીની વિદાય એ લઈ રહી હતી,
- ❖ she departs from parents and siblings with heavy tears in eyes
- ❖ નવી વહુનો સહુએ પ્રેમથી સત્કાર કર્યો .
- ❖ All of them greeted with love to new bride.

English equivalent are available, yet the translation misses the flavor. Ultimately, it looks as translation only, not original; as these local traditions do not suit the culture of English language.

3.8. Homonyms and Polysemic Words

There are certain words which have double meaning, or may mean different in different situations. Moreover, they are deeply rooted in the culture of the source language for example,

- ❖ “थुलुलु” (Marginalized)- here presents as a lunch, not the dish, So, it is translated as "Lunch"
- ❖ “ओओओओ.” (Vieanna Woods)- Oh yes presents positive meaning and one’s wishes to become something. So, it is translated as “Oh yes”
- ❖ “ओ, ओओ.” (Vieanna Woods)- presents surety of sentence which is said that’s why translated as “Yes, sure”
- ❖ The translator first has to decide the proper meaning in context to the text.

3.9. Untranslatability

Despite sincere efforts, certain words remain non translatable such words or expressions – either may be kept as they are, or should be deleted from

the text. For example,

- ❖ Some terms showing the relationship must also be kept as it is. For example, *Nanand, Bhabhi*.
- ❖ Names and nick names are mostly not translated, and they are kept as they are with loss of the meaning in the target language for example, *Shushila, Motikaka, Janukaka, Amit, Tinu, Maria, Saryu* etc.
- ❖ Jargons and slangs, as discussed earlier, cannot be translated either they must be left, or they may be explained in simple language.

In short, we can conclude that translation is the transformation of not only dress or body; it is the transformation of the soul of the story. But it is not easy to transform the soul – as it is! At certain points, variations in meanings or feelings; or sometimes even the loss of the meaning must be tolerated. Ultimately it is a creative process; and each translator may have his own solutions for the problems. Certain phrases, idioms, specifically significant words and the names and nick names cannot be translated satisfactorily every time. And for that, some proper solutions should be found out.

3.9 Conclusion.

Translation, in short, is the process of recreation. But as discussed above the disposition of a local situation with its specific culture in a foreign language must look odd. It is something like a typical Indian rural girl dressed in western outfits. Naturally, the dress does not suit her personality. Likewise, the foreign language does not suit the typical Indian culture and mentality. We can just change the dress; but we can't change the soul. Gopinathan has discussed this theory of changing the soul [Ch- 2.2.1 (e)] and it is called the process of metempsychosis. This can be nicely exemplified here.

Translation is the transformation of one soul in to other body. But it is really difficult to transform the soul. The difficulties arise in various fields discussed above when we change the language; we have to change the words and concepts, emotions & feelings, social norms and traditions, Jargons or slangs – closely connected with the source language. And in doing so we must tolerate the loss of the meaning – to some extent; and loss of that typical fragrance – to the full extent. It is not possible to replant the same flower into a foreign land maintaining its original freshness and beauty. However, translation does convey the meaning to some extent – and that is enough for the foreign readers. In a way it becomes the tool for cultural give and take.

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