

Co-relation among Language, Literature and Translation with Reference to Rabindranath's Works

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Abstract- The research aims to find out the relationship among language, literature and translation as they are related with each other and add new dimensions to the field of knowledge. Each of them is a very important element in the realm of knowledge. The literature is being translated through the centuries. For translation, language is an indispensable part. The paper wants to find out how the change of language affects the original text. The translated version cannot carry the same beauty of the original text. The culture and language of one nation or state cannot resemble the other culture ever. The translation of Bengali novels or poems is very hard as the culture of Bengal is not natural to other cultures. The language and the structure of the original texts are more appealing than the translated version. The original one and the translated one cannot be ever same. Even If the author himself is the translator, the translation cannot reach the beauty of the original text.

Keywords- *Language; Literature; Translation; Bengali Literature; Original Text; Language and Culture*

1. INTRODUCTION

Language is an integral part of literature without which the literature cannot exist. Translation is also related with literature and language which paves the way of vast knowledge for the readers of the literature. First, we need to know the meaning of literature, language and translation.

Literature is the mirror of the reality which displays the real life of the human beings with the help of language. Literature evolves out of the language. In the realm of literature, translation helps us to get access to the literature of the different countries.

Translation emerges from the need of knowledge of people from all over the world. Literature is not place bound. It extends to a large extent. To meet up the thirst of knowledge, the translation is very essential. Translation cannot be exact version of the original one. It only follows the essence of the original. There are some basic rules of translation. One of the rules is that it must convey the essence of the original text and make sense.

When the source text is in a non-European language and the translated one portrays a culture and literary style which is quite strange to English language readers, the translator's task is made even more difficult. It is very important to produce a translation that uses both readable and engaging to English language readers.

Language is the medium of literature or can be said the most important component of the literature like the brick of the building. Since every language has its distinctive features, the literature of one language cannot be same like

the literature of another language. There is a saying that a work of literary art can never be translated. Nevertheless literature does get itself translated to satisfy the thirst of the world wide readers.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Translation means translating a text from one language to another language. According to Oxford Dictionary, translation means "the process of changing something that is written or spoken in another language." The paper has focused on Rabindranath Tagore's Chaturanga and its translation Quartet by Kaiser Haq and Gitanjali and its translation by Tagore himself. Its aim is to find out how the language affects the literature and translation. The translated version cannot have the effects same like the original one. There are different types of translation: free translation, literal translation, thought for thought translation, semantic translation and communicative translation. The core part of this paper focused on thought for thought translation and free translation to bring out the relationship among language, literature and translation. Different critics have commented on the translation of Tagore. W.B Yeats in the introduction of Gitanjali said "Mr. Tagore, like the Indian civilization itself has been content to discover the soul and surrender himself to its spontaneity." (Tagore, Gitanjali, 12). Kaiser Haq tries to be loyal to the original text. But Tagore is not completely loyal to the original text. His aim was to meet up the desire of non-Bengali speakers. Language plays an important role in the translation process. The way of using the language can help the translator to execute his or her task properly.

Tagore has been criticized for not being loyal to the original text and culture.

Translation means the way of transform something from one language to another language. It has been defined by many critics. Catford defines it “the replacement of textual materials in the source language by equivalent textual materials in another language”(Catford, 1965, 20). There are some types of translation. The important types are following:

2.1 Word for Word translation or Literal translation

A form of literal translation which seeks to match the individual words of the original as closely as possible to individual words of the target language. The objective of this translation is to sustain the essence of the original text. It is an old practice. This type of translation is not acceptable as it is full of mistakes. There are distinct features of each language. They never match with each other. If someone tries translating each word literally, it will be full of mistakes. For an example, ‘I eat rice’ cannot be literally translated in Bengali or Hindi because it will be incorrect.

2.2 Communicative translation

It is freer, and gives priority to the effectiveness of the message to communicate. It focuses on factors such as readability and naturalness, and is appropriate to translations of “pragmatic” texts where the actual form of the original is not closely bound to its intended meaning. These are texts like advertisements, tourist brochures, product descriptions and instructions, manuals.

2.3 Semantic Translation

This translation gives high priority to meaning and structure. The change of meaning even slightly hampers the whole translation. The translator aims to keep the original meaning and structure. He must have knowledge of the source language and the target language. For example, the translation of Holy Quran and Bible falls into this category

2.4 Thought for Thought relation

It is not literal translation. It is the thought translated in another language. . For instance, Quartet belongs to this kind of translation. The translator has tried to translate it as close as possible. The objective of this translation is to keep the meaning of the original text. The aim of good translation is not to follow word by word but to follow the meaning of the text accurately and portray the meaning in the translated version.

Every language is itself a collective art of expression. There is concealed in it a particular set of stylistic factors—phonetic, rhythmic, symbolic, and morphological—which it does not completely resemble with any other language. These things cannot be translated ever.

The paper focused one of the famous novels of Rabindranath Tagore named *Chaturanga* and the name of the translated version is *Quartet*.

2.5 Free translation

It is one which preserves the meaning of the original but uses natural forms of the target language, including normal word order and syntax so that the translation can be naturally understood. Free translation is a kind of idiomatic translation. It focuses on paraphrasing of the original text. Rabindranath Tagore has made paraphrase of Gitanjali in his translation.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

There are some differences between the original text and the translated one which are found out while reading both the texts. The translator tries to put all the essence of the original one in the translation. Still, the difference remains intact, which cannot be changed. But, there are some things which cannot be translated as there is variance between two languages as well as two cultures. The translator changes to a little extent to make the translation understandable to the non-Bengali readers. The language of translation is very easy to understand. The translator tries to represent the story in a very simple language. There are some pauses maintained in Bengali which indicate hesitation. The translator tries to replace this pause with perfect word. He explains the things which are necessary.

3.1 Discussion of Quartet

Quartet is written by Rabindranath Tagore in 1915 and translated by Kaiser Haq in 1993, is one of the masterpieces not only in South-Asian literature, but also in the world literature. It is a story of typical conflicts between reason and emotion, orthodoxy and liberalism, mysticism and passion. This is a brief work -more a novella than a full -length novel-but it contains in an appealing narrative structure most of the representative themes of Tagore’s longer works. In this novel he drew both on the traditional culture of South Asia and that of Europe, a typical tendency of the South Asian writers. The novel is philosophical, but about love and passion too, and also shot through with humor and irony.

The title also alludes to the four chapter titles, each named after a different character: 'uncle' (the uncle of one of the young men), 'Sachish' (the young man himself), 'Dhamani' (the second of the two women), and 'Sribilash' (Sachish's friend, the narrator of the novel).

The novel traces the transformation of Sachish from an atheist to a diehard disciple of Swami Lilananda. The novel philosophically explains the circumstances of Sachish, who is influenced by strict atheism of his Uncle, and renounces even his family to serve the society. However, the death of his uncle shakes his beliefs and somehow he becomes an ardent devotee of Religious Guru Swami Lilananda. As soon as Sachish is sure of his religious aptitude, he is swayed by the love and devotion of Damini, widow of Swami Lilanada’s disciple. At this juncture, he is confused between the three points of a

triangle, social atheism, superstitious religion and natural attraction for woman.

Nanibala is typical of the young widows whose maltreatment was attacked by both his Brahmo relatives and Tagore himself. She is absolutely defenseless against Purindar, whose exploitation of her is only worsened by the fact that he has seduced rather than merely raped her. As we all see, she actually loves the man who has ruined her life and cannot finally accept rescue at the hands of anyone else. The first quartet of the novel is composed Nanibala, Purindar, Jagmohan and Sribilash. It would be noted that, at the time, a maid impregnated by her master's son in Western countries would also have been summarily dismissed and abandoned to the streets. There is nothing exclusively Indian about Nanibala's fate. Sachish decides to marry Nanibala to compensate for his brother's guilt. Jagmohan becomes happy to hear this. Both of them go against the system of society by supporting widow marriage.

In Hinduism, a Brahmin male should go through four stages (ashram) in life: celibate religious student (brahmachari), married householder (grihastha), forest dweller (vanaprastha), and finally wandering ascetic (sannyasi). After having raised a family including at least one son, the devout Brahmin can choose to retire to a simple life of contemplation in the forest wilderness and eventually undertake the severe ascetic life of a beggar, ideally ultimately fasting to death. Swami Lilananda, the guru who entrances Sachish and converts him is a sadhu devoted to the Vaishnava practices surrounding Krishna as lover of Radha. His name refers to the rasa lila (dance of love) that the god performs with his lovers. Countless pictures, songs and dances represent the religious ecstasy in which the worshippers seek to become one with the god they not only long for, but who equally longs for them. Rasa lila also refers to various erotic practices and arts that are reflected widely in South Asian poetry and fiction.

The Indian culture is depicted in the novel which is attempted to get portrayed in the translated one. All these theories found in the novel, are strange to European readers which will help them have the overview of Indian culture through reading it.

The translation cannot convey the message of the original one. The novel has no simple lessons to touch. No one forms an ideal marriage. No one attitude toward religion proves fully satisfactory. Friendship and love have been at their most intense among these characters and the result has been heartache for all of them. A traditional Hindu conclusion would have stressed the need to move on, along the path of renunciation; but Tagore simply wants to show us the human heart, in all its fullness and make us sympathize with the suffering that fills so many lives here on earth. The tradition of Hindu religion is quite absurd for European people. In European context, widow marriage is acceptable. The widow, getting deprived of all the rights is inhuman to the non-Bengali or specifically European readers. The translator here does not try to change the context in his translated version. He has kept all the

elements of the original text here. the disadvantage of this translation is that it becomes quite strange to the target audience.

The translator has tried to translate the novel close to the original. He has not omitted anything from the novel. The advantage of this translation is that the essence of originality is found in the text. The reader may know the culture of another place. But there are disadvantages too. For an example, marriage of Hindu widow is awkward in this subcontinent. They may find it absurd that why a widow should commit suicide to avoid marriage. There are different ideologies of Hindu religion and Indian culture.

"One day a renowned group of Kirtan singers from another part of the country were performing at the local Krishna-temple." (Haq, 48)

The term "kirtan" cannot be translated into English. So the translator does not change the terms. There is a Bengali calendar which is certainly alien to European people. The translator presents the name of the months in Italicized form so that the non-Bengali readers understand these terms should be looked for understanding. Shrabon is a name of Bengali month. There is many words here which are not translated to keep the touch of originality.

The world of Samsara is made up of these two categories of human beings.

The language of original source is more appealing than the translated one. The translated cannot meet up the demand of the readers. There are several reasons. The literal translation of the text is not possible as the language differs from each other. The European readers can only get the essence of the original text. They cannot get full satisfaction. This thing also depends on the translator. If translator has ability to present the essence of the originality in a way that the non-Bengali readers can understand the main themes of the novel, the translation will be successful. In this novel, the translator has done a wonderful job. Any reader can understand the subject matter of the novels. It is true that they will not get the complete novel. At least, they will get the essence of the originality. There are some certain words which cannot be literally translated. The translator has found it easy to keep the words same as the original language. "And you know that I am not a sanyasini. I enjoy reading those books. Give them back." (Haq, 58). The word has only its existence in the Hindu religion. In another language, it is hard to find the translated form of this word.

3.2 Discussion of Gitanjali

Tagore primarily wrote in Bengali but translated many of his works into English. Over the years, there has been many a debate as to the position of Tagore on the dais of Indian Writing in English. Tagore is undoubtedly a Bengali writer, but he belongs to Indian Literature in English too. In fact, the evolution of Indian Literature in English can be traced by Tagore's initial English translation of his works and his subsequent writing in English. Among his poetic works, translated by himself into English, is Gitanjali

Translation can be considered as transformation. Rabindranath Tagore himself has translated Gitanjali. It can be said that he has transcribed his own poetry. He targets at the non-Bengali people when he translates. He does not translate the source text blindly. He has brought many changes in the translated form. This same theory can be applied to even in the field of self-translation. Literary self-translation is a process in which a text is translated from the source language to the target language with the only exception that the author of the text becomes the translator of the text. Since the source text is created by the author himself, it is not wrong to believe that the author should have a command over the text. It is easily believed that he does have complete and perfect knowledge over the text.

Gitanjali is a collection of one hundred and three verses that the poet himself translated. Much has already been debated on the reasons behind these translations and on whether he deserved the Nobel Prize or not. However from the perspective of self-translation it would not be out of place to try and locate Gitanjali as a piece of self-translated work and try and understand through it, the politics of self-translation. The first verse in the Bengali text reads:

- *Amare tumi ashesh korecho*
- *Emni leela tobo*
- *Furiye fele abar e bhorecho*
- *Jeebon no bonobo*

Tagore translated the same verse in English as:
*Thou hast made me endless, such is thy pleasure
This frail vessel thou emptiest again and again,
And fillest it ever with fresh life.*(Tagore, 15)

When we try and compare the two verses, we see that though he has been successful in maintaining the overall meaning, He has made certain compromises and changes. First and foremost the structure of the verse itself has changed drastically. While writing in Bengali, he has used a rhyme scheme of abab. He does not maintain the rhyme scheme in the translated form. He rather paraphrases the whole work. Also 'pleasure' is not an equivalent translation of the Bengali word 'leela'. 'Leela' is a religious term and is used to commonly refer to god's game play with the human race and not so much pleasure. Another observation is his use of metaphors while translating into English. 'jeebon' (life) is translated as 'frail vessel'. He focuses on the European readers. He does not focus on the maintenance of the Bengali structure.

THE day is no more, the shadow is upon the earth. It is time that I go the stream to fill my pitcher.(Tagore, 51)

This can be because of the fact that it is believed that Tagore gave more importance to ideas than to the structural framework. Thus he emphasized more on the lyrical qualities.

One of the main aims of translation is to convey the message as accurately as possible. When we read *Gitanjali* in English, it is very evident through words like 'THOU', 'THEE', 'THY' etc, that the verses are addressed to God. They can be seen as hymns or even prayers for God. Only

one kind of expression is conceived from the English Version. However when we read the Bengali version of the same, we cannot dismiss the verses as just hymns sung to the almighty. They can also be seen as songs or poems written for a beloved. There is no archaism or loftiness in the way the verses have been written in Bengali. The tone is informal. Thus though the source text (Gitanjali written in Bengali in this case) can be interpreted in more than one way, Tagore consciously constructs the English translation in such a way that not many interpretations can be possible. One of the possible reasons behind this can be that Tagore was very concerned about his target audience (the European). He was aware that the west saw India as a land of mysticism. He wanted to build on it and thus we find Gitanjali (the English translation) to be full of mysticism and spiritual thoughts.

Rabindranath Tagore has addressed god in the translated versions. In Christianity, there is only one God while in Hindu religion there are many gods. The love between Gods as lovers is an important element of Indian mythology. Tagore has addressed mainly the western people who are mostly Christian. Tagore has addressed God without ambiguity assuming that they do not know Hindu religion and their facts.

In the night of weariness let me give myself up to sleep without struggle, resting my trust upon thee.

The translated version of the poems is addressed to God. The non-Bengali speakers easily understand that this poems are actually written for God. They do not feel any ambiguity here. Rabindranath Tagore has not tried at all to maintain the structure of the original one. He tried his best to satisfy the demand of the target audience. He has reversed the whole style of the original poem in his translation.

If the translation tries to sustain the original structure of the poems, the translation will lose its effectiveness, though it is a paraphrase, there is melody like the original. According to Usha Kishore, "Tagore's auto-translations have come under fire by critics like Mahasweta Sengupta who feel that his English translations do not convey the cultural values of the source language that is Bengali, but cater more towards the target language and culture that is English. Sengupta feels that Tagore has been faithful to the TL (target language) audience in a way, which undermines the source language and culture and this proves to be problematic in the sphere of inter-locking cultural values, particularly those, which are part of the coloniser-colonised dichotomy. Although Tagore is accused of changing style, imagery and tone of the originals, it can be argued that the changes wrought were to suit the TL poetics of Edwardian English. Writing in the early 20th century, Tagore had to cater to his audience in India, in England and the rest of the world. In Tagore's times, English in India and to a large extent in the rest of the world was a reflection of Edwardian English." (<http://www.museindia.com/>)

After reading his English translations, one will have tendency to think that Tagore was keener on expressing his

emotions rather than strictly translating his Bengali work. Thus he does not follow any particular pattern of translation. While translating some verses he follows a word to word translation, whereas on other occasions he follows the method of paraphrasing. Many critics believe that Tagore was concerned that the European would not be able to understand the cultural aspects of his country and thus he chose simple English word that though would not accurately match the Bengali one. However, they would succeed in putting across his emotions to the western readers.

Hence, Tagore as a self-translator takes a lot of liberties while translating. His English version of the *Gitanjali* is less of a translation of the Bengali text and can be considered more of a trans-creation. Tagore's *Gitanjali* contributes to the larger debate of whether self-translation is the ideal translation and it also questions the stance that the author/translator takes while translating his own work. Rabindranath Tagore was influenced by the European culture as the contemporary time was colonized by the British. English Literature, along with the medium of English and the English System of Education were all allies of the colonizers to control the natives, under the guise of a liberal education. "He was educated in British education system. He has focused on the British culture and language in his translation. He has been criticized for his attempts to satisfy the British reader. Bengali literature does not get translated as the English literature does. The English language is a result of colonialism. Kaiser Haq has tried to his level best to sustain the essence of the text by using all the elements used in Bengali tradition. But, Tagore has written for the European Audience. He has changed all the structures and still, maintained the essence of original text;

4. CONCLUSION

It is evident that mankind hankers after knowledge, a type of discourse, which is, in reality, perpetual. To survive, people need to learn and learning is not confined to only one culture or a country. To know another culture, one must read. To help the reading process, Translation plays an integral role. Literature and language complement each other while translation is dependent on them. When the language changes in the form of literature, the whole expression also changes. It is obvious that without

language, literature loses its ground. And language is the basic component of translation. The relation among them is very vital in the field of literature. The translation of Bengali literature is not in practice to a great extent. To expose the Bengali literature, Kaiser Haq and Tagore have taken steps to do the task. The language in a translation is very important. The use of language should be in a way that it can be loyal to the original text.

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