

The Functions and Challenges of a Translator

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Abstract :

Human beings are differentiated from other beings because of their language and their ability in handling that language. The very aim of language is communication becomes impossible, language gets extinct. In this process of communication, translation plays a very vital role. It is one of the tools that paves the way for human beings to be out of the limitations that are imposed upon them by time, place, language, culture and customs. In fact, it narrows down the differences among human beings.

Keywords : Translation, Translator, language, target language, source language

Translation is the process of manifesting the contents and meanings of words, sentences and contexts of texts from one language to another language. The language from which this change is effected is termed as the source language and the language to which this is changed is known as the target language. In a way, translation is the echo of the Source language. This echo is different from the original sound which is the real source. Thus, translation originates from the source book and leads to the formation of another book.

A real translation should have transparency. It should reflect the original light emanating from the source book. The real quality of truth in the source book should be fully retained through the translation; and it is expected to remain as a real artistic creation in the culture of the target language. It is here that a translator has to be diligent in certain points. Looking at from this angle, the translator is to perform two things:-

1. Doing the work of translation
2. Producing the work, thus translated.

As regards the translator, it is an uphill task to transform the milieu and internal structure as well as the culture inherent in the material couched in a particular language to another language parallelly without losing the sense and spirit of the material in the Source language.

There are two phases in the process of translation. They are language and culture. And

the aim of translation is the exchange of ideas. Hence, it is not merely the language but also the cultures that are being translated. For the same reason, translation is culture-centred. The translator enriches the language and literature of the target language by guiding the nobility of the source text.

The situation, being so, demands that the translator has to be cautious in the following cases:-

1. The translator should be fully conversant with the language of the source-text and the implications in that text.
2. He/she should be able to understand and find solutions for the subtleties, if any, in the source-book.
3. The translator should have an in-depth knowledge on the source language and the target language; and without this there is the possibility of inflicting injuries on both the languages.
4. Word-to-word translation is not fair as it is a kind of slavery that is likely to bring about a loss of beauty in the presentation and an oversight of the implications in the original work.
5. The translation should be done in the ordinary language.
6. The translated work should have the quality to provide the same enjoyment to the reader as done by the source-book.

Here it is worthwhile to examine the qualifications of a good translator :

1. A good translator must be ready to reverse the author of the source-work.
2. He/she must have remarkable skill and cultural background.
3. He/she must have the scholarship in the source language and the target language. The first is helpful for understanding the Subject-matter and the second is useful for manifesting it.
4. The subject-matter should be well-known to him/her
5. Reliability and truthfulness are two other qualities.
6. The translator should have much affinity towards the source-work.
7. He/she should not misunderstand and mislead the readers.

8. It is good to point out the mistakes and ambiguities, if any, in the original work.
9. A good translator is not expected to record anything that is not mentioned in the source-book.
10. If any idea from the source-book is omitted in the course of translation, the case should be mentioned as foot-note.
11. A sense of propriety is to be displayed by the translator.
12. Lexical knowledge is a must.
13. Grammatical acquaintance with regard to gender, number etc. Is equally necessary.

Challenges in Translation :

In the mechanism of translation, there are certain challenges to be confronted by the translator. The most noticeable challenges are as follow:-

1. Linguistic Structure :

Each language has got its own structural frame; and the translator should be quite proficient in it. It is the linguistic structure that provides translation the qualities of precision and simplicity

2. Use of Punctuations :

It is very difficult to translate the signs and punctuations as well as the linguistic styles in their own ways because they are intimately related to the respective Language and their cultures. Hence, the translator should be conversant with those, appropriately.

3. Compound Words:

Compound words may consist of two or more words. Their meanings are not taken individually but collectively; and this collective meaning may not project their individual implications. Therefore, the individual meaning and collective meanings do not have any relation with each other. This may create problems to the translator.

4. Unknown Names:

Certain names and actions in a language may be prevalent only provincially; and words related to those are prone to create misunderstanding, if the translator is unaware of the existence of such words.

5. Difference in meanings:

Some words have different meanings which are not related to each other. The translator is expected to use such words only in their right senses.

6. Emotional Attachment :

The translator and the original writer must have an emotional attachment. This proximity is helpful for criticism

Conclusion :

The current stand-point is that translation is a cultural exercise; and as a result the theories of translation of the past and the present are evaluated accordingly. In such a situation, the meaning, philosophy and experience in the process convert translation into a cultural activity.

Literary translation is an important method of cultural communication in a multilingual country like India. Even though there is political unification in India, she is culturally and linguistically separated. But the linguistic translations bring about a sense of unity; and at the governmental level itself there are arrangements for the translation of literary texts. Behind the slogan of the Kendra Sahitya Academy that "Indian literature is one even though it is produced in different languages" there is a concern for cultural unification.

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