

Language Barrier a Problem for Scientific Research Study

Shikha Sharma*

M.A. in English

Abstract – Challenges or barriers are social and cultural differences that exist between and among languages, nations and geographical entities. In most of the countries, a large number of social and cultural difference are observed. India is one unique example where such diversities are most evident. Translation is essentially an act of communication. It is the transferring a message from the source language into target language between two systems of sings or languages where the message of one system of sings is replaced with equivalent textual material of the other language by expressing its meaning and to an extent the style of language. In most cases too, we find a country having several social/cultural diversities. These differences impede, in one way or the other, effective translation because of varying conceptions of reality occasioned by languages The present article seeks to identify the nature of these differences and investigate some of the hindrances emanating due to social and cultures factors that occur in the course of translation. A discussion on these barriers will bring together the scholars of translation studies to brainstorm and suggest ways to address them. Bringing these barriers into the foray of discussion will also serve as a way of avoiding them.

Keywords – Barriers, Translation, Society, Reality, Diversities, Differences, Manipulation.

-----X-----

INTRODUCTION

Culture wields enormous influence on man as it is the foundation of his existence, since a person is born into a culture. Every community or nation has its own indigenous culture; this culture defines and shapes a people's perspective about every segment of life. This is why culture is seen as "the way of life of a people, including their attitudes, values, beliefs, arts, sciences, modes of perception and habits of thought and activity. The terms social and cultural can therefore be understood as possessing a link to each other in the sense that cultural activities are meaningful as social significance. Translation, therefore, becomes effective and meaningful as a social tool. If this is the case how can it be influenced socially from a cultural point of view? How can social and cultural factors affect effective translation? How can such factors be resolved and in what ways can the effects be cushioned? These are some of the issues that this paper will attempt to resolve. But let us start by making some conceptual clarifications

Why Translation?

Translation Studies is a specialized discipline that is saddled with the responsibility of ensuring that words and texts are replicated in their original and exact forms. This will definitely involve linguists and theorists at the same or different times. However,

there does not seem to be much cooperation between these two as noted by Bell:

The translation theorists, almost without exception, have made little systematic use of the techniques and insights of contemporary linguistics (the linguistics of the last twenty years or so) and the linguists, for their part, have been at best neutral and at worst actually hostile to the notion of a theory of translation.

"why" of translation. Translation is important for so many obvious reasons as it has as its major task, the preservation of words and texts in their original form after undergoing some language procession. This may not be easily done except when certain variables are considered; this is why the field of translation studies is still evolving, bringing up new ways and method(s) of effective translation especially within the complex society we have today. We shall discuss more about this, but let us move on to examining what social/cultural considerations entail.

Social/Cultural Mix

The term social and cultural seem inexorable; when we talk about the word social, we are looking at the big picture of society. The word is often contradistinguished from "individual". On the other hand, "cultural" is the word culture and it has to do

with the totality of a people's way of life. Thus in the Longman Encyclopedia, culture is:

The collection of meanings, values, morals, modes of thinking, patterns of behavior, idioms of thought, of speech, ways of life, etc that identify a particular nation – state, group, or social category. Culture therefore is all-encompassing, touching the very fabric of human cohesion. It is also dynamic, thus undergoing changes. Cultures influence one's behavior and it can also be influenced by internal external factors such as migration, scientific and technological inventions. A change in belief systems may also bring about a change in culture. A social relation is carried out within a culture, leading to social actions. Social actions are the interaction with other people and are of a primary importance. There are also actions in which the agent is a plurality, a "we" rather than an "I"; it is tempting to reduce this latter category to an aggregate of individual actions, but this kind of reduction or decomposition is not in general available. Man is a social animal who relates with other humans in groups. The society where man lives is complex, based on the culture that influences social relations/actions. Blackburn opines that:

how much in the way of social bonding should emerge from our interactions with each other? Language, money and law, are social entities, dependent on society for their existence and their function?

Any setting where there is interaction among individuals can be taken as a society. For it is in a society that communication takes place, for which we need language, even transactions whereby goods and services are traded for other goods and services, for which we eventually need money; and of guidelines for behavior and sanctions for trespass, for which we need law. Hence, "we have a set of structures, or in other words, individuals bound to each other in complex webs of relationships. And that is what is meant by a society.

SOCIAL/CULTURAL DIMENSION TO TRANSLATION

Since translation is a human activity, and humans are social/cultural animals, then translation must have a social/cultural dimension. Humans communicate in words and text; hence language is a medium of communication invented by man to foster harmonious social relationship and co-existence. To this end, there is a need for mastery of language; and this involves not only the ability to understand immediately, an indefinite number of entirely new sentences, but also the ability to identify deviant sentences and, on occasion, to impose an interpretation on them. To Chomsky, therefore, the central fact to which any significant linguistic theory must address itself. A translator or interpreter cannot divulge him/herself from the nitty gritty of mastery in

language if he or she must be an effective translator. He/she must keep pace with good knowledge of the language in question and even from cultural dimensions to semantics and syntax. At the level of cross-cultural translation, there is a need to pay greater attention to cultural diversities and the role they play in the determination of truth via language. This is where such linguistic appellations like idioms, proverbs, collocations, riddles and so on come into play, so that a word could earn something entirely different from its translation. In this case, should the translator rest content on the degree of closeness or equivalence? Newmark gave some translation procedures; under cultural equivalent, he contends that "cultural equivalents are usually inaccurate but they are a shorthand, have emotional force, are useful for immediate effect on the receptor. The social/cultural dimension to translation also challenges the proficiency of translators to effective translation and competence because of the depth of knowledge of the language to be unearthed. This is because, "translating involves not just two languages, but a transfer from one culture to another. this social/cultural dimension to be studied and properly contextualized. If this is done, it becomes easier for the barriers that will hinder effective translation to be removed; and this shall be our next focus.

REMOVING DIFFERENT BARRIERS TO TRANSLATION

Since the words or texts to be translated are situated or housed in a culture which has social significance, it becomes imperative for the translator to have adequate knowledge of the culture via whose language of which he/she desires to work. Since language is a highly complex phenomenon produced by incredibly complex human beings, Shastri's averment below becomes really instructive: It is complex at all the levels such as sounds, words, semantics and pragmatics. Complexity increases with the use of idioms, metaphors, proverbs and the highly stylized language of literature because of poetic license that the writers take. It is important to stress the major issues raised by Shastri some of which are: poetic license, spell of inspiration, and artificial creation. Of course, every writer has some or all the freedom to build castles with words; that is called poetic license. In the employment of this license, the use of idioms, metaphors, proverbs and so on can be freely applied. This license also can dovetail into inspiration that is uniquely his. The challenge there is the burden of having to read the author's or writer's mind. All the option that may be opened to the translator is to artificially create or close gaps because "there is no art to know the mind's construction in the face" as opined by Shakespeare. It is in this sense that translation becomes really difficult than just writing originally. Besides, the author works under the spell of inspiration, which the translator has to artificially create. Hence, translating is more difficult than the

original writing. Cultural transposition is not without its risky option as well. If this is the case, what should one bear in my mind when translating names? Hervey and Higgins give the following advice:

When translating names, one must, therefore be aware of three things: first existing options for translating a particular name; second the implications of following a particular option and third, all the implications of a choice between exoticism, transliteration and cultural transplantation.

EVALUATION

One of the serious burdens that translators we can't have a perfect translation. If translation cannot be perfect, what will be the standard by which "enough is enough"? What can be described as good translation? Newmark advises that "In considering social culture, one has to distinguish between denotative and connotative problems of translation" He establishes further the distinction between cultural, from universal and personal language. To him, there are no translation problems with universals. It is the cultural description of the universal referent that usually poses problems. If languages were like this, the task of learning a new language would also be much easier than it is". There is normally a translation problem with what is often called idiolect. Hence, where there is a cultural focus; "there is a translation problem due to the cultural "gap" or a distance" between the source and target languages. On the other hand, in case there are translation problems arising from lack of equivalence at word level, what should the translator do when there is no word in the target language (TL) which expresses the same meaning as the source language (SL) word? The major way out is still manipulation. For Bell:

The choice of a suitable equivalent will always depend not only on the linguistic system or systems being handled by the translator, but also on the way both the writer of the source text and the producer of the target text i.e. the translator, choose to manipulate the linguistic systems in question. Compromise, it seems, should be the result of deliberate decisions taken in light not only of what latitudes are allowed by the SL and TL respectively, but also of all the factors that can play a determining role in translation: the nature of the ST, its relationship to SL audiences, the purpose of the TT, its putative audience, and so forth. Only then can the translator have a firm grasp of which aspects of the ST can be sacrificed with the least detriment to the effectiveness of the TT, both as a rendering of the ST and as a TL text in its own right. This may just be a remedial therapy to the problem since "The words of a language often reflect not so much the reality of the world, but the interests of the people who speak it" (Palmer, 1976: 21).

CONCLUSION

We started out by stating that there are social/cultural barriers to translation. These social/cultural barriers infringe on effective translation since the latter is a symbiotic activity which involves the texts to be translated and the one who does the translation. The article further contended that the word social is obliterated by the word culture since social relations or actions take place within a culture. In the course of the discussion through logical analysis, it becomes obvious that compromise is part and parcel of translation. This has implications for effective or perfect translation which seems to be a facade. The article concludes that manipulation or compromise in translation exposes a gap that remains very wide leaving, in its trail, a serious burden on translators not because of their incompetence towards translation per se, but because of cultural diversities of words and language, hence the recommendation that the nearer a translation is to the original words or text in the face of equivalence, the better.

REFERENCES

- Newmark, Peter. (2001). *About Translation*. New York: Multilingual Matters.
- Bell, R. T. (1991). *Translation and Translating: Theory and Practice*. Essex: Pearson Education.
- Blackburn, S. (2009). *What do we really know?* London: Quercus.
- Blackburn, S. (2005). *The Oxford Dictionary of Philosophy*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Shastri, Pratima D. (2012). *Fundamental Aspects of Translation*. New Delhi: PH/Learning.
- The Longman Encyclopedia (1989). London: Long Group.
- Ukpong, D. E. (2016). "Ethical Considerations in Translation." Forthcoming Conference Paper.
- Hervey, S. and Higgins, I. (2007). *Thinking Translation...* London & New York: Routledge.
- Bessnett, Susan and Trivedi Harish (eds. 2012). *Post Colonial Translations: Theory and Practice*. Routledge.
- "Culture Change: Processes of Change". Culture Change. Palomar College. Retrieved Feb. 20, 2018
- Durkheim, E. (1973). *The Rules of Sociological Method*. (Trans) Ed. Sarah A. and John, H. M. George C. Chicago: Free Press.
- Esperenca B. and Bassnett Susan (2009).

Translation in Global News. Routledge. Hall, T. Edward. (1976) Beyond Culture. Hervey, S., & Higgins, I. (1992). Thinking translation. London / New York: Routledge

Corresponding Author

Shikha Sharma*

M.A. in English

sharmashikha10294@gmail.com