



Translation as a Mediating Means of Cross Cultural and Linguistic Communication: Challenges and Prospects in the Age of Globalization

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Abstract;

Translation is essentially a mediating means notwithstanding the traditional concern to establish equivalences between SL and TL. Accordingly every translation is an attempt to make mediation of cross cultural and linguistic communication. More importantly, the paper attempts to unravel and reiterate the deep-rootedness and/ or antiquity of translation and globalization. However, in the contemporary times, which have become synonymous of Globalization, translation and its role have become more inevitable. Set against this backdrop, the present paper delves deep into diaspora and globalization and the consequent “cultural turn” of translation, transcending the mechanical ambience and means.

Key words: “Cultural Turn” of Translation; Diaspora and Globalization; Beyond transference of meaning.

Introduction:

Without reinventing the wheel, the crux of the Activity of Translation in the contemporary times may be approximated with the title, “Challenges and Prospects of Translation in the Age of Globalization.” Understandably, Globalization implies greater interfacing and the consequent confrontations, and attempts at sharing and assimilation of cultures and languages. However, in the first place, it must be conceded that the continuum of Diaspora is perhaps as old as humanity, and the Diaspora movement of humanity is almost timeless and tireless in its cultural and linguistic divergences and convergences. This foregrounds Globalization as omnipresent that is ‘ever in the making,’ and its natural corollary, i.e., Translation.

The attempt to connect Diaspora with the now-politically emerged Globalization might look facile. Further, the tracing of roots of Globalization to Diaspora which seems to have taken place all the while is not to condone the latent hegemonic and imperialist agenda of it. On the other hand, it is an attempt to see how Diaspora must have necessitated Translation of various nuances all the while. The backdrop shall validate the umbilical connection between Translation and Globalization.

Notwithstanding the ‘seeming’ naturalness of Globalization, it cannot be taken without a pinch of salt, perhaps it is wiser even to take it with bags full of salt since it (Globalization) at times implies and promotes the emergence of mono-cultural and mono-lingual human existence. This



is obviously problematic, and is against the very grain of the underlying Diaspora movement that must have caused the now-explicit Globalization. In fact, by a few, Translation is viewed as a facilitator and sustainer of the same.

Against this backdrop, the path and agenda of Translation activity must be executed very cautiously. Before actually making an attempt at gauging the Challenges and Prospects of Translation in the 'now-explicitly-emerged Globalization,' it is imperative to reckon the "cultural turn" that took place in Translation activity.

"Traditionally, translation is treated as a rule-bound technique for the transfer between languages. With the author and the audience inviolable, a translator is put in the dilemma of imitating the original and satisfying the readers. In the devoted pursuit of equivalence and fidelity, such external parameters as history, society, economy are ignored as if they were equal.... It can be said that the first concept in cultural translation studies was *cultural turn* that in 1978 was presaged by the work on Polysystems and translation norms by Even-Zohar and in 1980 by Toury. They dismiss the linguistic kinds of theories of translation and refer to them as having moved from word to text as a unit but not beyond. They themselves go beyond language and focus on the interaction between translation and culture, on the way culture impacts and constraints translation and on the larger issues of context, history and convention. Therefore, the move from translation as a text to translation as culture and politics is what they call it a Cultural Turn in translation studies and became the ground for a metaphor adopted by Bassnett and Lefevere in 1990. In fact Cultural Turn is the metaphor adopted by Cultural Studies oriented translation

theories to refer to the analysis of translation in its cultural, political, and ideological context."

Against this backdrop, the following "Challenges and Prospects" shall be visualized. The Challenges and Prospects are kept together since they always interface, and as is known within a challenge lies prospect when the former is dealt with in a proper way.

Interfacing of Challenges and Prospects:

a. Non-Viability of Universal Translation Theory:

The universal translation theory based on accuracy and equivalence has its own limitations since it implies notwithstanding cultural and linguistic plurality, accuracy and equivalence are realizable targets in a routine way. Obsessed with these targets, a translator might ignore the source language text's cultural and lingual specifics, and the text's context.

This situation demands resourcefulness on the part of Translator to make necessary cultural adaptations to make the translation alive and vibrant.

b. Translation and Postcolonial Cultures:

Translation in postcolonial cultural context has to take into consideration its SL text's agenda, be it "recreating of past, celebration of one's culture specifics which might not be conducive for translation and 'creation and assertion of identity,' and even experiences connected to locale and geography and etc. Hence translation activity remains monitored by these parameters.

Secondly, the translator must be in the know of these limitations while translating



the text into TL since the TL lingua-cultural ambience might not have similar resourcefulness and connotations to carry out the agenda. More importantly, postcolonial cultures illustrate limitations of this presupposition that translation facilitates communication b/n groups.

c.

Translation in the post-positivist era: In the post-positivist era, subjectivity gains credibility which might go beyond rational explanation. Globalization while acting as unifying factor, though in a comprehensive way, in the sense, socio-lingual and cultural and politico-economic, does value the significance of self-reflexivity on the part of varied partners, and thereby pivots the position of subjectivity in human experience.

This backdrop must pose a challenge to Translators who act on the presumption that they have to find out equivalences between SL text and TL text with scientific precision. The post-positivism paves path for subjectivity and consequently proves the point that looking for equivalences might not be the job of a translator culture specific context. On the other hand, a translator is given opportunity to retain the ambience of culture.

d. Necessity for Translation must go beyond “conference interpretation” and “fixed written text”:

Perhaps one of the most important shifts in the debates on Translation activity is the need to shift from “conference interpretation” and debating on the translation activity of the “fixed written text.” Since substantial translation activity takes place in varied and lively situations with reference to non-literary and at

times literary translations of various genres, the discussion shall take place on these aspects.

Accordingly, the problems of the professional Translators must be addressed to.

e. Translation as a move away from “Representation to Experience”:

Since emotions are “embedded in the context of specific cultural concepts” a translator has to be careful to understand the same, and thereby one can represent the emotions but may not make the readers’ experience the emotion in an alien context of TL. Hence the difficulty must be perceived by the Translators.

f. The predominance of ‘Orality’ over the Written Literature vs Translation:

In spite of wide ranging discussions on Translation activity, it is most of the time confined to Written Literature. However, “Orality” is the central condition of human biology and culture, and translation must be theorized accordingly. As is known, even today, majority of the societies live outside the “Written Literature.”

Hence, the prospects of translation should not be limited to the written word alone. The *modus operandi* applicable to the written literature may not be sufficient to represent the orality and the culture specific of that. In fact, an altogether different strategy is to be adopted if at all one dares to translate the oral contribution.

g. Translation and various cultures’ repertory of primary forms and text types:



One of the obvious challenges is meeting the requirement of various cultures' repertory of primary forms and text types. The western norms and parameters of Translation may not be adequate to deal with the repertory of the primary forms which are deeply culture specific with an emphasis on the accompaniments of native music and their traditions.

An understanding of this possibility widens the horizon of Translation, and also shows the un-translatability of certain culture specifics whose strength lie in the amalgamation of form and the content of the these two.

- h. Going beyond "Black Box", in the sense, going beyond the concept of decoding and encoding:** The conventional theory of translation as decoding and encoding between the SL text and TL text by default has great limitations. The translator must realize that with the onslaught of the "cultural turn" audacious assumptions on the part of Translator about his/ her ability to translate everything and anything must be pruned. In the place of utter surety, the benefit of doubt about one's own adequacies, and the need of developing an empathic approach to align with the strange and to decipher the amenable and the un-amenable in the SL context to be carried out to the TL context must be done.

Conclusion and Findings: As has been hinted at already, the challenges for Translation activity are obvious and many, but the same could be turned into prospects, provided we, the translating

community, attempt at a comprehensive yet specialized understanding of our job with a focus on the culture specifics.

This will help us to realize that:

*Translation is not to eliminate the varied nature of the world and its plurality.

* On the other hand Translation is there to celebrate the diversity and the resultant richness of the literary and cultural world.

*Translation is there not to polarize the world into opposing camps but to see the complementary role of the differing parts of the one world.

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