Translation Works in Sanskrit Literature and Contemporary Literary Forms. An Analytical Study

www.sadvidyajournal.in

ISSN 0976-3953

Volume 17, **Issue** 1

Published
December 2023

Author

Dr.Narayanan. E.N
Assistant Professor
Department of Sanskrit
S.B.College Changanassery

Received:
October 06, 2023

Accepted:
December 07, 2023

DOI:
10.62705/sjrs.2023.01.24

Key Words

Existence and survival of language,
Cultural exchange,
contemporary relevance,

Abbreviations

AS - Abijnanaśākuntalam
MS - Maṇipravālaśākuntalam

Abstract

This paper deals with the translation of Sanskrit works to other languages. It discusses the need of the translation for the survival, existence in the world scenario of the language where the rapid changes occur. It also goes arising to the translation process due the cultural differences of languages. The paper takes different forms and matters for the application. It concludes with contemporary trends in translation.

Introduction

For the sake of scholarly discussions, Sanskrit literature may be studied in any one of the three forms namely, prose (gaḍyam) poetry, (paddḍyam) and the combination of two (miśram). In Sanskrit, the form of literature is generally determined by its theme and structure. Mahākāvyas, Sanḍeśakāvyas, Khandakāvyas, Akhyāyika, Campūs, Rūpakas etc. are commonly found in the corpus of Sanskrit literature in different forms. In later developments of poetics, the forms of these genres were defined and writers followed these definitions. The structure of poetics was framed and embellished with grammar, meter etc. In addition, the thematic structure was decided by Alaṅkāra, Dhvani, Rasa etc. All these constitute the traditional style of writing in Sanskrit Literature. In later times, the influence of foreign languages introduced new literary forms both into poetry and prose. If sonnets, epic, ode, lyric, ballad, elegy, idyll, pastoral elegy etc. were introduced into poetry, genres like novels and short stories were introduced into the prose. Among them, while the sonnet is structurally defined, other poetic forms are defined based on their themes. Attempts have been made and are still being made to translate novels, short stories and poems into Sanskrit.

Literature Review

Language in its wider sense has been a medium of communication for several millennia and is believed to have started from 3000 BC. In Assyria, a land of multi-language culture, the inscriptions of the Emperor were translated from Assyrian to the other languages of the State. This is considered to be the first attempt in translation, in the recorded annals of history.1

In this context, the word translation also should be verified. If we translate a pictorial structure to a literary form it is not a translation. It can be called trans-figure or trans-structure. So translation is a process of exchange between two languages, that is, between the source language and the target language.

"Translation is the effort to express the ideas of the source language in the target language, without lacking the ends and means, in an appropriate way."2

Different methods of translation are possible. For instance, faithful translation (translating the ideas exactly as in the source language), free translation, recreation etc. are some models. All these are relevant according to the needs of the situation. In the current scenario of global communication, the need for translation is very high. As language is the most important medium for mutual exchange, in every field, translators have an important and decisive role in that exchange. Through these exchanges, languages, both source and target, find new platform for their existence. Here the universal significance of the statement of Dandin, can be remembered.

"Iḍamanṭham ṭamahkṛṭsnam jāyēṭa bhuvanaṭrayam
Yaḍi śabdāhvayam jyōṭirāsamsāram na ḍīpyaṭē" 3

Cultural exchanges in Translation

"Literary translation is also a form of real-world context. This context may be examined in terms of gradually widening networks: translation production teams: the communities of interests, field, and systems with which teams interact; and the imagined communities in which they operate."4

From these, imagined communities can be selected for translational purposes. These communities can communicate their cultures to each other. They make the link between these communities in a social context. A genuine affection towards nature has prompted the translation of Ode to the West Wind to Sanskrit as MāruṭaSanḍēśa.

"Intercultural embassy literary translation as bridging intercultural divides by representing the best interests of source writer and culture to the receptor culture."5

Translations of Kalidasa's Abhijñānaśāakunţa!am introduced Indian style of narrating the relation between pristine nature and pure love to the receptors of different nations. If translation is possible between two different cultures eg., Indian and English, which can be called inter-cultural translation, intra-cultural translations are also very common. This intra-cultural translation is found when Nātyaśāsţra is was translated to Malayalam for the performers who practice Nātya with their dimensions. The formation of the Natāńkuśa can be attributed to the result of this development.

In India, collaborations with other countries paved the way for new trends. Translations arose out of a need for mutual understanding and cultural exchange. Many Sanskrit literary texts were translated into other languages. Sanskrit also adopted the method of translation for the existence of language in multilingual cultures of the Global and National scenario.

Methodology

Here taking sanskrit works and its translations I experiment through the converstion of languages. By comparative method an attempt is made to different approaches of translation. An analysis is made to derive the merits and demerits of the approaches

Analysis

Earlier works, though accepted themes different from traditional style, preserved the traditional structure eg- Mugalābharaṇam, Āńgalasāmrājyam, etc. Earlier translation works from Sanskrit to other regional languages are found to keep the idea and structure in the traditional style, also. But there can be some deviations as seen in the translation of the following verses-

"Anukāriṇipūrvēṣāmyuktarūpamidamtvayi.
Āpannābhayasatreṣupouravāhkhaludīkṣitāh."12

Translation of Maṇipravālaśākuntalam of KeralavarmaValiyakoyittampuran can be examined.-

"Guruvartmaniniṣthayōtirikumpuruṣōttamsabhavānuyuktamētat

Puruvamṣyarajasramārtibhājāmurubhadrāyagṛhītadīkṣarallō" 13

We can compare.

Abijnanaśākuntalam (AS)	Maṇipravālaśākuntalam (MS)	Additional words in MS	Omitted words from AS in MS
Anukāriṇipūrvēṣām	Guruvartmaniniṣthayōtirikum	Urubhadrāya	satreṣu
tvayi	bhavānu	puruṣōttamsa	
yuktarūpamidam	yuktamētat		
dīkṣitāh.	gṛhītadīkṣarallō	gṛhīta for prtyayaitac	
pouravāh	Puruvamṣyar		
Āpannābhaya	ārtibhājām	ajasram	

Here the translation is almost in Sanskrit but with different meter. Some ideas like puruṣōttamsa,Urubhadrāya are added. Important ideas like satreṣu are omitted.

There are possibilities to experiment with structural conversion in the translation of other language poetry to Sanskrit. Example-

"O wild west wind, thou breathe of autumns being

Thou from whose unseen presence, the leaves dead

Are driven like, ghosts from an enchanter fleeing"

(Ode to the west wind, PB Shelly)

Sanskrit verses-

"Pracanda hē paścimavāta tē prabhābharaśśaratprāṇadharāyatē tava

Adṛśyasattā harati praparnikām jirnām yathā mantrakarah pisācinim "14

Here prabhābharah is an addition. But the change to Sanskrit restructure to possess the characteristic features of Sanskrit meter, linings, rhymes etc. New creations in modern Sanskrit imitate the styles of novels, free poetry etc. But the translations, though rare, can experiment with such possible styles. Structures of Western poetries can also be adopted. But the sonnets may be the type of poetry which concerns with both structure and sentiment. In Sanskrit, the meter and the emotion are more closely related, as Viyōginī used in Vilāpakāvya. Here we can remember the words of Anandavardhana

"Śṛńgārē vipralambhākhyē yamakādinibandhanam

Śaktāvapi pramāditvam vipralambhē viśēṣavat" 15

So, the cultural difference in poetical approaches may hinder when Sanskrit text is translated to other languages. As Sanskrit has a well-defined structure the conversion of other poetry to Sanskrit with its characteristics is convenient. The creative process of Western styles like sonnets, epic, ode, lyric, ballad, elegy, idyll, pastoral elegy etc. in Sanskrit can be experimented with.

Conclusion

Contemporary trends in Sanskrit translations and whether they are contemporary compared with the literature of other languages. From the above discussions we can conclude that for the existence of the classical language Sanskrit, we have enough sources in the world. Translation is one of the best methods for the perpetration of any language. Structure is not a matter of concern in creative writing anymore. But we can write in many styles. We now use the translation of Sanskrit texts to other languages only for communication. This translation style may be data-driven which denotes the translation process as a behavior. Sometimes it may be an interpretation to the reader. At other times it may be theory-driven which can be termed as cognitive –pragmatic. But translation works from other sources to Sanskrit can surely recapture its identity keeping its traditional style intact and as a result, there exists the possibility of redefining the tradition to suit contemporary trends. Consequently, we can expect an increase in the number translated works in Sanskrit as well as a proportionate increase in the number of readers too.

End Notes

1. Vivartanam, State Institute of Languages,Thiruvnanthapuram, Kerala,2013, P-14
2. Vivartanam, State Institute of Languages,Thiruvnanthapuram, Kerala,2013, P-14
3. Kavyāḍarśah, Bhandarkar Oriental Research Institute, Pune, 1938, parichheda 1.6
4. Routledge Encyclopedia of translation studies, Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (Ed) Literary translation, Francis R Jones, 2ndedition, Routledge, Abingdon, 2009 p-155
5. Routledge Encyclopedia of translation studies, Mona Baker and Gabriela Saldanha (Ed) Literary translation, Francis R Jones, 2ndedition, Routledge, Abingdon, 2009 p-157
6. Mudrārākṣasam, 1.3
7. Mudrārākṣasam, Viśākhadatta, Devadhar and Bedekar(ed.), Keshav Bhikaji Dhavale, Bombay,1942
8. Mudrārākṣasam, Viśākhadatta, MR Kale(ed.), 6th Edition, MLDB, Delhi, 1991, p- 3 of tr.
9. Paribhāṣēnduśēkhara of Nāgōjibhatta,F Kielhorn(Ed)Parimal Publications, New Delhi, 1985, p-86
10. Aṣtādhyāyī, 1-1-4
11. The Aṣtādhyāyī of Pāṇini (vol.II), SrisaCandraVasu, MLDB, Delhi, 1891 Reprinted 2009, p-6
12. Abhijñanaśākuntalam,MR Kale (ed.), 10th edition,MLDB, Delhi, 1969, 2.17
13. Maṇipravālaśākuntalam, Keralavarma Valiyakoyittampuran, Kalidasa krtikal, Sahityapravartakasahakaranasangham, Kottyam, 1981, 2.17
14. Paścimamārutamṅgalagīti, Dr. E. N Narayananrevised version of the translation that published in Purnatrayi, Govt. Sanskrit College, Thrippunithura, 2008, page -122
15. Dhvanyālōkah, Choukhamba publishers, Varanasi,2006, 2.1

Citations

1 MR Kale , MLDB, Delhi, 1969

2 KeralavarmaValiyakoyittampuran, Sahityapravartakasahakaranasangham, Kottayam, 1981

3 Keshav Bhikaji Dhavale, Bombay, 1942

4 MLDB, Delhi, 1991

5 Parimal Publications, New Delhi, 1985

6 Routledge, Abingdon,, 2009

7 Srisa Candra Vasu, MLDB, Delhi, , 1891

8 State Institute of Languages,Thiruvnanthapuram,Kerala, 2013