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Reviewing 'Loss and Gain' in English Translation of *Angaliyat*

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Introduction

During the British Colonial period, many of the English literary and non-literary texts were translated into the languages of the colonized countries for various socio-political reasons. The trend continued after the independence of the colonized countries. India is not an exception in this context. In fact, this trend of translation of the English texts into regional languages of India also continued; not only English but also the other Asian and European literary and non-literary texts too were translated into most of the regional languages of India. Now there can be seen a reverse trend where the regional Indian texts are translated into English. Gujarati literature has also echoed the trend and therefore one can see canonical Gujarati novels such as *Manvini Bhavai*, *Karan Ghelo*, *Malela Jiv*, *Angaliyat*, *Akoopar*, to name a few, being translated and showcased along with mainstream Indian writing in English. There has been a rise in the applications of doctoral thesis for translating Gujarati literary works into English. However, there is a dearth of research pertaining to the evaluative aspects of the translated texts keeping in mind the best practices of translation.

Angaliyat by Joseph Macwan is a landmark in the Dalit literature not only of Gujarati language but also of the national literature. The novel depicts the plight of the Dalits of the Charotar region of Gujarat. The language used by the author is that of the Charotari dialect of Gujarat in general and of the Dalits in particular. A translation of one language system from another language system in itself is quite a complex endeavour. And when dialectical features of one regional language are to be translated into other it becomes even more complex endeavour as a dialect is a regionally or socially distinctive variety of a language, it is identified by a particular set of words and phonological features. This complex endeavour of transiting was undertaken by Rita Kothari and in the year 2004. The translation of the original novel appeared as *The Stepchild - Angaliyat*. The present paper aims at reviewing the translation of the novel with reference to the losses and gains in the process and exploring the creative solutions found by the translator. These creative solutions can be resourceful for a researcher of the translation studies in general and dialectology in particular. This qualitative review of translation also becomes of pivotal importance from the point of view of the historiography of translation studies.

The significance of the Paper

The 'cultural shift' in translation studies is leaning more towards the politics of translations, however, it is also required to revisit the process based discourse of translation. When one takes a close look at how a language in general and its dialect, in particular, demands a fresh strategy in translation, one realizes that in order to politicize *what to translate* and *what not to translate*, *how to translate* has been bypassed. A rise can be seen in the translation of Indian novels into English, in recent times. As a result, a thorough review of the translation process is awaiting critical inquiry. There are plenty of books on translation theories proposing translation strategies for translating from one language into another. However, there is a dearth of studies in the field of translating dialectical features into the English language. One of the aims of this paper is to provide a glossary of dialectical features with their English equivalents which can be a useful tool for other translators. The research also aims at identifying the strategies of translating Gujarati dialectical features into English which also can be useful to the translators. The research findings can be useful for translating the English fictions with dialectical features into their counterparts in the Gujarati language.

The Author

Joseph Macwan is a renowned name in Gujarati language novelist from Gujarat, India. He won Sahitya Akademi Award for Gujarati in the year 1989 for his novel *Angaliyat* (1986). He was also a recipient of Dhanji Kanji Gandhi Suvarna Chandrak of the year 1990. He has remained a prolific writer throughout his literary career. His significant works include *Vyathana Vitak* (Agony of Suffering; 1985), *Angaliyat* (The Step Child; 1986) and *Mari Paranetar* (1988). All most all of his literary works, be it novels or short stories, were autobiographical in nature and dealt with the plight and struggles of his community that he lived and witnessed at the same time. He was a teacher at St. Xavier's High School, Anand. He died on 28 March 2010 in Nadiad, Gujarat.

The Translator

Rita Kothari is a Professor at Ashoka University, Haryana. She has been a Professor of Humanities at the Indian Institute of Technology, Gandhinagar for over a decade. She is well-known for her translations of many canonical Gujarati novels into English. She is equally known for her research work on translation and language politics in Sindhi and Gujarati. *Angaliyat*, the landmark novel in the Dalit literature by Joseph Macwan was translated by Rita Kothari in the year 2004. As the novel depicted the plight of the Dalits of the Charotar region of Gujarat, the translation too attempted to carry forward the same plight of the Dalits into English. However, the translator has not specified any readership of her translated work i.e. 'for whom the

translation was made'. The translation seems to be Source Text and Language oriented rather than the Target Text or Language oriented which is apparent from the translator's confession: "*It was through the translation of Angaliyat (The Stepchild) that I establish my relationship with Dalitness.*" (Rita: X, 2012) Thus, the approach of translator appears to be more of exploring, identifying and eulogizing the Source Language and Text by the means of the translation process. The translator has been successful in her approach to a great extent. However, the end result of this process i.e. the translated text needs to be studied in isolation, as an independent text to gauge the relevance, if not the success of the endeavour. In the following sections, the 'loss and gain' for this process will be assessed.

The Losses in Translation

Ever since the discussion of translation has been started, the role of a translator has been recognised under various contradictory categories included but not limited to that of a 'traitor' or even 'predator' or 'cannibal' to that of a 'transformer', 'bridge' or 'deliverer'. Apart from the recent development in the last and the first decades of 20th and 21st century respectively, translators were never given their due credit and credential they deserve. It was mainly due to the belief of sacredness of the Source Text or Language (SL) and the 'loss' of that 'sacredness' during the process of translation.

In the case of *Angaliyat*, this 'sacredness' lies in the 'rawness' of the language and expression. This 'rawness' is the first 'loss' in the process of translation of this novel. The first paragraph of the first chapter have words such as 'uthatavent' (as soon as he/she wakes up), 'bhadbhankhadu' (early morning) and 'adaaraa ni zampali' (fence-like gate made of barb –wires for the open foreground) are typical dialectical expressions which seem to be lost in translation. (Macwan 1) The translation of these words to not echo the dialectical tone of the original. The translated novel is full of such loses that is beyond repair. Further, idioms and proverbs are bound to be lost while translated. The original novel is full of regional and dialectical features reflected in idiomatic expression and proverbs. While translating these dialectical expressions, the translator has either resort to 'word to word' translation or has omitted the expressions altogether. For instance, the proverbial expressions such as, "*Patel, the paado (he-buffalo) and pardhi (hunter) are never to be trusted.*" (Rita 23); "*Thus spoke the saint after a silence of twelve years.*" or "*Chicken of the house...as good as daal – jaggery of the house...as good as mud.*" (Rita 14 - 15) are translated word to word or translation is given in the brackets. Nevertheless, it needs to be kept in mind that the translation process is complex in many ways. That is to say, those who are good at translating between two languages are the once who do not need translation and those who need translation, those who are not familiar with the source language will have to depend on the

translation. Hence, these kinds of losses are bound to happen. It has to be kept in mind that whatever reaches to the other end of the targeted text and language is gain in itself.

The Gains in Translation

Any process of translation and transition involves gains and losses. As "*No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached.*" (Sapir 69). *Angaliyat* had received the National Sahitya Akademi award in 1988, however the translation its translation was not available in any Indian language up to 2004. In terms of making this text available to the rest of the world, the translation is certainly a gain. The author of the book, Joseph Macwan, acknowledges this fact that the translation has opened the doors of the world for this work. The merit of a translated literary text lies in the fact that whether or not the translated text stands on its own. On reading the translation one can certainly feel that it does stand on its own. It does give a sense of suffering, desire, pain, exploitation, social injustice by which the marginalized Dalit community is continuously victimized of. The translator has taken creative liberty while translating in order to give it an English touch and flavour. For example the opening lines of the 2nd chapter, 'I have never seen anyone in my life take this route for business and so early in the morning', appears in the fourth paragraph in the original text. By putting this line as an opening expression, the translator shows her dab hand in authorship as well. A Glossary of more than a hundred words (104 words to be precise) can be termed as a gain of this translation.

Further, the acid test of any literary text is whether or not the translated text stands as an individual art of work on its own. As the English translation of *Gitanjali* by Tagore of *Gora* by Ketaki Khusari Dyzon stand as an independent literary text. The expression such as: "*What on earth are you doing, jamadar*" (Rita 87), "*I am all ears*" (119) or "*Keeping her tumult at bay, Kanku made an overture.*" (134) are some of the remarkable translations that may help the translated text to stand as an independent work of art. However, these expressions may appear more as a patchwork rather than a rich tapestry of seamlessly interwoven flow of narration. There can be seen many loose threads that hamper the independence of the translated text.

Nevertheless, the English translation of the novel cannot judge in isolation. As the original text also deals more with the documentation of the plight of the downtrodden community and less of an aesthetic expression of a work of art so is the translated text. The purpose of the original text is more to do with the inculcation of the awareness of the Dalit movements in many regions of India and their literary expression in the form of work of arts. Further, translations of these regional novels into other regional novels pave the way for developing and inculcating Dalit consciousness among the inter-regions in general and in dormant states as

Gujarat in particular, “...it was through translation that the world of Marathi Dalit writing opened up to Dalits in Gujarat.” (Rita x) As mentioned earlier, it was through translation that the translator of the present novel sought to establish her ‘relationship with Dalitness’. In this context, the translation of *Angaliyat* is a gain at an individual level and at the level of a nation-wide Dalit movement. The original text, as well as the translated text, has text, thus, been the benchmarks of the Dalit movement in India.

Conclusion

On the bases of the close review of the source and target texts and languages, it can be said that it has been a win-win situation for both the ends. It is through the translation that *Angaliya* has become accessible to pan-India and it is by translating a benchmark Dalit novel into English the translator has received acclaim at the national level as a translator. The paper can best be concluded with the observation of Susan Bassnett about the dilemma of ‘loss and gain in the process of translation:

“Once the principle is accepted that sameness cannot exist between two languages, it becomes possible to approach the question of *loss and gain* in the translation process. It is again an indication of the low status of translation that so much time should have been spent on discussing what is lost in the transfer of a text from SL to TL whilst ignoring what can also be gained, for the translator can at times enrich or clarify the SL text as a direct result of the translation process.” (Bassnett 38)

Thus, what is usually seen as ‘*lost*’ from the original context may be ‘*found*’ replaced in the target language and textual context as gain. Which, broadly speaking is the case in *Angaliyat* as *Angaliyat - The Step Child*.

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