Examining Translation as a Tool for the Analysis of Differences in the Perceptions of Landscape, Society and Culture of Two Different Nations.

Karthika S H

MA English, Pondicherry University, India.

Abstract

How far can a translated work give the original essence of the source language text? The question is quite debatable in terms of two sides, the author's side and the translator's side . This paper inspects the various nuances contributing to the familiarisation of the unknown through translation as well as how far is it successful in doing so. The researcher has taken the English and Malayalam translations of the classic work *Nana* to point out the differences when the book is translated in both languages. The text talks about a girl in a Eurocentric society. The paper examines how far the translator became successful in convincing the Eurocentric setting to an unfamiliar Oriental reader and conveying beauty of the language.

Keywords: Culture, Society, Familiarisation, Translational Theory

Introduction

In the earlier times when globalization and unified networks were absent, translations became a source of knowledge exchange. The translators became the medium for such exchanges. The occidental and oriental knowledge came together because of translation and of course there was a question of superiority between them. The colonization had an impact on global translations. The colonizers educated the native people to act as mediators to the common people so that they can rule better in their respective colonies. This promoted translations. The problem with translation is that when a text is translated, the languages play an important role in determining superiority. If an oriental text is translated to a western language, the source text loses its importance and the translated text gains superiority due to the existing political and cultural hegemony of the occidental culture. When the English translated Latin, they glorified Latin(source language text). But when it reached the Asian or oriental realm, the English was not ready to accept other cultures.

Edward Fitzgerald translated Omar Khayyam's work. When he translated this work the work was highly praised(translated work) but dismissed the quality of the source text as rustic and barbaric. When a translator commits translation he or she should have the essence of the source text and should allow the essence to speak through the organs of translation. The creative genius of the writer is captured by the translator and is recreated without losing the foreignness of the text.

This paper deals with the translation of the French work *Nana* into two different languages and how these translations are successful in portraying the essence and purity of the source language text. The Source language text was written in French by the famous French naturalist author Emile Zola. *Nana* is the ninth book in the 20 volume *Les Rougan - Macquart* series. The protagonist appears earlier in his *L'Assomoir*, where the seventeen-year-old *Nana* is the daughter of an abusive drunkard. At the end of this novel, she is living in the streets and is beginning a life of prostitution.

The next book is titled *Nana* and focuses on the character of *Nana* and how she manages to

influence the French aristocratic society through her beauty and seduction. The novel starts with a lengthy narrative of a French Theatre at night. The introductory pages, nearly thirty pages are the description of the theatre itself and only in the pages of thirty did the protagonist appear in the novel. The whole thirty pages describe the French theatre and the society giving an idea to the reader how the theatre works.

Methodology

A year before writing *Nana*, Zola knew nothing about the Theatre des varieties. Ludovic Halevy invited him to attend an operetta with him. Halevy told numerous stories about the theatre and took Zola to the backstage. Halevy told him amorous life of the star Anna Judic who influenced Zola in writing the character Rose Mignon, and her husband Steiner in the novel. Halevy also provided stories of the famous prostitutes from which Zola drew his title character.

Zola has described the theatre and French culture in his introductory chapters giving a significant idea to the reader. As mentioned earlier Zola, himself was not acquainted with the theatre. He learned more about it and placed his characters in such a background. His work as journalist took him to the theatres, art galleries and boulevard cafes. He had neither the money, the time nor the inclination to mix with the courtesans of the demi-monde. He studied them and their admirers from a distance and writing caustically in various newspaper articles.

In 1870 the defeat and capture of Napoleon III at sedan, and the collapse of Second Empire, provided Zola with a splendid final curtain for his family saga and to pinpoint the moral corruption of the period as the principal cause of the country's humiliation. Zola was not alone on this view. Dumas also filled his plays blamed the reason of failure of France's primary reason was prostitution. This condition was in favour of *Nana*. He took documents and investigations about the culture that prevailed and towards the beginning of 1878 Zola's attitude to the subject was changed (introduction, 5) . The subject changed from the disapproval to a more human, balanced, and sympathetic interest is more visible in the novel .Thus the book evolved from a political satire to a deep more naturalistic human psyche.

Conclusion

The English translations of the novel *Nana* were famous instantly because the readers can understand and relate to French culture unlike an Oriental reader. In 1066 the Norman invasion of England paved the way for French dominance in the Anglo-Saxon Community. The official language became French and there developed a culture of French due to the French influence. Thus, the English people are very much acquainted with French language and culture. The landscape and culture were familiar, and the reader could get the essence of the text up to a certain level. The translator successfully translated the source language to the target language without losing the author's intention and content.

The second translation is in Malayalam. When you talk geographically, culturally and politically, the French and Malayalam have nothing in common. Malayalam is linguistically very different from that of the French and both the languages have their own unique grammar. When this text is translated in Malayalam the reception of the readers is to be analyzed in terms of their levels of perception. I believe that the Malayalam text is translated from English, making it more distinct to the source language text. The translator got the idea from another translator. Thus, the purity of translation is not a first-hand one. The translator

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has the idea what the first translator has done in his translation. So, by writing a translation of the translation the Malayalam translator himself has little knowledge about the original source text. He may have read all the backdrop and history of the work, but linguistic aspects of the source language text may not be known to the second translator.

The reader can only experience the text and its vivid description about the French landscape through imagination. Thus, the work of fiction becomes more like a fantasy.

When a translation of prose work is concerned, the dynamic equivalence is opted so that the target language text can be performative. Thus, the translated language text becomes successful if it can give a good back translation. The highest speculations bind the two textual idioms naturalized. When an occidental text is translated into Oriental language the major concern goes for the target language text's context, culture and audience. The translator can domesticize the source language text to a certain level so that the target language reader can also relate but the translator should maintain the foreignness of the text. Thus, literal translation is not possible in prose or fiction.

The main problems of translating a text from a western language to an oriental language is culture-based terms and grammatical construction of the source language text .It is difficult to translate the dialectical forms of source language text to the target language text. The translator should have an excellent command over the target language text and he or she should have knowledge in the source language as well. The problem with a second translation (translation of a translated text) is that there is a high probability of misinterpretation resulting in the superficial interpretation of the textual correlative.

A reader in the tropical region can't understand the climate and geography of the European countries and vice versa. So, this contributed to the difference in culture as well. In a country like India where the values and belief systems are different from the European Nations, the reception of such a book like *Nana* is doubtful. However, the notion of superiority of western culture aided the propaganda of such a book to be acceptable in terms of being foreign. The original initiative of the author may not be comprehended by the reader. Such misinterpretations devalue the motif of the source language text.

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