ISSUES FACED WHILE TRANSLATING FOLKLORIC MATERIAL FROM THE ENGLISH INTO TAMIL

Mrs. Mathura Sivakumaran
Lecturer (Probationary)
Department of Translation Studies
Faculty of Arts
University of Jaffna.

1. Abstract

Translation is not merely an inter-linguistics activity, but also an inter-cultural activity. Since folklore is a vital part in literary texts to institute a cultural system, due to its complex nature several challenges are faced by the translators. This study aims to investigate the linguistic and cultural issues faced by the undergraduates of the Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna, while translating folklore material form the English in to Tamil. The objective of the study was to identify the techniques and strategies used by the translator to overcome the problems. The cultural problems were categorized as problems in translating idioms, proverbs and cultural bound terms. the linguistic problems were categorized as complex sentence structure, terminological problems and problems caused due to punctual marks. In order to overcome the problems several translation procedures were used by the students. Accordingly, qualitative methodology and quantitative methodology were used to bring out the study. Quantitative methodology was used to collect the data. In qualitative methodology comparative method was used to compare the source text and the translation whereas descriptive method was used to describe the outcomes of the study. As the focus was on folkloric material it draws attention to the requirement of observing the ethnography of language in trying to reproduce the most exact approximation of the nuances in the original. The findings of the study could help the students in translation studies and researches who deal with issues in translating Folkloric Material from the English into Tamil to find the appropriate ways to handle such problems.

Keywords: Cultural problem, Folkloric Material, Translation, Linguistic problem, Undergraduates.

2. Introduction and research problem/issue

A literature expresses the human mind, feelings, emotions and ideas. If briefly says, literature is like a mirror of life. According to Dr.K.Visagaruban's (209: X11) statement, folk literature can be catergorised into two major categories. They are

1. Folk literature.
2. Classical literature.

This folk literature will help to develop the classical literature. Folk literature includes all the myths, legends, epics, fables, proverbs, songs, stories, ballads, puzzles, fairy tales and folktales. In that manner, a folk tale is a folkloric genre that typically bears of a story passed down from generation to generation. Those folktales originated in the era before literature and passed down verbally. Folktale exists to express uniqueness of a particular culture and easy to understand the background history of particular group of people.

In ancient time, people narrated their experience in hunting to their fellow people. Later, they became folktales. When a man narrates a story of his imagination or even predicted a story, they could be considered as folktales. Professor. R. Ramanathan (1996: 59) mentioned that, legends, runagate stories, village folktales, grandma stories, stories told by grandpa are referred to the categories of folktales.

Folktales differ from each other and from country to country due to the geographical factor, values & norms of particular group of people as well as the life style of people. Those folktales intertwine with anthropology, sociology, linguistics, cultural studies and translation.

Through the folkloric material translation, economic status, religion and language development of a country could be identified. Hence, today folktales have listed their importance because of globalization, modernization, modern educational system, implication of media & western culture and due to several other factors Anyhow, the interest shown by the people in narrating and listening folktale is still alive.

Therefore, the translation is an emerging field deals with various field. Sri Lanka has a long history of folktales translation for instance, village folktales of Ceylon, folk stories of Sri Lanka, folktales of Sri Lanka. Accordingly, foreign folktales were translated by several translators, hence, African short stories were translated by the well-known poet Mr.S.Pathmanathan and S.Gugi. Nevertheless, no translation or researches have done on African folktales from the English into Tamil, therefore, this study is focused on African folktale translation from the English into Tamil. This study provides a conclusion as how best to translate folktales, without losing the folktales' nationality and characters according to the Tamil culture. The findings could contribute to further researches in future.
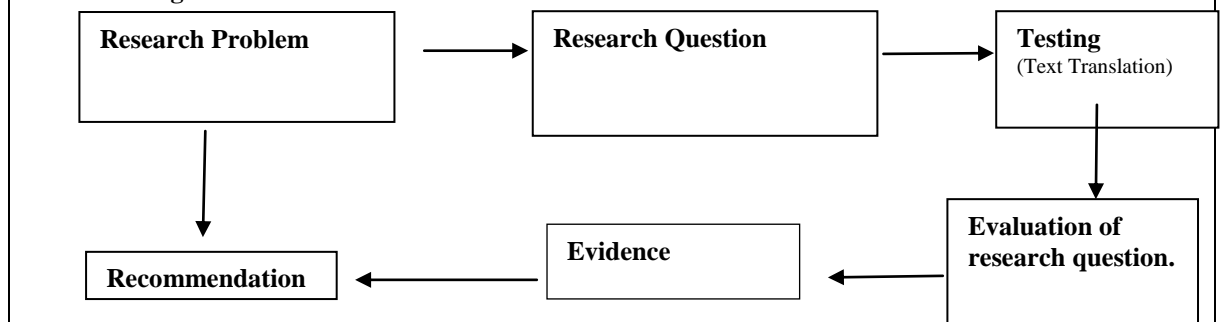
Research question:

In fact, folklore differs from other types of translation which can be varied from culture to culture or nation to nation. Finding proper equivalent for a particular cultural or contextual text is a difficult task. When a translator translates the selected folktales from English to Tamil issues arises. These will be studied in a detailed manner. This research sought to answer the following questions.

1. What are the issues faced by fledging translator while translating folktales?
2. How translators overcome such issues?
3. What are the techniques and strategies used by a translator in translating folktales?

3. Research Methodology

It provides comprehensive account of the method of data collection, analyzing those data, and explicates the advantages and research questions that can be addressed in the context of comparative approach. This chapter focuses on the following research areas: Research Design and Process, Methodologies, Data Presentation, Participants, Conclusion

Research Design and Process

This study is primarily focused on qualitative methodologies. Here, the problematic area is identified as "issues in translating folklore from English into Tamil". To test the research question samples were selected from first year and fourth year students of Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna. Particularly about forty students took part in the study. A classroom test including 40 sentences from selected folklores from English to Tamil was given for them. After collected the answer scripts test evaluation process started. The errors were identified and even analyzed as whether problem arises in grammatical level, linguistic level or cultural level. The research question agrees with the findings of the evaluation. The evidences are clearly highlighted in the study. Finally, recommendations are given for how to overcome issues in English-Tamil Texts.

Data Collection

This research is concerned with two types of data collection. They are primary data and secondary data. In the first instance primary data is obtained from the translation works of the students . The translation work is related to folklore.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Data collected from Primary data source that is classroom test is recorded appropriately and analyzed. At the beginning source and translated texts were compared and problematic areas were identified. Then, in order to identify the percentage of the answers MS excel software was used by the researcher, the final out is presented in the charts. The categorized data is recorded using descriptive method.

4. Results and findings

According to the study, 75 percentages of the translations are translated correctly using techniques like adaptation, transliteration, transposition etc. About 25 percentages of the translations have some errors in contextual transfer. As mentioned earlier omissions are frequent in the translation of students and it is difficult to identify the omissions in the mal-rule formalism. This type of error occurs when the students omit and skips some required elements from the sentences. There were 25% omission errors. There are two types of omissions possible in a translation. They are made inadvertently by the students other type is one where it is purposely omitted due to the lack of knowledge in certain types of sentences like idioms, proverbs and in some other difficult context. Another type of error deviation occurs in their translation. It could be visible in idiomatic translation which happens very commonly. Idiomatic expressions are related to cultural background of their language and it is difficult to translate from one to another.

Students of the translation made the grammatical and syntactical errors in their translation. The grammar of the language is formed on the basis of a complex syntactic structure. It contains various elements including noun phrase, verb phrase, preposition phrase and different syntactical head words. Students find it difficult to understand the complexity of the source text thereby they are unable to convey the meanings grammatical into the target language. Further, the result showed that syntactic errors were the most prominent. Countability, determiners, and tense were the three most common grammatical errors. This implies the students have more

grammatical problem than vocabulary problems. Student translation procedures refer to process the students used to translate the source text. Most of the students read the source text, translate it in their mind, and write down the target text. This procedure is referred to as the'' read and translate approach'' and it is often used in translation classrooms. (Davies, 2004 as cited by Zainudin and awal. 2012)

This approach, without through revision, often resulted in a word for word translation. According to Newmark (1998), a word for word translation refers to a translation close to the source text where words are translated in the order of words in the source text, ignoring the context. The students read and translated the source text, word by word. 75% students tried to adjust their translation. they still clung to the source text. As a result, they made grammatical errors.

Further, the findings of this research reveal that there are lots of issues arise by translating folklore from one language to another. The findings of translation issues in translating folklores from English into Tamil are given below.

- It is difficult to understand the cultural aspects of another culture of community without having good knowledge about them.
- In many occasions, the translator gives priority to convert the message into the target language than translating directly.
- Every culture has its own potentiality, ways of worship, and routines of lifestyle.
- Knowing the background of both source and target languages leads towards successful output of translation.
- In the literary Translation the translator should be familiar to choose the appropriate equivalent.
- For the sake of preserving the original sense of the source text, the translator applies the methods and strategies.
- In some cases, a translator has to apply transliteration method to preserve the soul of the text.
- Omission, elision, deviation, exaggeration can be ignored in translating folklores related to culture.

5. Conclusions, implications and significance

Folklore translation is a very challenging task to translate from English into Tamil. This study points out that the issues occur in four ways in a folklore translation such as grammatical errors, lexical issues, stylistic issues, and mainly the cultural issues. Culture is more important aspect in the translation of folklore. As the students of the Department of Translation studies tend to qualify in Translation studies both English and Tamil. Translator must improve the understanding of genre of literature in each language. The finding and the results show that translation students find issues in translating folklores. After analyzing, noting, classifying and counting the encountered errors, the researcher found that the types which are mostly common and it was ranked according to their frequencies. As mentioned earlier omissions are frequent in the translation of students and it is difficult to identify the omissions in the mal-rule formalism. This type of error occurs when the students omit and skips some required elements from the sentences. There were 25% omission errors. There are two types of omissions possible in a translation. They are made inadvertently by the students other type is one where it is purposely omitted due to the lack of knowledge in certain types of sentences like idioms, proverbs and in some other

difficult context. Another type of error deviation occurs in their translation. It could be visible in idiomatic translation which happens very commonly. Idiomatic expressions are related to cultural background of their language and it is difficult to translate from one to another. It is believed that the insights gained from the study connected with translation for developing appropriate materials and effective teaching techniques. It is expected that this study can help students in Translation Studies and researchers to deal with such issues and to find the method to handle such problems.

English: Times New Roman, 10pt.

6. **References (Selected)**

Use APA style for references and citations.
English: Times New Roman, 10pt.