



Research Paper

## An Attempt to Translate Two Edited Tamil Short Stories by S. Ramakrishnan- *Kadhavu* and *Siddhi*

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### ABSTRACT

Translation studies have been one of the emerging fields in literature as the world revolves around information and knowledge. This paper works on the problems the researcher faced while translating the two selected short stories of S. Ramakrishnan. The stories are titled as, *Kadhavu* and *Siddhi*. Both the stories deal with the simpler things in life. The researcher aims at bringing the Tamil culture to limelight by translating the stories. Certain theories have been discussed as there is no translation without theories. The problems the researcher faced while translating the short stories are solved by using certain theories according to the context. Grammatical equivalences, syntactic structures, phonetic levels of languages etc are considered when a problem is discussed. The problem arises when a translator has to choose between the form and the meaning. It is also obvious that irrespective of the theories and the methods employed in translating a text the target language text will miss out something as there is nothing as the perfect translation.

**KEY WORDS:** Grammatical equivalence, syntactic structures, phonetic levels.

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### I. INTRODUCTION

Translation, since ages is necessary for human communication across the world in various fields. It may be for business, communication, literature purpose and so on. Translation when used in communication, is called 'Interpretation'. Though, both 'Interpretation' and 'Translation' can be interchanged to produce the same meaning translation is mainly for written text and interpretation is for oral means of communication. Translation existed long back when human race was in need of communication. The denotative meaning of the source language and the target language will almost be similar. The problem arises when interpreting the structures of both the languages. Many theories started emerging from there and translators considered those theories when translating a piece of work. Translation theories emerged long back but existed as a proper field since 1983. Though St. Jerome was the first one to translate *The Bible* from Latin into English, there are many people who succeeded him and formulated theories. It is said that the concept of sense-sense translation and word-word translation were put forward by the Romans. Cicero, with Horace proposed the sense for sense translation which means, 'Segmental' theory of translation. Horace and Cicero also commented on translation theories and how a translated work should be.

Apart from the translation theories formulated by so many theorists while translating works in different languages, there are certain partial translation theories. Medium-restricted translation theories are performed not by one medium, instead the work can be done by humans or machines or both. Translation can be in an oral or written form and such translations are restricted to the medium in which the translation is done. Area-restricted translation theories can be restricted to the source and the target language or the cultures both the languages fits in. Rank-restricted theories do not actually consider the texts or discourses as a whole but focuses on the lower linguistic levels of a language or a text. Text type restricted theories deals with restricting the problems to the particular discourse or the genre the text belongs to. It is evident that the literary scholars and authors have restricted themselves to translate the literary texts of a specific genre. On the other hand, theologians and the translators who translate religious or the sacred texts restrict themselves to translate the scriptures. Time-restricted theories can be looked as theories that are restricted to translating texts from an older period or translating contemporary texts. Problem-restricted theories deal with the problems that are confined

within the general translation theory. Problems here can be the difference in the equivalence level of both the languages, their variance and so on. Therefore, there is no translation without the existence of theories. Translators intentionally or unintentionally adhere to any of the translation theories for effective translation of a source language text.

The researcher has chosen the short stories titled, *Kadhavu* and *Siddhi* for translation. These stories deal with the simpler things in life. There are so many problems the researcher faced in translating the short stories into English which are documented in Chapter 4. These stories were taken from S.Ramakrishnan's gallery of edited short stories titled, *Nooru Sirantha Sirukathaigal* though the story *Kadhavu* was written by K. Rajanarayanan and *Siddhi* by M. Aranganathan. S. Ramakrishnan was born in Virudhunagar, Tamil Nadu. He is one of the important writers of modern age. He is into different genres of literature as short stories, novels, collection of short stories, plays, articles and so on. He also won 'Sahitya Akademi award' for his novel, *Sanjaaram*. His works have been translated into many languages.

K. Rajanarayanan, the writer of the short story *Kadhavu* was born in 1922 at Idaicheval, Tamil Nadu. He began his carrier at his 30s and has written many short stories. His works mainly rely on the lives, struggles, problems and beliefs of the people. Most of his stories were of folk and fantasy genre. The short story, *Kadhavu* revolves around the door. The story opens as the children sway the door back and forth. Seenivasan is the first character introduced by the writer as he sells tickets to swing on the door. Many children from the neighbourhood also join to swing on the door. The writer then introduces another character Lakshmi, the sister of Seenivavan. The scene switches to Lakshmi as she is cleaning the door. The writer explains as to how the door was majestic and the people who lived there earlier were rich and well-settled. This also reveals the poverty of the family which lives in the house currently. The bread-winner of the family worked at a place far from their hometown, wherein the mother of the kids used to go to a nearby forest to work for the day. Lakshmi and Seenivasan used to take care of the kids at home. One day, Lakshmi found a sticker on the ground and both Seenivasan and Lakshmi managed to stick it on the door. Life was beautiful enjoying the little things, until the debtors came and seized the door from them. The family faced a lot of problems after that. Finally, the story ends as the children find the door near their school. They hugged it and glued their face towards the door.

M. Aranganathan, the writer of the short story *Siddhi* was born in Thiruppathisaram at Kanyakumari. He was interested in Literature and has written many short stories. He lived at Chennai for more than fifty years and then settled in Pondicherry after his retirement. The short story, *Siddhi* begins with a boy running on the ground belonging to the Police Department. On seeing his energy, one of the Police men gave him the address of a man to be met by the boy. The boy groomed him very well, and met the man the next day. He was amazed to see the beautiful mansion-like house surrounded by greenery all over. His legs were ready to run in the pavement which was meant to walk towards the house. He saw an old man who was around sixty years of age sitting in front of the house surrounded by beautiful plants. He spoke in a very casual manner to the boy and also shared his experience in sports when he was young. His eyes shone when he began to talk about sports. The boy got his practice from the old man. He also provided him healthy food by altering his food menu and chucked out junk foods. He used to begin his practice even before the sun rises. He ran for miles carrying his brother on his shoulder. The old man also played him many videos and matches related to sports and encouraged him in all aspects. Once when he was watching a match, the old man gave him a lecture on the countries the players belonged to. He watched the matches keenly, and by the end realised that they hit him different. That night, he was introduced to people as 'The star of hope for this Country'. People praised him on seeing his picture in the television. His practice sessions in the early mornings continued. The old man kept track of all his recordings and was happy that he performed very well. His name and fame reached people all over the word. They all had different pronunciations of his name. That was the day when his name has to be officially announced as a player to participate in Olympics. There happened an interview and he was asked a few questions. The old man sat at a distance. The interviewer asked the final question as to whether the country will excel in sports. He answered after a few minutes of silence that he knows only to run and does not know anything beyond that. It seemed like the old man was not pleased and he went out near his car. The night began to approach and the old man replied an irritated answer to the question of the boy and left in his car. As the title suggests, the lack of wisdom to answer questions and express him has been lacked in the boy. While he was talented in sports, the knowledge about his surroundings and the expectations his talent demands cannot be fulfilled by him and that would have disappointed the old man. Without the proper blending of both, heremained an unattractive boy. These are the summaries of the two short stories. The problems faced by the researcher are discussed in the next chapter.

## II. PROBLEMS IN TRANSLATION

Translators face a lot of problems when translating a text from a source language to a target language. In order to deal with the problems of translation one has to understand the importance of translation and why a particular piece of work from a source language is translated into the target language. Since ancient times, a piece of work cannot be significant in the source language alone. Translation helps in the exchange of information across the world. Though English has been spoken by people widely across the globe, not everyone can understand and speak English. It applies to every language. Effective understanding of information can be possible only if the work is translated into the mother tongue of a person who understands only his mother tongue. In this case, a person gets to read the text in his/her mother tongue but there arises a question as to whether the information is carried out from the source language to the target language effectively without any influence on the translator's register and his mother tongue. The problem in translating a text begins here and translators by all means are doing their level best in conveying the information the writer intends it to be or not. When it comes to the types of translation, most of the translators prefer Sense-Sense translation as the emphasis is on the content than the structure, as no matter how hard a translator tries languages are linguistically similar, cultural contexts cannot be explained to the foreign reader and is partially possible only with the help of the footnotes.

Translators face linguistic and non-linguistic problems while translating. Linguistic problem arises as there will definitely be linguistic differences between the source language and the target language. Each language is unique in its way and there are certain expressions which only the source language carries. When such an expression does not make sense in the target language, the translator finds it difficult to express what the writer intends in the source language. Footnotes can make sense to a point but the whole essence cannot be carried out as

As a translator of the two short stories, the researcher also faced difficulties when translating them from Tamil to English. Initially, it is the richness of the Tamil culture and the language that made them difficult to translate. In the short story *Kadhavu*, the urban life of a poor family in the southern part of Tamilnadu is portrayed. The words used by the writer have so many cultural significances. When the work is translated into English, no matter how hard the researcher put efforts to translate it, cultural significance cannot be retained. The setting itself is hard for a foreign reader to think about. The problem arises when the translator finds it difficult to translate the title of the short story. *Kadhavu* can mean 'door' and 'gate' in English. 'Door' is commonly a solid rectangular thing that blocks the entry completely. 'Gate' is something which blocks the entry partially and is not necessarily completely solid. In Tamil, both mean '*Kadhavu*'.

Another common problem the researcher found is the usage of the choice of words. Tamil has an altogether different sentence structure than that of English. When Word for Word translation is applied in the story, the Semantic Equivalence of the story gets disturbed. In case of the Sense to Sense translation the rhythm of the Tamil language loses its significance. Certain words and sentences are structured in a way in Tamil to convey the beauty of the language. When such sentences are translated into English for the English speaker to understand, the beauty of the language is affected. In Tamil there are different devices to enhance the beauty of the language which includes 'Rettaikelavi', 'Adukuthodar', 'Ethugai', 'Monai' and so on. For example: there are two consecutive words in the story "Tirunelveliku, Tirunelveliku". The Researcher translated these words into, "To Tirunelveli, to Tirunelveli". But the accurate essence of the language is not achieved in translation. Syntactic Equivalence cannot be achieved by the translator.

In the short story, *Siddhi* there are certain phrases which the researcher tried translating into the target language. Having translated those phrases there arise a discrepancy in the lexical structure. The words are arranged in a different order after translating it into the target language. When comparing both the sentences, the translated work is not satisfactorily effective. Structure related differences are found in the short story as usual. Not all languages necessarily start with a subject. In such cases, the sentence structure is altered.

## III. CONCLUSION

Translation is a supreme activity as the world revolves around information and knowledge. There are so many reasons as to why translation is important for effective living. The researcher aimed in achieving few things while translating the texts which are documented below. Translation enables in the exchange of information from one culture to another and to a wide range of audience. When it comes to exchanging information, it deals with the language, values and beliefs the source language text holds and many more attached to it. The full essence of the source language text and the intention of the original writer cannot be fully obtained in the target language, but the translator makes use of the possible theories and methods to convey the information as exactly as possible. The researcher, as the translator of the two short stories aims at exchanging the information from the Tamil language to the English speaking world by translating the text into English. The importance and the glory of a particular language and culture can be brought to limelight through translation. The researcher focused on bringing the tamil culture and the values attached to it to highlight by working on the

two tamil short stories and translating them. Likewise, people across the world translate in order to bring out the significance of their own culture and language to notice.

There are certain things that the researcher observed and realized while dealing with the translation studies in addition to the things she aimed at achieving as mentioned above. The ideas and the experience of the researcher can be subjective as different people have different ways in dealing with the translation problems and also the theories they prefer to use for their translation. No matter how hard a translator works in translating a text, there will always be something that the target language text will miss out. In other words, there is nothing as perfect translation as no two languages or cultures can be brought together without the influence of the nativity. The accuracy level in translation depends upon the syntactical equivalence of both the languages. When translation is done from a Dravidian source language text to a Dravidian target language text, the equivalence in all levels in both the languages can be majorly similar when compared to dealing with two different languages of entirely non-similar families. When the languages, English and Tamil are from totally two different families the problems faced by the researcher in translating from Tamil to English can be considered a tiresome job as they have completely different sentence structures. The cultural differences in such cases can also be very high while comparing to the languages of the same family. This issue is identified by the researcher while working on the texts.

Even after understanding the structure of the languages and the culture, different problems can emerge as culture is fluid and languages grow everyday with the addition of words in the dictionary. Different expressions and idioms can also be used by people around the world and can be included in the dictionary. Existing theories may or may not fulfill the problems the translators face in translating with the existing knowledge. No theories are restricted to one culture or a language and translators can make use of any of the theories around the world if necessary for effective translation. If not applicable, formulation of new theories can always be possible and should be done considering all the existing previous theories. This can pave way for the future translators in translating their work better and is a non-ending process as languages and cultures cannot be put in a box.

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