



Issues in Translating Discourse text: from Tamil to English: A Pragmatic Perspective

Dr.R.Kumarasamy,

Assistant Professor,

Department of Linguistics,

Madurai Kamaraj University,

Madurai – 625 021.

kumarling27@gmail.com

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Abstract

This research paper throws light on the discourse feature and pragmatic aspects of the text and their roles in comprehending the text. This paper, with some evidences by translating Tamil discourse texts (source texts) into English discourse texts, tries to establish a fact that how the discourse features and pragmatic dimensions of the source text along with the socio-cultural contexts at which the source texts occur and the attitudes of participants both sender of the message and receiver of the message are important and how those features able in source language could be retained along with aesthetic feature of the source texts, without any addition or deletion in the target text. It eventually concludes that the discourse text of source language has to be explored in the light of the pragmatic aspect of communication, for inferring message in source text and for encoding the meaning in the target text while properly translating discourse text. Similarly, the semiotic aspect of the message has also to be explored with the knowledge of the language and the real world where the participants are explored with the discourse feature, socio-cultural context and the attitude of the participants (both sender and receiver of the message) from the source, are to be critically analysed by the translators for ensuring them in their translated versions. So, the translated versions would be faithful to original and they would serve the purpose of translation between two or across many languages.

Keywords: Pragmatic, Ideological stance, Source text, Target text, Socio-cultural context, Attitudes, Participants.

Introduction

It is stated that the quality of expression of the potentiality is the property of communication. The mode of communication exploits the knowledge of language and the role of

participants involved in the process of proper communication, a kind of pragmatic aspect entails in the communication through transnational activities. Therefore the transfer of the message from source language text to target language text through either by oral or written medium not only poses the problem of identifying equivalences, but also the pragmatic values as expounded. The text, which is got transmitted through written medium or oral medium encounters the problem of multidimensional aspects such as the communicational dimension, pragmatic dimension and semiotic dimension.

The translation of any discourse text experiences either an incomprehensibility or comprehensibility of the participants of the target language. In other words, the nature and quality of the translation solely depends upon the thematic concepts as expounded in the source text that means the text in the source language It incorporates the inferentially, the denotative aspects of the utterances as perceived by the participants. The context in which the discourse text occurring also determines the language. Such phenomena vary from one language to another as the knowledge of language and socio-cultural traits are not exhibiting dynamic similarities among the languages. The meaning of the text is determined by the context where the words are occurring with denotative and connotative meanings.

Moreover the discourse text itself provides enough environment of inferring the meaning and the knowledge of the participants. So, in a language one can witness semantically identical ones with multivariate sentence structures and syntactic characteristics of the words. This phenomenon may create the problem of identifying the dynamic equivalences in the process of translation.

As the language is interlocked with the attitudes of the participants, the socio behavioral aspects of the participants also vary on the use of the utterances in accordance to the context where such things happen to be. The context exposes the knowledge of the language and that of the world as conceived by the participants. In translating, especially the discourse text one has to account the multiplicity of the interpretations so that more than one text can be rendered/ prepared to have exactly identical text in the target language.

Any sort of translation means to bring out the similarities between the source and the target texts. It also exposes the experiences of the real world and the social relationships of the speakers of the source text, interrelating with those of to the participants of the target language. That means the participants are able to construct the text with appropriateness and comprehensibility.

This paper with all the above stances tries to explore Tamil discourse texts while they are translated into English. The illustrated Tamil discourse texts incorporate the descriptive, the narrative and the expository characteristics. Moreover one has to know about the correlations found between the text and the innate biological properties of the human beings. This feature

helps one to interpret the multi dimensions of meaning (the denotative/connotative values) of the text in question. The context do initiates the explorations of pragmatic values of the discourse.

Here are some of the examples of Tamil discourse texts and those have been translated into English, with those examples the translation issues experienced while transforming Tamil discourse features into English discourse features.

The Tamil discourse text, considered here is as follow:

Ta.1:

பெரும் மழை பெய்து, ஊருக்குள்ளே வெள்ளம் புகுந்துவிட்டது.

எந்தப் பக்கம் திரும்பினாலும் வெறும் வெள்ளக்காடாகக்

காட்சியளிக்கிறது. ஆற்றில் வெள்ளம் கரைபுரண்டு ஓடுகிறது.

வயல் வரப்பு எல்லாம் ஒரே தண்ணீராக நிற்கிறது.

பயிரெல்லாம் வெள்ளத்திலே மூழ்கி, பாழாய் போயிற்று.

This said text expounds the other variety expressing the similar message.

Ta.2:

பேய் மழை பெய்து ஊரெல்லாம் வெள்ளக்காடாக

ஆகிற்று. எங்கே பார்த்தாலும் வெள்ளம், வெள்ளம்.

குளம் குட்டை எல்லாம் தண்ணீர் நிரம்பி வழிகிறது.

ஆற்றில் வெள்ளம் கரை புரண்டு போகிறது.

வயலெல்லாம் வெள்ளத்தில் மூழ்கிப்போயிற்று.

வெள்ளத்தாலே பயிரெல்லாம் நாசமாகிப்போயிற்று.

Both the texts, though referring the same message, are worded differently. That means text Tamil.1 consists of a descriptive statement “பெரும் மழை பெய்து, ஊருக்குள்ளே வெள்ளம் புகுந்துவிட்டது”- followed by a narrative utterance- “எந்தப் பக்கம் திரும்பினாலும் வெறும் வெள்ளக்காடாகக் காட்சியளிக்கிறது”- which then followed by the expository

statements "ஆற்றில் வெள்ளம் கரைபுரண்டு ஓடுகிறது. வயல் வரப்பு எல்லாம் ஒரே தண்ணீராக நிற்கிறது. பயிரெல்லாம் வெள்ளத்திலே முழுகி, பாழாய் - whereas if one looks at the text Tamil 2, he/she can understand this text consists of narrative statement- "பேய் மழை பெய்து ஊரெல்லாம் வெள்ளக்காடாக ஆகிற்று"-, being followed by expository statement - "எங்கே பார்த்தாலும் வெள்ளம், வெள்ளம். Again a narrative structure- "குளம் குட்டை எல்லாம் தண்ணீர் நிரம்பி வழிகிறது"- links with another expository structure" ஆற்றில் வெள்ளம் கரை புரண்டு போகிறது. வயலெல்லாம் வெள்ளத்தில் மூழ்கிப்போயிற்று"-, ending with one another expository structure" வெள்ளத்தாலே பயிரெல்லாம் நாசமாகிப்போயிற்று".

In other words, both the texts differ from each other in having different properties fused to expose the discourse nature. It is to be noted that compound words such as "பெரும் மழை", "பேய் மழை", "வெள்ளக்காடு", "குளம் குட்டை". "வயல் வரப்பு occurring in the texts seem that they do not have dynamic equivalences in the target languages. The vocabuls "பாழாய்" "நாசமாகி" though express similar meaning they differ in the connotative values, i.e. the pragmatic dimensional qualities of "பாழாய்" and "நாசமாகி" expresses different colours of meaning. That is in the text- Ta.1, it refers to the attitude of the participants expressing their mental displeasure with the event, whereas Ta.2, it - "நாசமாகி" - donotes the referential aspect of the participants with the event.

The translated text corresponding to the Tamil discourse texts exhibits variant textures as shown:

Eng.1 (corresponding to Ta.1):

Heavy rain flooded throughout the village.

Almost all places are interlocked with water.

The river banks are washed away with heavy rain.

Paddy field too flooded submerging the crops.

Eng.2 (corresponding to Ta.2):

**It rains cats and dogs. The entire village hit by
the heavy pouring of the rain. Everywhere**

**it is flood, it is flood. The banks of river over flown
by the devil raining/ due to heavy watering poured into
the river. The heavy rain with overflowing water also
hits the paddy fields. The heavy damage for the crops
has brought/ caused by the rain.**

The translated text of English.1 corresponding to Tamil.1 text exposes the denotative references. Almost all the utterances in English 1 are more or less either descriptive or narrative characteristics. But the text English.2 is deviated from English 1 in the sense of expository characteristics. The pragmatic dimensional aspect in the text explores more on semiotic dimensional aspect. The participants' mental attitude towards the event is well exposed in the text English 2. Moreover the connotative values of source text are well expounded here. In other words the translated text English 1 refers to text oriented one while the text English 2 denotes the participants/ readers oriented one.

The translated text English 2 cares for not only the communicational dimension-pragmatic dimension, but also the semiotic dimension, which correlates to the sign value to the participants' knowledge of language. In other words translating means bringing together the participants' attitude and social behaviour of both the source language text and those of the target language text- translated text. That is to state that two cultural traits are put together in a single track, in the process of the translation.

Ta.3:

கார்த்திகை மாதம் பிறந்தாலே அடைமழை காலம்.
ஓயாமல் மழை பெய்து கொண்டே இருக்கும். வெளியே
போக முடியாமல் போய்விடும். வயல்வெளியெல்லாம்
கொட்டும் மழையால் எங்கும் வெள்ளக்காடாக இருக்கும்.
வயல்காட்டு வேலையெல்லாம் கெட்டுவிடும்.

Eng.3:

**The month of karthikai is the season of continuous rain.
Without any break, it will rain continuously. It seems to
be difficult to go out. Due to heavy rain, the paddy field
will be flooded. All the cultivation activities come to stand still.**

The word "மழை" with the adjectival phrases "அடை" and "கொட்டும்" refers to the connotative value. In the word phrase "அடை மழை", it is the nature and the characteristic feature of the month "கார்த்திகை" while the phrase "கொட்டும் மழை" symbolizes the characteristic feature of the rain. In other words, the former one expresses the associated quality of the rain with the Tamil month while the later one the quality and quantum of rain.

A third variety of text, expressing the above said experiences, which is context around the pragmatic dimensional expect, is also considered for the translation. Here the semiotic dimension partially plays a role in the discourse. That is the correlation of "continuous rain" அடை மழை" with the birth of the tamil month "கார்த்திகை" the concept of monsoon and it's activities in a natural way of the world phenomenon. This kind of conceptualization of the natural environment process has to be accounted with approximation while translating. The interrelationship coexisting with the human activities and the natural phenomenology seems to be more semiotic dimensional entity. Such thing has to be exposed approximately in the translated text.

The word phrases, "பேய் மழை" "பெரும் மழை" and "அடை மழை" express the density and the nature of the rain. Each one signifies different meaning though one can witness the inter meaning relationship among them. But in reality they have to be translated differently to expose the pragmatic values as expounded in them.

The "வயல்வெளி" : "வயல்காட்டு வேலை ", "வெள்ளக்காடு" expose the associated quality of the nature of works with the human life. The utterances of the original text "கார்த்திகை மாதம் பிறந்தாலே அடைமழை காலம்; ஓயாமல் மழை பெய்து" indicate the differentiation and the interrelationship in the space- i.e. the month and the rain. In other words normally the month "கார்த்திகை" stands as a sign to indicate the rainy season, thereby signifies the description. The utterances "வெளியே போக முடியாமல் போய்விடும். வயல் வெளியெல்லாம் கொட்டும் மழையால் எங்கும் வெள்ளக்காடாக இருக்கும்" expose the interrelationship found in time with differentiation. Thereby the narrative characteristics of the utterances are exposed. The utterance "வயல்காட்டு வேலையெல்லாம் கெட்டுவிடும்" exposes the comprehension of the central concept by synthesis. That is, this exemplifies the exposition quality.

The translated text- English.3. simply exposes the interrelationship found in between the time and the differentiation of the time with the events. In other words, the translated text does not expose the pragmatic values as expounded in the original text. The original text experiences multi-functional activities such as the description, narration and exposition whereas it is the narration act seems to be the dominant feature in the translated text. The structure of the discourse of the original text differs from that of the translated text.

Conclusion

To conclude, it is inferred from the foregone explanation that, multi-variances of the discourse text have to be explored in the light of pragmatic aspects of communication while a text is translated. The exposition of semiotic aspects of the message also has to be explored with the knowledge of the language and the real world where the participants are exposed with the discourse text. It is also inferred that the multiple kinds of texts are evolved while translating the discourse text from one language to another. The context has to be property exploited in comprehending the message to the source text in the target culture, as every very text itself is the embodiment of the participants' culture and the social attitude towards the real world. So it is to be considered that if a text is to be translated properly, the translator search for equivalence between source language and target language, but also he/she has to seriously identify the discourse and pragmatic features of both source and target language, besides, the socio – cultural context at which both the texts are to be availed, as well as the attitudes and possible ideological stances the participates of the texts, that is the sender of the message and receiver of the message both in source text and target texts. Through such processes, the original ideas encoded by the author of the source text without amend and emend, will reach the readers of the translated version of the text in the target language. And similarly the aesthetic features of the original text can also be maintained in target text with the help of retaining the discourse and pragmatic features as well as the socio cultural context with participants attitudes at which the source texts and target texts are built. So, equal importance has to be given to pragmatic aspect of the text to be translated as given to other linguistic components of the source and target texts.

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