



**CHALLENGES ENCOUNTERED IN TRANSLATING SHORT STORIES
EXTRACTED FROM THE BOOK TITLED“OTHTHAMARA THOPPU”**

(TAMIL TO ENGLISH).

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ABSTRACT:

Translating a short story from Tamil to English requires a lot of efforts and needs to face several challenges related to linguistic, cultural, and stylistic aspects. One of the main challenges in translation is retaining the essence of Tamil expressions, idioms, and proverbs, which may not have direct equivalents in English.

In order to make Tamil story understandable to an English-speaking audience by maintaining the authenticity, it is necessary to carefully adapt the cultural aspects that is embedded in the tamil story , including regional dialects, socio-political nuances, and historical references.

Another challenge is the maintenance of the rhythm and flow of the original Tamil language. Poetic expressions, alliteration, and unique sentence structures are also often used in Tamil language that may not be rightly translated into English. Literal accuracy and Literary elegance need to be balanced by the translator. Moreover, It is very difficult to convey character dialogues and emotional nuances without changing their original tone and intent.

This paper mainly highlights the difficulties faced in literary translation, emphasizing the need for a nuanced approach that respects both linguistic accuracy and cultural integrity.

Here the tamil short stories titled ‘Group photo & My enemy’ extracted from the book “OTHTHA MARA THOPPU” are chosen for an experimental Study.

This translation process involves creative decision-making to retain the spirit of the original work while making it comprehensible and engaging for a diverse readership.

Keywords: Language, Translation, challenges, Tamil, English

INTRODUCTION TO TRANSLATION:

Translation is the process of transferring a text from one language to another without modifying the meaning of the original text. It promotes the exchange of knowledge, literature, and ideas among people from diverse backgrounds, thereby bridging the gap between linguistic and cultural aspects.

At its core, translation requires more, than just substituting words from one language into another. It necessitates a clear and proper understanding of the source language’s structure, idioms, and cultural nuances, including the skill to explicitize them naturally in the target language. A good translation needs to retain the essence of the original text which should also make it accessible and understandable to new audiences.

Translation is both an art and a skill which requires linguistic expertise, cultural sensitivity, and flexibility. It is a dynamic sector that changes as a result of linguistic changes, advances in technology, and demands for international communication.

The literary form of the short stories has distinct translation issues because of their conciseness and dependence on nuanced expression. The linguistic, cultural, and stylistic distinctions between Tamil and English make these difficulties considerably more complex to overcome when translating from one language to another. This review of the literature uses existing scholarly works and theoretical perspectives to examine the main difficulties in translating Tamil short stories into English.

Here the short stories chosen for translation are Group Photo & My Enemy , which are extracted from the book OTHTHAMARA THOPPU written by Alagu Mithran. He belongs to Kanyakumari district. He is one of the emerging writers whose primary focus is on highlighting the characteristics of female characters. The book “OTHTHA MARA THOPPU” is the collection 10 short stories . Out of which ,The first two stories are chosen for Translation.

CHALLENGES QUOTED BY OTHER WRITERS:

There are many translators who have translated some famous works from tamil to English. They also faced different challenges which is unavoidable In order to become a good writer and convey the information originally ,the translators need to overcome all the challenges faced by them. Here are the few challenges that is quoted by different writers & It is enclosed for your reference.

Linguistic Challenges:

Since Tamil and English are members of distinct linguistic families—Indo-European and Dravidian, respectively—they differ in grammar and structure, which has an impact on translation. Scholars like Nida (1969) and Catford (1965) emphasize how challenging it is to translate across languages that have different phonetics, morphologies, and syntax. English follows a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) order, , Tamil follows a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) order (Annamalai, 2001) which frequently calls for sentence restructuring. Furthermore, Tamil uses agglutinative morphology, which combines several grammatical components into a single word, making straight translation challenging.

Cultural and Contextual Nuances:

Preserving cultural subtleties is one of the biggest issues in translation. Translation involves both cultural adaptation and language conversion, as highlighted by Bassnett (2002) . According to Venuti (1995), Tamil short stories frequently make references to religious beliefs, festivals, social hierarchies, and cultural customs that may not have exact English translations. According to Ramanujan (1990), kinship phrases like "அண்ணா" (anna, elder brother) and "தங்கை" (thangai, younger sister) have social and emotional meanings that are hard to convey in English without further explanation.

Idioms, Proverbs, and Wordplay:

Another problem is the prevalence of idiomatic phrases and proverbs in Tamil literature. Idioms are culturally distinctive and frequently lack direct translations in other languages, according to Baker (1992). For instance, the Tamil proverb " மூக்குத்தண்டின் மேலே குதித்தது போல " (mookuthandin mele kuthithathu pola) literally translates to "like jumping on the nose stick," which may not make sense to English readers without contextual adaption. Furthermore, it might be challenging to translate Tamil short stories while maintaining its lyrical language, wordplay, and alliteration (Newmark, 1988).

Emotional and Stylistic Preservation:

Tamil short stories are known for their rich metaphors, emotional depth, and complex storytelling techniques. Lefevere (1992) asserts that translating literary works involves both language competence and an awareness of the author's tone and style.

Indirect language and rhetorical strategies are common in Tamil literature, and they might not translate well into English without losing their power (Kandiah, 1978).

Making the original work understandable to an English-speaking audience by preserving its emotional impact, tone, and rhythm is a difficult task.

Challenges in Transliteration and Phonetics:

Transliteration is challenging since Tamil words frequently contain sounds that are not present in English. Translators must choose whether to include footnotes for clarification, provide an English equivalent, or keep the original Tamil word. A major conundrum in literary translation, according to Toury (1995), is the decision between foreignization (preserving cultural distinctiveness) and domestication (making the work more relatable to the target audience).

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED WHILE TRANSLATING THE SHORT STORY “GROUP PHOTO”:

While translating the short stories ‘Group Photo & My Enemy’ from Tamil to English, many challenges have been encountered by the Researcher, Which includes the following:

1. Linguistic Differences:

- Syntax and Grammar: Tamil adheres to the Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) order, whereas English follows Subject -Verb-Object(SVO) , requiring sentence restructuring.
- Tense : Tamil frequently conveys actions in a different way when compared to English, making it challenging to maintain the same sense of time.

Example:

- Tamil: அவன் கதவை திறந்தான் .
- Literal translation: "He the door opened."
- Correct English translation: "He opened the door."

2. Cultural Nuances & Context:

Proverbs and Idioms: Tamil idioms may not have exact English translations, which makes it challenging to maintain their meaning.

Example:

- Tamil: அழுதுக் கொண்டே பால் குடிக்கிறது
- Literal translation: "Drinking milk while crying."
- Meaning: A person who enjoys benefits while complaining.
- A more natural English equivalent would be: "Crying over spilled milk while drinking more."
- Cultural References: Some terms may need to be explained or modified, such as "அம்மி" (ammi, grinding stone) or "தம்பி" (Thambi, younger brother).
- Addressing Forms & Honorifics: Tamil has layered honorifics that convey respect, something that English frequently lacks. The minor respect signals may be lost when translating

"அவங்க" (avanga) as opposed to "அவன்" (avan).

- Example:
 - Tamil: அப்பா வீட்டிலா?
 - Direct translation: "Father at home?"
 - Proper English translation: "Is Father at home?" (adding politeness)

3. Emotional & Literary Style:

Poetic Expressions: Tamil literature frequently has poetic or lyrical elements that are challenging to translate well without sounding strange.

Example:

- Tamil: அவள் முகம் சந்திரனாக பிரகாசித்தது!
 - Literal translation: "Her face shone like the moon!"
 - A more natural English version might be: "Her face lit up with joy."
- Wordplay & Alliteration: Some puns and alliterations may need to be creatively reworded in order to work in English.

Example:

- Tamil: வானம் கருகி விட்டது!
- Literal: "The sky has burned!"
- Meaning: The sky is dark and cloudy.
- A natural English translation: "The sky is overcast."

4. Word-to-Word vs. Meaning-Based Translation

- Meaning-based translation may lose part of the original charm or intent, where as a literal translation may make the content seem unnatural. Finding a balance is essential.

Example 1:

- Tamil: அவள் குடத்தில் நீர் எடுத்தாள்.
- Word-to-Word Translation: She in pot water took.
- Correct Meaning-Based Translation: She fetched water in a pot.

5. Dialect & Regional Variations

- Tamil has a wide variety of dialects and idioms. Chennai Tamil and Madurai Tamil might not be the same. It can be difficult to select the appropriate English equivalent

Example 1: "Where are you going?"

- Chennai Tamil: எங்க போற? (Enga pora?)
- Madurai Tamil: எங்க போறீங்க? (Enga poreenga?)
- Jaffna Tamil: எங்கே செல்லுகிறீர்?

(Engē cellukirīr?) (More formal)

- Standard Tamil: நீங்கள் எங்கே போகிறீர்கள்? (Neenga engae pogireergal?)
- English Translation: "Where are you going?"

The aforementioned difficulties shouldn't be a reason to abandon the translation work; rather, the researcher should come up with some fresh strategies to get past them and successfully translate the stories into the target language. To overcome the difficulties, the translator must be able to comprehend the subtleties of the Tamil language, which would enable us to comprehend the original text's meaning. Additionally, the translator can speak with s and receive advice on how to translate something effectively. Expertly translated books are available for reading and analysis. To guarantee that the author's style, tone, and structure are accurately translated, effective translation techniques can also be used. Another option to verify accuracy and spot possible mistakes is to try back-translation. Furthermore, dictionaries, bilingual books, and AI translation tools, can be used but always need to review for accuracy.

CONCLUSION:

To overcome the challenges of translating from Tamil to English, one must have a thorough knowledge on both languages' grammatical systems and cultural backgrounds. A literal word-for-word translation frequently results in errors since Tamil and English have large grammatical, idiomatic, and expressional differences. A more organic and successful translation is achieved by concentrating on communicating the desired idea properly by rearranging phrases, and modifying colloquial expressions.

Furthermore, translation quality can be greatly enhanced by employing tools that are humanly refined, maintaining a balance between official and informal tones, and practicing constantly. Thus, by using these techniques, it is possible to overcome the linguistic and cultural challenges and guarantee meaningful and transparent communication between Tamil and English.

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