

Translation and Globalisation

Dr Archana Kumari

*Assistant Professor, Department of English and Foreign Languages, Guru
Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya, Chhattisgarh, India.*

Abstract

Globalisation has always been an important aspect of translation. The term translation technically connotes the art of recomposing or reproducing a work from the source language (SL) into the target language (TL) without losing its original flavor whereas globalisation means transforming things from being local or regional into worldly, international or global. As an integral part of globalisation, translation has been mediating and bridging the distance between people, languages, and cultures of different countries. As a result of translation and globalisation, people have become more familiar with different linguistic communities and cultures. Translation has been a key factor in the development of world culture and world literature. In fact, in this age of globalisation, translation has become a necessity.

Keywords: Translation, Globalisation, Source Language, Target Language

Introduction

In this era of globalisation, it is almost impossible for a nation to survive and prosper if the people of that nation do not know more than one language. Translation has made the production and circulation of global information flows possible across different linguistic communities and cultures. Globalisation which usually refers to the integration of economic, political, and cultural systems across the globe has been possible because of translation. In fact, translation has become a key mediator of global communication and thus translators have always played a pivotal role in the dissemination of the ever expanding knowledge and information and bringing social and cultural change in the society. In translation, language is not transferred; intended meaning of the underlying utterance is being transferred since languages are different superficially but they are more similar internally. This can be attested by language use in each similar socio cultural setting, namely, greeting, introducing, answering the telephone, making enquiries, instructing, requesting, inviting, interrupting, apologising, congratulating, paying compliments, asking for permission, taking leave, negotiating, thanksgiving, etc. It is said that the best translation is that which has the feel of the original, that is, as if un-translated and this makes the text more exotic and creates a more genuine, culturally convincing text for the reader of the translation. With the increasing pace of

globalisation the need of translation and interpretation has also increased manifold. As a result of globalization, minority cultures and communities have been able to make their voices heard through the translation. In fact, translation and globalisation have dismantled the barriers between nations and function as bridges between countries to make human efforts meaningful and useful.

Need of Translation in Globalised World

Cronin emphasizes on a more self-aware and activist dimension to the role of the translator in the age of globalisation. Translation, for Cronin, plays a crucial role within globalisation, since one of its primary functions is “to replenish the intertextual resources of a culture.” (Translation and Globalisation: 133) In this globalised world translation has become imperative for international as well as intra-national communication. In a multilingual country like India where there are hundreds of languages in use, no communication can take place without translating and no one can imagine of socio-cultural harmony and national integration, what of globalisation? In India, translation is a part of everyday life. Signboards at public places like bus stops, railway stations, airports, banks, post-offices; names of shops; names of government and business organizations, etc. are written in at least two or three languages, viz. Hindi, English, and/or the regional language. Indian paper currency denominations are written in at least fifteen languages. In the history of language teaching translation method has been quite popular in many multilingual country of the

world and so does in India. In India where English is taught as a second or foreign language and where twenty-two official languages and several other regional languages and dialects are spoken, translation method has proved as one of the popular and successful methods of teaching.

Although translation of texts from one language to another has been going on for the past so many centuries, a systematic study of the linguistic process of translation has caught the attention of linguists only recently. In 1950s translation came to be accepted as a profession. There was a further development in it as a result of rising international trade, increased migration, globalisation, the recognition of linguistic minorities, and the expansion of the mass media and technology. Campbell and Hale in *Translation Today: Trends and Perspective* opine that as an applied discipline, translation and interpreting puts people into real and important jobs (221).

Translation and Global Communication

Derived from the Latin word *translatum*, the term “translation” has different connotations – ‘a carrying across’ or ‘a bringing across’, ‘interpretation’, ‘taking a view’, ‘bringing to life’, or ‘transformation’. Derrida sees translation as a continuing process which aims at modifying the original text which not only rejuvenates the text but also rejuvenates the language. (Kalyani 2001: 62). The word ‘translation’ has different definitions, viz. ‘re-composition’, (Nida, 1964: 68-9), ‘co-writing’ (Harris, 1983:

121), 'trans-coding' (Greimas), 'creative transformation' (Matilal, 1990: 122), 'trans-relating' (Kar, 2005). It is true that the act of translation is subject to manipulation and hybridization. In describing translation, one also translates translation. In fact, translation is a dynamic activity of rendering texts and messages from source language to target language, in Newmark's phrase "a dynamic reflection of human activities". Globalisation which was initiated as an economic process has spread through almost every sphere of human activity. The term globalisation which usually refers to the integration of economic, political, and cultural systems across the globe has been in increasing use since the mid-1980s. But Globalisation is a concept very difficult to define so does the concept of translation.

When the world has become a global village, the importance of translation cannot be denied. Translation is a kind of cross-cultural communication. Translation is essential for the survival and continuity of cultural heritage. As an independent discipline, translation has proved to be a bridge between different peoples, and, as a unifying medium, it has made literature written in diverse language accessible. As a result of the disappearance of national boundaries, classics in majority languages are being translated and made available to the readers across the world. The existence of world literature and comparative literature seems to be unimaginable without translation. Ivir views that, "Translation is a way of establishing contact between cultures" (1987: 36). It is now maintained that the process of translation should be

studied from the socio-cultural perspective. Cultural anthropologists like Malinowski stressed on the socio-cultural significance of translation. Translation is not only a linguistic act but an act of communication across cultures (Nida, 1964). While translating two cultures come into contact. Language is embedded in culture. Thus, translation involves translation of a culture. J. B. Casagrande has rightly put it:

In effect, one does not translate Languages, one translates culture.... That it is possible to translate one language onto another at all attests to the universalities in culture, to common vicissitude of human life, and to the inherent nature of language and the character of the communication process itself: and a cynic might add, to the arrogance of the translation (338).

With the advent of globalisation, translation has taken new forms stimulated by technology, travel, trade, and tourism. There has emerged different types of translators in the 21st century like professionals, or non-professionals; literary translators, technical translators, Wikipedia translators, etc. Other than literary texts there has increased the need of translation of government regulations, statutes, official reports, etc. Film translation, audiovisual translation, screen translation, multimedia translation, etc. are some of the emerging forms of translation. Moreover, the form of translation is based on function depending on the challenges of the subject.

The expansion of digital industries around e-learning and other education forms in many different languages shows

the strong link between translation and globalisation (Cronin 2003). The globalised world has necessitated spreading information quickly and efficiently so the role of translation has increased unprecedentedly in recent years. Technological advancement has given rise to various modes of machine or computer-aided translation, surtitled translation etc. Consequently, there is increase in the types and quantities of translation throughout the globe.

Internationalization, multiculturalism, globalisation, localization, language globalisation—all these are possible due to language translation. Translation has been playing the role of diversification and dissemination of knowledge. Translation liberates the confinement of knowledge from few people and makes available to the mass. It not only helps the transfer of meaning but also brings out the multiple possibilities of the original that can be transformed into different cultural forms and expressions. It is true that translation helps in bridging the distance of culture and geography. Through translation, varied cultures have come together by bridging all the distances in between. It is through translation that Renaissance spread all over Europe and the world. The world became familiar with Transcendentalism, French Revolution, Fascism, Communism, Imperialism, Colonialism etc. through translation. Here it is worthwhile to cite the example of Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, which was originally written in Bengali, a regional language of India but it gained its recognition as an important piece of world literature through its translation in English.

Translation is obviously much older than globalisation. Globalisation was introduced towards the end of World War II. The general purpose of globalisation is to make translation easier. In this globalised world the amount of translation is increasing exponentially. The cross-cultural interactions due to globalisation have increased the need for translators and interpreters. As a result of globalisation, texts have been created that don't belong to any one culture or language. Translation is a by-product as well as an integral part of globalisation. "In this expanding landscape, the amount of translation is increasing exponentially and the landscape is reshaped by the redistribution of the translation industry—political, juridical, technological and commercial translations have become the mainstream, in contrast with the translation of literary texts, which probably represent not more than one per cent of the total production of translation." (Nida, 1997).

No global communication is possible without translation. Translation helps to understand not only about what others say but also what they mean and what they intend. All types of translation literary or non-literary have communicative functions. The communication may take place from one person to another or from one country to another. Through translation ideas, information, opinions, discoveries, inventions, etc. can reach to an entirely new audience of the globe. New information about different countries is possible through translation only. New product of one country can be advertised and thus increased its product through translation. Translation

becomes a necessity from the moment when two persons or culture start communicating. André Lefevere who proposed the concept of translation as a “bidirectional Process” has rightly put it:

Translation is not just a “window open on another world”, or some such pious platitude. Rather translation is a channel opened, often not without a certain reluctance, through which foreign influences can penetrate the native culture, challenge it, and even contribute to subverting it.

Not only global communications, but also global businesses are dependent on translation. Globalisation is very pervasive in almost all the fields and especially in the field of business and commerce. Because of globalisation, boundaries of nations have disappeared and this has led to the manifold increase in business and commerce. As a result of rapid globalisation and the consequent changes in economy, politics and technology, the language needs of people have also changed. People as consumers of the products and cultures of other countries feel the need of understanding languages and cultures of other countries. And here comes the role of the translators. New product of one country can be advertised in the texts of TL country and thus increase its product through translation. The advertising industry with the help of the services of specialized translators or translation agencies have been able to localise their products, boost their business and project their image at the global level. Translation in advertisement aims to meet the everyday needs of the customers and consumers and to respond creatively and

competitively with branded products and services which can increase the sale of goods. In inevitable social changes, translation and interpretation are required in the context of the public services across language and culture as well. Because of the disappearance of the boundaries of language and culture, business and commerce have increased manifold. Social changes take place differently in different cultures but translation can always fill the gaps of such changes

The significance of translation can be understood from the fact that there are research projects in translation, departments of translation, translation centres, academic degrees, publishing ventures, translators' associations, and regular organisation of seminars, conferences, and publication in journals, international networks etc. translation has been serving as a sort of bridge in a multilingual situation. It also helps in preserving literary and cultural heritage. With the rapid spread of globalisation across the world the demand for translation has increased manifold in sectors like universities, publishing houses, research organizations conducting market surveys, medical science, tourism, entertainment, public relations and mass communication, international organizations, embassies, diplomatic service and BPOs.

Conclusion

In this age of globalisation, translation is highly desirable. Translation and globalisation have not only brought nations closer, it has also enhanced interactions between

people and cultures of these countries. Translation has always been an integral part of human history. Since time immemorial texts have been translated, transcreated, adopted, imitated and sometimes interpreted with new literary flavour. As an independent discipline, translation has proved to bridge between different peoples, and, as a unifying medium, it has made literature written in diverse language accessible. The importance of translation has expanded considerably with the dispersion of a people, language, or culture that was formerly concentrated in one place. Translator and interpreter education is now widely practised around the world. In this globalised world, translation and interpretation not only fill the knowledge gap but also help in profession building. Translation studies have gone through many changes and with the advancement of technologies it is set to undergo further changes in coming years and widen its scope at educational, research, social and professional levels. A country with a totally homogenous culture and linguistic make-up has become rather an exception than a rule in this contemporary globalised world. Social and cultural identities and the interest for maintenance and revival of minority languages create situations in which two or more languages co-exist and are necessary in everyday communication. In this globalised world, increasing communications among different parts of the world and the need to be competent in languages of wider communication, historical or political movements such as imperialism or colonialism, religious movements that result in people moving to a new country, economic

movements in the case of migration, etc. have increased the need and accelerated the spread of translation. It will not be an exaggeration to say that translation and globalisation work as unifying or integrating forces, bringing all the nations together.

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Dr. Archana Kumari (Ph. D.) is an Assistant Professor of English at Guru Ghasidas Vishwavidyalaya (A Central University), Bilaspur, Chhattisgarh (India) since 2012. She has also worked as Assistant Professor with North Eastern Regional Institute of Science and Technology (NERIST), Itanagar, Arunachal Pradesh (India) for six years in the Department of Humanities and Social Sciences.

Her research interests are in the fields of Linguistics, English Language Teaching, Communication Skills, Gender Studies, Diaspora Writing, Indian Literature in English, comparative literature and Translation Studies.

She has published several research papers/book chapters in reputed national and international research journals and edited books. She has two books to her credit.

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