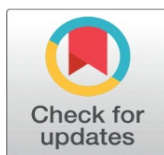


THE POLITICAL ASPECTS OF TRANSLATION AND ITS INFLUENCE ON LITERATURE

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ABSTRACT

The linguistic, cultural and colonial history of India intricately connects the politics of translation. Sociocultural imperialism and linguistic supremacy in translating texts often reflect the unequal distribution of power between different languages and cultures. The challenge faced by translators is to preserve the original content while adapting it to suit a different audience, therefore balancing the principles of faithfulness and adaptation. Translators frequently face the difficulty of articulating identities that may lack explicit counterparts in the culture they are translating, thereby interpreting the concepts of identity and otherness. Globalisation and commercialisation have led to the emergence of translation as a significant industry, particularly in industries like media, publishing and entertainment. English served as a tool for colonialism and an analysis of its influence and linguistic hierarchy was conducted. In contemporary times translation has played a vital role in Dalit movements. Dalit writers, who predominantly write in regional languages, frequently encounter marginalisation within the dominant Indian literary culture.

Keywords: Linguistic, Colonial, Translation, Power Distribution, Challenges, Adaptation, Interpreting, Globalization, Commercialisation.

The geopolitics of translation in literature is a complex and varied subject that investigates how power dynamics, cultural conventions, and ideological perspectives influence the translation process. Prejudice intrinsically influences the translation process involving decisions that may shape or modify the meaning of a written piece.

The study of the politics of translation continues to be a successful area of academic inquiry as scholars explore the impact of translation on issues of identity, authority, morality, and cultural exchange. This literature provides a deeper understanding of how translation operates within broader political, social and cultural frameworks. The linguistic, cultural and colonial history of India intricately connects the politics of translation. The extensive range of languages and dialects has made translation an essential instrument for inter-regional communication, as well as a political action that influences identity, power relations and cultural legacy. The following are several fundamental elements of the politics surrounding translation in India:

Venuti in his book *The Translator's Invisibility: A History of Translation* talks about the politics of translation are characterised by many essential elements: Sociocultural imperialism and linguistic supremacy in translating texts often reflect the unequal distribution of power between different languages and cultures. Prominent languages in dominant cultures, such as English or French, typically exert a broader global impact, while tongues coming from marginalised or

colonial civilisations may have less representation (17). The act of translating between a "minor" and a "major" language presents translators with decisions that have the potential to either uphold or challenge cultural hierarchy. Translators usually modify the material to conform to cultural norms when translating into a dominant language, potentially weakening or altering the original meaning.

The challenge faced by translators is to preserve the original content while adapting it to suit a different audience, therefore balancing the principles of faithfulness and adaptation (36). This may include linguistic precision, cultural heritage and even political factors. The translation decisions for politically sensitive literature such as those dealing with colonisation, resistance, or gender concerns can either highlight or obscure these significant themes. Simon, Sherry's book *Gender in Translation: Cultural Identity and the Politics of Transmission* mentions that the analysis of gender and translation reveals that the translator's gender and the use of gendered terminology in translations may influence the outcome. Empirical studies on feminist translations have demonstrated that patriarchal standards inherent in both the source and translated languages can exert a subtle or overt impact on texts (65). In order to avoid gender bias, translators may choose to challenge gendered conventions, frequently by deliberately altering pronouns or sentence structures.

Simon and Paul in their book *Changing the Terms: Translating in the Postcolonial Era* explains that the translators' visibility and invisibility in translation politics can include their hierarchical status and recognition within the field. Throughout history, translators have received less recognition for their efforts compared to the original authors (45). Nevertheless, there is a growing tendency to recognise translation as a form of creative authorship that involves significant interpretation and adaptation.

Translators frequently face the difficulty of articulating identities that may lack explicit counterparts in the culture they are translating, thereby interpreting the concepts of identity and otherness. Insufficient attention to the careful management of cultural nuances may result in a misperception or oversimplification of the "other."

The task of translating indigenous or minority voices sometimes involves navigating a historical backdrop of distortion or erasure, therefore making the translator's duty politically fraught in terms of safeguarding the genuineness of the original narrative (79). Furthermore, the politics of translation underscore that translation is not solely a linguistic undertaking but also a deeply political one. Translators employ their intellectual discernment to reflect cultural norms, power dynamics and ideological stances, therefore shaping the reception and understanding of literature in different social contexts. An in-depth understanding of this political dimension is crucial for both translators and readers to actively and intentionally engage with translated literature.

The practice of political censorship of translations, driven by political goals has been a recurring phenomenon throughout history. Governments or institutions may reject or modify translations to align with ideological narratives like nationalism, religious orthodoxy or colonialism. An exploration of postcolonial translation theory emphasises the essential role of translation in the context of colonisation and the decolonisation process (Simon and Paul 122). The process of translating colonial cultures' literature into the language of the colonizer often resulted in the loss of their cultural uniqueness. Postcolonial translators and academics promote a decolonised approach in which translations strive to maintain the genuineness of the originating cultural context and question Western models of understanding.

Globalisation and commercialisation have led to the emergence of translation as a significant industry, particularly in industries like media, publishing, and entertainment (185). This process of commercialization frequently results in translations that prioritize marketability over cultural correctness. To accommodate global audiences, literary translations, especially those of non-western authors, may be altered to omit cultural nuances or political critique in favour of universal themes.

English served as a tool for colonialism, and an analysis of its influence and linguistic hierarchy was conducted. British colonial sovereignty enforced English as the official language, establishing a hierarchical structure where English took on roles of authority, administration and education, while marginalizing indigenous Indian languages. Translators operating during and after the colonial era were required to negotiate this hierarchical structure. Many times, translators translated Indian writings into English in ways that reflected colonial ideologies, thereby reinforcing the dominance of western knowledge and culture.

Tejaswini Niranjana's book *Siting Translation: History, Post Structuralism, and the Colonial Context* depicts the part of Orientalist endeavour. The British also undertook the translation of numerous Indian religious and classical writings. Frequently, these translations entailed rewritings that aligned with colonial administration or scholarly objectives. Eurocentric perspectives sometimes influenced the translations of holy books like the Bhagavad Gita and Ramayana, leading to the distortion or oversimplification of intricate cultural histories (8).

This text examines postcolonial identity and nationalism within the framework of nation-state translation. When the country gained independence in 1947, translation played a crucial role in developing the concept of a unified Indian nation (67). In order to promote national integration, the Indian government actively encouraged the translation of regional literary works into Hindi and English. Despite its role in bridging language barriers and establishing a common cultural legacy, translation has resulted in conflicts between regional and national identities.

The campaign to establish Hindi as the official language of the country and the main language for translation encountered opposition in several non-Hindi-speaking regions, such as Tamil Nadu, West Bengal and Kerala. People in these states perceived the imposition of Hindi as a manifestation of linguistic imperialism, and they occasionally saw the translation of regional languages into Hindi as a political act of dominance (Niranjana 89). By contrast, translations into regional languages frequently conveyed the political message of expressing local identity and opposing the process of homogenisation.

Sanskrit and vernacular sanskritisation of languages was traditionally considered the representative language of India's refined culture and religious practices. Translating Sanskrit books into vernacular languages like Tamil, Bengali, Marathi, and others often served as a political endeavour, aiming to broaden the accessibility of religious and philosophical works that were previously exclusive to the Brahminical elite. Mediaeval Indian translators, such as those involved in the Ramayana or Mahabharata, frequently modified these literary masterpieces to suit the cultural milieu of the local population, therefore engaging in a process of balancing the privileged and the common traditions.

Furthermore, in contemporary times, translation has played a vital role in Dalit movements. Dalit writers, who predominantly write in regional languages, frequently encounter marginalisation within the dominant Indian literary culture. The translation of Dalit literature into English and other Indian languages has served as a significant political endeavour, granting prominence to under-represented voices and questioning the dominance of caste-based power in Indian literature. Translators specialising in Dalit literature frequently employ the practice of "political translation," which involves viewing the translation process as a means to oppose oppression and establish one's dignity.

Indian linguistics and multilingualism with around 22 officially recognised languages and hundreds of dialects, India's linguistic landscape is distinctive. A significant number of Indians are bilingual or multilingual, most typically proficient in one regional language plus either English. In India, translators frequently operate within a multilingual context, occasionally engaging in translation between regional languages and at other times negotiating between regional languages and English.

The Politics of language selection determining which language to translate into can be a profoundly political issue. Translation of a regional text into English can enhance its international reach, but it may be perceived as targeting a select, worldwide readership. Conversely, the act of translating a text into Hindi might be seen as an effort to cultivate a readership that spans across India, but it may also isolate individuals who do not speak Hindi.

The translation of Indian literature into English has played a critical role in today's context of globalization. Renowned writers such as R.K. Narayan, Salman Rushdie, and Arundhati Roy, along with translated works by authors like U.R. Ananthamurthy and Mahasweta Devi, have garnered global acclaim. The translation and global acclaim have also been limited to writers belonging to certain class and caste. Nevertheless, this phenomenon of globalisation also raises questions about the representation of Indian voices on the international platform, as well as the potential bias in translation choices towards specific narratives (mostly urban, upper-caste, or Anglophone) at the expense of others.

The rapid expansion of global publications has resulted in a growing need for translations of Indian literature, particularly into the English language. This phenomenon has not only created fresh prospects for Indian writers but has also resulted in the commercialisation of translation, where the motivation of financial profit may determine the translation of specific works, therefore reducing their literary or cultural importance.

Given the phenomenon of religious polarity in a nation characterized by a historical backdrop of religious strife, and caste system, the act of translating can serve as a means to foster social harmony or division. Interpretations of historical works may exacerbate existing conflicts between communities, especially in the context of Hindu-Muslim relations. Political parties or organisations may endorse translations that further specific religious or historical accounts.

Translation serves as a method of subaltern voice resistance in India, and it also serves as a strategy to challenge authoritative narratives. Translators challenge the established canon of Indian literature by translating literary works from subaltern populations such as Dalits, Adivasis, women, and other marginalised groups, thereby providing a platform for those historically silenced. Translation from marginalised languages and dialects into more generally spoken languages can facilitate the democratisation of knowledge and culture, therefore enabling the visibility of previously unnoticed populations within the wider cultural milieu.

Finally, translation in India is profoundly political, influenced by the nation's colonial past, caste system, linguistic politics, and regional identities. Translators in India consistently negotiate these intricate dynamics, and their decisions can either strengthen or question established power hierarchies. In this context, the politics of translation exemplifies the larger conflicts between national cohesion and cultural variety, between the global and the local, and between the privileged and the underprivileged scholarly references.

CONFLICT OF INTERESTS

None

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