

Translation of Sangam Text

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Introduction:

Translation is the communication of the meaning of a source language text by means of an equivalent target language text. The term equivalent means if a specific linguistic unit in one language carries the same intended meaning encoded in a specific linguistic medium in another, then these two linguistic units are considered to be equivalent. However sometimes two linguistic units in different languages carry the same function.

The present paper analyses the problems encountered while translating Sangam Literature to English.

Uses of the study

Helps to define the units of translation on which one should operate in the translation process.

Helps the translator to reach an objective interpretation of his original text.

Helps to put importance of the relationship which exists between the meaning of the SL message and the author's thought which condition it.

Helps to lead to develop the principles and procedures found in Sangam Tamil. The cultural context of Sangam Tamil and English can be sort out.

Helps to study the translator's views regards the question of faithfulness and flexibility in literary translation.

By finding out the problems in translation, we can find out the techniques used by the translator. This can be useful for the translators of current age in Tamil. It also leads to the growth of Tamil language.

Issues

The problem of translating Sangam Tamil literature is an open debates among the Translation theorist. The disagreement voiced by translation theorists as regards the problems that are involved in the process of Sangam Tamil literary translation stems from the confusion between a Sangam Tamil literary text and a Sangam Tamil literary translation. In fact the two are different and need to be clearly distinguished. A literary text is the direct product of an author. Its quality is assessed in terms of its relation to the Tamil literary tradition and the language in question.

A Sangam Tamil literary text is not the product of a single author and belongs to particular literary tradition. The Sangam Tamil literary text is a collection of different authors work.

There are around 473 poets who wrote 2381 poems in Sangam Literature. Most of the poets belong to different professions and different classes of the society and poems are edited and colophons added by the anthologist and annotators around 1000 AD. The Sangam Literature is rather the result of a complex series of relations and correspondences. It is a relation, which the translator in his attempt to interpret the source language (SL) message, should establish between the meaning of the SL text and the extra linguistic factors which condition it, i.e., the author's thought and concept of life. It is a relation between the translator and the text to be translated. Finally, it is a result of an approximate correspondence between the stylistic effect of the original text and that of the target language (IL). Translation theorists in discussing the problems of Sangam Tamil literary translation do not, usually, relate great importance to this complex series of relations and correspondences. This led to pessimistic, tentative and extremist views as regards the problems of Sangam Tamil literary translation. The disregard of the importance of the relationship which the translator should establish between the meaning of the original text and the extra linguistic factors which condition it led to the pessimistic view that subjectivity cannot be avoided in the interpretation of the meaning of a Source language literary text. The failure to understand that the translator has a relationship with the text other than that of a passive reader resulted into hesitant views as regards whether a translation should be faithful or flexible with the original text. Finally, the failure to understand that quality in

Sangam Tamil literary translation cannot be assessed in terms of sameness between the stylistic effect of the original text and that of the IL version but in terms of an approximate correspondence between them led to the extreme notion of the impossibility of adequate translations. All these problems have to be solved while translating the Sangam Literature to English.

பாடல் 1

2. குறிஞ்சி - தலைவன் கூற்று

கொங்குதேர் வாழ்க்கை அஞ்சிறைத் தும்பி
காமம் செப்பாது கண்டது மொழிமோ
பயிலியது கெழீஇய நட்பின் மயிலியல்
செறியெயிற் றரிவை கூந்தலின்
நறியவும் உளவோ நீயறியும் பூவே.
-இறையனார்.

விளக்கம்

ஒவ்வொரு மலராகச் சென்று தேன் உண்டு திரியும் அழகான சிறகுகளை உடைய வண்டே! நீ என் கேள்விக்கு என் விருப்பத்திற்கிணங்க விடை கூறாமல் நடு நிலையாக நின்று பதில் சொல். என்னோடு நெருங்கிய நட்புடையவளும், மயில் போன்ற மெல்லிய தன்மையுடையவளும், நெருங்கிய அழகிய பற்களையும் கொண்ட இப்பெண்ணின் கூந்தலைப் போல நறுமணம் கமழும் மலர்கள் உண்டா? நீ கண்டறிந்த பூக்களிலே ஏதாவது இப்படி மணமுள்ளதாக இருந்தால் சொல் என்கிறான்.

பாடல் 1

3. குறிஞ்சி - தலைவி கூற்று

நிலத்தினும் பெரிதே வானினும் உயர்ந்தன்று
நீரினும் ஆரள வின்றே சாரல்
கருங்கோற் குறிஞ்சிப் பூக்கொண்டு
பெருந்தேன் இழைக்கும் நாடனொடு நட்பே.

விளக்கம்

குறிஞ்சி மரத்தின் மலர்களைக் கொண்டு தேனடை செய்யும் நாட்டை கொண்ட
தலைவனுடன் நான் கொண்ட நட்பானது நிலத்தின் அகலம் போலவும், வானின் உயரம்
போலவும், கடலின் ஆழம் போலவும் பெரிது

Translation by Thangappa

Larger than the earth

Larger than the earth
vaster than the sky,
and immeasurably deeper than the seas
is my love for him
from the hills
where the honeybees make
abundant honey
from the black-stemmed
kurinji flowers.

Translation by Prof. A.K. Ramanujam

What She Said

Bigger than earth, certainly,
higher than the sky,
more unfathomable than the waters
is this love for this man
of the mountain slopes
where bees make rich honey
from the flowers of the kurinci
that has such black stalks.

Te:vakulatta:r (*Kuruntokai* 3)

8. மருதம்

பாடியவ ஆலங்குடிவங்கனா

கழனிமா அத்துவிளைந்து உகு தீம்பழம்
பழனவாளகதூ உம்ஊரன்
எம்இல்பெருமொழிகூறி, தம்இல்
கையும் காலும்தூக்க தூக்கும்
ஆடிப்பாவைபோல,
மேவன செய்யும் தன் புதல்வன்தாய்க்கே

* வயல் அருகில் நின்ற மாமரத்தின் முதிர்ந்த இனிய கனிகளை
பொய்கையில் உள்ள வாளைமீன்கள் கவவி உண்ணும் ஞலைவன், எம் வீட்டில்
பெருமொழிகளை ஹிசென்றாலும் தன்னுடைய வீட்டில், (எதிநின்றவ) கையும் காலும்
காலும் தூக்க தானும் தூக்குகின்ற கண்ணாடியுள் பாவைபோல், அவனை ஈன்றதாய்க்கு
மட்டும் அவள் விரும்பியவற்றை அவன் செய்வான்

Translation by Thangappa

Like a puppet

This man -
From the village
Where the valai fish in the wet field
Snatches away
A ripe mango falling
Beside the field -
Has gone back to his son's mother
Throwing to the wind
All his promises to me
He now know-tows
Before that woman
Like a puppet
Lifting his hands and legs
As she pulls the strings

I (What the concubine said about the husband, the wife's people overhearing)

Marutam
-Alankudi Vaganar

Translation by Prof. A.K. Ramanujam

What the Concubine Said

You know he comes from
where the fresh-water sharks in the pools
catch with their mouths
the mangoes as they fall, ripe
from the trees on the edge of the field.

At our place
he talked big.

Now back in his own,
when others raise their hands
and feet,
he will raise his too:

like a doll
in a mirror
he will shadow every last wish
of his son's dear mother.

A:lankuti Vankana:r (*Kuruntokai* 8)

குறிஞ்சி- தலைவன்கூற்று

யாயும் ஞாயும் யாராகியரோ
எந்தையும் நுந்தையும் எம்முறைக்கேளி
யானும் நீயும் எவ்வழியறிதும்
செம்புலப்பெயனீபோல,
அன்புடைநெஞ்சம்தாங்கலந்தனவே
-செம்புலப்பெயனீரா

Translation by Thangappa

Rainwater and red soil

Your mother and my mother
Do not know each other
Your father and my father
are not you and me,
how do we know each other ?
And yet,
like the mingling of rainwater
with red soil,
our hearts have mingled.
(What the lover told his beloved after their first meeting)
Kurinji
Chempulapeyanirar

Translation by Prof. A.K.Ramanujam

What He Said

What could my mother be
to yours? What kin is my father
to yours anyway? And how
did you and I meet ever?
But in love our hearts are as red
earth and pouring rain:
mingled beyond parting.

Cembulappeyani:ra:r (*Kuruntokai* 40)