

Translation and Adaptation of Indian Regional Literature into English

Dr. A. Vasantha Kumari

Principal, Government Degree College, Falaknuma, Hyderabad, Telangana, India.

Date of Receiving: 19th January 2023;

Date of Acceptance: 28th February 2023;

Date of Publication: 25th March 2023

ABSTRACT

India recognizes 23 regional languages, in addition to around 2,000 other regional languages spoken throughout the country. English is therefore essential in this nation. In a nation such as India, where a national language would be unfeasible, the invaders imparted the now-globally-utilized English in return for the looting of India's precious cultural assets. This study examines the term "literature" from the perspective of Indian English and analyzes works authored by Indian writers in English as well as those composed in India's regional languages. IWE asserts its superiority over India's regional literature by aligning itself with post-colonial literature. IWE is not a distinct entity; rather, it primarily comprises the synthesis of Indian Diaspora literature composed in English. In contrast, Regional literature finds it challenging to thrive due to its inability to attract a sufficiently broad audience, preventing its influence from disseminating globally as International Writing in English (IWE) has. There is a fundamental and dynamic process that serves as a bridge between localized cultural worlds and a worldwide readership. This process is the translation and adaptation of regional literature into English. The translation of Indian literature into English acts as a form of "democratizing" literature. This is because translation into English enables works that are anchored in distinct, diverse, and frequently marginalized contexts to reach an audience on a national and international scale. India is home to approximately 700 languages and dialects. Despite the fact that some people may claim that translation poses a risk of dilution, in today's globalized world, translation is the major means by which regional literature is preserved and developed. This helps to ensure that these stories are not overwhelmed by the preponderance of Western literature. A "creative act that involves reinterpretation, negotiation, and transformation" is better described as the process of translating regional literature into English. This process is more than simply a simple exchange of words. It is crucial for preserving the rich, multi-linguistic tapestry of India's cultural history while also ensuring that it remains relevant in a World that is becoming increasingly globalized and modern.

Introduction:

During the time that the British were in control of India, the foundation was created for what would later be referred to as Indian Writing in English. A tree has emerged from the seed, complete with beautiful flowers and delectable fruits. The tree is now fully developed.

Visitors are eating and swallowing the fruits, while the natives are offering them to them for tasting. It was a natural occurrence that took place as a consequence of consistent attention, clipping, and feeding. R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao were the individuals who were responsible for its development throughout the 1930s. It all began with the writings of Michael Madhusudan Dutt. These four authors are frequently considered to be foundations of Indian writing in English due to the fact that their contributions to literature were all published in English rather than a local dialect. Soon after winning freedom from the British Raj, the people who had been colonized began writing about their struggles and tribulations. They did so in the language of the colonizer, which they had abandoned after falling on hard times in the era after independence. When the British were in control of India, the groundwork was laid for what would later be known as Indian Writing in English. This foundation was established during the period that the British were in control of India. The seed has grown into a tree, complete with lovely flowers and delicious fruits bursting forth from its branches. At this point, the tree has reached its complete maturity. Visitors are eating and swallowing the fruits, while the natives are offering them to them for tasting. It was a natural occurrence that took place as a consequence of consistent attention, clipping, and feeding. Through the entirety of the 1930s, R. K. Narayan, Mulk Raj Anand, and Raja Rao were the individuals who were accountable for its development. The

writings of Michael Madhusudan Dutt were the starting point for everything. The fact that these four authors' contributions to literature were all published in English rather than in a regional dialect is one of the primary reasons why they are usually regarded as the foundations of Indian writing in English. Almost immediately after achieving independence from the British Raj, the people who had been subjected to colonial rule started writing about the challenges and difficulties they had faced. After falling on hard times in the era following independence, they did it in the language of the colonizer, which they had abandoned after falling into a difficult situation. pertaining to Indian writing, and it honours the literary tradition of India in a manner that is appropriate as well. And it has always been a treasure mine of all of our traditions and culture, in addition to being a source of immense fascination among authors from India.

Regional literature preserves our forefathers' kathas and tales. R.K. Narayan, Raja Rao, and Mulk Raj Anand were among the writers who offered distinctive expression to regional flavour in their delicately beautiful works. To incorporate an Indian viewpoint, these writers "indigenized" the English language. For example, in his famous book Kanthapura, Raja Rao takes readers on a tour of a small village in southern India, illuminating the culture and customs of its residents. Raja Rao gives the composition a Kannada rhythm by using ordinary English, and it has a strong Indian character. An extensive sthala-purana, or legendary history, is a part of every Indian community, no matter how small. On one of his numerous pilgrimages through the country, the Mahatma may have slept in this low hut by the village gate; Rama may have rested under this pipal-tree, Sita may have dried her clothes on this yellow stone, or some other god or godlike hero may have passed through the village. - Kanthapura: A General Overview Malgudi and its surroundings are described in great detail in all of Narayan's books and short tales. His works, however written in English, have an authenticity that is rooted in his native Tamil and the experiences he had while living in the region. Writers specializing in regions are expected to draw attention to the unique qualities that make a certain location distinct from others and how those qualities shape the character of the region as a whole. Items of this kind are sometimes called IWE. A regional author, on the other hand, can become famous after his works are translated into other languages and take on a more global flavor, reaching readers all over the world. Many people throughout the world could enjoy reading the children's and regional stories, poems, novels, and folk tales from India. One example of the evergreen appeal of Indian folk tales for kids all around the world is the Assamese Burhi Aair Xadhu. Translations of Indian literature into Hindi and English are severely lacking, despite the country's rich linguistic diversity. Consequently, we still don't know much about what made Indian literature so successful. While many people in India consider Hindi to be "India's national language," many more Indians find immense pride in being fluent in their native languages. Regardless, the frequency of high-quality translations into Hindi and English from other Indian languages remains unknown. Both Indian and global literature will benefit enormously from a professional English translation of the original regional content.

Although it is not usually the case, everything in this piece works together nicely despite the fact that the writing is superb and the subject is honest. This is despite the fact that the content is honest. Hangwoman, written by K. R. Meera and translated by J. Devika, is a book that Sinha suggests to readers who are just beginning their reading journey. The reason for this is that literature published in languages other than English contains a wide variety of qualities that can be experienced. Until recently, writing in regional languages was a struggle to breathe and garner attention in India. However, now is the time for regional literature to be critically acclaimed. Novels written in native languages are increasingly being published in translation, which supports them in transcending their linguistic boundaries and reaching a wider audience. Writers who work in regional languages, on the other hand, do not receive the same level of respect and attention as their peers who write in English. According to Peter Ripkin, who serves as the director of the organization known as SPALA (Society for the Promotion of Asian, African, and Latin American Literature) in Frankfurt, the following comment has been made: "Those who write in English continue to be viewed as the sole representatives of India's literary canon." In spite of the wealth of variation that exists within regional literature, it has not had much of an impact on the literary canon of the Western world. In spite of the fact that the Frankfurt Book Fair, which is located in Germany, has been quite vocal about promoting regional literatures, just forty titles have been translated from Indian languages into German by the organization. With regard to the 55 works of Indian fiction that were translated into German in that year's book fair, 14 of those works were from regional languages, while the remaining works were Indian fictions written in English. According to the organizer of the book fair, the lack of experienced translators is a significant factor that contributes to the fact that Indian regional writings and literature are virtually unknown in western countries. In spite of these obstacles and constraints, it is encouraging to learn that Indian translation work has been elevated to a level where it has the potential to reach a wider audience across the nation. One Part Woman serves as an example of this. There is a need for translators to pull out all the stops in order to bring this beautiful regional literature from India to the attention of people all over the world. The irony is not lost on us that this process of interpretation, which is taking place in the language of the colonizer, which is English, will ultimately result in a society that is more Indian (colonized). This is because local interpretation groups may facilitate greater discussion between Indian dialects themselves by utilizing English as a vehicle to go across the

world in order to spread India's wealth of provincial writing. To phrase it another way, the time has come for local writing to take the place of IWE as the benchmark of excellence.

The Importance of Translation and Adaptation

For the purpose of facilitating communication across cultural barriers, translation and adaptation are vital. These processes enable concepts, literature, and information to transcend linguistic boundaries while preserving their relevance to local settings simultaneously. Adaptation is the process of tailoring content to local cultural nuances, whereas translation focuses on maintaining a correct language conversion. This ensures that messages are understood, suitable, and effective for the audience that they are intended for. Translating regional literature into English serves several critical functions:

- **Cultural Preservation:** It documents and preserves the cultural history, folklore, and social realities of various regions.
- **Expanding Readership:** It makes regional works available to a bigger and more diversified audience, some of whom may not be proficient in the language of origin, as is the case with Malayalam literature or Tamil Dalit literature, for example.
- **Globalizing Local Voices:** It makes it possible for stories that have strong regional characteristics to be understood on a global scale, as demonstrated by the popularity of Geetanjali Shree's Tomb of Sand (which was originally titled Ret Samadhi in Hindi) and for which she was awarded the 2022 International Booker Prize.
- **Enriching English Literature:** Through the introduction of distinctive idioms, metaphors, and cultural sensibilities into the English language, it challenges the conventional, Westernized, and academic literary conventions.

Challenges in Translation

It is necessary for translators to go beyond literal word-for-word conversion in order to convey the original meaning, style, and intent. Additionally, they must be able to handle technical jargon, tight deadlines, and the nuances of varying dialects and changing language. Translation challenges include bridging linguistic gaps (idioms, complex grammar, multiple meanings), as well as cultural divides (humor, references, tone). These nuances are difficult for machine translation to capture, which is why human knowledge in context, inventiveness, and cultural adaptability is required. The translation of regional literature is famously challenging due to the profound language and cultural distinctions that exist between the regions:

- **Cultural Nuances:** The English language does not have a direct equivalent for a great number of regional terminology, idioms, and traditions. As an illustration, the Hindi concept of Godhuli, which literally translates to "dusk" or "cow dust," as well as caste-specific phrases, frequently lose their emotional value when translated literally.
- **Dialects and Sociolects:** It is difficult to capture the genuine voice of a region, such as the Bundeli dialect in a Hindi novel, because the translated counterpart does not exist in English. This could result in the character's voice being more monotonous.
- **Fidelity vs. Accessibility:** When translating, translators are frequently required to make a choice between literal translation and modification. They must maintain a constant balance between being loyal to the original material and ensuring that the text is readable in English.

Strategies for Effective Translation and Adaptation

In order to overcome these challenges, translators take advantage of a variety of strategies, frequently going from straightforward translation to "transcreation" or "adaptation":

- **Transcreation/Adaptation:** When writing poetry or highly idiomatic prose, it is often necessary to adapt the original work so that it is tailored to the culture and language of the target audience while yet maintaining its essence.
- **Cultural Transposition:** By substituting a culturally unique reference with one that is more recognizable to the audience in question, or by employing footnotes and glossaries to explain concepts that cannot be translated through translation.

- **Functional Equivalents:** the process of translating a regional curse into a natural English counterpart, which involves finding a phrase in English that delivers the same emotional impact as the original term, rather than the precise meaning of the phrase.
- **Collaboration:** If at all feasible, working with the original author or with others who are knowledgeable about the culture of the area to guarantee that the subtle meanings are captured.

If translation was an important part of the freedom fight in India, then it would be even more important during the period after the country gained its independence when it comes to the role it plays. The Nehruvian endeavor was responsible for giving Indian art, culture, and literature the kind of importance they deserved. The field of drama was recognized as a significant one that acquired attention. India has a long and illustrious history of dramatic performance, which was suppressed by the colonial government. The 'Back to Classics' movement began in the early 1920s. This movement asserted that Indians have their own languages, a rich source of classical theater, and a sense of the resurgence of the classics inside their culture. Other contemporary Indian theaters that were considered to be avant-garde, such as "Theatre of Roots," emerged throughout the 1960s. In accordance with the Indian perspective on life, the objective of drama and theater was to generate a sense of pleasure and bliss (Rasa) by depicting a variety of events, mental states, and emotions that are experienced by human beings.

Translations were crucial in the development of Indian dramas that were performed in English. Plays that are written in a variety of Indian languages are currently being translated into English and other languages as they are created and enjoyed in different regions of the country. Through the use of these translations, a more intimate connection is being built between the theater workers who come from a variety of places and speak a variety of languages. Because of this, the readers were able to gain an understanding of the various cultures and traditions that are practiced in various places of India, which were previously unknown to them. The deteriorating performing arts were improved as a result of this. The different varieties of ancient dance-dramas, such as Nautanki, Yakshagana, Ras Lila, Bhavai, Tamasha, Jatra, and Khyal, among others, gained widespread appeal, a bigger audience, and significance as cultural dance forms when they were translated in a language that was understood by everyone. Badal Sircar, who writes in Bengali, Vijay Tendulkar, who writes in Marathi, and Girish Karnad, who writes in Kannada, are recognized as some of the most influential Indian dramatists in this genre. As well as Yayati, Hayavadana, Nagamandala, Fire and the Rain, Tughlaq, and other works of Girish Karnad, Ghashiram Kotwal, Silence, the court is in session, Gighade (Vutlures), Sakharam Binder of Vijay Tendulkar, Eevam Indrajit, The Mad Horse, Bhoma', Procession, and Stale News, among others. The translations of Badal Sircar are among the best works in the field. Their bodies of work provide the impression of being a window into their various civilizations, as well as their whims and fancies. These translations of regional works into English served as a foundation for the development of what is now known as "national theater," which is a place where many streams of theatrical art appear to interact with one another.

Conclusion:

It was curious as to how many contemporary readers are employing their native language in this endeavor. It is possible that some members of the westernized Indian class or the colonized intellect would be interested in reading the same literature if it were translated into English, for instance. This is precisely what occurred with One Part Woman; prior to its translation into English, no one was aware of its existence; nevertheless, after the book was eventually translated into English, it became the subject of a heated debate almost immediately. There is a theory that has been put out by academics that one's native tongue is the most effective avenue for both the expressing of creative ideas and the acquisition of new information. Because of this, the phrase "real Indian literature" can only be applied to Indian regional literature; this type of literature has also started to flourish, and its fragrant fruits will soon be relished all over the world. In the process of globalizing regional narratives, the translation of Indian literature into English plays an extremely important role. On the other hand, it presents difficulties in maintaining the authenticity of disputes that are founded in particular cultural contexts at the same time. Key concerns include striking a balance between accessibility and fidelity. In the process of translating Indian literature into English, the investigation of conflicts in Indian literature reveals the many facets of language, identity, culture, and representation. As a literary discipline, translation has evolved into a strong medium for cultural exchange, social criticism, and global recognition of regional tales. Its original goal was to simply transfer works from one language to another, but it has since expanded beyond that function. The works of Indian literature that have been translated into other languages serve as a window to the nation's diversity, complexity, and historical consciousness. As a result, these works are an essential component of literature all over the world.

References:

- Chanda-Vaz, U. (2018, December 1). Regional literature finds new readers across India, thanks to excellent translations, a dedicated lit fest. *Firstpost*. <https://www.firstpost.com/living/regionalliterature-finds-new-readers-across-indiathanks-to-excellent-translations-a-dedicated-litfest5344901.html>
- Devy, G. N. (1998). *After amnesia: Tradition and change in Indian literary criticism*. Orient Blackswan.
- Gandhi, L. (1998). *Postcolonial theory: A critical introduction*. Columbia University Press.
- Kotoky, M. (2011). India's regional literature in popular culture. USC Center on Public Diplomacy. <https://uscpublicdiplomacy.org/blog/india%20%99s-regional-literature-popularculture>
- Krishnaswamy, N., & Burde, A. (1998). *The politics of Indians' English: Linguistic colonialism and the expanding English empire*. Oxford University Press.
- Mukherjee, S. (1994). *Translation as recovery*. Pencraft International.
- Nair, R. B. (2002). *Narratives of truth and desire: Reading Indian literature*. Routledge.
- Niranjana, T. (1992). *Siting translation: History, post-structuralism, and the colonial context*. University of California Press.
- Phalnikar, S. (2006, October 8). India's regional literature a tough sell at Frankfurt. DW. <https://www.dw.com/en/indias-regional-literature-a-tough-sell-at-frankfurt/a-219639>