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A Comparative Analysis of Translation Strategies in Sannapureddy Venkata Ramireddy's *Bhilam* (The Cave)

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Abstract:

This paper explores the translation of the Telugu short story *Bhilam* (The Cave) into English, focusing on linguistic, idiomatic, and cultural challenges. Using Peter Newmark's theory of communicative and semantic equivalence, it shows how a "sense-for-sense" method preserves the narrative's emotional and cultural resonance.

Introduction:

Bhilam, by Sannapureddy Venkata Ramireddy, depicts rural life, superstition, and psychology. Translating it demands more than literal substitution; regional dialects and cultural nuances must be carried into English. Ten text samples illustrate how communicative equivalence works in practice.

Plot Synopsis:

The story revolves around a sacred cave and its guide, Gopal. When Ramana brings his supposedly possessed wife to the cave, Gopal responds with wit and sarcasm, exposing the psychological roots of the crisis through a series of "tricks."

Translation Methodology:

Newmark's framework guides the approach: semantic equivalence stays close to form; communicative equivalence favours the target reader's response. The "sense-for-sense" method dominates, ensuring Telugu idiomatic intensity survives in English—linguistic and Cultural Challenges.

Lack of equivalents: Ritual terms (*Deepaaraadhana*, *Naivedhyam*, *Kaartheeka*, *Sivalingam*) and onomatopoeic words (*Jarajara*, *Barabara*, *Pakapaka*) have no direct English counterparts. Polysemy: Words like *Thunaka*_(fragment/piece), *Bisa* (box/device/contrivance), and *Nandhi* (bull/ox/deity) require contextual selection.



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Analysis of Text Samples:

Text 1. *Guha dwaaraaniki iruvaipulu vunna bhandaraallaku pasupu kumkumalu addhi vunnaayi.* (SLT)

- The two big stones at the beginning of the cave are applied with turmeric and red powder. (TLT)

Analysis: Sets the scene through ritual markers at the cave entrance.

Text 2. *Kaartheeka maasapu naalugu soma vaaraarlo bhakthula kalakalatho Bellamkonda parisaraalu galagala mani muricipoyaayi.* (SLT)

- As it is the month of *Kaartheekam* and Bellamkonda village is being occupied by full of people for four weeks of the month. (TLT)

Analysis: Communicative equivalence explains the lunar month's significance.

Text 3. *Devathaa moorthulaku dhandaalu pettukoni athani venta kadhilaaru andharoo.* (SLT)

- All others, after offering prayers to the idols of gods and goddesses, followed him. (TLT)

Analysis: Highlights communal pilgrimage and the guide's role.

Text 4. *Kundaa, chatti, neella bindhelatho, andharoo bilam dhaggeraku cherukunnaaru.* (SLT)

- They have reached the cave with all the utensils like the earthen pots, water containers, small mud pots for cooking, and some drinking water. (TLT)

Analysis: Captures the logistical reality of devotees offering food.

Text 5. *Raasulu raasuluga padivunna bandaraalla meedha jaagrathagaa aduguleastho, muniswamyki, bilamchedrayuniki, govindalu koduthoo kadhuluthunnaaru janam.* (SLT)

- While stepping on the stones which are in heaps. The people are moving out hailing to the God and Muniswamy. (TLT)

Analysis: "Hailing" functions as an equivalent for chanting "Govinda."

Text 6. "Ore ore...adhi nora? Jaaladi gunthaa? ravvantha sepannaa moosukonivundalevaa?" (SLT)

- "Hey you fool! Is it a mouth or the pit of filth? Can't you be quiet at least for a moment?" (TLT)



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Analysis: Sense-for-sense rendering keeps the abusive tone.

Text 7. “*Yemundhi naayanaa methabadaka? Sinnappudu kaallaku balam, vogisina nadumuku balam, idho ee musili muppana notiki balam... vollulo yeadaa sathuva leadhu – noti bisa thappa*” antaande. (SLT)

- “What else without becoming dull? There is strength for legs in childhood, strength for the waist in youth, but there is no strength in the body at this age of oldness except chattering of the mouth,” said Gopal. (TLT)

Analysis: Jovial tone builds rapport between the guide and travellers.

Text 8. *Adhi ea dhisa aiyindhee ardham kaaleadhu paadhukalaanti rayoo, nandhi aakaaramoo amarchivundhi.* (SLT)

- On one of its sides, the direction is not known exactly, but appeared a rock implant, looked like an image of Nandhi that is fixed there. (TLT)

Analysis: Technical description orients the reader spatially.

Text 9. “*Osi niyemma kadupugaala...idhem korikea? Nuvvu manchigaa poyyettu leavea.*” (SLT)

- “You stupid spirit, what kind of wish is it? It seems you cannot leave this body amiably!” (TLT)

Analysis: Communicative equivalence conveys Gopal’s irritation.

Text 10. *Bilam laage innaalloo cheekatigaa kanipinchina aame antharangam ippudu thelusthoo vundhi.* (SLT)

- Her conscience, which seemed dark until now, has come to know, like the darkness of the cave. (TLT)

Analysis: Metaphor linking the wife’s inner state to the cave is preserved.

Conclusion:

The translator, having analysed the story, provided a plot summary and explained linguistic aspects that lack a direct TL equivalent using idiomatic expressions, alongside culture-specific words. Thus, the translation of *Bhilam* demonstrates that a sense-for-sense approach is crucial for regional literature. Prioritising communicative equivalence preserves cultural context while retaining humour, grit, and a spiritual atmosphere for a global audience.



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