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A Comparative Study of Semantic and Communicative Equivalence: A Translation Analysis of Thallavajjala Panthanjali Sastri's "Gaaradi"

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Abstract

This article explores the challenges and strategies involved in translating the Telugu short story "Gaaradi" (The Street Magic) into English. The study categorises translation hurdles into linguistic, idiomatic, and cultural domains. Utilising Peter Newmark's dual concepts of Semantic and Communicative Equivalence, the researcher analyses ten specific text samples to demonstrate how "sense-for-sense" translation often outweighs "word-for-word" accuracy in preserving the narrative's psychological depth and cultural nuances.

1. Introduction

The short story "Gaaradi," authored by Thallavajjala Panthanjali Sastri, presents a complex narrative of psychological disturbance, domestic tension, and pathological paranoia. The plot follows Khadar Saheb and his wife, Bee, whose lives are disrupted by a stranger named Sinu during their travels as street magicians. This study analyses the researcher's own translation of the text from the Source Language (SL - Telugu) to the Target Language (TL - English), focusing on the achievement of equivalence.

2. Methodology of Translation Analysis

The translation process was categorised into three primary problem areas: Linguistic Problems: Addressing the lack of direct equivalents for terms like *Chitapata*, *theeta*, *dharja*, and *chembu*.

Idiomatic/Usage Problems: Resolving nuances of regional slurs and expressions (e.g., *neeyekka*, *baadkaav*).

Cultural Problems: Bridging the gap for culture-specific items such as *Pappucharu* (a dietary staple) and *dhosam* (astrological fate).



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The researcher employed Peter Newmark's framework, alternating between Semantic Equivalence (loyalty to the SL author's specific word choice) and Communicative Equivalence (loyalty to the TL reader's understanding and the "sense" of the message).

3. Analysis of Text Samples

Text. 1. *Bhaadakovlu thotaloki chembu theesuku poyuntaaranukunnaadu Khadar.* (SLT)

- Khadar thought that the idiots might have gone out into the bushes for a nature call. (TLT)

The SL text is a declarative sentence depicting Khadar's anguish. The translator successfully brought equivalence by adopting the sense-for-sense translation following the Communicative equivalence.

Text. 2. *Athanni choosi gathukkmanna maamoolugaa borupanmpu vaipu vellindhi Bee.* (SLT)

- Having seen him, she trembled at first but went towards the water pump. (TLT)

The SL text is a complex sentence. The translator has brought the text and context of the SLT into the TLT by applying the sense-for-sense type of translation following the Communicative equivalence, keeping the target reader in view.

Text. 3. *Yenda bhaaga thella bhaare sariki mugguroo raathri pappucharutho chaddhannam thinesaaru.* (SLT)

- As it was a bright morning, all three had the leftover food from the previous night. (TLT)

The SL text is a complex sentence, and it gives information about their breakfast. The translator successfully brought equivalence between the SLT and TLT. He has applied the sense-for-sense type of translation following the Communicative equivalence. The translator has given importance to the target reader while translating the SL text.

Text. 4. *"Naagubhaamu, kondallo pattinaam. Padagameedha mani vuntundhi".* (SLT)

- "It is a cobra, caught in the hills. There is a gem in its hood", Khadar said. (TLT)

The SL text is an expression by Khadar while giving the magic show. The translator succeeded in bringing equivalence between the SLT and TLT by applying word-for-word translation, following the Semantic equivalence, as the translator seems to be loyal to the SL writer.

Text. 5. *"Anakonda gaadhoo" kurraadu navvukuntu vellipoyaadu.* (SLT)



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- “Is it not Anaconda?” The boy has gone laughing. (TLT)

The SL text is an expression uttered by a boy. Each word of the SL text is successfully translated into TL by the translator applying the sense-for-sense type of translation following the Communicative equivalence.

Text. 6. *“Achinthala dosam povodhamma, peedakalalaki taaveezu yesukondi thalli,” antoo padhepadhe cheppi mothaaniki naalugu thaaveezulu ammeasaadu.* (SLT)

- “All the evil will disappear, and for nightmares you can wear the talisman, madam”, selling the four talismans. (TLT)

The translator successfully brought equivalence following the mixture of both the Semantic and the Communicative equivalence. He has given importance to the SL writer while translating the expression following the Semantic equivalence, whereas he has used the Communicative equivalence to translate the rest of the sentence.

Text. 7. *Okka arupu arichi, ‘neeyekka poye aanikaadiki’, andhaavunukunnaadu* Khadar. (SLT)

- Khadar wanted to yell against her and say, “You bloody, go to him”, but he could not. (TLT)

The translator brought equivalence between the SLT and TLT, applying the sense-for-sense translation following the Communicative equivalence, giving importance to the target reader without losing content and context.

Text. 8. *“Voolloki boyosthaa” nantoo Khadaru saarabastha (potlam) kosam vellipoyaadu.* (SLT)

- Khadar has gone to the village for the arrack (packet) and said, “I will be back”. (TLT)

The translator has successfully brought the equivalent between the SLT and TLT following the Communicative equivalence, as he has given importance to the target reader; however, the text is translated word-for-word as well.

Text. 9. *Khadarki voo maadhiri cheekatlo vunnaadanipinchindhi.* (SLT)

- Khadar felt as if he was in darkness. (TLT)

The translator followed the Communicative equivalence in translating the text, and it is very clear that he has given importance to the target readers, and therefore, he successfully brought the content and context from the SLT to the TLT.



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Text. 10. “Gunturu poothava yendhee?” (SLT)

- “Are you going to Guntur?” (TLT)

The translator has applied word-for-word translation following the Semantic equivalence. The translator has translated the sentence, being very loyal to the SL writer as he has translated every word of the SL text without any modification.

4. Observations

The researcher has observed the possibility of equivalence of translation from the SLT to the TLT while analysing the short story without missing the sense between the two languages. While Semantic equivalence is applicable in translating specific words and phrases related to expressive, informative, and phatic functions, Communicative equivalence proves more apt for the overall translation of the short story, as it prioritises the target reader’s engagement with the narrative flow.

5. Conclusion

Translating “*Gaaradi*” requires a delicate balance between linguistic accuracy and cultural transposition. This analysis demonstrates that while Semantic equivalence preserves the author's literal voice (as seen in Sample 10), Communicative equivalence is essential for conveying the emotional and situational subtext of the story (as seen in Sample 1). The study concludes that for a short story rich in regional dialects and psychological nuances, a hybrid approach—leaning heavily toward Communicative equivalence—ensures that the "sense" of the story remains intact across linguistic boundaries.

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