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DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT TRANSLATION OF MAAMTA: AN URDU SHORT STORY BY
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ABSTRACT

The present paper examines 'dynamic equivalence' as a translation technique put forward by Eugene A. Nida through translating Maamta: An Urdu Short Story by Ahmed Nadeem Qasmi (1916-2006). Nida defines translation as a process of reproducing the message in receptor language naturally equivalent to the message in source language. Through dynamic equivalent translation of Maamta, it has been highlighted that any theme or message in the translated text may have an impact on readers more similar to its impact on readers of source language. The power, purity and consistency of unconditional motherly love reflected in this story may have similar impact on the readers of any language if dynamic equivalence is appropriately produced.

Key words: Dynamic, Equivalence, Maamta, journey, Literary, Translation, Nida

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INTRODUCTION

Every language has its own peculiar structure, style, and the way of communication. It is perhaps based on differences between territories, and societies where the language is used as a tool of communication. But language cannot be confined to communication. It may cover its speakers' customs, cultural and ethical values, and translation may require equivalence to these values in target language. The word translation may represent the act or process of transforming words, ideologies, commands, desires, and feelings from one language to another without losing their original meaning.

A number of definitions have been put forward by translators to meet the basic requirements of their own specific type of translation. Nida (1964:161) has perhaps rightly stated: "Definitions of proper translating are almost as numerous and varied as the persons who have undertaken to discuss the subject. This diversity is in a sense quite understandable; for there are vast differences in the materials translated." Keeping in view the need of literary translation Nida and Taber (1969:12) have defined the science of translation as a process to produce natural equivalence in the target language: "Translation consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, first in terms of meaning and

secondly in terms of style". The nature of equivalence to be produced in the target language would however be based on the essence of text being translated.

In his definition of translation Roger T. Bell (1991: 5) seems to emphasize the need for preserving semantic and stylistic equivalence in target language what has been expressed in source language. He claims that: "Translation is the expression in another language (or the target language) of what has been expressed in another, source language, preserving semantic and stylistic equivalences". Similarly, Catford (1965:20) also highlights 'equivalence' in defining translation: "Translation is the replacement of textual material in one language (SL) by equivalent textual material in another language (TL)".

Amongst the above definitions, Nida and Taber's interpretation of equivalence may serve our purpose better. The target language product needs to be as accurate as possible but the very essence of successful translation may be the exact equivalence in response by the users of target language as it may be in the case of source language. In this way, the accuracy in translated substance, grammatically as well as semantically, becomes highly important to generate a desirable response. The mode of current translation has come out of the views put forward by translators based on life-long experience in the field of translation. Equivalence as a key concept in literary translation is owned and promoted by different theorists in accordance with their own specific view of translation process. The opinions of such scholars and experts of translation science has served as a guide to determine the direction and nature of equivalence as a principle to be followed in the English translation of an Urdu short story composed by Ahmad Nadeem Qasmi, a Pakistani poet, novelist and story writer.

The views of theorists give different interpretations of the concept of equivalence. Baker (2005:77) describes the word level referential or denotative (designating or showing something) equivalence between the words of Source Language and the Target Language that create a similar association or response in the minds of people reading the text composed in language different from the language of original content. It seems to be appropriate for translation of texts with religious contents.

Popovic in (Bassnett, 1988:32) also explains equivalence through dividing it in to four types. (1) Linguistic equivalence, (2) paradigmatic equivalence,(3) stylistic equivalence, and (4) textual (syntagmatic) equivalence. Similarly, Hann (1992), in (Baker, 2005:78) describes four categories of equivalence. (1)One-to-one equivalence where there is a single expression for the TL(target language) for a single SL(source language) expression, (2) One-to-part-of-one equivalence wherein a TL expression covers part of the concept designated by a single SL expression.(3)One-to-many equivalence, wherein more than one TL expression for a single SL expression, (4) Many-to-one, wherein more than one TL lexical item for a single SL expression or lexical item. These strategies may suit well to translate academic material.

Baker's six types of equivalence in his well-known work *In Other Words: A Course book on Translation* (1992) also guide researchers and translators. These types are:(1) Equivalence at word level, (2) Equivalence above the word level exemplified in collocation, idioms and fixed expressions,(3) Grammatical equivalence which deals with the diversity of grammatical categories across languages,(4)Textual equivalence which deals with thematic and information structures,(5)Textual equivalence which focuses on cohesion, and (6)Pragmatic equivalence which deals with coherence, the process of interpretation. These techniques may be suitable for translating texts of basic or pure sciences.

Eugene A. Nida's (1964:1-2,82) dynamic equivalence aims at creating similar response on the readers of Source language and Target Language, to make translation as communicative as possible. It is contrary to formal equivalence which brings about literal translation. Keeping in view the nature of content in the Urdu story being translated, Nida's theory of dynamic equivalence seems to serve well as a model for communicating the essence of story, the theme of 'motherly love' in English language.

DYNAMIC EQUIVALENT TRANSLATION

It is a type of translation that presents an equivalent of substance, words, phrases etc. of one language in another language. Eugene A. Nida, the exponent of Dynamic Equivalent Translation has been associated with the American Bible Society for long time. The way he supports this form of translation shows

that he could perhaps apply this technique effectively during the process of Bible translation. He introduces it through expressing his experience-based opinion:

"Dynamic equivalence" is defined as "the quality of a translation in which the message of the original text has been so transported into the receptor language that the response of the receptor is essentially like that of the original receptors. The opposite principle is formal correspondence." (Nida and Taber 1969: 202)

The translation of *Maamta* (Motherly love) conforms closely with the concept of Dynamic equivalence promoted by Nida. Maximum efforts have been made to highlight similarity of reader's expected response to English translation of the text with response of a reader to original text in Urdu language. Necessary efforts have also been made to maintain the minimum standard of translated version of the text through avoiding major grammatical errors to maintain maximum semantic accuracy.

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF MAAMTA

One of the British officers recruited me for Police service from Punjab and posted in Hong Kong, an island in China where the inhabitants were mostly Chinese but the ruling class belonged to Great Britain. Although the British rulers had been recruiting for a long time the groups of Police constables from Punjab and transported them to Hong Kong but the current recruitment was unusual and remarkable for being made during the time of war. The war in Europe initiated by Hitler made English people more concerned about their survival as a colonial power in Asian territories and to maintain their administrative control the need for Punjabi constables in Hong Kong was almost doubled. It gave me a chance to serve in Hong Kong. I am not physically a stronger man and failed several times in qualifying physical test for recruitment to army. Although I was more a skeleton than a man, but the doctor ignoring my physique appreciated my tall stature by saying that the short-statured Chinese would be scared by his presence.

The British rulers had strong realization that to send short-statured young men as police constables in Hong Kong was a great political blunder for which they had to pay dearly. The Englishman's desire to recover the loss led me to Hong Kong police department. Old officials of Hong Kong police told us many stories of comfortable life enjoyed by police men in Hong Kong. It is a noteworthy fact that "every country is a heaven for police men where the rulers come from another country".

In Hong Kong Police men enjoyed great powers. They could influence public opinion and change it as they liked. They could force short-statured Chinese ladies holding begging-bowl to flee from the roads, bazaars and railway tracks whenever they desired. And if on the way their children were slipped away, the same police men could enjoy their sympathies and appreciation by returning their children to them. They had powers even to check and retain the luggage of people and to kick men and women coming from China back in to it.

On reaching Singapore one of the officials rumored that the war is going to expand to the seas of eastern region. By hearing such a rumor the Ship's British captain flushed with anger, and to prevent the rumor from spreading any more, removed the rumormonger from his service and sent him in custody of English police in Singapore. On arrival in Hong Kong, we could notice clearly the signs of sadness on the faces of people. Everyone was looking afraid of war and the fear was reflected through their faces. One could see Chinese refugees sitting on the footpaths of zigzagging roads in Hong Kong and Kowloon, looking for bombs coming from the sky to take their lives in seconds. They seemed to be waiting for death in peaceful manner.

A vast majority of starving children were found running after the food. The number of such children was grown to intolerable level. The rulers were feeling uneasy and expressed their feelings of discomfort. Their indifference can be measured from the statement of an officer who categorically said "to rear such a large number of children is none of their job". The children whose parents were alive could be made different from other children through fastening their neck with a belt. If someone was found without belt with the neck he was sent across the border in to original China.

It was however, a painful duty for the police officials to keep the foot-path clean for the officers interested in walking on foot. Trenches were being dug, shelters were being built, beauty of the buildings was protected and camouflaged, and the whole city of Hong Kong seemed to be under-construction. It was narrated that there was a time when the lights of Hong Kong were reflected in the sea-water and the

reflection of buildings with different lights created such a romantic scene that even the men with dead aesthetic taste could feel their taste of young age revived. The same sea was now looking the mainspring of darkness.

After a whole day session of physical training, I spared some time to relax but the terrible silence in the city, fear of war, and the memories of my mother made me weep bitterly. In the day time I could infer from the sadness of eyes and sorrowfulness of people's faded faces that they were suffering from pain, emotional distress, and feelings of discomfort that somebody may endure on his mother's death. It reflected in my brain the image of my mother helplessly dying but looking for my presence. During the training hours I could escape the bitterness of my separation from my mother. But as soon as the night began my condition was totally changed from that of a fighting soldier to an innocent child pushing his face against the pillow and weeping for the love of my mother. The love that helped me to take a sigh of relief when I was anxious, it soothed me in painful situations, and calmed me when I was angry. She always sacrificed her pleasures to give me some sort of comfort while she needed it most.

My mother tried to prevent me from traveling to Hong Kong by saying, "You are going to Hong Kong. Hong Kong is, I have listened, the other corner of the world". I could feel your presence in my imagination if you had to leave for Delhi or Calcutta but you are leaving for Hong Kong where we will be separated by oceans and mountains. If the war breaks out in your native town and all of your loved ones are dead who will offer me shoulder to lift their coffins. How would I be able to manage to bury my own dead body? My son, don't leave for Hong Kong, I can live with empty belly but not without my son's presence. I am afraid nobody will wash your clothes. Nobody will oil and comb your hair. Nobody will soften your eye-brows, and nobody will button your clothes. May God bless you! If you suffer from pneumonia as you did last year and you feel headache who will massage it with almond-oil? Your mother's heart is weeping without shedding tears but you can't see it.

My son don't leave us. Let's place your head in my lap. We will die of starvation but not in separation. Let me say, if I am dead in your absence, while you are in Hong Kong, who will take part in the ceremony of putting my helpless dead body in my grave? The heaven is under the feet of a mother (Islamic view, symbolically stating that service to one's mother is a path to heaven). The maulvi (religious scholar) says the grave of mother is as bright as galaxy, wow. But I left for this city even after a view of my mother's eyes full of tears. And now during the night in solitude, the reflection of my mother's face appears before my eyes. She looks staring at me and such a view keeps me frightened. I imagine, what my mother was looking for? I am here to see the buildings being destroyed everywhere in Hong Kong. The city which remained full of lights all the times is looking like a falling tree in winter. The intense fear of bombardment did not allow me to do anything other than weeping in the memory of my mother.

I recollected the moment, how my loving mother tried to prevent me from leaving for Hong Kong by saying that she could live without eating anything but not in separation from her son. How did she imagine and express her bitter feelings over my helpless condition in Hong Kong? If I suffer from any misfortune or any disease nobody will come to save me. She was trying to imagine her son unable to take part in her last ceremonies. Her face full of sadness appears to me in imagination and communicates me the perils of war in which I am exposed to death by bombing at any time.

It could not be presupposed what suddenly happened to us. We could see nothing but bombers with horrible thunder, destroying the city, reducing buildings to fragments, and scattering parts of human body everywhere in the streets. One could hear nothing but the echo of death in all corners of the city. Some fire was erupted from anti-aircraft guns but only for few moments and then observed silence for ever. The dead bodies of innocent people and the scrap of destroyed buildings could be seen dispersed everywhere. A fragment of bomb struck to a constable standing on duty and his intestines which came outside the body were visible. An old English lady proceeded from the door of a shelter home with watered eyes, putting one of her finger under the chin, reading the faces of everyone. When her search came to an end she exclaimed "my son", and suddenly fell down. Everyone was surprised to see the lady who was perhaps looking for her lost son but lost even the hope itself.

The city did not take much time to surrender to Japanese. They came and occupied and I became one of the prisoners. Realizing the horribleness of situation and permanent loss of motherly love, I began to weep and wail. After a few days, I became familiar with Japanese, but my experience with Japanese was as bitter as bleeding heart. A Japanese officer was looking at the prisoners with great pride. Suddenly his cap fell down and one of the prisoners smiled, but the very next moment another Japanese officer smiled and suddenly the bullet crossed the body of smiling man and killed another man standing next to him and all Japanese laughed and enjoyed it as a part of fun.

The next day to curb the revolt of Chinese fishermen against the Japanese occupation, some obedient or least rebellious prisoners were also set to go for fighting against Chinese in an island as a part of Japanese battalion. I was one of them. We were asked to sit in a boat and sailed to an island. We could see a beautiful Chinese valley full of beautiful trees and bushes. But there was neither any human voice nor any smoke from the fire places. However there were some huts where we suddenly stormed and Japanese officer using Chinese language said "if there is anyone inside the huts he must come out, otherwise we will kill everyone".

Suddenly hundreds of old ladies with worn-out clothes came out. Their response to Japanese officer's warning was more prompt than our expectations. Obeying the order of Japanese officer, we encircled them; Japanese officer stepped forward, scornfully looking at them, shouted "where are the men? There was utter silence for few moments. Then an old lady with white hairs came forward and replied: on their job.

The officer shouting: What's their job? To build hideouts for miscreants in China's coastal areas?

The old lady: No, for fishing.

Japanese officer: Where are your children, old men and girls?

The old lady: There is an annual festival of fishermen and all of them are celebrating it in the waters.

Japanese officer: Come here. He dragged her to himself and she fell down. Another officer fired with a revolver and after writhing in agony for few moments she died. The other ladies, looking frightened, covered their eyes with hands. A wave of terror and sympathy for humanity suddenly passed through my whole body. The view made me squirm, but the poor man like me had no choice other than containing my fury through biting my own lips. The silence in all sides was extremely terrible.

After deputing the prisoner constables from Punjab for the surveillance of old ladies, Japanese disappeared into their huts. We could hear Japanese officers enjoying wine and abusing Chinese. I also began to use abusive language for Japanese excessively without being heard by anybody else. Suddenly, I saw a lady sitting down on the earth. She was looking afraid of Japanese. She came closer to the dead body of the old lady, covered it with the cloth, and stood nearby it. She gave me the memory of my own mother. I felt sympathy for her but all of a sudden a Japanese officer kicked me in back and removed the cloth from the dead body and went away.

After few minutes Japanese came back. The commander of Japanese battalion addressed the old ladies in a furious mood: "it appears that your group is working in Hong Kong and they have informed you about our action, otherwise all young girls, children, young men, and old men could not disappear from the island. But we are not supposed to leave, we will wait and when they come back, we will kill all of them including your sons, daughters, brothers, sisters, husbands, wives, and fathers. We will put you all in the sea as well".

After delivering such a threatening speech he left for the camp along with his soldiers. The ladies were sitting silently. Their movements were reflecting their internal condition of sorrowfulness. Symptoms of death were visible on their faces. The clouds were appearing and darkness was increasing. I tried to move my hand but I found it almost senseless because of coldness. The dead body of old lady shocked me excessively, and I could see the lady who covered the dead body looking at me with great surprise. After some time a Japanese officer came and declared that they are going to leave for another island and ordered the ladies to prepare meal for them. He called us to keep an eye on them. The ladies immediately left for their huts to prepare meal for Japanese.

The thunder of clouds were touching my heart and giving me the memory of my mother's love when in cold weather she covered me with the cloth frequently, to keep me free from pneumonia. The tearful eyes

of my mother appeared before me and my whole body started trembling. The lady, who covered the dead body, slowly came to me. She possessed something in her hand, and she was looking back to Japanese again and again who were, at that time, engaged in drinking and dancing. I could see similarity between the face and the old age of that lady with that of my mother. The tears came out of her eyes, and asked me in Chinese language, are you prisoner? I moved my head in agreement. She spoke, "my son was in hurry, I called him but he didn't listen, like your shirt one of his shirt's button was missing.

I was surprised, she continued speaking, and do you have your mother? I did not speak but nodded positively. I tried to control myself but failed and started weeping. She stepped forward and began to button my shirt and after doing that she smiled with tears. For a moment, I realized that she was trying to escape herself from Japanese to kiss my cheeks. She removed tears from my face with my shirt and went back. For a moment, I imagined, the Chinese island has flown in the sky and I have fallen in the lap of my mother in Punjab.

DISCUSSION

The English translation of Maamta, an Urdu short story, represents Indian background, in which the role of parents in the life of their children is always pivotal. The words of Urdu text seem to be more penetrating and forcefully representing warmth of human feelings. Without uttering the word 'love' the mother expresses higher degree of maternal affection. Several facets of maternal love have been discussed in the text of Maamta but three fundamental aspects of motherly love have been specifically focused. These aspects include, Strong feeling of compassion, craving for Son's presence, and serious concern about separation. Motherly love appears to be a universal theme free from all limits of time, territory, and culture.

Through producing dynamic equivalence, three facets of love particularly highlighted in the story may be reproduced to examine the effectiveness of Nida's translation technique. The Feelings of Compassion in both languages are equally important to readers. In the Source Language it is:

میں سوچتی ہوں وہاں تمہارے کپڑے کون دھوئے گا؟ تمہارے بالوں میں تیل کون ڈالے گا؟ تمہاری آنکھ سے گری ہوئی پلک کون نکالے گا؟
Similarly, in the Receptor Language the meanings and feelings are almost similar: "I am afraid nobody will wash your clothes. Nobody will oil and comb your hair. Nobody will soften your eye-brows". The readers of both text may respond in almost a similar way.

Secondly, the craving for presence is presented in Urdu with greater force of emotions. In the source language it is:

نہیں بیٹا نہ جاؤ۔ چلو میرے گھٹنے سے لگ کر بیٹھ جاؤ۔ بھوکوں مریں گے پر اکٹھے تو مریں گے۔

One can realize identical impression of a mother's quest her son's presence in receptor language:

"My son don't leave us. Let's place your head in my lap. We will die of starvation but not in separation". Through producing dynamic equivalence to a mother's unquestionable love for her son the importance of human affiliation has been emphasized.

Thirdly, the mother's expression of her concern about expected separation of her son from family shows importance of social bond between parents and their children. Where there is a social bond there is always a need to maintain it. In the source text the tone of a mother's statement is apparently sad and one can feel its depth in any language:

ہانگ کانگ تو وہاں ہے جہاں سے آگے سنا ہے دھرتی ختم ہو جاتی ہے۔ بیٹا تم دلی کلکتہ میں ہوتے تو میں تمہیں خوابوں میں ٹٹول لیتی پر تم ہانگ کانگ جا رہے ہو، تمہارے میرے درمیان سمندر اور پہاڑ کھڑے ہو جاہیں گے۔

The painful state of a mother's mind can be clearly felt while reading the same message in receptor language:

"Hong Kong is, I have listened, the other corner of the world. I could feel your presence in my imagination if you had to leave for Delhi or Calcutta but you are leaving for Hong Kong where we will be separated by oceans and mountains".

If a comparative study of different types of literary translation is made, Nida's technique provides better model for literary translation than literal translation, stylistic alternative, or thematic transformation. In spite of linguistic and cultural differences the message of one text can be appropriately communicated to receive or generate similar response from the readers of source and receptor language. However, it depends on the translator's academic background, literary field of interest, competence and professional skills to produce dynamic equivalence of one text in another language to an appropriate level.

CONCLUSION

Literary translation is more subjective than any other form of translation. It translates not only the message of an author but also the feelings and emotions involved in any literary text. Because of excessive subjectivity in literature, producing exact translation of a literary piece of writing is hardly possible. In this way, effectiveness of literary translation mostly depends upon similarity of response by the readers of texts in source and receptor language. It can't be possible through translating words and sentences from one language to another language. There is a need to provide equivalent alternative in a target language.

Nida's technique of dynamic equivalent translation seems to be more effective in communicating the message of a literary text from Urdu to English language. Modalities of Nida's translation model are more translator- friendly than other models of translation theorists. It helps to promote the readers' creativity and facilitates them to have a flair for reading translation. In this way, the readers speaking different languages may be able to respond in a similar way. Although any model can be used for translating the text of Maamta from Urdu to English but Nida's technique appears to be more effective and suitable for similar literary texts.

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