



# Barriers in Translation

## (With Special Reference to Vijay Tendulkar's Plays)

**Dr. Shailaja B. Wadikar**

Professor & Head (English)

SL LCS, SRTM University, Nanded.

**Mr. Avinash Pawar**

Assistant Professor of English,

Amity School of Languages,

Amity University, Mumbai.

### Abstract:

A translated version of a literary work tends to be a variation, rather than an imitation or a representation, of its original. It is, at once, both imitative and creative, faithful and free in rebuilding or re-structuring a given pattern of meaning. That is why a translated work is never an exact replica of its original but has to be a variation of it.

The present paper aims to present the problems in the translation of a play. A play is more performance oriented. The playwright writes a play to be staged. In the process of translation, the risk of losing the original charm is always there. However, the gain is more important than the loss.

**Keywords:** Translation, replica, imitation, variation.

### 1.1 Introduction

An ideal translation cannot be expected to be too faithful to or too free from the original. If it is too faithful, it suffers in readability and aesthetic appeal. If it is too free, it ceases to be translation at all and becomes adaptation. How to transmit the culture of one language into another is a great problem with the translator.

According to Goethe, the real dilemma before a translator is to choose either of the two alternatives (particularly when the languages involved in translation are genetically dissimilar):

**One demands that the author belonging to some other nation should be brought over to us so that we can regard him as our own; the other demands of us that we should go across to the stranger and accustom ourselves to his circumstances, his manner of speaking, his peculiarities.** (Goethe 56).

## 1.2 Important Elements in Translation

According to Richards, meaning comprises four elements, viz., (i) Sense, (ii) Feeling, (iii) Intention, (iv) Tone. (179) So, for a total grasp of meaning, a literary translator needs to have dual 'competence' ('performance' included): (i) linguistic and (ii) communicative. A translator needs, therefore, to keep in view scope, focus, emphasis, and tone of words and sentences.

## 1.3 Translation of a Play

The translation of a play invites problems on the part of a translator since a play at once, both: reader-oriented and performance-oriented. It is impossible to separate a dramatic text from its performance as the theatre consists of dynamic relationship between the two. All these aspects – linguistic, communicative and dramaturgical-present a number of problems for the translator.

Dialogues in a play are characterized as much by rhythm, intonation, volume, pitch and intensity as by informality and colloquialism. They have an intimate relationship with situation. Robert Carrigan points out:

**All times, the translator must "hear" the voice that speaks and take into account the "gesture" of the language cadence, rhythm, and pauses that occur when the written text is spoken. (132).**

## 1.4 Vijay Tendulkar's Translated Plays

Vijay Tendulkar, a Marathi playwright, has been one of the pioneers of the contemporary Indian theatre. On being translated in English, he has won international recognition in the post-1970. Most of his plays are of controversial nature. All his major plays such as *Silence! The Court is in Session*, *The Vultures*, *Encounter in Umbugland*, *Kamala*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Ghashiram Kotwal*, and *Kanyadan* have been translated into English, Hindi, and other major Indian languages. The first four of these are Priya Adarkar's translation in English. *Sakharam Binder*, is translated into English by Kumud Mehta and Shanta Gokhle in collaboration. The English version of *Ghashiram Kotwal* is again a collaborated translated work of Jayant Karve and Eleanor Zelliot, and *Kanyadan* is translated by Gouri Ramnarayan.

The translators have tried their best to remain faithful as far as possible to the original texts and to recapture the spoken mode and accent of the Marathi language in their English renderings. Some of the difficulties involved in translation process are related to the areas indicated below:

## 1.5 Difficulties in Translation

### 1.5.1 Proverbs or sentences having proverbial ring:

१. न स्त्री स्वातंत्र्यमर्हति  
(तेंदुलकर शांतता! ९०.)

Woman is not fit for independence  
(Tendulkar *Silence!* 115.)

२. मेली कोंबडी आगीला भीत नाही.  
(तेंदुलकर सखाराम २३.)

A dead hen doesn't fear the fire!  
(Tendulkar *Sakharam* 147)

Here, the translations appear structurally weak and part with some of the flavour of the original.

### 1.5.2 Idiomatic and Slangy Expressions

Idiomatic and slangy expression are found almost untranslatable. The vagueness in their meaning and the emotive appeal create difficulties for the translator. For example, see the words and expressions enlisted below; they are translated into English but they lose their colloquial touches.

टुक्कार  
(तेंदुलकर दंबद्वीपचा१२.)

Decrepit  
(Tendulkar *Encounter* 281.)

दमडीचोर  
(तेंदुलकर गिधाडे७.)

Lickpenny  
(Tendulkar *The Vultures* 208.)

### 1.5.3 These Exclamatory Expression are Sometimes Untranslatable

अरे! अरे! अरे!  
(तेंदुलकर घाशीराम११.)

Oh! Oh! Oh!  
(Tendulkar *Ghashiram* 15.)

छे !  
(तेंदुलकर कन्यादान११.)

Eh! (Tendulkar *Kanyadan* 3)

### 1.5.4 Doublings

Doublings are hardly realized in translation if they are realized, they result into ridiculous attempts.

नोकरी बिकरी  
(तेंदुलकर शांतता ३.)

Earn Enough,  
(Tendulkar *Silence!* 56.)

मागं-पुढं  
(तेंदुलकर सखाराम४७.)

There is no stopping.  
(Tendulkar *Sakharam* 56)

### 1.5.5 Vocatives and Kinship Terms

The Vocatives and Kinship Terms present difficulties while they are translated from Marathi into English. The words showing honour or intimacy do not have exact equivalents in English. For example, अहो, तुम्ही, या - The translation fails here because it is incapable of conveying the feeling of honour in English.

So and far as Kinship Terms are concerned, we use, “uncle” for both  , “aunt” for   and - The English Kinship Terms showing relations are not so distinct or discriminating as the Marathi ones; they are inclusive.

### 1.5.6 Euphemistic Expressions

Euphemistic or euphemistic expressions in Marathi may overtly be translated in English irrespective of whether they are tabooed or not in the latter. The examples cited below are from the play *Silence! The Court is in Session*.

### 1.5.7 Humour, Sarcasm, Irony, Pun, Allusion, and Echo

This is not the place to enlist any more examples to show how subtlety of humour, irony, sarcasm, and echo are partially or wholly lost in translation process. There are innumerable examples of these.

To conclude, it is difficult, if not impossible, for the translator to translate the informal tone and retain the emotive qualities of the words and expressions. That is why certain idioms and slangs are found almost untranslatable. Similarly, the Marathi doublings have lost their emphasis in English.

### 1.6 Conclusion

The translation of the play *Kamala* seems to be reasonably, successful for the simple reason that slangs, abusive terms, tabooed words, etc., are hardly used in it in comparison with other plays. So far as *The Vultures*, *Sakharam Binder*, *Kanyadan* are concerned, the translated versions lack the changed language and emotive intensity of meaning of the original ones, since the plays are full of slangs and abusive terms. The loss of meaning is usually inevitable in any translated work, but the gain is as important as, or perhaps, more important than, the loss.

The translation of *Ghashiram Kotwal*, by Jayant Karve and Eleanor Zelliot may be seen as an ideal rendering in English of the original with its racy vigour and musical charm. It makes the production a hit on the stage. It goes to establish the notion of “Standard Translation”, for the dramatic text is evolved out of the source language user’s. (i.e. the Marathi speaking Jayant Karve’s) the best endeavour in translation, a creative rendering into the target language (i.e. in English) in collaboration with the native user of the target language (i.e., Eleanor Zelliot here.)

That is why these words of A. K. Ramanujan are as much encouraging to the translator as to reader:

**The best in this kind (i.e., the best translation) are but shadows; and the worst are no worse, if imagination amend them. (8).**

### Works Cited:

1. Carrigan, Robert. Quoted in Susan Bassnett– Mc–Guire. *Translation Studies*. Methuen, 1980.
2. Goethe, Quoted in Vasant Bapat. *Taulanik Sahityabhyas*. Mouj, 1981,
3. Richard, I.A. *Practical Criticism*. Routledge, 1929.
4. Ramanujan, A. K. “Translator’s Note” to U. R. Anantha Murthy’s Novella, *Samskar*. OUP, 1976.
5. Tendulkar, Vijay. *Five Plays of Vijay Tendulkar*. OUP, 1992
6. ---. *Ghashiram Kotwal*, Seagull Books, 1999.

7. ---. *Kanyadan*. OUP, 1996.
8. तेंडुलकर, विजय. *कन्यादान*. नीलकंठ प्रकाशन, १९९२.
9. ---. *गिधाडे*. नीलकंठ प्रकाशन, १९८०.
10. ---. *घाशीराम कोतवाल*. नीलकंठ प्रकाशन, १९९२.
11. ---. *दंबद्वीपचा मुकाबला*. पॉप्युलर प्रकाशन, १९७३.
12. ---. *शांतता! कोर्ट चालू आहे*. नीलकंठ प्रकाशन, १९८२.
13. ---. *सखाराम बाईंडर*. नीलकंठ प्रकाशन, १९७३.

