



A LINGUISTIC APPROACH TO CHEMMEEN TRANSLATED IN ENGLISH BY ANITHA NAIR AND TRANSLATED IN TAMIL BY SUNDARA RAMASAMY

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ABSTRACT

Every language is affluent with the classical works. They glorify the cultural and traditional life of the state, nation or continent. Chemmeen, a novel written in Malayalam, presents an interesting story of the love affair of a young pair and the predestined life of fisherfolk. This novel has been translated into many Indian and European languages. The present study focuses on the merits and demerits of the translation in English and translation in Tamil.

Key words: *Classical Works – Culture – Tradition – Demerits in Translations.*

INTRODUCTION

Chemmeen, originally written in Malayalam by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai, was published in 1956. Sahitya Academy award for literature was given to this novel. At that time the novel was appreciated and criticized also. The theme of this novel was discussed in the houses and in the literary forums. Even the common people of three or four, gathered at odd places, talked about *Chemmeen* alone.

Theme of The Novel

Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai infused the element of imagination in this novel, *Chemmeen*. He portrayed the life style of fisherfolk, their beliefs, traditions and their relationships effectively and the morality of their life is one of the most important elements.

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The Kerala coast consists of many small hamlets of the fisherfolk. Their life is intertwined with the sea (Kadamma). There are small huts of such simple fisherfolk. *Chemmeen* narrates such a coastal life to the readers.

We cannot believe their extreme poverty, hard work and simplicity of day to day's life, unless we watch them first hand. Their life is a long struggle. They don't want to live in different style after accepting the risky life with pride. The sea safeguards the good people and punishes the guilty without kindness. The faith in the Goddess Sea alone conducts their life.

Other Versions of *Chemmeen*

The story of this novel was produced in a movie with the same title. There was an earlier translation in English by Naraya Menon.

The film version won the award of the President of India. The translated novel has been prescribed in many universities and colleges in India for the students of English Literature.

The novel in Tamil version was published in 1962 by Sahitya Academy. The novel was translated by Sundara Ramasamy. It went into many prints in the recent years.

The Aim of This Study

A linguistic approach to *Chemmeen* in English translation and in translation of 'Tamil' especially in the chapter I is undertaken.

Anita Nair has translated *Chemmeen* in English recently. The present study focuses on the coinage of words in English, transliterated words of Malayalam and sentences. Similarly the Tamil version of Sundara Ramasamy is taken up for discussion on the aspects of translation in Tamil.

Analysis of Words In English Translation

Karuthamma, the heroine of the novel, *Chemmeen* is talking with Pareekutty, her childhood friend. She calls him 'Little Boss'. The word 'Little' could be 'Junior'.

During their talk Pareekutty calls Karuthamma 'Big Momma Fisherwoman' just for making fun. The word 'Momma' seems to be unnecessary. Hence, the meaning is that Karuthamma has entered adulthood.



There develops an uncontrollable laughter between Pareekutty and Karuthamma. She gasped for breath. The translator has used a figurative word 'bosom' instead of 'heart'.

Similarly the translator has done the translation; 'mundu'. The readers are generally at a loss of getting the correct sense.

When Panchami reports Karuthamma's meeting with Pareekutty to their mother, Chakki, she uses the words like, 'Ammachi' and 'Chechi'. We cannot consider them to be childish words. The reason is that the word 'mother' is used by the translator and therefore there is no absolute necessity of transliteration. Likewise there is another word; 'Accha' to denote 'father'.

Chakki makes an earnest request to Karuthamma that the fisherfolk must have fear in mind about the power of sea (Kadamma). She addresses to Karuthamma as 'my magale'. The translator has arranged these words next to 'my daughter' unnecessarily.

The fisherfolk has a tradition. A woman must retain her chaste. Negatively if there is any woman defiled, the sea mother becomes angry with the fisherfolk. She would engulf the entire village without hesitation. So, Chakki suggests that Karuthamma could maintain her purity of mind and body. In this context the translator has liberally used the word 'virtue'.

The translator has used an unparliamentary word to refer to the women working in the shack of Pareekutty; 'sluts'. It is because of her wrong notion that the women of lower social status have no moral values.

The novel in translation is used to show off the translator's use of bombastic words like 'strut', 'burgeon', 'lode', 'fecundity', 'aplomb' and 'inviolable'. The words are the hindrance to the smooth reading of the novel by the common people.

Wrong Usage of Phrase and Sentences in Construction

The translator missed her correct perception of the kerchief around the neck of young Pareekutty. She has used the phrase; 'around his throat'.

When Karuthamma recalls her mother's talk with her father about the idea of getting the money from Pareekutty, the construction is such as; "I heard you and Accha talking the other day".

"...all you will have is your boats and nets". & "That's what's going to happen" are examples of her bad construction of sentences in English.

Analysis of Words in Tamil Translation



Sundara Ramasamy has translated *Chemmeen* in Tamil effectively. The choice of words and construction of sentences are well managed. Presently, this study highlights the ideas that are pointed out in the discussion of translation in Tamil.

“நீ ஏன் என்னை சின்ன முதலாளின்னு கூப்பிடுறே?”

The Source Language is unavailable for the study. ‘Kochuhu Mudalali’ seems to be the original word to refer to Pareekutty.

But the Tamil translator has opted for translation of a fisherwoman as ‘பெரிய மரக்காத்தீன்னு’. Further he uses ‘ஹாஸ்யமா?’ to denote a joke or a comedy.

The translator chooses the word ‘மொறைக்காதே’ instead of ‘உற்றுப் பார்க்காதே’. Similarly he prefers the word ‘வேஷ்டி’ which is not associated with the dress of a woman in general.

‘உருமாலும்’ is coined by the translator for the word ‘handkerchief’. ‘கைக்குட்டை’ is readily available in Tamil for the understanding of the readers.

Chemban Kunju has given instruction to the members of his family that any one of them must safeguard his saving of money all the time. Panchami has to take care of the house in the absence of Karuthamma so that he is unable to join in the game with her friends. The translator has chosen the word ‘ஒரு சமயம் கூட’ which is irrelevant.

“கருத்தம்மாவின் தவறைப் புரிந்துகொண்டோ, புரிந்து கொள்ளாமலோ சக்தி சொன்னாள்”. In the context of Karuthamma’s ignorance or Karuthamma’s guilty of having been a victim of Pareekutty, Chakki wants to give her daughter a caution that Karuthamma is no longer a child to visit Pareekutty.

To refer to Pareekutty that he is a Muslim the translator has used the phrase ‘நாலாம் மதத்து ஆசாமி’ which causes a confusion to the readers.

“யாராவது நொன்டி, கூன் குருடு வரும்”. In this sentence the translator has failed to comply the subject with the correct verb.

‘அவனுக்கு என்ன குத்தம்?’ In this context the translator has missed the correct word

‘குறை’.

As far as the sentences in translation of Tamil are concerned, the sentences are well constructed with a few exceptions which are not at all deviating from the right context.

CONCLUSION



The present study wants to emphasize that the novel either in translation of English or in translation of Tamil is to be free from the linguistic barriers and the cultural barriers. Any full fledged translation will be welcome for the effective presentation in the classrooms of colleges.

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