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Strategies Used in Translating a Text from Nepali to English: "A Case of Ke Nepal Sano Chha?"

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Abstract

Translation has become important in modern linguistic and cultural studies, yet it remains a difficult and most awaiting attempt. This study explores the strategies adopted by the translator in rendering the meaning of the source language (Nepali) text into the target language (English). Mainly, it observes the translation of a Nepali essay 'Ke Nepal Sano Cha?' written by Laxmi Prasad Devkota into English text 'Is Nepal Small?' by Govind Raj Bhattarai. I employed a corpus based research design utilizing parallel corpora of the Nepali essay into English versions of the text. The data for the study were derived from both versions of the essay, with observation serving as the primary method of data collection. The analysis identifies several frequently utilized translation strategies, including translation by more general terms, translation by neutral terms, translation using loan words with or without explanations and sense-based translation. The findings present the challenges essential in the translation process, emphasizing issues related to lexical, cultural and contextual equivalence. These findings highlighted the intrinsic difficulty achieving exact translation which resulted because of the cultural and linguistic nuances embedded in languages. The study suggested that proper translation involve a deep understanding of the source and target languages as well as their corresponding cultural contexts. These intuitions have implications for improving translation practices and strategies in future linguistic and literary endeavors.

Keywords: Translation strategies, gaps, cultural reference, sense translation, Deletion

Introduction

Translation is at the center of human civilization. Dam, Brøgger, & Zethsen, (2019) state that "Translation as an activity, a phenomenon, a concept is of course as old as mankind, and has been and will continue to be part of human life regardless of the existence or not of a scholarly field "(P.1) Translators change the given linguistic system (in the source language) into one that they can somewhat customize to their preferences (in the target language) during the translation process(Popovi'c, 2019). Translation is the process of encoding the meaning and form of the source language into the target language using the source language's decoded meaning and form. We are in a situation where we have to translate or die. With the growth of globalization, the need for translation has increased. To make the literature produced in one language readable for people other than that particular language translation is a must.

The discipline of translation studies is relatively new (Munday, 2010). While the practice of translating has a long history, the formal academic study of translation only gained prominence in the second half of the 20th century (Munday, 2001). Before the 1960s, translation was often treated as a language learning activity rather than a distinct field of study. It was frequently used in the grammar-translation method of language instruction, where students translated disconnected sentences to show their understanding of grammatical rules. Translation studies emerged as a separate discipline through the influence of many key developments.

Translation studies has increasingly drawn on concepts and methodologies from wide range of disciplines, including linguistics, cultural studies, philosophy, sociology and history(Munday,2010). Contemporary translation studies is characterized by a movement from prescriptive approaches to descriptive ones, emphasizing on analyzing what translation actually looks like in practice. There is now more emphasis on understanding the translator's role, decision-making processes and sociocultural context(Nzimande,2023)

Translation has been used to transfer written or spoken source language texts to equivalent written or spoken target language texts. According to Ordudari (2007, P.1) the purpose of translation is to reproduce various kinds of texts in another language and thus making them available to wider readers.' Translation is

the process of rendering the meaning of the source language in the target language. With growing trend and demand of globalization translation is broadening its scope and area. Literary translation is a intricate process of regenerating the given text in a unique from that involves the examination of layers of meaning and rewriting them in the target language (Adhikari, 2019)."Translation of the literary text is very challenging since literary texts are loaded with emotions and feelings of the author. These texts contain ideas that are related to the culture of the source language and as a translator one has to give the same sense to the text. Translation is done with many languages and in Nepal the translation is supposed to begin in the early 1970s nearly four decades after the first appearance of modern writing in Nepali (Adhikari, 2017).

The most challenging aspect of translation is to translate the culture specific terms and the greater the differences between the languages, the more difficult it become to translate and the more cultural overlap between them the less the translation problems occur (Daghoughi & Hashemian 2016) .The interlingual translation is bound to reflect the translator's own creative interpretation of the SL (Bassnett 2005, p 86).

Translation is not an easy task, it needs meditation, skill, and knowledge of the language if it is not done with full care many issues can be generated. Since a translation technique is used to convey the meaning of text fragments, a translation method is used in relation to the entire text. The methods are considered justified, unjustified, or incorrect in terms of their intended purposes since they can be validated in a specific setting (Molina, L. and Albir, H. A. 2002).

According to Popovic (2019) the following issues can be noticed with the translated version of the text in English which he named as negative shift:

- (1) mistranslation of information;
- (2) 'subinterpretation' of the original text;
- (3) superficial interpretation of connections between intentional correlatives.

(as cited in Bassnett 2005 P. 119)

I think these issues remain in translation because of the cultural gap between the language and the lack of competence on the part of translator while attempting to translate. Translators need to understand the culture, words, and many other areas of both languages. In this regard we can say a good translator must be a good bilingual who has knowledge of both knowledge and culture. For Neupane (2020) to be a good translator bicultural understanding is required on the part of the translator. Neupane (2020) define culture as, 'Culture refers to customs, arts, social institutions, rituals and rites of a particular group of people.' The literary texts always contain several cultural terms in them and the translator struggles most to find the parallel terms in the target language so that the meaning and the impact that the source language text has created upon the audience can be maintained in the target language.

Similarly, the translation of the proverb is the other challenging issues for the translators. Neupane (2021) defines proverbs as brief, witty, idiomatic, popular and pithy expressions, based on accumulated folk experiences and there is not any ultimate method and/or model of translation. Regarding difficulty in translating the proverbs Neupane (2021) further mentions 'Since proverbs are epigrammatic in the cultural history and so figurative quality of all of the proverbs cannot be translated by using a single strategy.' The figurative language of the proverbs and illocutionary function and perlocutionary function that it serves make it more difficult to translate. Translation is a very meticulous task according to Belloc (as cited in Bassnette, 2005) mentions general rules for translation of the text. Translator should consider the work as an integral unit. The other rule that is put forward is regarding the translation of idioms. The idiom need to be translated by idiom we can't translate idiom by word to word translation. Similarly, the translation should truly understand the intention of the source language text writer and this helps in getting more equivalent translation. Similarly, translator should be careful about the words or structure that may appear in both the languages. Most important of all is translator should not ornament. The translator should not use his intention and feelings with the text and exaggerate the ideas that are present in one language to other.

In this research I have attempted to find out the various strategies that the translators have adopted in the process of translating an essay written in Nepali by Laxmi Prasad Devkota translated into English by Govind Raj Bhattatrai. Through a sample text I wanted to explore the techniques that the translator has followed which in long run be useful for the translators who to adopt in the translation process.

I have realized that the translation is difficult task as expressed by Rabassa, (2005). I attempted to translate one of the text as an assignment during M.Phil program and realized the difficulty in the process for that reason to explore what strategies the translators use during the process of translation. Though it sound simple to look at but as we delve into the literature we realize the real difficulty that we encounter during this process. So, through this attempt I wanted to find out the strategies that the translators actually adopted in this process. This study will be useful for the green translators who attempt to translate the literary text to English. The findings will be helpful for finding out the challenges that the translator face and the attempt that they make in the process of translation.

Methods and strategies adopted to translate the text

Every translator has their own methods of translating the texts from source language to the target language. According to Newmark (as cited in Orudari 2007) the strategies that a translator adopts is word for word translation. When two languages have equivalent word in both languages this strategy is applied. Students pause when facing difficulties in understanding English text, were striving to accommodate the equivalent terms in the foreign language, and were struggling with their spelling when translating (Swar & Mohsen, 2023).

- 1. Word-for word translation
- 2. Literal Translation
- 3. Faithful translation
- 4. Semantic translation
- 5. Adaption
- 6. Free translation
- 7. Idiomatic Translation
- 8. Communicative Translation

The translator employs a range of strategies to render the source text into the target language effectively. One such strategy is translation by a more general term, wherein the translator selects a word or phrase that closely aligns with the meaning of the source language (SL) text, though it may lack exact equivalence. Additionally, the translator may opt to replace the SL terms with more neutral or less expressive words, particularly in instances where cultural or contextual differences make direct translation challenging. Another commonly employed strategy involves the use of loanwords from the SL, often accompanied by brief

explanations to clarify their meaning in the target language (TL). Furthermore, when certain ideas or expressions are deemed untranslatable due to linguistic or cultural disparities, the translator may resort to paraphrasing, reformulating the content to convey the intended meaning while maintaining coherence in the TL text. These strategies collectively highlight the translator's adaptive approach to addressing the complexities of cross-linguistic and cross-cultural translation.

If the terms are impossible to find in the target language and cannot explain some time the translator avoid it but the care must be taken to render the meaning and the sense must be preserved. And translators sometimes have to add the ideas associated with the text for making the sense clear to the readers in the TL.

Methodology

This study was conducted with a purpose to find out the strategies that the translator adopts during the translation of the text from Nepali into English. The corpus of this article was *ke nepal saano cha?* written by Laxmi Prasad Devkota and its translated version 'Is Nepal Small' by Prof. Dr. Govind Raj Bhattarai. I have followed qualitative Research approach under which I have adopted corpus based research design. I have compared the texts manually to find the equivalence and properties of translation associated with them. I have used the transliteration for mentioning the terms in source language.

I followed corpus-based research design which uses secondary sources of data that include original and translated versions of the selected essays. I collected the words that are used in the source language and their translated versions in the target language texts. I used random sampling procedure to select the words. Overall impression was also considered while selecting between the terms for analysis. The comparison was then done to derive the finding by using qualitative approach to analyze and interpret the data in order to reach the conclusion. This paper is targeted to the descriptive study on the basis of comparison of two versions i.e. original version of *Ke Nepal Sano Cha* in Nepali and translated version Is Nepal Small? in English.

Source materials

The study has used the Nepali version and the English version of the texts assigned. The original text written by Laxmi Prasad Devkota which is taken from Laxmi Nibandh Sangraha entitled 'Ke Nepal Sano Chha?' This is a powerful and patriotic essay that challenges the perception of Nepal as a small and insignificant country. Devkota is a celebrated figure in Nepali literature, uses this essay to highlight the unique qualities and strengths of Nepal, despite its geographical size. The text is the explanation of the patriotic feeling of the author towards his motherland. The author uses hyperbole and exaggeration to describe his feeling towards the nation. The use of metaphors is one of the key characteristics of the source text. The choice of words spellbound the readers as they read. The text contains typical Nepali words as well which needs some explanation even for the readers from the same language creates a different feeling towards the readers in the source text.

This essay has been translated by Prof. Dr. Govind Raj Bhattarai, a prominent literary figure in translation and widely regarded as a pioneer of translation in Nepal. The translator has sought to capture the essence of the original text, evoking emotions and sentiments akin to those intended by the source language author. However, an exact translation is inherently challenging, as language is deeply intertwined with culture, and cultural nuances are among the most difficult elements to convey. Due to linguistic disparities in vocabulary, grammar, and the emotional resonance of the text, achieving a perfect translation is unattainable. In such instances, the translator has prioritized conveying the meaning and essence of the original text rather than adhering to a literal, wordfor-word translation. In this study I have studied various strategies that the translator has adopted while translating the essay Ke Nepal Sano chha?. I am using the framework that Orudari has identified regarding the translation and figuring out some additional strategies that the translator has adopted. I am particularly looking into how the gap those two languages have due to its culture and what strategies the translator has used to bridge this gap in terms of translation by more general terms, neutral terms, and loan words. What is the situation of the onomatopoeic words, how are pronominal forms translated and the strategies like omission and insertion used in the translation process.

Findings and Discussion

'Ke Nepal Sano Chha?' is the essay written by great poet Laxmi Prasad Devkota. He is considered as the greatest poet for his contribution in the field of literature in Nepal. His literary works are overloaded with love, emotions and patriotic feelings (Adhikari, 2020). This essay is an example of his masterpiece. The author has included exaggeration and hyperbole to prove his rhetorical question. The use of language used to praise the nation is the most challenging aspect of translation. Similarly, the skill that the author contains to use the words to mention in detail about the ideas he wants to prove creates problems for anyone who would like to translate his texts.

The translator, Pro. Dr. Govind Raj Bhattarai, has done justice to the text in the process of translation to bring it in the final shape. We know translation of the text from one language to the other is a great challenge as it contains cultural specific terms, gaps in terms of ideas, and the variation in concepts. But the author has done full justice while translating the text. The author used word for word translation technique in most of the cases however it's not always possible to follow only that strategy so there are many other strategies' that seems to be used to reduce the gap between the languages and convey the meaning in the target language maintaining the same sense. The author has tried his best to create the same emotion for the readers in English language that the original author was able to create upon the first language users. The following sections explain the strategies the translator has used in translation.

Translation by a more general term

One of the greatest challenges for the translator is to find the exact word with the same feeling in the target language. For Newmark (2003) literal translation becomes increasingly difficult and finding is difficult. If that gap is found the translator compensates for that gap by replacing the term with a more general term. The interpreter has utilized general terms because of the absence of explicit ones to replace the SL expressions. The models in table 1 demonstrate that SL expressions are subordinates to the TL superordinate, which have been utilized to supplant SL subordinates.

For example, *khadilo* in SL refers to very compact things when they are kept in some vessels. This typical term cannot be translated that way in the TL so the

translator has used the term *Solid* for bridging the gap. Likewise, the word *bishwaprem* which can be translated as world love but is translated as *philanthropy*.

Table 1Use of More General Terms during Translation

Source Language terms	Target Language terms
Mohani	charm
Awahawaa	characteristics
Pakahndipan	hierocracy
Grishma garam	cool spring
Nileko	swallowed
Chasmaa	spectacles
Ekanase	monotonous
Nitya	close
<u>g</u> hotlirahekaa	meditating

Table 1 presents the occurrences of the words in the target language where the exact translation is not possible. The translator has replaced the words with more general term while representing in the target language.

Translation by neutral terms/less expressive terms

The translator has used less expressive terms to convey the propositional meaning of source language into target language. This resulted because of the gap between the languages and may cause the variation in the meaning conveyed by the text. For example, the word *chandijibre* is translated as *sliver lips*, to convey the meaning in the TL texts.

 Table 2

 Translation by Neutral terms/less Expressive Terms

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
Chandijibhraa	silver lips
Magaj	mind
EkohorogaaDhaa	monotonous
barsanChha	descends
Dagurdaichan	flowing
grishma garam	cool spring
bokre niyama	shallow laws
Jaatii (ethnic)	people
Niilekaa(mugged)	swallowed
Lawaj(tone)	language

Table 2 presents that the terms like *magaj*, *jatti* from the source text is translated in the Target language by representing with the neutral or less expressive terms into *mind*, *people* as the exact word is not possible to find in the target language.

Translation by loan terms (plus explanation)

This strategy is adopted by the translator when there are terms that do not have any equivalent terms in the target language. This is mostly done with the proper nouns and words associated with a particular culture. The following table shows the list of the words that are borrowed in the target language. These words are not translatable in the target language. So, the translator has kept the words same by transliteration and the word is explained in the footnotes.

Table 3

Translation by Loan Terms (plus explanation)

Target Language Terms
rani banaima
Saarangi
Baimatraa
amarballari
sabitri
Kantipuri
Gauri Shankar
Banakali
Thakurbaba

Table 3 shows the words translator has borrowed from the source language as he translated the words that are not found in the target language. The words are kept same in the target language but the author has supported with the explanation for better understanding the meaning and the concept of the text.

Translation by loan terms (without explanation)

The translator has kept many of the words as they are in the translated text, which I find a great challenge for the readers in the target language. Many of these words are translatable in English but the translator has kept them as it is. For example, the word *pipal* is not translated as the name of the tree and the word contains some religious aspect for the readers in Source Language but the translated version missed that emotional feeling. Similarly, the term *Shirbindu*is

kept as it is and there is no explanation for the word. These words can be challenging for the readers to comprehend the aesthetic quality associated with them. The following table shows such words:

 Table 4

 Translation by Loan Terms (without explanation)

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
Pipal	peepul
Angrezibaz	Angrezibaz
Shirabindu	shirbindu
Bindu	bindu
Omkar	Omkara
Kalidas	Kalidasha
Shankuntala	shakuntala
Gandharbha	gandarbha
bagmati	Bagmati

Table 4 presents the other strategy that the translator used for rendering the meaning of the source language terms in the target language. The author has kept the words same in the target language as it was in the source language. Most of the nouns fall in this category where these words are kept as the same in the target language. I feel this is most problematic for the readers to comprehend the meaning in the target language.

Translation of onomatopoeic words:

According to Chiarantano (2006)," Onomatopoeic words mimic the sound they represent and the sound of the word imitates the object makes." The source language contains numerous onomatopoeic words in source language texts. In fact, after reading these two versions of the texts I realized that source language texts are rich in using onomatopoeic words. The words that are used in the source language texts are *jhilimili*, *kringmiring*, *jhalkaajhalki*, *farfaraaii*, *jharjhar*, *sarsar*, *jhilikkajhilikka*. The author used these words in SL for showing emphasis in particular action or feeling. Many of these words are missed out in the translated version of the texts. However, for some words the author has attempted to translate the sense in the target language as the word *jhalkaajhalki* is translated

as *glimpses* in the TL and others are not translated. Likewise, the word *jharjhar* in SL text as *mountain springs* in TL text.

Table 5 *Translation of Onomatopoeic Words*

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
jhilimili	
kringmiring,	
jhalkaajhalki	Glimpses
farfaraaii	
jharjhar	mountain springs
sarsar,	
jhilikkajhilikka	

Table 5 presents the list of the onomatopoeic words that are found in the source language text. Onomatopoeic words are most difficult to translate as they are language specific. So most of the onomatopoeic words are not translated and they are missed in the target language. However, the author has translated some onomatopoeic words as *jharjhar* as *mountain springs*, *jhalkaajhalki* as *glimpses*. This gap ruins the real flavor of the source language in the translated text in the target language.

Translation of the same word idea in different way

One of the major characteristics of the translated text I found is translation of the same ideas in different way as the sentences *yaha ke chaina*? is found translated as *what is not available here*? in one occurrence and *what is not found here*? in the target language text. Similarly, words *ascharya* and *chamatkar* are translated as *wonders* in TL text. Likewise, the words *mutu* and *hridaya* in SL text are translated as *heart* in TL text. Similarly, the word in SL text *hernu*, *herdaichhan* is translated as *treat* in the same sentence. To render the meaning in the target language needs and for creating the good impact upon the readers the translator may have adopted this strategy. It also reduces the monotony created by the same word in the process of reading. Nepali language having very rich vocabulary ma create some differences among the readers.

Table 6Translation of the Same Word Idea in Different Way

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
Yaha ke chaina	what is not available here
Yaha ke chaina	what is not found here
ascharya	wonders
chamatkar	wonders
mutu	heart
hridaya	heart
hernu	treat
herdaichhan	treat

Table 6 presents the occurrences that the author in the translated followed to keep the meaning. The same words or sentences are translated in different part of the text differently as *yaha ke chaina* in the source language is once translated as *what is not available here* and *what is not found here*. The translator has adopted this strategy to convey the message and the keeping the source language sense in the target language. This also reveals that source language contains many words for the same sense as *hridiya* and *mutu* which have one equivalent as *heart* in the target language.

Translation of pronominal words

Another area of translation in which the translator faces is the translation of the pronouns. While going through these texts I found a couple of interesting facts related to the translation of the pronouns used by the translator. The pronoun *uslaai* used in SL which is neutral in meaning is translated as *he* in the TL which gives the glimpse of gender biasness. Similarly, the noun *Nepal* is replaced by the pronoun *she*. Along with that the translated version is found used with the pronoun insertion as *I* and *one* to fill the gap between the SL and TL. In the third line of the text pronouns *ma* and *maile* in SL texts are translated as *I* in the TL text. This is done to render the meaning of the text as well as to fill the gap between the two languages

Table 7

Translation of Pronominal Words

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
uslaai	he
Nepal	she
та	I
maile	I

Table 7 presents the pronominal words that are translated in English in the translated version. ma, maile are both translated as I in the target language and Nepal is treated as female and translated as she.

Sense translation

In many cases the gap between the first and second language is bridged by translating the sense rather than the word for word. In this translation I noticed several occurrences of sense translation. For example, *amupam* which is unique in its meaning in SL is translated as *matchless* in TL. Likewise, the term *ekohoro gaaDha* is found translated as *monotonous dark* in TL text. Likewise, the term *gamBhirgodhuli* is translated as *grave dark* in the TL text. Similarly, the phrase *aankhaachimliraheko* is translated as *blind* in the TL.

Table 8Sense Translation

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
атират	matchless
ekohoro gaaDha	monotonous dark
gamBhirgodhuli	grave dark
aankhaachimliraheko	blind

Table 8 presents with the words that are translated in the target language by understanding the meaning i.e. based on the sense. There may not be the equivalent word in the target language. In this situation the author tried to bridge the gap by translating the text based on the meaning that it conveys as *anupam* into *matchless* and *aankhaachimliraheko* as *blind*.

Omission or deletion

This strategy is used by the translators when the ideas or words cannot be translatable into the TL texts or the sense remains the same. The particular idea is not presented in the target language.

Table 9Omission

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
maidanidesh	plain
taatoraatogulabi	red rosy
nabin nabin	new
kataakataa	unknown

Table 9 presents the situation in which the author has deleted or omitted during the process of translation. In the translated version the translator has used *plain* in TL for *maidanidesh* in SL. The word *desh* is not translated as country in the process. Likewise, the phrase *taatoraatogulabi* is translated as *red rosy* in TL and during the process the equivalent word *taato* is not translated as *hot* in the TL text. One of the characteristics of the SL is the same word is used twice to emphasize like *nabinnabin*, *rang rang*, *kataakataa*, *haaiihaaii* and while translating these words the translator has either omitted the whole word or translated only into a single utterance as the words *nabin nabin* is translated as *new*, *kataakataa* as *unknown* in the TL.

Insertion

When the words or the ideas in the target language are found even if the source language texts misses them it is termed as insertion. This strategy is used to compensate the meaning in the target language text and make the reading more adaptable. The other quality of the translation observed in the text is adding the words or phrases in the translated texts that don't have equivalent word in the source language texts. The intensifiers and adverbs like *too*, *now*, *merely*, *entire*, and *rightbelow* are found being used in the translated version of the essay. Similarly, the term *feel* is inserted in the TL text where it doesn't have any word that means *mahasusgarnu* in SL. The word *size* is inserted in the TL text which has equivalent meaning as *aakaar* in SL but the translator has inserted to give the meaning how big the country is.

Table 10
Insertion

Source Language Terms	Target Language Terms
	too
	now
	merely
	entire

The table no. 10 presents the occurrences of the words that are found in the target language text even if these terms are missing in the source language text. Mostly the intensifiers and modifiers are found being inserted by the translator as too, merely, etc.

The translators used many strategies to bridge the gap for rendering the meaning of the source language text into the target language text in the process of the translation. It was impossible to fathom all the depth of the techniques that the translators adopt during this process through this small scale research. This study was based upon one short essay. Further researches are needed to explore the specific strategies that the translators use to translate by choosing the words that falls on the particular class. Similarly, the research is needed to be done in the texts that are written and translated in other languages rather than only Nepali and English.

Conclusions

Translation is an intricate and demanding process that involves far more than a mere exchange of words between languages. It requires the translator to bridge cultural, emotional, and contextual gaps while maintaining the original text's integrity Translation of a text is a rigorous activity one needs sound knowledge of both the languages in this process. There are several challenges that the translator faces in this process. As explored in this article, translation strategies such as using general terms, neutral words, and loan terms help navigate linguistic challenges, but they often result in compromises to the exact meaning or emotional resonance. The translation of literary works, especially, demands skill, cultural insight, and creative problem-solving, as demonstrated in the translation of "Ke Nepal Sano Chha?" by Laxmi Prasad Devkota. The various strategies used by the translator, such as omission, insertion, and sense translation, highlight the complexities involved in preserving the essence of the source text. These challenges arise from the cultural gap and synonymous terms of the languages.

The translator has used word for word translation in the majority of cases and because of which the emotions that the source text has created upon the SL readers are tough to generate from the TL text. Many other strategies like cultural substitution, borrowing the SL terms, omission are used by the translator during this process. I found that the translator faced challenges that usually any translator faces during the translation process.

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