

Translation of Spanish Classics of Spanish Golden Age period to Hindi in last 20 years: An Overview

La traducción de los clásicos del Siglo de Oro al hindi en los últimos 20 años: un panorama

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Abstract. This paper focuses on the issue of translations in recent years from Spanish to Hindi, which is spoken in large part of India and also in countries where there is a majority of Indians. Indian readers have known the works of the Spanish Golden Age for a long time since one of the greatest Spanish work, *Don Quixote*, was translated into Hindi and also into other Indian languages from the second half of the eighteenth century. This work attempts to present the reception of translations from the Spanish Golden Age into Hindi and also analyzes the boom in popularity of translations of Spanish masterpieces of this era. This article has also analyzed the different problems of translation when working with texts from the same period.

Keywords. Miguel de Cervantes; *Don Quixote*; Golden Age Spanish literature; Hindi Translations; Problems in the translation; Reception; India.

Resumen. Este trabajo analiza el tema de las traducciones en los últimos veinte años desde el español al hindi, que se habla en la mayor parte de la India y también en los países donde hay una mayoría de indios. Los lectores indios conocen las obras del Siglo del Oro español desde hace mucho tiempo ya que una de las mayores obras españolas, *Don Quijote*, fue traducida al hindi y también a otras lenguas

indias a partir de la segunda mitad del siglo XVIII. Este trabajo intenta presentar la recepción de las traducciones del Siglo del Oro español al hindi y también analiza el auge de las traducciones de obras maestras españolas aúriseculares. En este artículo también se plantean los distintos problemas de la traducción cuando se trabaja con los textos de la misma época.

Palabras clave. Miguel de Cervantes; *Don Quijote de la Mancha*; Siglo del Oro; traducción; hindi; problemas de traducción; recepción, India.

People from Indian subcontinent have always appreciated the literature and many classics from different corners and different eras have been translated into various Indian languages. As the actual form of Hindi is comparative new member in the family of Modern Indian Languages, but the language has existed from the seventh or eighth century of the CE. Even before the independence, the vernacular language was having two forms, Hindi and Urdu and apart from being one of the national languages, it is widely spoken and understood by billions of the people worldwide. The same is the case with other languages also. Many modern Indian languages are being used in different parts of the world. Tamil, Punjabi, Kannada, Bengali, Telegu, Malayalam are not only restricted to the geographical boundaries of India. Many of these languages are one of the national languages of one country or another.

Similarly, Spain and Spanish literature needs no introduction for Indian readers and intellectuals. Even people with average studies have knowledge of major authors in Spanish language like Miguel de Cervantes, Pablo Neruda, Lorca, Gabriel Garcia Marquez, José Marti apart from other important socio-political figures and cultural elements from Hispanic World.

In the last 20 years, there has been an exponential growth in the translation of Spanish literature in Indian languages. As I am Hindi native speaker, so, it has been pleasure to see and read the translations of *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, *El alcalde de Zalamea*, *El médico de su honra*, in Hindi, apart from some of the translations which I have done also with the help and support from GRISO, Universidad de Navarra, and Ministerio de Educación y Cultura, Gobierno de España, like *Lazarillo de Tormes*, *Novelas ejemplares*, *Diario de a bordo* of Christopher Columbus, *Los tres maridos burlados* of Tirso de Molina among others. Apart from translations from Spanish to Hindi, several translations have been carried out in several other Indian languages, like Malayalam, Tamil, Oriya and Bengali. Indian readers have shown so much keen interests to know the Hispanic authors that some of the Hispanic authors have also been translated from English to other vernacular languages, as is the case of some Modern Indian languages, Tamil and Malayalam.

As I have earlier informed, my mother tongue is Hindi and thus this article centres itself to the translation of various Spanish classics of Golden Age, I would like to add that the role of Professor Vibha Maurya is unparalleled, when it comes to the diffusion of Spanish language and culture in India. On the one hand, she has taught meticulously various classical texts of *Siglo del Oro* to the students of various universities.

Apart from Dr. Vibha Maurya, Ms. Aruna Sharma is one among other important translators of Spanish Golden Age. The author has himself translated several texts from Spanish Golden Age from Spanish to Hindi. Apart from these translations, Prof Aparajit Chattopadhyay has also done translations in Hindi of Lope de Vega and Calderón de la Barca.

As I have mentioned earlier Both, Indian intellectuals and common readers are well versed with the Spanish literature and Golden Age Spanish literature through translations. One of the most famous books from Golden Age Spanish literature, which does not need any introduction and has been among the most translated books is *Don Quijote de la Mancha*. Needless to mention that the classic has arrived to Indian subcontinent through its English translations as the *Don Quixote*, the translated book was among one of the most popular books in the contemporary British times. Here, at this moment, I would to quote Dr. Preeti Pant, one among several Spanish Golden Age scholars in India. In her doctoral thesis, *La recepción del Quijote a través de las traducciones a las lenguas indias*, she comments:

La primera traducción en lengua inglesa apareció antes de la publicación de la segunda parte del *Quijote* por Cervantes en 1615. *The History of the Valerous and Wittie Knight Errant, Don Quixote of the Mancha* por Thomas Shelton publicada en Londres, 1612. El nombre del protagonista principal se escribió con la misma letra que en español entonces, 'Quixote', pero se pronunció de manera inglesa. En la época de Cervantes el *Quijote* se pronunciaba como 'Qui-xo-te'. En Inglaterra se domesticó el nombre del hidalgo manchego y llegó a ser anglicanizado como 'Qui-xote'¹.

Thus, the majority of the critics opine that Spanish literature has been introduced in Indian subcontinent through the English translations of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* of 1700 possibly, however these translations of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* lacked the irony, parody and linguistic wealth of the book. However, these translations were immensely popular among the British household. It was the moment, when the translations of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* along with some other Spanish books arrived in Indian subcontinent. Once again, I am quoting Pant:

En este ambiente de la recepción de un *Quijote* bastante inadecuado y mal interpretado, ya que toda traducción es una interpretación, parece que cargado con la recepción subjetiva de los británicos el *Quijote* llegara a la India. Es importante recalcar que este *Quijote* era bastante anglicanizado ya que carecía de diacronía cultural ya en Inglaterra. También, es importante reiterar que la novela inglesa que se estaba haciendo cada vez más fenomenal estaba bajo bastante influencia de un pensamiento positivista, puritano y anti tradicional².

Without getting diverted, just I would like to add that Sir William Jones, one of the important Indophile of the eighteenth century, had started the documentation of the presence of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* in India as the book was one among

1. Pant, 2018, p. 111.

2. Pant, 2018, p. 113.

some minor novels of Cervantes in the shipment of the first English novels which arrived from Europe to India³. It was the moment, since then Indian mind has started enjoying and appreciating the Spanish art and intellect⁴, but, here at this point, we should also keep in mind that none of these translations have been done from original Source Language and none of the early translations are complete, rather they are abridged versions of the book and certain specific episodes have been translated quite often.

As Dr. Pant has opined in her thesis that one of the main reasons for the multiple translations of *DQ* in several Indian languages is that the authors accept that it is one of the most important books of world literature and thus its translation is a necessity but not a single translator has said that after reading the book, he felt the need to translate the book⁵. Moreover, there are translators and several people from Indian academic world, who have felt the need of the translations of Spanish classics in Hindi as in academic discussions, the academia has reiterated that they do their best for the translation of Spanish Classics into Hindi. At this moment, no one can negate the historical role of GRISO and the personal interest of Prof. Ignacio Arellano, in making possible the translation of some of the greatest classics from Spanish Golden Age into Hindi, as in the attached bibliography anyone can see their unparalleled support for providing translations in Hindi.

It is important to note that the time, when *DQ* arrived in the India, Translation Theory has not become an academic subject. Prof. Menakshi Mukherjee, in her article writes:

I recall that the adapter Nanigopal Chakrabarty [...] freely imposed references that his local readers would be familiar with. [...] a valiant hero should have a heroine like Ayesha or Tiltotama (names of characters in Bankimchandra Chattopadhyay's popular novel *Durgeshnandini*, 1866. In those far away days Translation theory has not yet become an academic subject – and no one talked about 'domestication' or 'defamiliarization' as strategies of Translation, but this was definitely a case of 'domestication'. Another example of 'domestication' is offered by the title of 1931 version in Bengali: *Don Kusti*⁶.

Historically, we have a tradition to retell the stories and these retold versions follow the same tradition in which original texts are being modified to suit local taste. *Ramayan* is one of the major examples, in which the story is being retold in different Indian languages. Thus, abridged versions of *Don Quijote* indicate the popularity in common people. It is a process, which indicates that Spanish Golden Age literature is not new for Indian readers but yes, a major achievement has come in the last 20 years, in which we can proudly say that now the texts are being translated directly from Spanish to Hindi and or in other languages and these translations are much loyal to the original texts.

3. Pant, 2018, p. 114.

4. For a detailed list of early translations of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* in India, see Ganguly, 2006, p. 59.

5. See Pant, 2018, p. 234

6. Mukherjee, 2006, p. 21.

Before coming to the definition of the translation, it should be reiterated that Translation is considered as a cross cultural communication, where the contents of one language is carried into another language by creating in this new language an information and communication equivalent to original text. Literary translation is a process in which the work for a time being, is without language, it lives in the mind and in the heart of the translator, and then it appears in the new language, with a new form. Thus, we cannot ignore the creative aspect of the translation. Miguel de Cervantes, in *Quijote* (II, 62), gives his opinion through the dialogue:

— Osaré yo jurar —dijo don Quijote— que no es vuesa merced conocido en el mundo, enemigo siempre de premiar los floridos ingenios ni los loables trabajos. [...] Pero con todo esto, me parece que el traducir de una lengua en otra, como no sea de las reinas de las lenguas, griega y latina, es como quien mira los tapices flamencos por el revés, que aunque se ven las figuras, son llenas de hilos que las oscurecen y no se ven con la lisura y tez de haz, y el traducir de lenguas fáciles ni arguye ingenio ni elocución, como no le arguye el que traslada ni el que copia un papel de otro papel. Y no por esto quiero inferir que no sea loable este ejercicio este ejercicio del traducir, porque en otras cosas peores se podría ocupar el hombre y que menos provecho le trujesen⁷.

Coming back to the contemporary times, several Indian hispanists, Prof. Sunigdha Dey, Prof. Vibha Maurya, Prof. S. P. Ganguly, were the first who have started to find cultural connections between Indian and Spanish cultural words. In modern times, particularly in post Indian independence period Prof. Meenakshi Sundriyal was the first Indian scholar, who completed her doctoral research on Spanish Golden Age, and after that there were a large number of research scholars, who had shown interest in the various aspects of Spanish Golden Age. Translation is one among many cultural elements and as the author knows only Hindi among various Indian vernacular languages, so the article will try to overview Spanish Golden Age translations in Hindi only to reiterate that there are many translations of *Don Quijote de la Mancha* in many Indian languages and they have been received well. As the article deals with the translations in Hindi language only, it should be noted that Prof. Vibha Maurya, professor of Golden Age Spanish literature has translated *Don Quijote de la Mancha* in Hindi language completely and the book has been received very well by the critics in India, however she accepts the importance of the translation work done by Mr. Chhavinath Pandey, who had translated all the chapters of first part of the same book. Dr. Maurya opines that translating *Don Quijote* in Hindi was a challenge as «The protagonist was not only sensitive to his own image in printed pages but was also concerned with skills of translations, so that it should be difficult to make out 'which is the translation and which the original'»⁸. In fact, the academic research area of Hispanic Studies in India is not very old as we all acknowledge here, but yes, surely there are many attempts to translate the book in many Indian languages.

7. Cervantes, *Don Quijote de la Mancha*, p. 1032.

8. Maurya, 2006, p. 70.

Apart from Dr. Maurya's translation of *DQ*, as an important work, several other translations in Hindi of other Golden Age Spanish authors appeared as Prof. Maurya translated and published the first part in 2006 and later in 2015, she published the complete translated work in Hindi.

Ms. Aruna Sharma, another important translator of Spanish Golden Age literature to Hindi has translated *El alcalde de Zalamea, El príncipe constante* apart from translations of *posguerra* period of Spanish literature, the works of Federico García Lorca like *Yerma, La zapatera prodigiosa, La casa de Bernarda Alba y Las bodas de Sangre*. The article is limited to the translations of the Golden Age period only in the previous twenty years, but it would have been injustice to her when we don't include the translation of other important Spanish authors into classical form of Hindi.

To give an idea of Hindi, for the unknown world, the linguists have classified the variations of Hindi into three major categories as the language has itself many variations. The first and foremost is the language, where the morpheme and lexical formations are taken from Sanskrit and quite often it is very difficult to understand, even for native speakers, as the structure follows Sanskrit. We can classify this variation of Hindi as *sanskritised Hindi*. The second variation is the *Hindustani*, which is not *sanskritised* form of Hindi, but it accepts regional, local, Urdu and other words of foreign origin. This form of the language is more popular with the common mass, and as it has a simple lexicon, so it is easy to understand. This form of Hindi also has its rich literature and cultural history. The third form of Hindi is *Hinglish*, which is half Hindi and half English, however it is not being accepted as a standard form for literary and other cultural texts.

Now, without deviating from the main topic, I would like to add that almost all the translations from Spanish to Hindi has been done in the popular form of Hindi, the *Hindustani* form, as it has more appeal to common people, for whom the translations are being done. This also gives rise to a common question, which is related to multilingualism and if the multilingualism promotes the translation or not? In vast countries like India, language(s) also functions within space. Due to lack of the definitions related with multilingualism, the phenomenon is understood as the ability to communicate and understand more than two languages, with a high level of proficiency. In Indian context, it is very difficult to comment as the country is full of paradoxes. On one hand it promotes quality translations as a large majority of target audience knows the source text, and on the other it discourages the normal, superficial quality works. More research is to be done in case of India, as such a vast country has twenty official languages and vernacular languages are very rich. A large part of the research has been done in the western world, catering to the western needs, but still some research needs to be completed in the case of Indian sub-continent⁹. Of course, the Indian government is always promoting the translations for the development of regional languages as the regional governmental body, the state is based on the languages, which may or may not have the appeal outside the native state, as such there is regional diaspora also outside the native state. In

9. For more details on the subject, see Israel, 2021.

the same article, the author has also opined that in Indian scenario, the multilingualism and translation has been complementary to promote the national unity and to overcome the divisive effects of multiple languages.

The cultures come closer through the translation process, and nevertheless it promotes the translation process to a large extent. We can also say that the translation is a tool for cultural enrichment, but as Spanish and Hindi belong to two different cultural worlds, so the biggest challenge for a translator is to deal with creativity in the translated texts, maintaining it, within the parameters of translation. As a translator of several texts from Spanish Golden Age period to Hindi, like any other translator, we all accept that translating between languages deals with problems associated with cultures. So, it is not easy to understand the same meaning and present it to readers in another language(s), as the same word may have the different meaning in another language.

We all know that Indian society is completely different in comparison to that of Spanish society and thus there are words and history associated with the same. The Spanish Golden Age fought for the Christian values, which were universal in nature, but to present the same in Hindi is a big task, as the society in itself is a Hindu majority. For this society, to present the concept of jokes related with Reforms, Counter reforms, themes associated with honour, picaresque and byzantine genres is a difficult work. As *DQ* is a major representation of all the genres and the translators have faced the same problems, so it was not a simple task for them to put all this with cultural equivalence for Indian readers. Here, at this moment, I quote Dr. Pant, who in her doctoral thesis aptly said:

Muchos tropos cómicos del *Quijote* vienen de alusiones a la contrarreforma y la práctica de la religión católica en el tiempo cervantino. Todos estos momentos de humor también están perdidos ya que el contexto indio carece de la historicidad del catolicismo español. Alusiones a santos, nombres de santos, las cruzadas, la inquisición, los conversos, los peregrinos, los monjes y la Biblia en sí están sin referencia en el contexto indio tanto del siglo XIX como ahora¹⁰.

All this requires annotations from the part of the translators, but this should not be exhaustive as it pauses the continuation from the side of an interested reader. Similar things can be said equally on the translation of *abuelo (a)*, *tío (a)* as in Hindi there are separate words for the maternal and paternal relatives. I would also like to point out that in the translation of many works from the Golden Age period, there are like, *mozo (a)*, *sobrino (a)*, which in Indian context, have completely different meaning. The translator has to go for a deep reading of the text, to clarify whether these words are being used to clarify the family members or just a simple worker of the house. The translators in India face problems to clarify the meaning of *caballero* and *hidalgo* as in Hindi, the lexical is same for both the words. A lot of similar things can also be said on insult words, which varies from culture to culture. The universal concepts are the same, but it is impossible for the translator to give the true translation, which the satiric burlesque poetry of Baroque is in process.

10. Pant, 2018, p. 234.

For the readers, who are well versed with the problems in cultural elements, when for example Lazarillo in his autobiography says, «*Pues sepa Vuestra merced, ante todas cosas que a mí llaman Lazarillo de Tormes*» and thus he continues with his introduction; the readers understand aptly what is not being said and the Spanish concepts related with honour, and pride as these contexts are historical in nature. It is noteworthy to see how being deprived of his honour, he is using a language, which is making us believe that he has inherited *good fortune* and *virtues* from the society, and the translator has to use a language which should be same powerful to show the counter arguments of the society. Needless to mention, that the translation of *Lazarillo de Tormes*, was not a simple task, as during the translation, I had to understand his hunger and honour, apart from his other psychological needs. It was a constant question to understand whether he was suffering from hunger constantly or he became hungry after watching the food.

One of the major tasks of the translator of Golden Age Spanish works is to present the translation in its totality. A large number of protagonists present humour and honour, and thus it is very difficult for the translator to present the same as written in the original texts. The translator has to take help of lingual register of the specific zone, as Prof. Maurya writes in her article: «I have achieved this to a large extent by making use of narrative tones of the narrator in the source text as also by looking for certain equivalents (way of addressing, substitute for titles, roles and functions of the characters) in our own ancient texts like *Chandrakanta Santati* or the epics»¹¹.

There are instances that, sometimes, the translated text is not as popular as the original work. It may happen due to cultural differences and lack of knowledge towards the source language. Fortunately, with the Spanish language, this case has not appeared, Spanish language is so rich and variety of texts are so enormous that we are able to go for popular literary texts. Golden Age Spanish literature is so vast, varied and extensive that apart from some translations of Cervantes not much has been translated and as a translator, we have a huge and enormous work.

Here, the contemporary Spanish society which was premodern in nature. The society was agrarian on one hand and the immigration to cities have started. The several issues of individuals with society also started, and the themes which Lazarillo or Berganza from *El coloquio de los perros* are urbane in nature. The authors have avoided to discuss on these themes and the role of the translators emerge as how to present in the translation, what is not being written, but are being mentioned. Lazarillo talks about the relation of Escudero with other women, Berganza shows the society to the readers in the true form. Without deviating from the central topic of translation, representation of these themes, in another language is not a simple task.

Continuing the theme of subjectivity in the literary works, especially in the translations of the classics from the Spanish Golden Age. It is the subjectivity, the element by which, the translator shows his/her capability, while doing the translation of the texts and it includes the certain elements, for example cultural conscious-

11. Maurya, 2006, p. 78.

ness of the translator, the experience of the translator as a reader, linguistic competence, aesthetic tendency, creativity and all of these manifests in the translation. It is a mere mechanical activity, where equivalence source and target languages are being viewed. Continuing the discussion of the translations done in Hindi, I firmly believe that all the translators have paid attention to poly-system theory and norms approach in which historical, cultural, socio- political factors were taken into consideration. Almost all the translators in the introduction of the translation explain all these elements for the readers of the translation. All these are being done to achieve literary communication with the readers of the translated text so that the textual interpretation can be done adequately and appreciate the aesthetic value of the texts in both the languages.

To conclude, we can say that the translation process of classics of the Golden Age Spanish literature from Spanish to Hindi, which started under the guidance of Vibha Maurya, from the early modern period to late Baroque period is being carried out smoothly, as translations are coming out periodically and it is appreciated by the readers also. As mentioned earlier, GRISO-Grupo de Investigación Siglo de Oro of the University of Navarre, is also supporting whole heartedly the translation and propagation of the Spanish classics from the Golden Age. Here, to conclude, I think that a brief bibliography of the translations from Spanish to Hindi published in the last twenty years from the Spanish Golden Age to be presented for the work done in the last twenty years.

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