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The Influence of an English Mediating Translation in Translating Figures of Speech into French from the Malayalam novel, *Chemmeen*

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Abstract

This study intends to investigate whether the translation of figures of speech in an indirect translation could be influenced by the techniques adopted by the translator of the translation that serves as the mediating text (MT). The English translation of metaphors, idioms, and colloquial expressions from the Malayalam novel *Chemmeen* and its subsequent French translation comprise the data of this study. The objectives of this study are: (i) to identify the translation techniques that have effectively conveyed the figurative meanings to the foreign reader in the indirect translation, and (ii) to investigate to what extent the English translation which serves as the mediating translation (MT) has influenced the French indirect translation (ITr) in representing the meanings embodied in the Malayalam metaphors, idioms, and colloquial expressions. Principles of translation postulated by Baker (2011) and Newmark's (1988) typology of translation techniques guide the data analysis and discussions in this study.
Keywords: Figures of speech; translation techniques; indirect translation; mediating text; *Chemmeen*.

Introduction

Figures of speech, which are also referred to as rhetorical devices or literary devices, are creative and expressive techniques employed in language to go beyond the literal meaning of words. They enrich communication with depth, vividness, and emphasis, making it more engaging and impactful. Every language has a prized collection of these that is unique to the culture of a language. While figures of speech add a vibrant richness of cultural nuances, they often pose challenges to a translator as the idioms and metaphors in one culture may not have equivalent ones in another language or even if they do exist in a similar form, they could mean something altogether different in a target language. If the languages involved belong to distinctly different language families, then the chances of finding equivalents for figures of speech become remote. The translator, therefore, would have to adopt different techniques such as providing a literal translation of a metaphor, a cultural equivalent of an idiom, or paraphrasing a colloquial expression, etc. In the case of an indirect translation i.e., a translation of a translation or multiple translations, the elucidation of figures of speech would largely depend on the mediating text that acts as the source text for the indirect translation. If the target translator has very little or no understanding

of the culture and language of the original author, one could safely assume that s/he would rely heavily on the mediating text and tend to mirror the translation techniques employed within it. However, this assumption needs to be confirmed by a contrastive analysis between the mediating text and the indirect translation which is one of the aims of this study with particular attention paid to the translation of figures of speech.

This study focuses on *Chemmeen* (1956), an award-winning Malayalam novel by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai (popularly known as Thakazhi), its first English translation by Menon (1962) and the French translation by Balbir (1965) which was based on Menon's English rendition. Balbir (1965) had these words printed on the title page of the translated version, *Chemmeen, un amour indien, roman traduit de l'anglais par Nicole Balbir* (*Chemmeen, an Indian love, novel translated from English by Nicole Balbir*). *Chemmeen* gained a truly worldwide presence by being translated into Russian, Spanish, Arabic, Japanese, Vietnamese, Sinhala, and Chinese. Based on the researcher's library search, the French translation is the only version that was not translated directly from Malayalam. The French translation, *Un amour indien* (1965), therefore, was fully reliant on the English translation as it was the only source text available for the translator. No records of Balbir having had access to the original Malayalam novel have been found. Thus, in this study, Menon's English translation is the mediating translation for Balbir's indirect translation into French.

To date, the studies on Chemmeen as a novel are very few and far between (Togariya 2020; Malik 2015; Pillai1988; Rao 1985; Thundy 1984) and mostly focus on its central themes which include fisherfolk beliefs and myths, tragedy of love owing to social norms, chastity, etc. No studies have been carried out to investigate how Menon's English translation of the novel has been instrumental in the translation of *Chemmeen* into either Indian or foreign languages. There have certainly not been any academic studies carried out on the French novel, *Un amour indien* (1965) that was translated indirectly through Menon's English version. While Thomas's (2005) and Mukherjee's (1981) studies in *Sahapedia* (Chandran 2016) point out that Menon's translation was not a totally faithful representation of the original text as it was produced in the post-colonial era and was specifically catered for a western audience, their writings do not touch on the mediating role that Menon's English version has played for an indirect translation. With regard to translation techniques used by Menon in his English version, Ilavarasan and Saravanan (2018) state that Menon' techniques of including footnotes for certain terms is particularly worth mentioning. They point out that words that are distinct on a fishing coast such as *Chakara* and *uppa* are explained via footnotes by Menon. Menon is also commended for using the simple, easy to understand words such as 'oarsman' to describe a character's initial job, 'dried fish' to indicate a different process of preserving fish. Menon's use of other translation techniques such as transliteration is also highlighted in this study. They point out that terms such as *Kochumuthalali* that means 'junior trader' and *Vallia marakathy* to refer to a 'fisherwoman' and *anna* that is 1/16 of a rupee and many more have been transliterated in Menon's target text. This study, however, does not discuss the translation of figures of speech. As such the present study aims to fill the two main gaps in the study of *Chemmeen* which can be seen in the two objectives below:

(i) To identify the translation techniques that have effectively conveyed the figurative meanings to the foreign reader in the indirect French translation, and

(ii) To investigate to what extent Menon's English translation which serves as the MT has influenced the French translation in representing the meanings embodied in the Malayalam metaphors, idioms, and colloquial expressions.

All of these have left gaps in the study of the translation of this novel *Chemmeen,* through the English MT.

The language used in the text is Malayalam, but Thakazhi renders the conversations using the dialect of the fisher folk which makes the novel extremely authentic to a Malayalam reader such as the researcher. The conversations and narrations open the door to the reader of everyday life and struggles and beliefs of a fisherman, portraying their culture. The author uses relatively simple language with a handful of figurative and colloquial expressions which makes the reading engaging and refreshing. The English translation of metaphors, idioms, and colloquial expressions from the Malayalam novel *Chemmeen* and its subsequent French translation comprise the data of this study.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Figurative Language

Words in general possess a primary sense, that is what they mean when the words are taken in isolation, and a secondary sense when they are studied in the concerned context. Besides primary and secondary senses, words have a figurative sense too. Larson (1984) states: "Figurative senses are based on associative relations with the primary sense" (111).

Roberts and Kreuz (1994) aptly state that figurative language could be difficult to interpret unless the context of the utterance is clear. They refer to a metaphoric statement such as "My aunt is an elephant", as an example, which could relate to the person in terms of girth, length of nose or fondness for peanuts. They add that research has, time and again, proved that it is not difficult to interpret figurative language so long as the context is made clear to the reader (159). In a well-constructed literary text, translators would more often than not have sufficient context in the unfolding narrative to enable them to break down the figures of speech which are unfamiliar or novel. A suitable strategy can then be identified to recreate the figurative meaning in the target language.

Figurative language can be categorized in different ways. Roberts and Kreuz (1994) have identified eight distinct types of figures of speech (based on psychological literature) that have been generally accepted and studied by scholars. The eight major types of nonliteral language are hyperbole (exaggeration), idiom (a meaning different from its literal interpretation), indirect request (a command phrased as a comment), irony (statement that is opposite to the actual meaning), understatement (expressing something as less important than it is), metaphor (rendering an implicit comparison), rhetorical question (a question to which an answer is not expected) and simile (making an explicit comparison). In *Chemmeen*, the novel under study, the figures of speech markedly employed by the

author are metaphors, idioms, and colloquial expressions and these comprise the data discussed in this paper.

2.2 Domestication and Foreignization

"Translation is the forcible replacement of the linguistic and cultural difference of the foreign text with a text that will be intelligible to the target language reader" Venuti (1995, 18). Venuti presents two strategies, i.e., domestication and foreignization, to address cultural factors in translation. Foreignization is the type of translation that aims to preserve the foreignness of the original and gives the reader the impression that they are reading something alien, thereby increasing their awareness of cultural differences. Domestication is the translation strategy that uses a transparent, fluid style to minimize the strangeness of the foreign text for readers of the target language (Zhuo 2022).

Venuti (1995) agrees that while in the process of translation, the linguistic and cultural differences are replaced in the target text, there may be a gain or a loss in some cases, but to be able to present to the target reader a cultural other that is familiar and recognizable, he says that a certain domestication of the foreign text would be needed. Hence the question arises on how and what to translate to which Venuti answers by quoting Schleiermacher who argued that "…there are only two. Either the translator leaves the author in peace, as much as possible, and moves the reader towards him; or he leaves the reader in peace, as much as possible, and moves the author towards him" (Lefevere 1977, 74, cited in Venuti 1995, 19-20).

Schleiermacher calls the domesticating method as "an ethnocentric reduction of foreign text to target-text cultural values" resulting in bringing the author home, to the reader. He terms the foreignizing technique as "ethnodeviant pressure on those values" to present the linguistic and cultural differences to the reader thereby sending him abroad (Venuti 1995, 20).

2.3 Translation of idioms

Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines idiom as "an expression in the usage of a language that is peculiar to itself either in having a meaning that cannot be derived from the conjoined meanings of its elements (such as *up in the air* for "undecided") or in its grammatically atypical use of words (such as *give way*).

According to The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language (Crystal 1994), idioms exhibit two distinct characteristics that are in fact helpful to identify an idiom. The first one is that it is not possible to comprehend the meaning of the idiomatic expression going by its constituent lexemes. The second feature is that the expression is both grammatically and lexically fixed. For instance, the expression "Put a sock in it" to mean "stop talking" cannot be interpreted the same way if one changed it to "put a stocking in it" or "put a sock on it" as "it is not possible to replace any of the lexemes and retain the idiomatic meanings" (163).

Moon (1998) subsumes idioms under the broad category of fixed expressions which include frozen collocations, grammatically ill-formed collocations, proverbs, routine formulae, sayings, and similes.

Baker (2011) defines idioms and fixed expressions as "frozen patterns of language which allow little or no variation in form and in the case of idioms, often carry meanings which cannot be deduced from their individual components" (67).

To interpret an idiom, one needs to first recognize the idiomatic expression concerned. The next step would be to figure out how to translate it into the target language, which in fact is more difficult than recognizing it. Baker (2011, 71-75) lists three main difficulties that are encountered while translating idioms. They are:

1. There may not be an equivalent for the idiom or the fixed expression in the target language. The culture-specific idioms are more difficult to translate.

2. An equivalent may be available in the target language for an idiom in the source language but the connotations of the two may be different.

3. An idiom may be used in the source text both in its literal sense and figurative sense

Translation of idioms and fixed expressions into a target language is bound by many factors beyond the primary concern of whether a similar idiom exists in the target language or not. These include the significance of the lexical units that constitute the idiom, their appropriateness in a given register and more importantly the context of their usage. Baker (2011, 75-86) suggests some possible techniques for translating idioms:

1. This works on the principle of replacing the source language idiom by an idiom in the target language. This is not a common strategy used as such counter idioms are rare.

2. This involves replacing the idiom or fixed expression with another idiom of similar meaning but of a different form.

3. Just as loan words are borrowed from the source language especially in the case of culture-specific words, idioms too can be borrowed from the source language to be used in the target text.

4. One of the most common techniques is paraphrasing as this method is adopted when an equivalent in the target language cannot be found.

5. This method deals with avoiding the play on idioms by expressing the literal meaning of the expression in a certain context that would allow its concrete meaning to be interpreted.

6. An omission of an entire idiom is done in instances where no equivalent could be found in the target language or where paraphrasing is difficult or due to stylistic reasons.

There are numerous studies carried out on the techniques used to translate idioms in novels from non-Western languages into English or vice-versa. Shokooh and Khatib 2012; Wang and Wang 2013; Lafta 2015; Rizwan 2018; Abdelaal and Alazzawie 2019; Medagama 2021; Shahrahil et al 2022 are some of them. It is not unexpected that there is ongoing interest in researching how idioms can be expressed in foreign languages; the deeply culture-bound nature of idioms reveals much to be known about a people's worldviews and value systems and how they are managed in translation is always worth unravelling. Two of the past studies are reviewed here.

A study by Min (2008) examines the translation of Chinese idioms in the light of their cultural contexts based on the novel *Honglou Meng* (1999) and its two English translations. Min (2008) believes

that Chinese idioms are like mirrors that can most effectively portray the unique aspects of Chinese culture. As such, for the translation to be successful, the translator is required to take into consideration factors such as culture, ideology, background, and audience. Min's study revealed that besides semantic translation and communicative translation (as proposed by Newmark 1988), annotation is another strategy that was adopted to convey the Chinese idioms that are laden with cultural elements. Annotation serves as a compensatory strategy which provides the reader with knowledge of the source language in its 'true colours'. In other words, it opens the world of alien culture to the target audience and helps to minimize cultural loss.

In another study by Khrais (2016) who comments on the Arabic translation of Jumpha Lahiri's English novel, *The Namesake* (2003), various areas of challenge in literary translation are discussed. She particularly highlights 4 specific challenges, that is, the translation of abbreviations, phonetically significant words, specialized vocabulary, idioms, as well as play on words, and colours. Literary texts are distinctively different owing to embedded nuances, ambiguities, ironical or paradoxical statements etc., and this makes translating them far from being a straightforward task in comparison to translating technical and scientific texts. Translating literary works does not just involve the task of transferring the semantic content but also the responsibility of recreating them as works of art to reflect the stylistic novelty of the original author. A literary translator would therefore have to consider linguistic elements, and cultural perspectives alongside multiple levels of meaning produced by allusions, idiomatic expressions, and other figures of speech.

2.4 Translation of metaphors

Metaphors (and similes) are figures of speech used for comparison. Larson (1984, 246) defines them as "[g]rammatical forms which represent two propositions in the semantic structure". The translator, in his efforts to translate them, recognizes the semantic structures involved in the propositions, analyses them and in relating the two propositions he finds the relationship. While both similes and metaphors involve comparisons, metaphors are different from similes in terms of form or structure.

For instance, '*That child is a greedy little pig'* uses the metaphor of pig to personify the child as a pig whereas '*That child is like a greedy pig'* employs a simile to compare the child to a pig (Larson 1984, 246).

Knowles and Moon (2006, 3) state that "when we talk about metaphor, we mean the use of language to refer to something other than what it was originally applied to, or what it 'literally' means, in order to suggest some resemblance or make a connection between the two things."

Metaphors are ubiquitous when it comes to any language. They are used in relation to individual words as well as in discourse. With reference to their relation in individual words, it can be said that words and meanings are born through metaphors, and in fact, concepts and meanings are also given form with the aid of metaphors. This can be seen for example, in the meanings of the words *field*, *hurt* and *dark* in the following sentences. Concrete, or tangible elements like a field, an injury or wound and darkness/absence of light take on a metaphorical status in the contexts below:

She has published extensively in the **field** of psychology

The failure has **hurt** him deeply

. . . the end of a long tale, full of **dark** hints and unspeakable innuendos

Metaphors are almost indispensable in discourse because of their extensive functions. Their functions range from explaining, clarifying, describing, expressing, evaluating, and entertaining. "We choose metaphors in order to communicate what we think or how we feel about something; to explain what a particular thing is like; to convey a meaning in a more interesting or creative way; or to do all of these." (Knowles and Moon 2006, 4)

Metaphorical models and analogies make lives simpler as they help to understand complex processes. For example, to understand the human body's mechanism of fighting infection, a metaphor of war is used to convey how the white blood cells fight the invading microorganisms to preserve the host (Knowles and Moon 2006).

Metaphors could be differentiated as 'dead' metaphors and 'live' metaphors. Larson (1984) refers to 'dead' metaphors as those that are used as an idiom, and those that are commonly used where one does not stop to think of the comparison. 'Live' metaphors, on the other hand, are those that are more original in the sense that the author creates them for the purpose of teaching or illustrating. Knowles and Moon (2006) term 'dead' metaphors as conventional and 'live' metaphors as creative metaphors. Metaphors are sometimes hard to understand and if interpreted literally, they may lead to ambiguous meaning or no meaning even. In attempting to translate a metaphor, a translator needs to identify if the metaphor in question is a 'dead' metaphor or a 'live' one. If it happens to be a 'dead' metaphor, its meaning could be expressed non-figuratively as the 'image' does not need to be retained. In the instance of a 'live' metaphor, however, the translator is required to analyse the metaphor in terms of the propositions involved and the point of similarity. Once the interpretation is done satisfactorily, the next step would be to translate the metaphor into the target language. Larson (1984, 254) lists five ways of translating metaphors.

1. The metaphor could be used in the target language if it sounds natural and understood by the readers.

2. In some cases, the metaphor may be needed to be treated as a simile with the addition of the words such as "like" or "as".

3. The metaphor could be substituted in the target language if it conveys the meaning.

4. An explanation of the meaning of the metaphor may be given with the metaphor being retained.

5. The metaphorical imagery could be discarded in some cases, the meaning of the metaphor translated instead.

Chita and Stavrou (2020) who believe that translation of metaphor is a cultural notion, identify and highlight the ways metaphors in the text of Oscar Wilde's *The Picture of Dorian Gray*, an English fictional book, are translated into Greek and German based on Newmark's (1982) translation theory. Greek and German translations of the book were chosen in order to see whether the metaphors are rendered differently in the two languages, which are related to distinct branches of the Indo-European language family.

The metaphors found in the source text were primarily translated using metaphors from the target language. In other words, both the Greek and the German translators frequently employed metaphorical language as a strategy, whereas literal translation was uncommon in the translated versions. It seemed that the German and English metaphorical expressions may be more comparable than the English and Greek ones. Due to their shared linguistic family, it is reasonable to assume that they "share" a culture. Nevertheless "metaphors cannot be always transferred intact from a source language to a target language" (Chita and Stavrou 2020, 128).

Chita and Stavrou (2020) further elaborate that those metaphors are also cognitive tools for creating and expressing real-world conceptualizations. As such, source language, target language, culture, and style should all be emphasized in translation efforts. Lakoff and Johnson (1980) who advocate the cognitive approach, believe that metaphors are essential tools for mental processes in human culture, not merely ornamental components of rhetoric. On the challenges of translating metaphors, Chita and Stavrou (2020) quote Dagut (1976, 28) who states that "what determines the translatability of a SL metaphor is not its 'boldness' or 'originality', but rather the extent to which the cultural experience and semantic associations on which it draws are shared by speakers of the particular TL" (118).

Khairuddin (2015) studies the translation of metaphors from the English novel, *Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets* (2000) into Indonesian, that focuses on the appropriateness of the techniques employed. The results showed that specific translation techniques, such as adoption or reproduction, adaptation or replacement with Indonesian metaphors, conversion to simile, adoption plus sense, conversion to sense, and deletion, were relevant and determinative of the appropriateness of the English metaphor translation to Indonesian. When a metaphor translation possesses both referential and contextual accuracy, it is said to be acceptable. Referential correctness reflects the degree of the translation's fidelity to the original text, whereas contextual accuracy reflects the translation's smoothness, naturalness, and acceptability in the target language. If the metaphor translation meets the requirements for referential and contextual accuracy, it is considered appropriate. If one or both of the accuracy types are absent, the metaphor translation may be less accurate or inappropriate.

Examples of the analysis and evaluation of appropriate and less appropriate metaphor translation as presented by Khairuddin (2015, 204-205) are given below.

Analysis and evaluation of an appropriate metaphor translation

He promised Harry, he would flay him within an inch of his life when the Masons had left.

La mengancam akan menghajar Harry sampai nyawanya tinggal seujung rambut. (Indonesian)

"Flay him within an inch of his life" is a metaphor, and the interpretive meaning of the phrase is 'to flay exceedingly brutally'. The metaphor is translated as "menghajarnya sampai nyawanya tinggal seujung rambut" in Indonesian. The translator's strategy is to substitute the English metaphorical image with the Indonesian image which has similar interpretive meaning. By this, the translation can remain faithful to its original form while still being acceptable in the target language. On the other hand, choosing a direct translation would render the phrase "menghajarnya sampai setiap inci hidupnya". That would not sound smooth and natural and is therefore unacceptable.

Analysis and evaluation of a less appropriate metaphor translation

Harry! What d'yeh think yer doin down there? Harry's heart leapt.

Harry! sedang apa kau disini? Jantung Harry melompat. (Indonesian)

'Extremely shocked' is the interpretive meaning of the metaphorical phrase "Harry's heart jumped" in the original text. It is given as "Jantung Harry Melompat" which is literally 'heart Harry jump' in Indonesian. The metaphor has been translated word-for-word into Indonesian by the translator. While the translation is referentially accurate, it does not sound natural in Indonesian. An Indonesian metaphor such as *jantung Harry mau copot* would be considered a more appropriate translation in the TL context.

2.5 Translation of Colloquial Expressions

Merriam-Webster online dictionary defines "colloquial" as something "used in or characteristic of familiar and informal conversations". Colloquialism is an informal expression that is used more often in relaxed conversation rather than in formal speech or writing. These develop in languages through years of casual communication between familiar speakers. Examples are expressions such as "Kick the bucket" (to die) and "Stir up a hornet's nest" (to provoke a strong negative reaction). Colloquial expressions are not regarded as 'substandard' but they are informal speech patterns, conversational phrases that are frequently unique to a particular region or nationality. Hasanah (2020, 29) quotes Epoge (2012), who says that "colloquial speech refers to the total set of utterances in a familiar, informal context such as at home, at a place of relaxation or at the workplace".

Qin (2023) conducted a case study on the strategies employed in the translation of colloquial expressions in *Three-body problem* (2014), a Chinese science fiction text. She opines those meanings of culture specific words should be conveyed to a foreign audience and thus, a translator's choice of strategies is of much importance. Qin (2023) observes that due to the differences that exist in the Chinese and western cultures, there may be specific Chinese cultural concepts that do not originate from common life experiences. The western reader may not know much about those culture-specific issues and it may affect their reading pleasure. In such instances, in order to avoid potential cultural conflicts, a translator may resort to domestication strategy and free translation method.

Qin (2023) adds that in some cases, colloquial expressions are representative of common life experiences of people or they are from accepted objective laws. These colloquial expressions may be familiar to everyone as they may reflect common points of human culture. In such cases, the translators may adopt domestication, foreignization strategies or both combined depending on the nature of the colloquial expression in question. Adopting these measures is a means to reflect the characteristics of the source language as well as providing readers with a distinctive reading experience based on cultural diversity.

Shadrah (2010) analyses colloquial expressions in a children's storybook, *The Secret life of Ms Wiz* (2004) by Terence Blacker translated into the Indonesian version, *Kehidupan Rahasia* (2004). Her objective is to study the techniques used and their effectiveness on the quality of the translation in terms of accuracy and acceptability. While accuracy is focused on getting the message correctly and precisely across from the ST to the TL by closely understanding the ST author's intent, acceptability in translation

is equally concerned about conveying meaning alongside complying with TL linguistic rules and language styles/norms acceptable to the target audience (McDonald 2020). On the whole, accuracy aims for semantic equivalence, while acceptability aims to achieve dynamic equivalence. The study records that the colloquial expressions in the children's book comprises four forms such as single words, clipped words, contractions, and verb-adverb combinations. A total of 11 techniques such as adaptation, amplification, borrowing, calque, generalization, literal translation, modulation, reduction, deletion, transposition and synonym were found to have been employed in the translation of colloquial terms in the novel.

Two examples with the colloquial expressions in bold have been drawn from the study.

Example 1:

SL: You go back to your land of utter amazing whatever and you tell it straight to your Dad no way is old **Muggins** here going to be queen.

TL: Anda kembali saja ke negeri kekal apa itu dan Anda bilang terus terang pada ayah Anda, tak mungkinlah **si bodoh** ini bakal jadi ratu.

 (Shadrah 2010, 49)

The technique of adaptation has been used in this case as the translator replaces the colloquial term *Muggins* in the ST that is used to refer to someone who is made to look stupid with the equivalent TL term *si bodoh* which means 'the stupid one'.

Example 2:

SL: No **drama**

TL: Tak perlu **ribut-ribut**

 (Shadrah 2010, 50)

The term *drama* in this context does not refer to a play in a theatre but means something done exaggeratedly. In this situation, the translator adopts the technique of amplification to make explicit the implicit meaning of *drama* by using the term *ribut-ribut* that means 'chaos or much noise/fuss'in the TL.

Shadrah (2010) concludes that the statistical analysis shows that the most accurate technique employed is reduction and the least is deletion. In terms of acceptability, the most acceptable one was also the technique of reduction while the least acceptable was the technique of borrowing.

2.6 Indirect translation (ITr) and mediating translation (MT)

Indirect translation (ITr) that is a translation of translation is known to humanity since time immemorial. The translation of the Bible attests this fact. For the Bible to be translated into modern languages, the mediating text from Hebrew, Aramaic and other translations have been the Greek Septuagint version and St. Jerome's Latin Vulgate. Toury (2012, 82) says that ITr is about "translating from languages other than the ultimate SLs". Pym (2011, 80) stresses that an "ITr amounts to the historical process of translation from an intermediary version" (Rosa et al 2017, 119).

Rosa et al 2017, state that, according to Kittel and Frank's (1991) and Pym's (2011) definitions, ITr essentially entails a) one source text (ST), one source language (SL), and one source culture b) a first

translated text into a second language that serves as a mediating text (MT) and a mediating language within a second national culture; and c) a second translated text into a third language that serves as the ultimate target text (TT) and the ultimate target language within a third national culture.

Haroon (2022, 167), quoting Ringmar (2007), states "[i]ndirect translation has made it possible for readers to gain access to works which otherwise would not have been able to reach because of linguistic limitations". Readers in Spain, for instance, were introduced to Chinese literature in the 20th and 21st century through the translation of Chinese works into Spanish via English and French. In China, the use of English as the mediating language made it possible for the drama of Henrik Ibsen to be translated into Chinese (He 2001, cited in Haroon 2022, 167-168). Haroon (2022, 168) cites Leppänen (2013) who notes that from the 15 translations from Japanese into Finnish in the 1960s, not a single translation was carried out directly from the original Japanese.

Pieta (2019) writes that indirect translation (ITr), though it claims a long-standing history, has studies that explore its use in present day and prospects of future benefits only recently being carried out. One of the popular reasons for ITr is the lack of competent translators who can translate directly. Other reasons include lack of the authentic source text, cost effectiveness, time efficiency and censorial issues.

Zielinska-Elliott (2018) writes of the 'Murakami phenomenon'. The Japanese works of Murakami Haruki have seen translations in at least 50 languages today of which English language was the first to begin with. In fact, for a long time, it was the English translation of Murakami literature which the others (except for Russian and French) based their translation on. This method happened to pose problems for translators of other languages as the editors expected them to follow the English version closely. Another challenge they faced was that the English versions were edited or even abridged versions that were not welcomed by the other language translators as they had to deal with the lost sections of the text. Alfred Birnbaum, an American translator who grew up in Japan was the first to translate Murakami Haruki's works into English; he had a free hand at abridging or even restructuring the text as requested by the editors. Murakami says that he is "very thankful for the translators who translate my novels," (Zielinska-Elliott 2018). His rationale is that "If a translation can be read smoothly and effortlessly, and thus enjoyably, then it does its job as a translation perfectly well─that is my basic stance as the original author" (103).

Indirect translation has been in practice in the Indian context for a long time, the translation of the epics –the Ramayana and the Mahabharata being the classic examples. These works have seen a lot of translations and retranslations from other languages. English used to be the mediating language for translations from foreign languages whereas it is both English and Hindi that help to translate Indian works from one target language to another.

Based on the study of Swedish translations done during the period from year 2000 to 2015, Allwood (2021) stated that 70 of the 5,259 translated novels during this period were ITrs. 48 of the 70 cases of ITr (68.5%) that were identified in Allwood's study employ English as the mediating language (ML). The remaining 22 novels were translated through other mediating languages like French, German, Russian, Spanish, Dutch, and Turkish. Although French, German and Russian were the most prevalent MLs after

English, other more peripheral languages also serve as the ML. The notion of using an author's own translation, or self-translation, as the mediating text also occurs in the Swedish context, and it occasionally coincides with the use of a (semi)peripheral language as the ML, such as Galician-Spanish-Swedish. Allwood lists six principles that influence the choice of ML and these are

…author–ML proximity, historical–cultural proximity, previous translations, the status of the mediating text, the personal choice of the publisher or translator and the translation in question being the only ML version available. Hopefully these principles could be further developed and, in the future, tested on and compared to the situation regarding ITr in other modern language situations Allwood (2021,72).

Zainol and Haroon (2019) study the issue of fidelity i.e., the extent to which the TT reflects the ST in indirect translations because of the presence of a mediating text (MT). Their objective was to determine if an indirect translation produced a text that deviates from the original text, and if so, to find out if the mediating text is responsible for the deviations caused. Their study was based on the translation of the French ST, *Malaisie* (1930) that was translated into Malay (TT) entitled *Nurani Tanah Melayu* (2015) that used the English version, *The Soul of Malaya* (1931) as the MT.

Based on Kadiu's (2016) study on the translation of an Albanian ST, its French TT and the English MT, four main patterns of relationships are drawn. They are:

1. Deviations from the ST are reflected in the MT and hence in the TT as it follows the MT.

2. The MT does not deviate from the ST but the TT does not follow the MT.

3. The MT is close to the ST but the TT does not follow the MT.

4. The MT deviates from the ST and the TT also deviates but it resembles the ST (Zainol and Haroon 2019).

Zainol and Haroon (2019) study the deviations in the Malay TT based on these four situations. One of the examples where the MT causes the deviation in the TT as it follows the MT as its ST is given below:

ST- Comment n'avais-je pas pensé qu'en effet <u>ce fruit</u> qui contient la science du bien et du mal, c'était la morale ?

MT- How was it I had never realised that <u>the fabled fruit</u> which contained the knowledge of good and evil, was morality?

TT-Mengapakah saya tidak sedar bahawa <u>buah daripada fabel itu</u>, mengandungi pengetahuan tentang baik dan buruk, iaitu akhlak?

(Zainol and Haroon 2019, 112).

Ce fruit that refers to the fruit from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, as stated in the Bible, is translated as "fabled fruit". The English translation conveys the meaning that the fruit referred to is the forbidden fruit from the fable of Adam and Eve but the Malay TT gives a literal translation of a "fabled fruit" (*buah daripada fabel*) making it explicit and thus deviating from the ST for which the MT's presence is the cause.

The Influence of an English Mediating Translation in Translating Figures of Speech
into French from the Malayalam novel, Chemmeen

In this study, the ITr is the French translation of *Chemmeen* which came through Menon's (1962) English MT.

3. Methodology

This study is based on a Malayalam classic written by Thakazhi Sivasankara Pillai in the year 1956. A best seller of its time and recipient of the Sahitya Academy award (1965), this novel was translated into more than 25 different languages, both Indian and European. Malayalam is the language spoken primarily by the people of Kerala in the south-western part of India. The story is set in a fishing village and the author vividly portrays the life of a young Hindu woman, Karuthamma, who is torn between the beliefs and traditions of the fishermen and her love for a young man named Pareekutty who is a Muslim. The taboo of inter caste marriages was overpowering at that period of time, hence Karuthamma could not bring herself to declare her love for the Muslim trader. Instead, she agrees to marry Palani, the man whom her father proposes and begins her life with him. Time went by, but neither the traditions nor the beliefs of the fisher folk could put out the flame of her first love and so she dared to be joined with him, albeit in death, breaking all the man-made barriers of tradition, caste, and religion.

Thakazhi's novel is written in both standard Malayalam as well as colloquial as the story is told about the lives on a fishing coast. Abject poverty, hope of *Chakara* (season of abundance), ambitions to own boat and nets, love blossoming in the young minds, scandals… all of these and more project a cultural dimension of the lives of fishermen on the coast. Colloquial language brings the story alive to the reader, as conversations in fisherman dialect are aplenty. The usage of idioms and fixed expressions including proverbs, use of metaphors convey the emotions and thoughts of the characters vividly and thereby the cultural beliefs and practices of the fisherfolk. The English translator has adopted different techniques in translating the idiomatic expressions (that includes colloquial expressions) and the metaphors in *Chemmeen*.

The idiomatic and colloquial expressions and metaphors in the original Malayalam novel (ST) are identified with the page numbers from the text given in brackets. The literal meaning and figurative meanings within the context are explained. Their English translations (MT) are represented with their page numbers from the text and are studied in terms of their achieved meanings in the light of Baker's (2011) and Newmark's (1988) principles of translation. The translation techniques adopted by the translator to reproduce the idioms, metaphor and colloquial expressions from Malayalam into English are identified. Those that have been successful in conveying the figurative meaning in the target language are identified. How far the nuances have been able to get across to the target audience through the translation is examined. The French translations of the same samples (TT) are presented with their page numbers and their back translations (BTF) into English (which are done by the researcher who teaches French) are provided. They are studied in terms of how well they represent the culture-specific Malayalam expressions and those in fisherman dialect to the French audience through English. A total of 6 idiomatic expressions, 4 metaphors and 7 colloquial expressions drawn from the Malayalam ST are discussed in this paper.

4. Discussion

4.1 Idiomatic Expressions

S.No.	ST (Malayalam)	MT (English)	TT/ ITr (French)	BTF	TECHNIQUES OF TRANSLATION
1	shavathe kuthathe (p.115)	Don't taunt me when I am so miserable (p.78)	Ne m'insulte pas quand je suis si malheureuse (p.86)	Don't insult me when I am so miserable	Paraphrasing
2	pennu perem mureem neranju nikkuva (p.75)	And the girl is hanging about unmarried, in the full bloom of her youth (p.49)	La petite, dans la fleur de sa jeunesse, traine sans être mariée (p.58)	The little one, in the bloom of her youth, goes about unmarried	Omission of idiom
3	ippam nakshathram ennatte (p.74)	Now let them count the stars (p.49)	Pour l'instant, qu'ils en voient trente-six chandelles (p. 58)	For the moment, let them see stars	Literal translation
4	vayattil thee (p. 104)	... were on tenterhooks (p.70)	…étaient sur des charbons ardents (p.79).	to be impatient or anxious	Idiomatic translation
5	…avaru njeliyenda (p.89)	…to show off (p.59)	…faire de l'épate (p.68)	Showing off	Idiomatic translation
6	Urullaykkupperi pole (p.123)	…gave it back to him in the same coin (p.85)	…rendant la monnaie de sa pièce (p.93)	Paying him back	Idiomatic translation

1. The Malayalam expression "shavathe kuthathe" that literally means 'Do not stab a corpse', is used to appeal to someone not to humiliate them when they are at the bottom end. In the translated version, Menon replaces it as "Don't taunt me when I am so miserable" (78), adopting a paraphrasing translation strategy. Paraphrase is described as "an amplification or explanation of the meaning of a segment of the text" (Newmark 1988, 90). This is a case where an idiom in the source language has no equivalent in the target language. Baker (2011) says that languages adopt different methods to express meaning; it could be just a single word in one language but a fixed expression or idiomatic phrase in another. "It is therefore unrealistic to expect to find equivalent idioms and expressions in the target language as a matter of course" (71).

The French translation records it as "Ne m'insulte pas quand je suis si malheureuse", back translated as 'Don't insult me when I am so miserable'. The Malayalam idiom is transferred as a straightforward plea into French too due to its translation from English. There is no room for seeking an equivalent idiom in French as the English MT was a paraphrase of the idiom from the original Malayalam version. While Menon's paraphrased expression certainly fulfills the task of conveying the general intended meaning, the sharp image of intense emotion felt in the insensitivity and disregard for one's pain embodied in the unique Malayalam idiom of 'stabbing a dead corpse' is lost to the French readers. Adding the Malayalam

idiom, to Menon's paraphrase i.e., "Don't taunt me when I am so miserable" + 'for it is akin to stabbing a corpse' would have captured the idiom in the English MT and preserved the original author's penmanship and the cultural image. This would be a couplet according to Newmark where two translation techniques (paraphrase + full borrowing of an idiom) are used to convey something uniquely cultural. While the translation becomes longer, it is a technique that makes possible comprehension and new knowledge of another culture for the target reader.

2. A common but crude expression in Malayalam to refer to girls who remain single past their marriageable age, is "pennu perem mureem neranju nikkuva", that literally means "the girl has grown big enough to fill the room and the entire house even". The coarseness of the expression could be attributed to past traditions that believed girls were to be married off at a very young age and it was considered a "social crime" on the part of their parents if they were not. Thakazhi's usage of this expression is very apt as it could be a household expression heard in the homes of the fishing village that has young girls. Menon who translates the same as "And the girl is hanging about unmarried, in the full bloom of her youth", tends to project an innocuous image of the situation that is far from the original intended meaning. An idiom is omitted in the translation, and with this it fails to raise the intrinsic element of crudity that is common amongst the people in the fishing communities of that era. With respect to omission in translation, Baker (2011) says that "there is inevitably some loss of meaning when words and expressions are omitted in a translation" (43).

Balbir translates the expression as "La petite, dans la fleur de sa jeunesse, traine sans être mariée", back translated as "The little one, in the bloom of her youth, goes about unmarried". The French translation of the idiom presents to the readers a pleasant scenario that is entirely different from what the original author intended to convey. A crude-sounding Malayalam idiom, therefore, is missed by the French readership.

3. When someone is going through dire situations, a crisis, or a desperate state, resigning them to such conditions without helping them is often said as "ippam nakshathram ennatte" literally translated as "let them count stars now". Menon adopts literal translation and seems to have provided an idiom in English with similar meaning and form. It is recorded as "Now let them count the stars" in the MT. The attitude of fishermen who overindulge themselves when they make money but suffer when there is no fishing because they had not saved up for a rainy day, is looked down upon by a character in the novel who chides them when they are going through a crisis. He means that they should suffer as they deserve it and hence says that they count stars. Thakazhi's use of the imagery is appropriate and befitting in the fishing community where looking up and "counting stars" is possibly the only thing left to do when there is no income or food. The readers of the English target language may be able to connect the imagery in the given context. While it is agreed that literal translation has its own constraints as it sometimes leaves the reader with confusing, rigid word-by-word translations, Newmark (1988) advocates literal translation in the instances where the source language and target language meanings tie in better than other techniques would. He stresses: "literal translation above the word level is the only correct procedure if the SL and TL meaning correspond, or correspond

more closely than any alternative; that means that the referent and the pragmatic effect are equivalent" (70).

The French version says "Pour l'instant, qu'ils en voient trente-six chandelles" back translated as "For the moment, let them see stars". When translated word-for-word, the French, is actually, "For the moment, let them see thirty-six candles". "To see stars" is "to see bright flashes in front of your eyes, especially because you hit your head" (Online Cambridge dictionary). Translating the English with a French idiom seems to convey to the French reader, the meaning of being hit with a state of shock and this is, in terms of image, somewhat different from the MT and ST. While the MT and French ITr both express the overall meaning of resigning a person to their suffering because of unwise actions, they differ in the image evoked. While the English MT stays close to Malayalam ST image of 'counting stars', the French ITr creates an image of 'seeing stars' as a result of being hit in the head.

4. The idiomatic phrase "vayattil thee" in Malayalam is what a person feels when s/he goes through an extremely frightening or dreadful situation often anticipating a tragic or a violent aftermath. When the said situation ends without much catastrophe, the relief experienced is indescribable. It is then that the Malayalam speakers would claim that the situation they had undergone was one with "fire in the stomach" (the literal translation of "vayattil thee"). Menon describes such an event as "... were on tenterhooks" in his translation.

Someone who feels tense while awaiting the outcome of a situation is said to be "on tenterhooks" (Dictionary of idioms and their origins 1992). It is a state of suspense and agitation because of uncertainty about a future event. "A tenterhook is literally a sharp hook that fastens cloth to a tenter, a frame on which cloth is stretched, like a tent, for even drying to prevent shrinkage" (Online Merriam-Webster dictionary).

Menon has adopted the technique of supplying another idiom equivalent in a general sense to the Malayalam idiom in the English target language. Baker (2002) refers to this as the technique of "replacing the idiom or fixed expression with another idiom of similar meaning but of a different form".

Balbir replaces the English idiom, "... were on tenterhooks" with a French idiom "…étaient sur des charbons ardents" in her translation. *...Êtaient or Être sur des charbons (ardents)* as per Dictionnaire de français Larousse is *être impatient ou inquiet* that means *to be impatient or anxious*. Replacing the English idiom with a French one does not seem to represent the situation adequately as in the original because the intensity of the sentiment expressed in the ST is far greater than just being tensed or experiencing a feeling of suspense.

5. The expression *Avaru njeliyenda* is recorded when a group of fishermen felt a sense of failure when another set of fishermen from the neighbouring coast had a larger haul than theirs during fishing. The fishermen who belong to the coast are competent men who always win 'a big catch' and hence were dejected and envious of the others. So, they make a statement that literally means "they need not stand with their chest up and head high (that causes body to curve projecting forward)". *Avaru* means *they* and *Njeliyenda* is a common expression whose figurative meaning is to say that one does

not need to show off or act big. Menon has approached it with an idiomatic translation that says "There is no need for them to show off on this seafront" (59). This has been followed in the French text as "Ils n'ont pas besoin de venir faire de l'épate sur ce rivage" (68). *Njeliyenda* is not a polished expression but carries a lot of scorn in it. While "faire de l'épate" does inform the readers the meaning of the fishermen's retort in the context, the crudity and scorn associated with *Njeliyenda* are not felt by the French readers. This is because, "show off" from the MT, is a general statement that does not carry as much scorn and crudity as the Malayalam expression does.

6. The situation is a conversation between the bride's people and the bridegroom's people at a wedding. The bride's mother became unwell at the moment of wedding but the groom's people insist that the bride be sent immediately with the groom to his place as it is customary. The headman of the village makes a remark to the groom's relative that it is not reasonable on their part to ask the daughter to leave when the mother is unwell. To support his statement, he points out an inadequacy on the groom's side that there are no women in their group when the bride is taken with them. To this remark, the groom's relative asks why then he had agreed to give away the girl in marriage to someone who has no women in their circle. This sort of answer to the remark is what *Urullaykkupperi pole* means. *Urulla* refers to a handful of rice that is made into a ball while eating and *upperi* refers to the vegetable side dish.

The expression *Urullaykkupperi pole* literally means that the amount of side dish matches the amount of rice while eating, nothing more and nothing less. Menon translates this expression using idiomatic translation and arrives at "…gave it back to him in the same coin "(85). Collins online dictionary gives the meaning of "paying back in the same coin" as "to reciprocate or behave toward in a like way, esp. inamicably". The French translation that has been based on this goes as "…rendant la monnaie de sa pièce" (93) and it means "beat someone at his game" or "giving someone a taste of their own medicine". In this case, the French reader does get the idea that someone was making a retort when s/he reads "rendant la monnaie de sa pièce", but together with it, a subtle sense of hostility is also conveyed which was not intended by the original author. The original expression *Urullaykkupperi pole* is devoid of hostility, revenge or ill intent. It only showcases the presence of the mind of the speaker who counteracts the argument using logic. This Malayalam expression that means giving the appropriate response at the spur of the moment can be likened to "tit for tat" in English. This subtle nuance is lost to the French readers.

4.2 Metaphors

S.No.	ST(Malayalam)	MT (English)	TT/ITr (French)	BTF	TECHNIQUES OF TRANSLATION
1	Padakkuthira (p.49)	Her (p.29)	La (p.38)	Her	Omission of the metaphor
2	Aa Kaalamaadan (p.62)	That father of yours (p.39)	Ton père (p.48)	Your father	Omission of the metaphor
3	Pishashu (p.66)	That devil (p.42)	Ce démon (p.52)	That demon	Literal
4	Dhoomakethu (p.217)	That awful woman (p.151)	Cette horrible femme (p.155)	That horrible woman	Omission of the metaphor

1. In Malayalam, the metaphor "padakkuthira", (literally meaning "a war horse") is generally intended to refer to a strong-willed person, someone who would not submit to others easily. This metaphor does not evoke a positive image of the person referred to but is certainly disapproving. This could be because women of that era were not allowed to be independent thinkers but were expected to be submissive in general and in particular, to men. While a Malayalam-speaking person can visualize the character in the novel as a "padakkuthira" given the context, to what extent the English TL reader would be able to decipher this metaphor, if translated literally, is questionable. The reason being the metaphor is culture-specific and "war horse" is not used in the English language with the same understanding as in the SL.

It is understandable therefore as to why Menon avoids the idea of using the metaphor "padakkuthira" and resorts to using the pronoun *her* instead. However, much is lost with the absence of the metaphor as the TL reader would not perceive the contempt implied in the usage. The metaphor, "padakkuthira" is a stock metaphor in Malayalam. Newmark (1988) states that a stock metaphor could describe a quality or a person more comprehensively than by using physical language and its added aesthetic purpose would be to appeal to the senses of the reader. He further adds:

> A stock metaphor can only be translated exactly if the image is transferred within a correspondingly acceptable and established collocation…As soon as you produce a new image, however acceptable the TL metaphor, there is a degree of change of meaning and usually of tone (Newmark 1988, 109).

The French translation, in following the English MT does not have an opportunity to introduce a metaphor. A reference to the person has been made using the pronoun *La* (that means *her*) instead. Perhaps, one way to save the loss of this stock metaphor, "padakkuthira" in the English translation is by fully borrowing the metaphor in Malayalam into the TL and adding on to it a descriptive equivalent or paraphrase which would explain the metaphor in plainer words. Larson (1984, 254) lists this as the fourth option in his list of techniques to deal with metaphor translation: "The metaphor may be kept and the meaning explained (that is, the topic and /or point of similarity may be added)". Newmark provides this option for metaphor translation.

2. "Kaalamaadan" is used in Malayalam to personify someone as 'The Devil' or 'The Angel of Death' to be specific. This expression carries extreme hatred and disgust towards the addressee. "Aa

kaalamaadan" in the Malayalam novel, which is, 'That devil', aimed at a child's father by its mother in the story, shows forth her frustration and hatred. Menon's omission of this metaphor in English, and substitution with the phrase, *That father of yours,* betrays perhaps just a mild trace of annoyance but the English rendition far from captures the mother's resentment or acrimony towards her husband. In staying close to the MT, Balbir has presented the phrase as "ton père" in French, back translated word-for-word as "your father" while meaning *That father of yours* as in English. The end result in French thus is as with the English; the depth of the mother's bitterness in the novel as intended by the original author is lost. It is surprising as to why 'That devil' was not translated literally by Menon as it would have been easily understood in English. Larson (1984, 254) states that "[t]he metaphor could be used in the target language if it sounds natural and understood by the readers. Even something close to it like, 'That demon' or 'That monster' would have adequately reproduced the mother's rancour.

3. The people on the coast are eager to do business with the man who has brought in a big catch. But he has a change of attitude now and does not entertain his fellow men. People seem exasperated with him and are afraid to talk to the *Pishashu* that means *the devil*. Menon's technique of literal translation that renders 'the devil' for 'Pishashu' has been followed in the French translation as "Ce démon" that means 'that devil'. "Ce démon "sufficiently explains the frustration and the disappointment of the coastal people when the fisherman does not want to sell his catch to the ordinary folks.

4. A little girl has been upset because her step mother whom she hates has been given shelter by her neighbour even after her father had driven the woman away as she stole some money from him. The girl was hoping that she would be gone as she created a lot of chaos in the home but the *Dhoomakethu*, as the ST author describes her, is living next door. The step mother is described as *Dhoomakethu* because it literally means "comet of destruction". Menon's translation completely omits the metaphor but simply states that she was an "awful woman" (151). This has led the French translator to describe the woman as "Cette horrible femme" (155) that means "that horrible woman". The metaphor *Dhoomakethu* speaks vehemently of the possible degrees of destruction and devastation that it can cause but it is not carried by the translation of "a horrible woman". A horrible woman is a general statement to describe a person that one hates but it does not measure up to the metaphor *Dhoomakethu*. The ST author has chosen the metaphor as he thinks from the perspective of a little girl who may use such terms to describe her feelings of hatred toward someone.

4.3 Colloquial expressions

S.No.	ST (Malayalam)	MT (English)	TT/ITr (French)	BTF	TECHNIQUES OF TRANSLATION
1	Valla pottano podiyaano aareekkum" (p.23	Perhaps some dumb idiot, (p.10)	Peut-etre quelque pauvre idiot", (p.18)	Perhaps some poor idiot	Descriptive equivalent
2	Enna praayachitham venam", (p.37)	Must I do penance for that?", (p.21)	Est-ce que je dois faire pénitence pour cela ?" (p.29)	Do I have to do penance for that?	Literal translation
3	Aa pengochu kadaappuram mudikkanekondu nadaakkumbam…" (p.47)	While that girl is wandering about single on the seafront..." (p.27)	Pendant que cette fille se promène toute seule sur le rivage…" (p.36)	While that girl walks alone on the shore…	Literal translation
4	Pennine kaiyode konduponamennu athra pidivaadhathinum ningallkku mariyaadhayilla	In a way it is not fair that you should lead the girl away by the hand (p.85)	D'une certaine manière, il n'est pas bien que tu emmènes la jeune fille par la main (p. 92)	In a way, it is not right that you take the girl by the hand	Literal translation
5	Vayee mannadikkalle	My child, you must not be the cause of the ruin of the seafront" (p.8)	Mon enfant, tu ne dois pas être une cause de ruine pour le village" (p.16)	My child, you must not be the cause of ruin of the village	Cultural equivalent
6	Kadalu kariyenathu (p.20)	The sea goes dark (p. 7)	La mer devient sombre (p.15)	The sea gets dark	Descriptive equivalent
7	Annaanu aanayolam vaa pollikkaamo? (p.76)	Can a squirrel open his mouth as wide as an elephant? (p.50)	Est-ce qu'un écureuil peut ouvrir une bouche aussi grande que celle d'un éléphant ? (p.59)	Can a squirrel open his mouth as wide as an elephant?	Literal translation

1. An expression prevalent among the Malayalam speakers is "valla pottano podiyaano aareekkum" that is interpreted as 'It may not be a smart one'. The context of this expression in the novel is a situation wherein if one found a bridegroom for their daughter without paying a good dowry, then the groom must be an idiot or a simpleton because a higher dowry is required if the prospective bridegroom is of a good standing. Menon translates the expression giving a descriptive equivalent that goes as "Perhaps some dumb idiot". This describes precisely the meaning of the expression to the target readers. The French translation too, that goes as "Peut-être quelque pauvre idiot", back translated as "Perhaps some poor idiot" conveys the mind of the author to the readers.

2. A fisherman who used to be working for others has risen to the level of owning a boat and new nets. His childhood friend's wife criticizes her husband saying that his friend has prospered while they

have no food for dinner. Besides his wife, the others on the shore too started comparing the two of them. The exasperated fisherman, who is not envious of his friend who prospered, wonders as to why people should take it out on him when his friend has grown rich. The Malayalam expression "enna praayachitham venam", that literally means "what atonement do I need to perform?" is used to ask someone why people are taking it out on him for what someone else has done (either good or bad). It does not suggest atonement or penance of any kind. Menon's literal translation of it that goes as "Must I do penance for that?" may be misunderstood by the reader and it may not be able to describe the person's sadness and frustration as to why it is taken out on him for some other individual's action. This could be because such an expression is seldom used in the English language. In that aspect, the literal approach to this situation has resulted in a loss of meaning.

Balbir's translation goes as "Est-ce que je dois faire pénitence pour cela ?" back translated as "Do I have to do penance for that?". Menon's literal English translation of the metaphor used in Malayalam has been literally translated into French. The word "pénitence" may mislead the French reader as the context does not involve any relevance to penance or atonement of any sort. Besides, the French audience may not be able to interpret the frustration of the fisherman when people around him are taking it out on him when someone else is able to own a boat and new nets. The literal translation of the metaphor has not successfully represented the situation to the French audience.

Newmark prescribes literal translation when the SL and TL meaning match very well such that the "referent and the pragmatic effects are equivalent". He underscores it further saying "that the meaning of the SL unit is not affected by its context in such a way that the meaning of the TL unit does not correspond to it" (Newmark 1988, 70).

3. The expression "aa pengochu kadaappuram mudikkanekondu nadaakkumbam…" that means "while that girl is set to ruin the shore" is based on the belief that if an 'impurity' of character is found in someone, that would spell danger for the entire fishing coast. Marital faithfulness was given utmost importance in the lives of the fishermen and any breach of that would cause ruin for everyone as the sea goddess would be angry and would destroy everything. The fisherman community has a set of vocabulary, slangs, dialect, and expressions that are uniquely different from the larger community of Malayalam language speakers. The expression that warns about the "girl set out to ruin the shore" could be mistakenly read literally as "While that girl is walking about to ruin the shore" because ***nadakkumbam*** means "walking" ("aa pengochu kadaappuram mudikkanekondu **nadaakkumbam**…"). Menon translates the expression into English as "While that girl is wandering about single on the seafront..." which is almost a literal one that could inform the reader that the shore may be ruined because the girl was wandering about single. The addition of "single" could be to imply that there is a social stigma about the girl remaining unmarried.

"Pendant que cette fille se promène toute seule sur le rivage…" back translated as "While that girl walks alone on the shore…" being a translation of the literal translation, does not seem to convey the essence of the traditional belief that the colloquial expression is enveloped in. Newmark (1988) believes that while it is relatively easy to recognise 'cultural words', there are many cultural customs that are

expressed using everyday language "where literal translation would distort the meaning and a translation may include an appropriate descriptive-functional equivalent" (95).

4. A colloquial fashion of saying "something must be done at that present moment and not later" in the Malayalam language is "kaiyode" that literally means 'by the hand'. The novel records a sentence, "Pennine **kaiyode** konduponamennu athra pidivaadhathinum ningallkku mariyaadhayilla" (123) that uses this expression meant to tell people that they are not fair in insisting that the girl must be taken immediately with them. "In a way it is not fair that you should lead the girl away by the hand" is Menon's literal translation of the sentence that may misinform the reader who is unfamiliar about the source culture that the language is a part of. "D'une certaine manière, il n'est pas bien que tu emmènes la jeune fille par la main" back translated as "In a way, it is not right that you take the girl by the hand" is the French version. The literal translation of the expression in the French language may not be able to convey neither the cultural context nor the figurative meaning involved to the French readers.

5. "Vayee mannadikkalle" is a common, household expression in Malayalam, and is also heard on the fishing coasts. It literally means "filling up mouths with mud" but the usage aims at saying 'do not ruin lives'. This expression is used in the sentence, "ende mogalu …thorelollorede <u>vayee mannadikkalle</u>" (8) (literally translated as "My child, you should not be filling up the mouth of our folks with mud") that a mother warns her daughter not to have illicit relationship with anyone lest she be the cause of bringing destruction to the fishing coast.

Menon's translation clearly communicates the author's intention by way of employing the equivalent saying, "My child, you must not be the cause of the ruin of the seafront". The French translation too has been successful in translating the culture-specific, fisher folk colloquial expression into French through English. "Mon enfant, tu ne dois pas être une cause de ruine pour le village" is back translated as 'My child, you must not be the cause of ruin of the village'.

6. *Kadalu kariyenathu* is a common expression that is heard on fishing coasts. To the fishermen, Sea is their deity, their provider. Their traditional belief is that the sea provides enough and more for the fisherfolk if they uphold marital purity in their lives. If one is not faithful to their spouse, it is akin to displeasing the sea goddess whom they endearingly call *Kadalamma* (Sea mother). A mother educates her daughter on the importance of maintaining marital fidelity and so informs her that the sea would be scorched if otherwise. *Kadalu kariyenathu* is an expression that literally means that the sea would be scorched resulting in a state devoid of food for the fishermen. In other words, the sea goddess would be displeased and that would spell disaster for the fishermen because sea is their provider.

Menon gives a descriptive equivalent in his translation as "The sea goes dark" (7) based on which Balbir records "la mer devient sombre" (15) in her French translation that means the "sea gets dark". The idea of sea going dark may suggest relevant phenomena such as storm or rain but not the idea of scarcity for the fishermen. The expression *Kadalu kariyenathu* may seem an ordinary expression but it envelops the core value of a fisherman's life and in fact, it is the pivotal axis on which the entire novel rests. The

French audience do not get to appreciate a significant ideal that controls the lives of fishermen because the translation merely says that "la mer devient sombre". The context may suggest to them that the sea gets angry and destroys everything but they miss the important concept that pleasing the Sea goddess is vital for their everyday life.

7. It was the time of the year when the colour of the sea was red. The fishermen believed that the sea goddess had her periods then. Fish is scarce and consequently, the hearths of the fishermen are not lit. *Valakkaran* or netsman who have workers with him, do pay them allowance out of good will during such times even though they cannot go fishing. So, a *Valakkaran* asks another upcoming well-to-do fisherman if he pays his workers during such bad times. The fisherman responds saying *Annaanu aanayolam vaa pollikkaamo?* that literally means, "Can a squirrel open its mouth wide like an elephant does?". Using the expression, the fisherman explains his situation that a *Valakkaran* may be able to pay his workers during a crisis but an ordinary fisherman like him cannot aspire to imitate the *Valakkaran*.

Menon has given a literal translation of the Malayalam colloquial expression as "Can a squirrel open his mouth as wide as an elephant?" (50) and this has been mirrored by the French translation that says, " Est-ce qu'un écureuil peut ouvrir une bouche aussi grande que celle d'un éléphant ?" (p. 59) that means Can a squirrel open his mouth as wide as an elephant does? Despite the expression, *Annaanu aanayolam vaa pollikkaamo?,* being specific to the Malayalam language, its literal translation into English and French does provide the same scenario in the minds of the foreign readers. With the context being clear about the means of paying the workers during a dry season, this literal translation of the colloquial expression certainly communicates to the foreign audience the idea of the folly of being over ambitious, while living with minimal means.

The colloquial expressions in Malayalam including those of fisherman dialect are culture-specific and hence a knowledge of the culture is of paramount importance in translating those into a TL. Newmark (1988, 94) defines culture as "the way of life and its manifestations that are peculiar to a community that uses a particular language as its means of expression". And usually when communities have a cultural focus, it goes without saying that they boast of a set of terminology unique to their culture and dialect too. This entails, therefore, translation problems because of the "cultural gap" between the source and target languages involved. Newmark (1988) believes that as cultural customs are generally explained using ordinary language, translating them with a relevant descriptive-functional equivalent would be recommended lest a literal translation distorts its meaning.

According to Hatim and Mason (1990), a translator is regarded as a mediator between cultures as s/he could fix or alleviate any incompatibilities that may interfere with the transfer of meaning. A sign in a particular cultural community may possess significance but may not mean much in another community and hence it is the translator who mediates and resolves such discrepancies. A translator is thus, one who is not just bilingual but possesses bi-cultural vision too.

5. Conclusion

The analysis of the techniques adopted by the English translator with respect to the idioms reveal that paraphrasing and literal translations have been generally successful in conveying the figurative meaning to the target reader while omitting an idiom or replacing it with a less crude form or a closely equivalent target culture idiom does not contribute towards expanding the cultural knowledge of the foreign to the target reader much less the meaning involved. In the case of metaphors, omission of metaphor has been the translator's strategy which deprives the reader of the cultural context besides a loss of fine nuances. As for the translation of colloquial expressions that are culture-rich, supplying a descriptive or cultural equivalent of the expressions has been found to be generally successful as they convey the intended meaning. On the other hand, the instances of colloquial expressions that were translated literally communicated neither the cultural context nor the figurative meaning to the readers.

The French translation that followed the English MT was found to be closely representing the English version in terms of the figurative translation of the expressions. The French translation that had only the English version as the source text and not the original Malayalam source text have, almost always, mirrored the techniques adopted by the MT translator. As a result, the instances of successful translation in the MT were reflected in the French translation too. At the same time, the figurative expressions that failed to convey the intended meaning in the MT were not successful in the French translation as well. The French TT too experienced the loss of meaning or fine nuance as a result of the MT's influence on the target translation.

Haroon (2022), based on her study on the indirect translation of a short story from French into Malay done via English, posits that the modifications that occur during an indirect translation, whether pertaining to errors/mistranslations or omissions carried over from the MT or modifications made by the ITr translator (like domesticating SL idioms with TL cultural equivalents) while translating from the MT, show that these shifts or changes can happen during the first phase of the transfer, i.e., from the ST to the MT, and/or it may also occur in the subsequent phase of the transfer, i.e., from the MT to the TT. Haroon (2022) cites Pieta (2019, 29) who has found that in the case of literary texts, more modifications are typically seen in the first link of the ITr chain, often resulting in a situation where the TT is a generally faithful transfer of the MT but the MT is a relatively unfaithful rendition of the original ST. When discussing the variations between the ST and the final TT owing to the modifications made by the translator of the MT, Haroon observes that, "…when the fidelity of the mediating text to the source text is compromised, this has a spill over effect on the target text in that the target text becomes more dissimilar to the original source text" (170).

This study confirms all the conclusions drawn from Haroon's (2022) findings in her study. The current study has made evident that the MT has exerted a strong influence on how the figures of speech in the French version *Un amour indien* are conveyed. While the findings of this study may be limited to the novel understudy here, it can be safely concluded that the MT plays a pivotal role in influencing the subsequent translations. If subsequent translations are to reflect the cultural exoticism of the source culture for example, with regard to figures of speech as seen in this study, and the engaging force of the

narrative held together by the distinct penmanship of the first author, then the MT needs to be a close representation of the genius of the original work. In other words, the degree to which the MT of a literary text faithfully captures the cultural uniqueness of the source culture (as embodied in its figures of speech) would influence the degree of the reflectiveness of the impact of the original work and allow the receiving culture to 'enter' into and broaden their understanding of the world of the Other. If the MT of a literary work like *Chemmeen* turns out to be a fluent, communicative translation, then what the foreign readership gets is a swift and smooth reading of the storyline, but without the experience of the artful sense of the storytelling which would involve emotional and cultural connotations.

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تأثير الترجمة الوسيطة الإنجليزية في ترجمة المجازات الكلامية إلى الفرنسية من رواية المالايالامية (شيمين)

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الملخص

تهدف هذه الدراسة إلى التحقيق إذا كان من الممكن أن تتأثر ترجمة التعبيرات المجازية في الترجمة غير المباشرة بالاستراتيجيات التي اعتمدها مترجم الترجمة كنص وسيط (MT). تتكون بيانات هذه الدراسة من الترجمة الإنجليزية للاستعارات والتعابير الاصطلاحية والتعبيرات العامية للرواية المالايالامية (شيمين) وترجمتها الفرنسية اللاحقة. أهداف هذه الدراسة هي: (i) تحديد تقنيات الترجمة التي نقلت بشكل فعال المعاني التصويرية إلى القارئ الأجنبي في الترجمة غير المباشرة، و (ii) التحقيق في مدى تأثيرالترجمة الإنجليزية التي تعمل كنص وسيط في الترجمة غير المباشرة الفرنسية (ITr) في تمثيل المعاني المتجسدة في الاستعارات المالايالامية والتعابير الاصطلاحية والتعبيرات العامية. اعتمدت الدراسة في تحليل ومناقشة البيانات على مبادئ الترجمة لـ'بيكر' (2011) وعلى نموذج تقنيات الترجمة ل 'نيومارك' (1988).

الكلمات المفتاحية: التعبيرات المجازية ؛ تقنيات الترجمة ؛ ترجمة غير مباشرة؛ النص الوسيط؛ شيمين.

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