

**Fostering Inter-cultural Understanding through Translations
A Study of Japanese Literary Translations into Sinhala**

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Abstract:

Literary translations can directly cater to sustainable development by fostering intercultural understanding, tolerance, mutual respect and the cultural diversity of the speakers of both the source language and the target language. Intercultural understanding is a powerful means of promoting multiple SDGs like Quality Education (SDG4), Peace, Justice and Strong Institutions (SDG16) and Partnership for the Goals (SDG17) by advocating collaboration, inclusion in diversity. Global partnerships could be strengthened through various ways and literature is an incomparably effective and sophisticated medium to cultivate such understanding. Translating vocabulary and concepts specific to a certain culture or ethnic group is never an easy task as it involves deep knowledge and understanding of the source language as well as techniques of expressing it in the target language. How to translate cultural aspects of the source language without disturbing the natural flow of the story is a key factor when it comes to fiction. Translatorship has been seen as an individuation of collective schemes related to personal history, the collective history of the source culture, the collective history of the target culture, and their intersections. Further, it is highlighted that Translatorship can be redefined in terms of habitus. In this study, a few translated fictions by different translators from Japanese into Sinhala were studied focusing on references to food, clothes, festivals, and religious aspects. The study utilized a content analysis method, and it was captured that each translator has used a different translation method when rendering cultural aspects. Some had added in-text solutions like additions and paraphrasing, whereas some had used out-of-text solutions, i.e., a glossary to give extra cultural knowledge, without disturbing the natural flow of the story. Some had used typological cultural terms. Subsequent to analysis, it was observed that the existence and the identity of the translator emanating from the translated work differ depending on the methods they have adopted to translate cultural aspects. As a common factor in all the translated works analysed, it could be said that translators appear to play an extremely vital social role as cultural ambassadors since the translators in the analysed works have paid extra attention to unique aspects of Japanese culture and how best those factors could be translated into Sinhala in a way the readers could grasp a better understanding of those unique cultural aspects. All in all, it could be said that literary translations could play a major role in fostering inter-cultural understanding that promotes sustainable development and therefore more attention and focus should be given to research on methodologies and techniques utilized in translating cultural aspects.

Keywords: Cultural Ambassadors, Cultural Aspects, Intercultural Understanding, Translating, Translator Existence and Identity