

Abstract 18

The Extent of Cultural Transposition for Contrastive Cultural Identity

Jayamal de Silva

Department of Languages, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka
jayamaldesilva91@gmail.com

In translation theory, the term ‘cultural transposition’ stands for the various extents of departure from literal translation in the process of transferring the contents of a source text into the context of a target culture. Deviating from literal translation is required in instances where differences in cultural identity between the original author, his readers, and the readers of the translation exist. The aim of this study is to identify the extent of cultural transposition appropriate for instances denoting contrastive cultural identity, i.e., the figures interpreted differently in different cultures. The analysis is carried out with regards to two geographical figures, namely Śrī Pādāya in Sri Lanka and *Kerepakupai-Merú* in Venezuela, and one historical figure, Thotagamuwe Sri Rāhula thero, whose dead body is placed in Goa, India. The model of cultural transposition extents proposed by Hervey and Higgins (1992) is followed here, in order to figure out the appropriate translation procedure. Despite representing the same figure, each term is attributed with different interpretations in different cultures and the languages centre to them, denoting zero equivalence, making cultural transplantation inapplicable. In such instances, the choice of term made by an author stands for his cultural identity and it needs to be preserved in translation unless an adaptation is intended. Any attempt of maintaining translation equivalence by replacing the source term with the one held in the culture of the target language only distorts the author’s cultural identity and the spirit of the source work. Accordingly, cultural borrowing, where the source term is transferred verbatim into the target language, along with measures taken to make its meaning clear to the target readers, is identified as the appropriate extent of cultural transposition.

Key words: Contrastive Cultural Identity, Cultural Borrowing, Cultural Transplantation, Cultural Transposition, Equivalence