

Culture in Translation: Shyam Selvadurei's *Funny Boy* in Sinhala and French

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Abstract

Shyam Selvadurei is one of the better known writers in English of the Sri Lankan Diaspora. *Funny Boy*, his first novel was translated in to French by Frédéric Limare and Susan Fox-Limare in 1998. The Sinhala translation was published later in 2002, translated by Sugathapala de Silva. Selvadurei's style of writing is heavily influenced by the variety of English spoken in Sri Lanka, his mother tongue Tamil, Sinhala and Sri Lankan culture which explains the necessity of the glossary included in the novel. The object of the present paper is to examine how these cultural elements are translated in to two different languages. Both translations were analyzed to identify strategies and techniques used by the translators. The French translators targeted an audience who are familiar neither with the Sri Lankan context nor its languages where as the Sinhala translator has translated a novel, though written in English is placed in a more familiar context. The translators have chosen different strategies in their respective translations. The French translators have attempted to make certain cultural elements explicit to its target audience, by including a glossary, footnotes, and strategies such as adaptation. Equivalence was a strategy used in both translations, especially in translating idiomatic expressions and proverbs. The Sinhala translator has not provided footnotes, glossary or explanations. Many terms were not translated but were given in English in the Sinhala translation. The translation reflects the bilingualism practiced by Sri Lankans. As a strategy, it also highlights the dominance of the English language and the Western culture in the Sri Lankan context. The French and the Sinhala translators 'domesticate' their work and however, their strategies vary depending on the chosen target audience and its linguistic context.

Key words: *Translation, Culture, Sinhala, French, English*