Effective Strategies to be Used in Translating Personal Names in Literary Translation

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The translation of novels that fall under the heading of literary translation is a complex process as it deals with different cultures. Personal names are unique and extremely culturally bound. Most of the time, they have an underlying meaning as well. Sometimes surnames and first names differ from language to language. There are instances where the writer utilizes the name itself as a figure of speech to denote a specific message. Thus, translators must keep all this in mind when translating personal names, as sometimes an alteration will hinder the entire meaning of the novel. The main objective of this study is to explore ways in which personal names can be translated into English emphasizing effective strategies that can be used. The research problem is "how to translate personal names and what are the methods that can be used in the process." To achieve this objective, the novel "senkoṭṭaṃ" by Mahinda Prasad Masibula was utilized. Ten unique Sinhala names were taken from the novel and were given to 10 undergraduates majoring in Translation Studies to be translated. The Source language was Sinhala, and the Target language was English. Students were given the freedom to translate using any method they prefer. After analyzing the gathered data, several effective methods were explored. Transliteration, naturalization, substitution, phonological replacement, and using the same name with footnotes were among the most popularly used methods. When compared with the context of the novel, the translated names proved very effective for the target audience. In conclusion, a comprehensive discussion proved that, depending on the context, all the above methods can be used interchangeably in producing a successful translation.

Key words: literary translation, naturalization, personal names, substitution, transliteration

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