



Mumbai Münster Institute of Advanced Studies (MMIAS)

Room No. 102, Ranade Bhavan, Kalina Campus, University of Mumbai,
Santacruz (East), Mumbai 400098, India

Tel: +91 22 2653 0262 | Email: nbharucha.mmias@mu.ac.in

University of Mumbai



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Nilufer E. Bharucha

Co-Director, MMIAS
University of Mumbai

Klaus Stierstorfer

Co-Director, MMIAS
WW University Münster

Report on Translations: Bridging Linguistic, Social and Political Divides

The Mumbai Münster Institute of Advanced Studies (MMIAS), University of Mumbai, had organised a One Day Hybrid Online-Offline International Symposium on *Translations: Bridging Linguistic, Social and Political Divides* on 6th April 2023. MMIAS Director, Professor Nilufer E. Bharucha's English translation *Homeland* of Dalpat Chauhan's Gujarati novel *Malak* was launched at the inauguration of the Symposium.

The Symposium began with Professor Bharucha, welcoming the Chief Guest, speakers and participants. She then requested Professor Sridhar Rajeswaran, Chairperson for the Inaugural and Book Launch to take over.

Professor Sridhar Rajeswaran, Member MMIAS Advisory Board, then introduced the Chief Guest, Padmashri Professor Sitanshu Yashshchandra, and requested him to release the book *Homeland* and give his remarks. Professor Sitanshu spoke about how Professor Bharucha had stayed true to the original work by Dalpat Chauhan's *Malak* when she translated the novel. He mentioned how the work was challenging as the novel was written in a dialect and certain words had to be translated such that the essence was not lost. He commented on the theme of the novel and highlighted certain parts in the novel to make his point.

Following Professor Sitanshu's remarks, Professor Sridhar then requested Dalpat Chauhan to say a few words about his work. Dalpat Chauhan spoke about how he was inspired to write this novel. He also spoke about his personal experiences as a Dalit and the problems they faced in the society. He later read some parts of his work in Gujarati on the demand of the audience.

Professor Sridhar then concluded the session before the audience broke for a short tea break before the beginning of the Keynote Sessions.

Keynote Session I was chaired by Professor Vidya Vencatesan, Head, Department of French and I/C Director, Centre for European Studies, University of Mumbai. She introduced the first speaker in the session Professor Anisur Rahman, Former Professor of English, Jamia Milia Islamia, Delhi, critic, poet and translator of Urdu literature into English. In his presentation, Professor Rahman spoke about his experience as a translator of Urdu literature. Professor Rahman spoke about how he developed an interest into taking up translation. In the course of doing translations, Professor Rahman came across Persian words in Urdu and he mentioned how having learnt basic Persian in school helped him overcome that obstacle. Professor Rahman spoke of many such instances in his work as a translator.

The second Keynote speaker in the session was Professor Sanjukta Dasgupta, Former Professor of English at the University of Kolkata. She is also a critic, poet and translator of Bangla Literature into English. As the title of her presentation suggests, *Between Art and Craft: The Journey of a Translator*, she spoke about translators and their works. Professor Dasgupta spoke about how translations helps one transcend the barriers of language. She mentioned how her work and translations are mindful of inclusivity and diversity. She spoke about how Rabindranath Tagore's *Gitanjali*, which was translated by him, won the Nobel Prize for Literature in English. It was also the first time that an Indian was given this award.

Professor Dasgupta said how this was acknowledged as part of English Literature and not a translation of the original written in Tagore's mother tongue Bangla. She made a point to say that one must be aware of the politics of translation and the politics of rewards for translation. She further mentioned how the Man Booker Prize is been given to both the translator as well as the author equally since 2016, which began when a Korean novel was given this prize.

She concluded her talk by talking about her own journey as a translator. She also gave an example of her translation towards the end.

Keynote Session II was chaired by Professor Anisur Rahman and the first Keynote Speaker was Professor Vidya Vencatesan. Professor Vidya spoke about *Translating Cultures: Rendering the Urdu Nazm in French*. In her presentation, she spoke about the poetry of Javed Akhtar and her translations of it in French.

The second Keynote presentation, which was online, was made by author and translator Jerry Pinto. Jerry Pinto is a translator of Marathi into English. In his presentation on *The Salt in Translation*, Jerry Pinto spoke about his own experiences as a translator.

The final Keynote Session III was chaired by Professor Sanjukta Dasgupta. The first Keynote speaker was Dr. Pragnya Shukla, Former Associate Professor of Hindi at Maniben Nanavati College and translator of Gujarati into Hindi. Her presentation on *Dimensions of Gujarati-Hindi Translations* focussed on how in a multicultural setup like India, the importance of translation is multi-dimensional. She further spoke about how post independence, all Indian languages underwent transformation. She spoke about how Hindi is an official language of India per the Constitution. Dr. Shukla then spoke about how Hindi and Gujarati have similar meaning words and derived from Sanskrit. She mentioned how translation is crucial not only in just maintaining the meaning of the text but also conveying the cultural, linguistic and socio-cultural issues. In her conclusion, Dr. Shukla mentioned how it is challenging to translate specific names and some which are commonly used can be retained.

The final Keynote speaker at the Symposium, was Professor Roxana Marinescu, Bucharest Academy of Economic Studies | ASE, Department of Modern Languages and Business Communication, Bucharest, Romania, Academic and Critic on Translation and Cultural Mediation. Her online presentation titled *Considerations on Literary Translation and Cultural Mediation: The Role of the Translator in Communist and Post communist Romania* focussed on the communication between man and machine in today's times of Artificial Intelligence and options of Google Translate and ChatGPT available freely.

The online presentation on *Intimate and Distant Readings in Translation* by Academic and Translator, Professor EV Ramakrishnan could not due to technical difficulties be included. This was a loss to the audience and the organisers hoped this could be rectified by inviting Professor EVR to make a presentation at a later date.

The symposium was attended by academics and students form Mumbai and some of the invitees from abroad joined the symposium on Zoom.

The symposium ended with a vote of thanks by MMIAS Research Associate Kirti Risbud and refreshments were served to conclude the day.

For complete event recording, visit the link given below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=N3s6E-RPkeM>

Date: 6th April 2023

Place: Mumbai