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READER RESPONSE APPROACH TO TRANSLATION AND ITS EVALUATION

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Abstract

Translation Studies is now a deep-rooted interdisciplinary field of research whose limits extend beyond linguistic considerations is perhaps unquestionable. The twentieth century, particularly its second half, has witnessed the appearance of an important number of theoretical outputs that have in fact laid the foundations of the translation studies as a discipline. Translation has been regarded as a practice of reading and writing, and as a vehicle which passes through the cultures across the world. The diverse critical works on translation theory focuses on a series of aspects dealing with the problems and prospects of translation as an academic activity. In recent times, the growth in Translation Studies, there has been a shift in the development of Translation Studies by giving the emphasis on the translation process of literary texts from different perspectives.

Keywords: Linguistics, translation, Reader response, communication, information, learning

Translation, especially the literary translation, is not a mere art of transferring from one language to the other. Translation evolved as a necessity and inevitability of human life as cultures get contact with each another. The role of translation has been accelerating since time immemorial. Particularly, in the recent phenomenon of translation as an emerging discipline in the academia, which indeed is functioning as a significant tool for not only in the communication of diverse people from various countries, but also in the growth of nation's

politics, culture and society from the last five decades. The process of knowledge communication throughout the world is transporting through the art of translating. The whole world's culture, societal systems and political situations became familiar to each and every one within the world.

At this juncture, the analysis of translation from various perspectives has become a significant scenario in view of its development as a new and emerging discipline among the global academia. However, the evaluation or the analysis of translations and their assessment is mostly confined to the linguistic approach for a long time. In the olden days, scholars used to give great significance to the Source Text (SL), considering it as the authoritative. Translation, nevertheless, was regarded as unoriginal and subservient. From 1970s and 1980s, the emergence of faithfulness of translation from its history, ideology and other societal aspects made significant role in advancing translation studies as an emerging subject of study. Andre Lefevere's theory of rewriting was also an outstanding subject of study in this perspective. According to Lefevere's theory of rewriting in translation, there should be an analysis between the source language text and the target language text from the perspective of culture and the ideology of the text, author and the translator. This way of notion in the arena of translation and its evaluation encouraged many scholars to examine the translations from a wider social context. In this regard, it can be concluded that the translation studies as an emerging subject shall be viewed from various perspectives for its growth in the academic arena.

In this regard, it can be noticed that the emergence of new approach from Lambert and Van Gorp who viewed the translations and its analysis from the perspective of the relationship between authors, texts and readers, particularly in 1980s. They also insisted their study on both the source and target language literary systems, relations between intentions of authors and translators and the study of differing sociological aspects like publishing etc. Afterwards, it can also be noticed that the recent years of research across the global academics is correlating the translation studies from the perspectives of cultural studies and feminism, etc. According to Eugene Nida's theory of Dynamic Equivalence, the principal aim for translators must be to achieve equivalence between original and translated text.

Equivalence is accomplished when a translated text makes the same affiliations and emotions in the minds of its readers as was delivered in the minds of the readers of the original text. Afterwards, Skopos Theory was developed by German linguist 'Hans Vermeer' in the 1970s. He introduced a functional approach where the nonlinguistic and textual factors like the recipient's culture and the purpose of the text were the focus of attention. The research in Translation Studies has primarily been concerned with assessing the "faithfulness" of the

translated text to the source text and making general findings about what is “right” what is “wrong”, from the linguistic perspectives. From 1990s, the concern of research in Translation Studies shifted from the “textual” to the “cultural”. This paradigm shift was described by Bassnett and Lefevere (1990:1) as the “cultural turn” in Translation Studies. Cultural aspects to translation have managed to widen the discipline to hold the historical and cultural contexts. Besides, the text itself is promising to the idea that nothing exists in isolation and that the sense of anything is always determined by its context (Asad 1986:148). Similarly, Bassnett and Lefevere (1990:11) states that “[t]here is always a context in which the translation takes place, always a history from which a text emerges and into which a text is transposed”.

Later, Jeremy Munday (2012) presents a progressive hypothesis towards a general theory of evaluation in translator’s decision-making that will be of high significance to translator training and to descriptive translation analysis. Afterwards, there are some significant approaches for evaluating translations. Newmark defines a good translation as follows: “[A good translation] is likely to look surprisingly like the original text to a reader competent in both languages ...” (“About Translation” 34) Later, Antoine Berman who separated the literary translation from the non literary translation in evaluating the texts also extended the scope of the evaluation of translations.

He states that

“Unfortunately, a vernacular clings tightly to its soil and completely resists any direct translating into another vernacular. Translation can occur only between “cultivated” languages. An exoticization that turns the foreign from abroad into the foreign at home winds up merely ridiculing the original” (Berman 2000: 294) He also opined that “All translation is, and must be, the restitution of meaning” (Berman 2000: 297). Antoine Berman declares that there may be many various methods for translation criticism or evaluation as there are many translation theories. Consequently, he entitles a model as “an analytical path” and remarks that it can be “modulated according to the specific objectives of each analyst and adapted to all standardized text types”. (Berman)

Hence, this study will look in to the problems and prospects in TL text’s translation of Anna Karenina (Telugu) and discuss the issues such as translator’s ideology, the relation between the author and translation, readers’ perspectives on translation and its dissimilarities and various other issues by comparing the TL text with its SL text. Therefore, the evaluation of literary translation is one of the significant and new phenomenon in the translation and its criticism. After studying various types of evaluation approaches in translation, we can understand that the majority of the approaches are centred on the language.

Some revolutions occur quietly: no manifestoes, no marching and singing, no tumult in the streets; simply a shift in perspective, a new way of seeing what had always been there. [We] have been witnessing just such a change in the field of literary theory and criticism. The words "reader" and "audience," once relegated to the status of the unproblematic and obvious have acceded to a starring role. The significance of reader response can be understood from the view of Terry Eagleton, who has categorized the history of modern literary theory as taking place in three stages: a Romantic "preoccupation with the author," a New Critical "exclusive concern with the text;" and finally, "a marked shift of attention to the reader over recent years" In a Reader-Response critical approach, the primary focus falls on the reader and the process of reading rather than on the author. Reader-response theory recognizes the reader as an active agent who imparts "real existence" to the work and completes its meaning through interpretation. Its criticism argues that literature should be viewed as a performing art in which each reader creates their own, possibly unique, text-related performance. It stands in total opposition to the theories of formalism in which the reader's role in re-creating literary works is ignored.

Reader-Response literary criticism recognizes the simple fact that the readers respond to literature and that such responses are important to the understanding of the work. Long ago, even Aristotle recognized how important an audience's reaction is to tragedy, for a key to tragedy is catharsis, the purging of the audience's emotions. Reader Response criticism includes various approaches to literature that explore and seek to explain the variety of readers' responses to literary works. Reader-Response critics embrace the affective fallacy (what reader-response critic Stanley Fish has called the "affective fallacy"); for they believe that a reader's affective response is important to criticism²². Instead of focusing on literature as a well-wrought urn, Reader-Response critics focus on the reader, who "completes" or "activates" the text as he or she reads. In a sense, the reader becomes the most important element in the reading process, supplanting even the author.

a) Theoretical Assumptions:

- Literature is a performative art and each reading is a performance, analogous to playing/singing a musical work, enacting a drama, etc. Literature exists only when it is read; meaning is an event (versus the New Critical concept of the "affective fallacy").
- The literary text possesses no fixed and final meaning or value; there is no one "correct" meaning. Literary meaning and value are "transactional," "dialogic,"

- In reader's approach towards text, he/she engages with the text, constructs meanings, envisions the text by connecting to it and evaluates with their reflections. (Rosenblatt)

b) Varying Emphases:

How readers interpret texts: Sometimes called "subjective" may deal with published "readings" of texts and/or study nonprofessional readings (e.g., students). These critics explain similarities in readings in varying ways:

- o "styles" or "identity themes" of readers are similar²³

- o "Character-Action-Moral Style" ("connected knower's")--treat literature as coextensive with experience

- o "Diggers for Secrets"--find hidden meanings in literature; psychoanalyze motives of characters, etc.

- o "Anthropologists"--look for cultural patterns, norms, values [e.g. feminists, New Historicists].

- Norman Holland--Psychoanalytic approach: cf. George Dillon's classification of students' responses to Faulkner's "A Rose for Emily"

- Readers belong to same "interpretive communities" (Stanley Fish) with shared reading strategies, values and interpretive assumptions (i.e., shared "discourse"); concept of the "informed reader."

- Readers are situated in a common cultural/historical setting and shaped by dominant discourses and ideologies (New Historicist emphasis). "Reception theory/aesthetics" studies the changing responses of the general reading public over time.

How texts govern Reader: Focus on how texts guide, constrain, control reading; often use linguistic, stylistic, narratological methods of analysis. Wolfgang Iser argues that the text in part controls the reader's responses but contains "gaps" that the reader creatively fills. There is a tension between

- "the implied reader," who is established by the "response-inviting structures" of the text; this type of reader is assumed and created by the work itself

- "the actual reader," who brings his/her own experiences and preoccupations to the text

c) Analysis of the Arguments of Reader-Response Critics

Why do we need to study how people read? It seems easier to simply to read without

thinking about it, treating reading as another mechanical action, like brushing one's tooth. Once learned, it becomes part of one's subconsciousness. We even read instinctively when presented with scribbled piece of writing. Maybe an important question to put forth is why should one be so interested in reading?

Reader-Response Criticism was prevalent in the late 20th century before being integrated into mainstream literary theory. Despite its recent ebbing away and inherent fallacies of the approach, I still believe that it has a good place to ground the exploration of reading. I have constructed a blueprint of each author's contribution to the movement that helps to highlight the major points and flaws of the theorists which I believe had the most valid points about reading, beginning with Georges Poulet and ending with V Valter Benn Michaels. The note that ensues is my attempt to re-position the major theories of Reader- Response Criticism vis-à-vis reception theory and aesthetics into five types: textual, experiential, psychological, social, and cultural. Richard Beach, *A Teacher's Introduction to Reader-Response Theories* (Urbana, IL: National Council of Teachers of English, 1993).

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