

## TEACHING COMMUNICATIVE TRANSLATION: AN ACTIVE RECEPTION ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE TRANSLATION AND READER'S RECEPTION

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**Abstract:** Literary theory sees reception theory from the reader response that emphasizes the reader's reception of a literary text. It is generally called audience reception in the analysis of communications models. In literary studies, reception theory originated from the work of Hans-Robert Jauss in the late 1960s. Communication only means that the original message will be clearly sent in its equivalent context to the target receptor. Similarly, the main role of translators is to send the message across without any form of distortion or emphasis. It is delivering the genuine context of the message to the language that the active receptor understands. A single mistake in a context translation can result to offensive message that can eventually lead to misunderstandings between active receptors. This paper proposes on the role of translator as the mediator between a writer of the original text and the active target language receptors of translated version in the course of communication which definitely affects the process and result of translation practice. It also reveals the emphasis on the creation text of the translation theories originated from the strategic communication theories, which hopefully leads to a dream of the most equivalence between the text and the translated version.

**Keywords:** *translator, active receptor, mediator, strategic communication, equivalence.*

### INTRODUCTION

Most people learn a foreign language to communicate. Through communication, they send and receive messages and negotiate meaning (Rubin and Thompson, 1994: 30). Translation is considered an act of communication. To translate most effectively, the translator should analyze the messages; to do so, he/she should have some tools at hand; such tools can be the well-known communication strategies which prevents a communication from disruption. This is what turns communication strategies into a very important issue in translation studies and attracts the attention of many teachers, scholars and foreign language learners.

Literary theory sees reception theory from the reader response that emphasizes the reader's reception of a literary text. It is generally called audience reception in the analysis of communications models. Reception theory focuses on the role of the audience in the interpretation of a text, instead of on the text itself. In other words, the theory suggests that audiences play an active role in reading texts, that each person has the ability to interpret the same text differently, and that a text by itself – i.e. without a reader – has no specific meaning.

In this paper, I try to explore the role of translator as the mediator between a writer of the original text and the active target language receptors of translated

version in the course of communication which definitely affects the process and result of translation practice. It also reveals the emphasis on the creation text of the translation theories originated from the strategic communication theories, which hopefully leads to a dream of the exact equivalence between the text and the translated version.

As a teacher and also a translator, I see that schools as institutions and all professional translators have to react to the emergence of this active reception theory as a new perspective on discourse since is a literary work is neither completely text nor completely the subjectivity of the active receptor, but a combination or merger of the two. The work is more than the text, for the text only takes on life when it is realized, and furthermore the realization is by no means independent of the individual disposition of the receptor.

Holub (1984) characterizes reception theory as "a general shift in concern from the author and the work to the text and the reader." Reception theory reflects a paradigm shift in the history of literature, and it is considered "a reaction to social, intellectual, and literary developments in West Germany during the late 1960s." According to Holub (1984), reception theory was a revolutionary approach to contemporary literary criticism.

This new paradigm of literary criticism pays attention to the function of the reader in a process of literary experience. Jauss (1982), one of the main contributors to reception theory, published an essay, "The Change in the Paradigm of Literary Scholarship" in 1969. In this essay, Jauss (1982) points out that the rise of the new paradigm and emphasizes the importance of interpretation by the reader, replacing the obsolete literary scholarship methodology which involved the studies of accumulated facts. Jauss' (1982) theory

views literature "from the perspective of the reader or consumer" and treats literature "as a dialectical process of production and reception." In his article "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," Jauss (1982: 15) states the following:

...the relationship of work to work must now be brought into this interaction between work and mankind, and the historical coherence of works among themselves must be seen in the interrelations of production and reception. Put another way: literature and art only obtain a history that has the character of a process when the succession of works is mediated not only through the producing subject but also through the consuming subject—through the interaction of author and public.

Iser (1926), who is considered to be one of the most prominent figures in reception theory, points out the importance of this literary process, as well. Iser takes a phenomenological approach to reception theory and he "decontextualizes and dehistoricizes text and reader." Iser (1926: 274-5) argues that the reader's involvement coincides with meaning production in literature: "...The convergence of text and reader brings the literary work into existence, and this convergence can never be precisely pinpointed, but must always remain virtual, as it is not to be identified either with the reality of the text or with the individual disposition of the reader".

This suggests that reception theory defines literature as the process of how the reader and the text interact with each other, and it was a revolutionary way of looking at the history of literature and literary criticism. Reception theory introduces the necessity of the reader's involvement in the interpretation to be included in the process of literary experience.

## TRANSLATION COMPETENCE

The concept of translation competence has existed but has had different labels; There are some definitions of translation competence, which are the following: Bell (1991: 43) defines translation competence as “the knowledge and skills the translator must possess in order to carry out a translation”. Wilss (1982: 58) says translation competence calls for “an inter-lingual super-competence based on a comprehensive knowledge of the respective SL and TL, including the text-pragmatic dimension, and consists of the ability to integrate the two monolingual competencies on a higher level;” and finally, the other definition is that of PACTE research.

According to PACTE, translator competence which is the underlying system of knowledge needed to translate includes six interrelated and hierarchical sub-competencies:

- 1) Communicative competence in two languages, Hymes (1971) first used the term “communicative competence” to denote an integrated concept accounting for both underlying knowledge of a linguistic code and language use for communicative purposes within a community. The goal of language teaching is to develop what Hymes (1972) referred to as communicative competence (Richards and Rodgers, 2002: 159). Hymes’ multidimensional concept of communicative competence includes elements of linguistic, cultural, and sociolinguistic knowledge, as well as cognitive, physical, and environmental constraints on communication, extra-linguistic competence as implicit or explicit knowledge about the world in general and specific areas of knowledge: knowledge about translation (its ruling premises: types of translation unit, the processes

required, etc); bicultural knowledge; encyclopedic knowledge and subject knowledge in specific areas (PACTE, 2000). Another definition of communicative competence can be: Communication competence is the ability to send messages which promote attainment of goals while maintaining social acceptability. Competent communicators attempt to align themselves with each other’s goals and methods to produce a smooth, productive, and often enjoyable dialogue.

- 2) Transfer competence (difficulty in finding the dynamic equivalence).
- 3) Instrumental/professional competence (deriving from the translation brief, or documentation difficulties).
- 4) Psycho-physiological competence (relating to creativity, logical thought).
- 5) Strategic competence (all the individual procedures, conscious and unconscious, verbal and non-verbal, used to solve the problems encountered during the translation process).

All these the above mentioned sub-competencies make up translation competence and they are integrated in every translation act, establishing inter-relations, hierarchies and variations. The inter-relations are controlled by the strategic sub-competence because its role is to monitor and compensate for the other sub-competencies, as it makes up for weaknesses and solves translation problems.

## COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES

As Richards and Rodgers (2002: 160) maintain, strategic competence refers to the coping strategies that communicators employ to initiate, terminate, maintain, repair, and redirect communication. According to Richards and Schmidt (2002: 91), strategic competence is

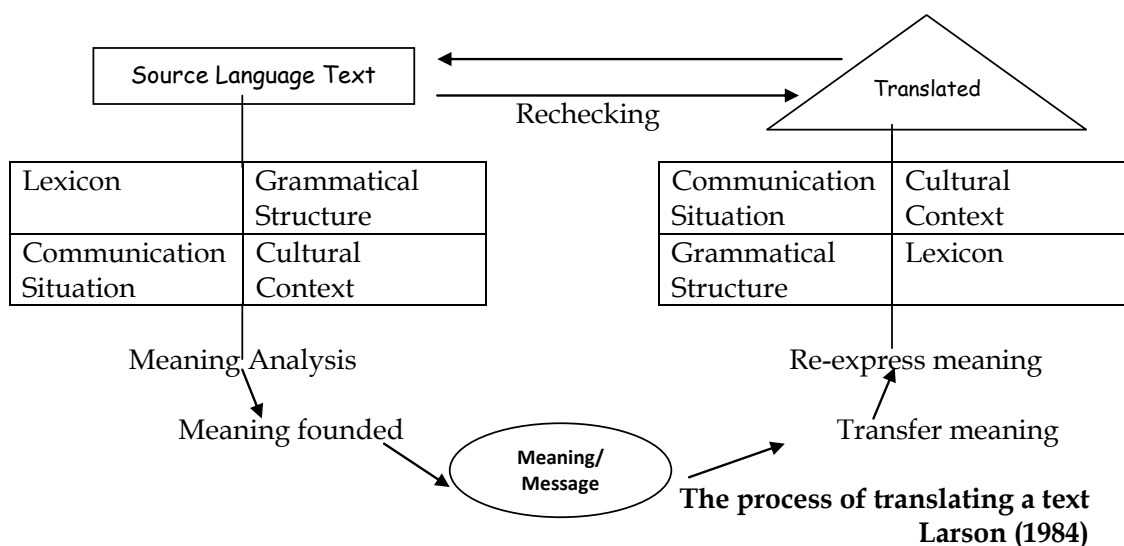
defined as knowledge of communication strategies that can compensate for weaknesses in other areas or an aspect of communicative competence which describes the ability of speakers to use verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to compensate for breakdowns in communication or to improve the effectiveness of communication. This sub-competence plays an essential role in relation to all the others, because it is used to detect problems, make decisions, and make up for errors or weaknesses in the other sub-competencies (PACTE, 2000).

Rubin (1981, 1987) defines communication strategies as those strategies used by a learner to promote and continue communication with others rather than abandon it. They are strategies used by speakers when

they come across a difficulty in their communication because of lack of adequate knowledge of the language.

Bialystok, in her book *Communication Strategies*, cites four definitions relating to the strategies of second-language learners (Bialystok, 1990: 3): systematic technique employed by a speaker to express his ideas when faced with some difficulty (Corder, 1977); a mutual attempt of two interlocutors to agree on a meaning in situations where requisite meaning structures are not shared (Tarone, 1980); potentially conscious plans for solving what to an individual presents itself as a problem in reaching a particular communicative goal (Faerch & Kasper, 1983a); and techniques of coping with difficulties in communicating in an imperfectly known second language.

### METHODOLOGY: EQUIVALENCE IN TRANSLATION THROUGH COMMUNICATION STRATEGIES



Larson (1984) asserts three main reasons: "When doing a process of translating above, the translator wants to be sure his translation is accurate, clear and natural." These are three

determining and widely accepted criteria in assessing the quality of any translation as explained below:

- a) Accuracy: conveys all the information that is in the source text. Sometimes

- the translator struggles with reformulating the message and may include information that is not in the source text or meant in the source text. This information should be removed from the translation.
- b) Clarity: the translation must be understandable to the people who are depending on it for information. A translation may be accurate without being clear. It tends to contain ambiguity. Ambiguity is when a phrase or sentence could have more than one meaning in a specific context so the target audience is not sure of the intended meaning.
  - c) Naturalness: A translation can be accurate and clear and still not be natural. A natural translation is idiomatic and uses the grammatical forms ordinarily used in the target

language. To test for naturalness, does the translation flow easily? Does it sound right to speakers of the language or does it sound foreign? Ideally the translation does not sound like a translation, instead it sounds like a text originally created in that language.

### DESIGN AND PROCEDURE

Here is a check list design for having equivalence in translation through communication strategies based on Tarone's (1977) typology of conscious communication strategies (Tarone, 1977 cited in Bialystok, 1990: 39) and translation criteria proposed by Larson (1984). See the procedure below the checklist for what should be considered at each stage.

Communication Strategy Type	Translation Criteria	Equivalence Frequency (%)
Avoidance		
a. Topic avoidance		
b. Message abandonment		
Paraphrase		
a. Approximation		
b. Word coinage		
c. Circumlocution		
Conscious transfer		
Literal translation		
Language switch		
Appeal for assistance		
Mime		

### ANALYSIS: AN ACTIVE RECEPTION ANALYSIS BETWEEN THE TRANSLATION AND READER'S RECEPTION

In literature, the interaction between text and reader occurs within a framework that controls and limits the interaction, through genre, tone, structure, and the social conditions of the reader and author. Cultural theorist, Stuart Hall, is one of the main proponents of reception theory,

having developed it for media and communication studies from the literary-and history-oriented approaches mentioned above. This approach to textual analysis focuses on the scope for "negotiation" and "opposition" on the part of the audience (Procter, 2004). This means that a "text" – be it a book, movie, or other creative work – is not simply passively accepted by the audience, but that the reader/viewer interprets the meanings of the text based on their



individual cultural background and life experiences. In essence, the meaning of a text is not inherent within the text itself, but is created within the relationship between the text and the reader.

Reception theory suggests the new role of the reader in the literary process and categorizes the term "reader" into "implied reader" and "actual reader." Holub (1984) argues that the concept of the "implied reader," introduced by Iser (1926), was one of the most controversial ideas that he adapted from other theorists. Holub (1984) defines the implied reader "as both a textual condition and a process of meaning production." Iser (1926) makes a point that the concept of the implied reader is fundamental to reception theory. Iser (1926) states, "This term [implied reader] incorporates both the prestructuring of the potential meaning by the text, and the reader's actualization of this potential through the reading process. It refers to the active nature of this process."

The term implied reader is defined as "the reader whom the text creates for itself and amounts to a network of response-inviting structures, which predispose us to read in certain ways." In contrast, the actual reader is defined as the reader who "receives certain mental images in the process of reading; however, the images will inevitably be colored by the reader's existing stock of experience." Realizing the importance of understanding how the reader's interpretation is produced, Jauss introduces the concept of "horizon of expectations" in order to reveal the way in which the text interacts with the reader's interpretation.

As to have the same response as the first target language reader, communication strategies remain an important element in translation. Compensatory strategies, in particular, will undoubtedly promote learners' communicative competence. Teachers

can play an important role in conveying communication strategies to students and thereby assisting them to practice the target language. Neubert (2000: 3-18) claims that the practice of translation and, hence, teaching translation requires a single competence that is made up of or could be considered to integrate a set of competencies that include, for instance, competence in both the source and the target languages.

The work of the translator is, undoubtedly, somewhat thankless. As opposed to the conference or business interpreter (in some cases), he hardly ever obtains public acknowledgment for his efforts. His place remains in the shadows, buried in dictionaries, glossaries, in the labyrinths of large or small libraries or within the endless branches of the Internet. Therefore, the main quality of a good translator is his endless love of his profession, which is characterized by continuous search and non-stop work. And this quality, whose absence will inevitably lead to poor-quality translations, should be inculcated in the mind of the would-be translator.

The student who simply arrives in the classroom, makes his translation merely paying attention to language, then goes back home and returns next class to work with whatever material his professor has decided to bring to class, without any sort of preparation or conscious work, will never go beyond the limits of mediocrity. If a professional translator must go from the field to the text, and vice versa, countless numbers of times, then that is precisely the order we should give to our students' tasks. Right from the start, the future translator should acquire the habit of insatiable research and learn to look for any piece of information necessary for his work. These habits and skills will develop only as a result of the professor's guidance, orientation, instruction, and encouragement.

Accordingly, the teacher should first guarantee that his students get hold of extralinguistic notions, a background on the field, the subject matter at hand. This stage of “familiarization” with the field or subject matter may be developed either in the target language (TL), the source language (SL), the translator’s mother tongue – should it be other than either the SL or the TL – in any other language known by the translator, or in all of them. The essence of this process is that our translator acquires a background that will allow him either to know the content of the text or, at least, grasp the elements that will facilitate his understanding thereof.

The process as such should not be viewed as a linguistic analysis of the subject but rather as a cognitive approach to the notions it comprises. The inversion of the dynamics of this process would result in the apprehension on the part of our students of just a few phrases, collocations, and terms only in the form of equivalents. The processes and notions they identify, however, will never be understood, which in turn will probably lead to lexical misuse and loss of reference. If, on the other hand, the professor focuses his work on the learning of sciences and not merely on their nomenclature, the result will be that students will understand the whats, hows, whens, wheres, and whys of the processes and, implicitly, the terms that denote them, the ways to say things, the style, i.e. the linguistic means specialists like the author they translate employ to convey messages like his.

In order to have a qualified translation, the teacher must teach his students some procedures that used as a tool in the process of translating. These procedures will help him as a guidance to create an equivalent meaning in the receptor language. Whatever the difficulty in the translation process, procedures must aim at the essence

of the message and faithfulness to the meaning of the source language text being transferred to the target language text.

In theory, communicative translation addresses itself solely to the second reader who does not anticipate difficulties or obscurities, and would expect a generous transfer of foreign elements into his own culture as well as his language where necessary, communicative translation is likely to be smoother, simpler, clearer, more direct, more conventional, conforming to a particular register of language and tending to under translate. Basically, communicative translation emphasize the sift of messages. This method, pay attention to the reader or listener of target language that hope there is no difficulties and unclearly in text of target language and also effectiveness of target language

For example: “*Awas anjing galak!*”

It can translate become: “Beware of dog!” rather than “Beware of the vicious dog!” because the first sentence was beckon that the dog is vicious. In the communicative translation of vocative texts, equivalent effect is not only desirable, it is essential; it is the criterion by which the effectiveness, and therefore the value, of the translation of notices, instructions, publicity, propaganda, persuasive or eristic writing, and perhaps popular fiction, is to join the Party, to assemble the device-could even be quantified as a percentage rate of the success of the translation.

In information texts, equivalent effect is desirable only in respect of their (in theory) insignificant emotional impact; it is not possible if SL and TL culture are remote from each other since normally the cultural items have to be explained by culturally natural or generic terms, the topic content

simplified, SL difficulties clarified. Hopefully, the TL reader reads the text with the same degree of interest as the SL reader, although the impact is different. However, the vocative (persuasive) thread in most informative texts has to be rendered with an eye to the readership, i.e., with an equivalent effect purpose.

Communicative translation being set at the reader level of language and knowledge is more likely to create equivalent than is semantic translation at the writer's level. In communicative as in semantic translation, provide that equivalent effect is secured, the literal to word for word translation is not only the best. It is the only valid method of translation, there is no exercise for unnecessary synonyms or elegant variations, let alone for a phrase, in only type of translation. There is no one communicative or one semantic method of translating a text. These are in fact widely overlapping hands of methods; a translation can be more or less, semantic, more, or less. Communicative even a particular section or sentence can be treated more communicatively or less semantically.

Given these assumptions, a translator must know about the nature of meaning, possible adjustments, the nature of text, and SL decoding and RL encoding. Meaning: Translators are required to study semantics – to learn about different types of meaning and how to investigate meaning. Considerable attention is given to lexical semantics while little (if at all) is given to pragmatics, and none to formal semantics.

Considerable attention is given to possible adjustments: a passive may be changed to an active (possibly explicating the subject), a metaphor may be changed to a simile, a rhetorical question may be changed to a statement, and so forth. Students are taught to

recognize the conditions under which each adjustment might be made. This instruction is reinforced with exercises, sometimes to the point that the trainee acquires a natural reflex.

*Text:* The concern to know about text has fueled enthusiasm for the study of discourse. This enthusiasm, however, has been largely directed toward approaches that are text-centric (e.g., ones that look for structures, ones that take co-text to be the context); little has been directed at approaches more oriented toward the social, pragmatic, or cognitive aspects of discourse.

## CONCLUSION

Like any communicative activity, translation has its own set of communication strategies, which are chosen (whether consciously or unconsciously) in order to achieve communicative goals. Some strategies are well-established in translators' repertoires and are deployed deliberately, while others are used less consciously, more instinctively. Therefore, translation is a problem-solving activity, and communication strategies are used to address problems at all levels of linguistic representation in order to deliver the genuine context of the message to the language that the active receptor understands.

Communicative translation attempts to reproduce the exact contextual meaning of the SL text. But both content and language should be acceptable and comprehensible to the readership. It is a usual practice in translation to render expressive texts very freely and informative texts very literally. But if we consider the above functions we find the expressive texts more author-centered, informative texts more content-centered and vocative texts more reader-centered. Moreover, the unit of translation in expressive texts is always smaller compared to other text-types. The finest



nuances of meaning are contained in words rather than sentences. As translators we should note this and attempt to retain the beauty of the original. Care should be given to transfer the cultural components of an expressive text intact. In case of informative texts they may be transferred and explained whereas replaced by cultural equivalents in vocative texts. The informative and the vocative texts are more suitable for a communicative translation.

Reception theory enables a text not simply passively accepted by the audience, but also allows the receptor interprets the meanings of the text based on their individual cultural background and life experiences. The revolutionary of reception theory approach to the role of the reader in relationship to the notion of interpretation was one of the most important contributions to the history of literature, and its new perspective on the literary experience established a new paradigm for writers and theorists. Although it is difficult to fully understand how powerful and revolutionary this paradigm shift was at that time, it is easy to see that the concepts which came out of reception theory are now part of how we try to understand literature, art, and the world. In fact, we still function in the same paradigm, so to speak, and it is mind boggling to imagine how exciting it will be to witness the eruption of new paradigm.

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