



## TRANSLATION AND TRANSLATING – APPLIED TO DESCRIPTIVE STUDIES – PARADIGM SHIFT – A STUDY

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Translation studies is one of the important disciplines of language/culture studies. It is the discipline which bridged the gap between languages and cultures from unknown ages. The religions when they spread across the continents in ancient times, translation was the only solution to make them selves intelligible to the newly added loyalists. So, right from the ancient times, translation has been serving the purpose of trans-cultural, cross-linguistic transactions. In colonial era, the British could administer the globe by employing translators and they themselves mastered the native languages and translated many texts in the process of understanding the native cultures. In the post colonial, globalized world once again translation and translating have become an essential human activity. Translation has attained the status of independent discipline. As it grew, it has taken into its fold different areas like interpretation, inter and intra linguistic translations and also history, culture and social arenas. As the time passes, translation studies accumulated theoretical aspects based on different points of view of scholars involved in it from time to time. There were paradigm shifts and translation studies have taken a definite direction in the courts of time.

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Paradigms are ways of perceiving the world in terms of both the problems that can be addressed and the evidence that may have a bearing on their solution, says, Margherita Ulrych, a translation scholar. He continues, when the existing paradigm accumulated so many defects that it essentially becomes untenable, the paradigm is challenged and replaced by new ways of perceiving the world. Translation studies also witness profound paradigm shifts in recent years along with literature, linguistics, social studies, cultural studies etc.

This shift is from strictly comparing the original source text with the target text to descriptive translation studies, where many fundamental issues pertaining to historical, social and cultural

compulsions which lead to translations are dealt. The shift is from ATS (Applied Translation Studies) to DTS (Descriptive Translation Studies). The aim of DTS is to delve into translation as a cultural and historical phenomenon, to explore its context and conditioning factors, to search for grounds that can explain **Why there is what there is**. Descriptive translation studies have shown that translational behavior depends on the cultural, historical and ideological constraints prevailing in socio cultural contexts. In this scenario who translated what, when and how will become very important issues? DTS has brought to general translation studies, various issues like the nature of translated text and the complex factors that govern the translation process. DTS aims to arrive at a better



understanding of languages, cultures and translation phenomena and its behavior. So, the primary objective of DTS is, the systematic observation of actually existing translations within particular historical and cultural situation without any evaluative or pragmatic aims and is not aimed in any way at influencing the production of translation by others.

To achieve this objective, DTS mainly concerned with the answers to the questions who translated what, when, where, how and why these questions describe and explain the translational phenomena. Actually, answers to who, what, where and when are external contextual factors, how is internal factor and why is both external and internal factor. This leads to writing of relevant and useful external history of translations by answering who, what where and when but to write internal description of the text one needs all these and why and how i.e. without some kind of contextualization, it is difficult to describe the process of translation.

After the post-structural era, in translation studies, the ideological, social and cultural implications of translations are at the centre. At this point, the systematic reflection on the comparison of target and source texts more or less pushed to the background.

Some of the fundamental issues touched by DTS are of purely theoretical in nature and needs attention.

One such fundamental issue is the status of the translated work as an independent text. Once produced, a translation, in its own cultural environment functions in a way similar to that of any other text in that environment, but it is also a derivative text, a representation, a reconstruction or a reproduction of another text. Precisely, the translated text bears hybrid status. So, the translated text is a representation of another text and the same time a text in its own right.

The process of translation has to undergo stages of 'decomposition' and recomposition. The translator is the centre of these two stages. Because of these two stages, the way of looking at the translation process is of two types, one oriented dominantly toward the source of text i.e. retrospectively and the other towards the target

language i.e. prospectively. The prospective point of view concentrates on translation process as such and retrospective translation studies concentrates on products. The methodology of describing actual, existing translations, the view point is necessarily retrospective.

The hybrid or double status of literary translation gives double or multiple roles to the each factor in translation process. This multiple roles played by the different factors not only make the study of translation complicative but also interesting. Jakobson gives in detail the duplication of communicative roles in translation.

The translator occupies the role of source text addressee and also target text sender. He also shares his position of source text addressee with the translation describer or critic. As target text sender he shares his position with author as the author is also target text sender. The original author may be said to occupy the positions both of the source text sender and target text sender. The describer also takes up two positions at the same time, not only source text addressee but also target text addressee. All these make descriptive translation studies very interesting.

It is interesting to note the translator's involvement in the duplication of the roles. The translator has two roles: one is source text addressee or reader and target text sender or writer. The question is that the translator is some kind of reader and when he becomes a producer of a text, does he disappear or has he left any traces of his reading? This leads to the methodology of reconstructive aspect of translation. One can get translator's role as reader of source text can be found by analyzing the target text.

Another issue is while accepting the fact that both the author and translator are present in the target text how can they be distinguished from each other. The author generally foresees a possible reader, the modal reader, supposedly able to deal interpretatively with the expression in the same way as the author deals generatively with them. But because of different capabilities of the readers, the interpretative route can never mirror the generative one. Interpretation just as a translation, is never a matter of reproducing meaning, it always is a matter



of producing meaning. The reader in turn, in the process of reading, constructs a modal author. How does the translator fit into this vocabulary?

The translator is latently present in the target text and that as an abstracted category; he is manifestly present in the differences between target and source texts. The translator is visible when the texts are compared. He inhabits the space between the texts. Translator generally manifests himself Para textually in different ways. Para textual presence ranges from mentioning of his name in an edition, adding of foot notes or publishing of bilingual editions. It is an extra textual feature. But translator's presence can be found within the text. This can be deduced by analyzing how has the text been translated? In these concepts like translator's poetics, power relations, translational norms, and translational interpretation play the part. All these concepts are looked upon as different ways of trying to make visible the textual category of translator. All these factors, explain why things have turned out the way they did. The answer is because the translator adhered to certain norms, ideologies and certain conceptions on interpretation of the source text. Then the question of why did he adhere to those particular norms comes into existence. In a nut shell, descriptive translational studies takes into its fold translator's conception of the source text as it emerges from the target text. The socio cultural reasons for his interpretation of the source text as modal reader and the reconstruction of the target text based on it affirms translator's centrality. It is plain that however one tries it is difficult to efface the translator's presence. It leads to the issue of equivalence in translation. One can expect optimal approximation but not exact mirror image of the source text. Some one feels that in translation we transfer cultures not languages. All these issues show that translation studies needs to look beyond its own borders.

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