



CRITICAL DISCOURSE ANALYSIS OF A NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE TRANSLATOR OF *TIRUKURAL*

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Abstract: Various articles and papers that were found on the translation studies are mostly on the translated text rather on the translator. Therefore, the area in which this paper is attempting to pave the way to give equal importance to the translator as well as the product. The translated text this paper focuses on is a classical Tamil literary text which is originally called ‘*Muppaal*’, famously pointed out as ‘*Kural*’. *Kural* has been considered as the most widely translated non-religious text. It is said that the text has been translated into eighty-two languages. This paper has chosen to compare and contrast based on critical discourse analysis are George Uglow Pope and Sri Varahaneri Venkatesa Subramnaiam Aiyar. The motive to relay on the above-given translators is only because these translators are the ones who first translated the whole text on the category of native and non-native translators.

Keywords: Translation studies, *Kural*

Introduction

The rapidly growing multidisciplinary identity of translation studies has extended its range not only at the linguistic level but took the discipline to the practical experience of the translator to know the product given by the translator. Placing the translated text in front and ignoring the translator is prejudicial work. The connection between any text and the translator is equally

important as the connection between the text and the author. Various articles and papers that were found on the translation studies are mostly on the translated text rather on the translator. Therefore, the area in which this paper is attempting to pave the way to give equal importance to the translator as well as the product. The translated text this paper focuses on is a classical Tamil literary text which is originally called 'Muppaal', famously pointed out as 'Kural'. This text was believed to be written by Thiruvalluvar. His name and the history of both the text and the author is still debatable, but the fact that it is written in old Tamil proves that this belongs around 31st BC. The specialty of the text lies, on the condition that the author refrains from dealing with any ideas related to caste, religion, or language. Because the paper deals with the text and the context, it is important to look at the period in which the text has been written. The texts written in the period comes under the 'sangam literature'. Since the text 'kural' has no prejudice made this text spread across overseas. Kural has been considered as the most widely translated non-religious text. It is said that the text has been translated into eighty-two languages. As a writer, who is bilingual in Tamil and English, it is just fine to focus on the translations in English. The English language solely has fifty-seven versions accessible in hand. In this paper, one is likely to stick to one translator who is alien to Tamil and made an attempt to translate kural to English and on the other hand, who is a native speaker of Tamil and made an attempt to translate into English. Further narrowing it down to the translators the author has chosen to compare and contrast based on critical discourse analysis are George Uglow Pope and Sri Varahaneri Venkatesa Subramnaiam Aiyar. The motive to relay on the above-given translators is only because these translators are the ones who first translated the whole text on the category of native and non-native translators. G U Pope was a missionary from Canada, who spent around forty years in Tamil Nadu. Along with the translation of *Kural*, he also translated many texts including a famous text from the Sangam literature which is 'Thiruvagasam'. Later, he became a scholar in Tamil, Sanskrit, and Telugu. On the other hand, V S S Aiyar was a freedom fighter from Tamil Nadu who fought against the British Colonization. He also contributed to the Tamil literature; in addition to that, he was called the father of Tamil modern short story. He translated the *Thirukural* under the title 'The Kural or the Maxims of Thiruvalluvar' in 1916. G U Pope, on the other hand, translated the *Kural* under the title 'The sacred Kural of Thiruvalluvar Nayanar' in 1958. It was the period when the British colonized India. To contextualize the period with the translation made by both the translators is important because it is inevitable to look into the

context and the text from two different angles. Therefore, this paper will reveal the process and politics of the translations undergone by both the translators through critical discourse analysis with a major part given to the author and the reason for the terms used by them in the translation. The methodology used here to analyze the above mentioned translated texts is **critical discourse analysis** which is used when language is used as a tool to communicate the essence to explain the content. In the meantime, we would come across politics and the context of the texts. Critical discourse analysis, therefore, studies the structure, meaning, shape, from the tone to the reception of the text by outspread spectators. The application of each term, content, essence falls under the discourse is also the fragment of the assessment. The methodology enables analysis of more than one simple question by inculcating what discourse is being asked to do in the process of encoding (translating), decoding, and utilization by the reader.

Literature review

As '*Kural*' is considered a widely known text, there are many scholars who explored various aspects through it. While encountering some articles and research papers, one can find few gaps waiting for them to be explored. There are a few articles mentioned here to give the overall view of the area and how much it has been explored. Also, this paper has hired a few ideas from books and articles to justify the argument made by the writer.

'Active vs Reactive Texts in the translations of Thirukkural' by S P Visalakshi. This article talks about the translation of G U Pope by using step by step systematic analysis. This article weakens when the text concludes by stating that this translation does not contain the essence of the original. This void can be filled during the process.

'French Translations of Thirukural – A Comparative Study' by Dr. Uma Allaghery, in her articles compare two versions of translations of Thirukural. The writer wrapped by the article by comparing the two selected couplets form the selected versions and stated these two translators gave their best in translations according to their socio-cultural and sociolinguistic perspectives. This article contains the idea in which each translator will be inclined to their respective cultural and linguistic background with or without their conscious mind. The idea will be borrowed and utilized in this paper.

“*Tirukkural* Translations of G U Pope and Rajaji – A Comparative Study” written by J Jaya Parveen and V Rajesh. Here the writers compare these two translations based on the linguistic level. They further deal with lexical choice, punctuation, and collocation, and so on. Moving on with the same idea, they had chosen a few Kural from both the translations and tried comparing with the other. In the concluding statement, the writers have made a statement that G U Pope had translated ‘word to word’ kind whereas, while Rajaji translated ‘sense to sense’ kind of translation. As a writer of this paper, one can find this article hold gaps which can be filled in this paper by starting with G U Pope’s translation cannot be comprised in a term like ‘word to word’ translation.

The idea of Critical discourse analysis was borrowed from the book ‘Research Methodologies in Translations Studies- Routledge’ by Gabriela Saldanha and Sharon O’Brien. This book comprises many methodologies that can be used under translation studies.

Giuseppe Palumbo’s work ‘Key Terms in Translation Studies-Continuum’ enlightened this paper in the usage of a few technical terms in the area of translation studies. This book can be a guide for scholars pursuing this area. Also, this book comprises major thinkers in translation studies that aid the writers in many ways. Furthermore, the book also directs the scholars to many more readings to gain deeper knowledge in this particular area.

Critical Discourse Analysis

After encountering with the preface to, *The Sacred Kural* given by Dr. G U Pope, one could understand the purpose of his translation. ‘I tried to help forward the study of this admirable language among both Europeans and the Natives’ (Pope, 1886). As a writer of this paper and as a reader of this translation, one will find out whether Dr. Pope has attained his purpose during the process of his translation. ‘I have in transliteration used rr for ‘ra (*letter in Tamil-an extra stress in R*)’ and have, therefore, written Kural. In this, I follow the example of Beschi’ (Pope, 1886). Constantine Joseph Beschi, also known as Veeramamunivar, who composed the first Tamil lexicon – a Tamil Latin dictionary on which Pope looked up for his references. Other than this reference, there is in nowhere it is mentioned about the source of his learning. As one could agree on, every language has its link with its cultural identity; one might even raise a question on this translation whereupon Pope looked into the culture of his source language while translating

or it's just a mere translation where he could impart information from one language to another? The answer to this question is mentioned on his preface 'Generally my translation runs line for line with the original and preserves something for its rhythm, where this did not interfere with the infidelity to the sense', also 'you must learn not only to *think* in Tamil but also to *feed* in Tamil, if you are intelligible and useful among the Tamil people' meaning to say that, he has looked into the cultural identity and took socio-cultural aspect into account. During the process of undergoing critical discourse analysis, one could prove the above statement is justifiable or not. V S S Aiyar on the other hand had chosen as the non-native translator to be compared with Dr. G U Pope. Apart from a Tamil scholar, he was one of the major freedom fighters who fought against the British rule in India. Unlike the translation of Pope, his translation didn't get much fame. In the preface of his translation, he talks about the history and the purpose of his translation. 'I have come to the conclusion that the Authorised English Version of the Bible is the proper model to be followed by the translator of the Kural' (Aiyar, 1916). He wants his translations to be modeled on the Holy Bible. He also read the Latin versions before translation, to get an idea before translating. During his translations, he had only a little time left because he was being searched by the French police for his resistance against colonization. It is also mentioned that his purpose translation was '...in spreading all over the world the thoughts of one of the greatest men that have trodden upon the soil of Hindustan' and 'In undertaking this translation my object has been to sow in the hearts of my countrymen the seeds of the noble and manly life' (Aiyar, 1916). By analyzing both the translators' purpose of translations, it is quite clear that they want these great thoughts to be popularized in the western world.

Comparison

To hit the truth with, that it is impossible to compare all 1330 couplets of Popes' and Aiyars', therefore to pin down few couplets in *kural* based on the socio-cultural aspect. It is hard to narrow it down, but as a writer of this paper, one had tried to focus on the second book among the three books which is *Wealth*. Under the huge book wealth, the author again deduced it to the chapter called *On the power of speech* by G U Pope or the *Eloquence* by V S S Aiyar. Since the paper is on translation a study that comes under the way of communication, it is agreeable to lean on this chapter than the other. These two translations had published on the difference of fifty-two years, which means Tamil reached the western world way ahead than the English reaching the

Tamil. The first whole text translations translated by these translators happened during the period of colonization. It could mean that the translators found the necessity of translating ‘*Thirukural*’ to exalt the language and the values hidden in this text to the western world. Before going into the deep analysis, there are few general points to be mentioned when comparing these two translators. They are these two translators vary in form. Pope had translated in a poetic form on the other hand V S S Aiyar had them in a prose format. Also, when considering the structure in the frame, Pope is sticking to the line division the same as the original text by Thiruvalluvar, on the other hand, V S S Aiyar worried less about the structuring of the line. As a whole, Pope uses complex language whereas; Aiyar used simple terms that are understandable in a single read.

Pope : A tongue that rightly speaks the right is greatest gain, It stands alone midst goodly things that men obtain.

Aiyar : The blessing of the tongue is a blessing indeed: for it is a blessing apart and foremeth not part of other blessing.

Analysis: The term blessing is repeated in Aiyar’s couplets which stood apart in the first reading, and that shows the alliteration. Also, the term like ‘foremeth’ was used by Aiyar which is an old English term mostly used as a language in the Bible. In Pope’s version, he used the term gain instead of a blessing, which he considers the man who speaks in ‘right’ ways has gained the greatest things in his life.

Pope : Since gain and loss in life on speech depend, From careless slip in speech thyself defend.

Aiyar : Prosperity and ruin are in the power of the tongue: guard thou therefore against imprudence of speech.

Analysis: The two main contradictions here are, Pope uses the term ‘gain and loss’ and Aiyar uses ‘prosperity and ruin’ for the same Tamil version. By considering the time differences between both translations made, the translators perceived the same term in different ways. And a translation cannot be judged based on the different usage of words. One can understand there are many ways of mentioning the same term

Pope: ‘Tis speech that spell-bound holds the listening ear, While those who have not heard desire to hear

Aiyar : Behold the speech that Bindeth friends more closely and softeneth the hearts of even enemies: that alone is worthy of the name.

Analysis: The terms ‘bindeth and softeneth’ which again denotes that these are the terms used in the Old English Bible. Also, the author of the original text never used anything like friends or enemies, which is something Aiyar added in his translation. And, the translators have the authority to add, delete, or improvise the text they are working on. On the other hand, Pope is sticking to the exact terms used by the source author.

Pope : Speak words adapted well to various hearers’ state; No higher virtue lives, no gain more surely great.

Aiyar : Weigh each circumstance aright and then speak the speech that it fit: for the increase of righteousness and profit there is no other thing for more worth to thee than it.

Analysis: In the ‘original’ text the author mentioned, two terms which are அறனும் பொருளும் (*Aranum porulum*). This was improvised in Pope’s version as *higher virtue* and in Aiyar’s version he mentioned as *righteousness* and *profit* which could be considered as closer to the source text.

Pope : Speak out your speech, when once ‘tis part dispute That none can utter speech that shall your speech refute

Aiyar : Speak thou the speech that cannot be silenced by any other speech

Meaning: One must choose the ‘right’ term, which cannot be replaced by any other terms while speaking.

Analysis: Pope adds neither more nor less than the original writer. Wherein, Aiyar on the other hand eliminates few terms. This doesn’t mean, he neglects the essence of the original writer but the way he explains is easily understandable for the reader.

Pope : Charming each hearer's ear of others' words to seize the sense, Is method wise of men of spotless excellence

Aiyar : To speak to blind to one's self one's hearers and to take the substance in the words of others that is the part of the consummate statesman.

Analysis: Aiyar adds up a few words to make to reader understandable, which translates to lose its effect on the reader. Pope sticking the poetic sense helps the text to prevent it from ignoring the essence.

Pope : Mighty on word, of unforgetful mind, of fearless speech, 'Tis hard for hostile power such man to over reach.

Aiyar : Behold the man who is eloquent of speech and knoweth neither confusion nor fear: it is impossible for any one to beat him in debate.

Analysis: These two translations are clear enough on its first read, yet there is a variation from 'original' text, which is இகல்வெல்லல் யார்க்கும் அரிது means it is rare to defeat that person. In Pope's version, he mentions *hard* for hostile power such man to overreach but in Aiyar's version, it is *impossible* for anyone to beat him in a debate. The terms hard and impossible are different in many ways. Also, one distinguish term சோர்விலன், means tireless has been neglected by both the translators. They replaced it with unforgetful, and confusion respectively. They found those words much relatable than the term tireless.

Pope : Swiftly the listening world will gather round, When men of mighty speech the weighty theme propound.

Aiyar : Behold the men who speech is well ordered and couched in persuasive language: the world will be their beck and call.

Analysis: Pope is concerned about the language as well as the content while translating. While Aiyar gives meaning through simple language which helps the non-native students to understand the source text.

Pope : Who have not skill ten faultless words to utter plain, Their tongue will itch with thousand words man's ears to pain.

Aiyar : Verily they have a passion for much speaking who know not to say their mind in few and well chosen words.

Analysis: Again the term verily is a common term used in the Bible mentioned by Aiyar. Numbers mentioned in Pope's version are not mentioned in the source text. Pope's structure never changes from the source text, but in Aiyar's translation, the second half of the sentence in the source text is in the first half in most of the couplets. Because he translated the entire text in prose format for better an understanding.

Pope : Like scentless flower in blooming garland bound Are men who can't their lore acquired to other's ears expound.

Aiyar : Behold the men who cannot expound unto the knowledge that they have acquired: they are like unto the flower that hath blossomed on its bunch but giveth forth no fragrance.

Analysis: Here Aiyar's translation becomes more like an explanation to the source text rather than a translation. There isn't any perfect standard to grade translation or any guide to follow while translating, because the purpose of each translation varies from one person to another. Thus, these translators have attained the purposes of their translations.

Conclusion:

Keeping the readers or the audience in mind is a major part of the *power in speech* chapter is mentioned above, as an author, I believe translation is also a way of communication. Both the translators have kept their audiences in mind but in different ways. Pope wants his audience to think. He carried the essence and the depth of the language by implementing a rhyme scheme, inserting complex terms also translating it in a poetic form. At the same time, Aiyar wants his reader to understand his translation on the first read. It is easily understandable, which tells the translator wants the content to be carried out to the other parts of the world. By talking about the structure of the couplets Pope used a comma to separate the line division. In opposition to that, Aiyar did not give much importance to the line division rather gave importance to the content. Furthermore, the source text holds the specialty of conveying the content with only seven words

in two lines. Neither of the translators could achieve this in their translation. Pope focused on each word, each phrase and by inculcating rhyming words took him long for this translation from 1858 – 1886. However, Aiyar being the freedom fighter, he didn't get much time to focus on delivering the essence of the language or the translating it rhythmically, instead he gave importance in delivering the content to the world. Despite that, he employed the language used in the Bible. For instance, he began a sentence with 'Behold', 'O ye' and so on. Both translators vary from each other in many ways. This cannot be measured by stating this translator is better from the other rather, than connecting with what we learn from each translated texts is what matters. The translation is a subjective art, which cannot be weighed when compared.

Limitations

Though this paper has covered a few gaps found in some research articles in this area, this paper also contains a few limitations which could be carried out in further development. All 1330 couplets couldn't be analyzed in this paper. Also, the History of both the translators doesn't have a reliable source which is a hurdle in knowing the detailed understanding of the context in which the texts have been translated.

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