

ISRG Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences (ISRGJAHSS)



ISRG PUBLISHERS

Abbreviated Key Title: ISRG J Arts Humanit Soc Sci

ISSN: 2583-7672 (Online)

Journal homepage: <https://isrgpublishers.com/isrgjahss>

Volume – II Issue-II (March – April) 2024

Frequency: Bimonthly



Ventures into Readers' Influence on Translation and Suggested Translation Strategies

Yang Aijun

Zhejiang Yuexiu University, Shaoxing, China, 312000

| **Received:** 17.03.2024 | **Accepted:** 21.03.2024 | **Published:** 26.03.2024

***Corresponding author:** Yang Aijun

Zhejiang Yuexiu University, Shaoxing, China, 312000

Abstract

Translation, as an intricate and multidimensional communication conduit bridging diverse cultures and languages, fundamentally operates within a complex interactive framework. Within this dynamic process, readers occupy a pivotal position. Their linguistic proficiency, cultural grounding, reading habits, and ancillary factors not only exert a profound influence on the strategic selection and nuanced adjustment in translation, but also serve to ignite the innovative spirit of translators. This, in turn, bolsters the dissemination and wider acceptance of translated works. However, concurrently, readers' influence can yield negative implications for translation activities due to issues such as cultural misinterpretation, language barriers, subjective appraisals, among other challenges. This paper delves deeply into the constructive impact of readers on translation endeavors, elucidating their pivotal academic significance, and offers informed translation practice recommendations.

Keywords: Reader; Translation Studies; Influential Factors

1. Introduction

Translation, serving as a pivotal conduit between languages and cultures, has played an instrumental role in the tapestry of human civilization. I.A. Richards once asserted that "translation stands out as perhaps the most intricate event in the annals of the cosmos" (Nida, 1993: 1). Quality is an indispensable concept in translation scholarship, having a direct bearing on the acceptability of translated works within the target language milieu (Paulina & Pollastri, 2008; Schaffner, 1998). According to Wu Guangjun (2007), translation quality constitutes a multifaceted and dynamic construct encapsulating subjectivity, indeterminacy, sociality, and developmental aspects. Since antiquity, translation has transcended mere linguistic code conversion, embodying the transmission and integration of emotions, thoughts, and cultural elements. However, this exchange is not without its challenges, being influenced by

numerous factors. Among these, readers – as the final recipients of translated texts – wield considerable influence over the translation process. Rosa (2006) posited that target language readers can be bifurcated into ordinary readers and ideal or hypothetical readers. The latter category possesses advanced reading comprehension and cognitive abilities, able to grasp the profound meanings embedded in original texts, constituting the envisioned or expected audience and the intended communicative endpoint for the author. Zhou Lanxiu (2007) highlighted that readers of translated works hold a unique position and exert significant influence across the entire translation continuum. Kruger and Kruger (2017) further contended that translation activities encompass two cognitive processes: the output stage of translation, which currently garners much attention in translation process research; and the reception

process of translated works, representing the semantic interaction and alignment between the translator and reader. Presently, cognitive translation studies predominantly focus on the production aspect of translation, employing methods such as think-aloud protocols, keystroke logging, or eye-tracking to scrutinize translators' cognitive operations during translation. Nevertheless, the cognitive engagement of target language readers while perusing translated works remains largely unexplored (Jaaskelainen, 2012). From an academic vantage point, the impact of readers on translation is a complex and diverse issue. Most everyday readers often lack familiarity with source languages and formal training in translation. Their expectations regarding translation quality and their reading priorities may deviate from those of professionals, and their evaluation methods are typically highly subjective and intuitive (Hansen, 2009). Primarily, readers' language proficiency directly impacts the readability and acceptance of translated works. Readers with lower proficiency levels might encounter comprehension barriers due to unfamiliar vocabulary or sentence structures, whereas more proficient readers can parse the original text's meaning more accurately, thereby enhancing their appreciation of the translated work's artistic merits.

Secondly, the cultural background of readers significantly influences translation outcomes. Readers hailing from diverse cultural backgrounds may interpret and emotionally engage with the same translated piece in divergent ways. Their linguistic and cultural backgrounds can shape their reading style, thereby influencing how they construct and decipher the text's meaning (Ma Xingcheng & Li Dechao, 2020). For instance, certain concepts or behaviors that are normative within Western culture might be met with incredulity or difficulty to accept within Eastern cultures. Thus, translators must thoroughly consider the readers' cultural context and adopt suitable translation strategies and techniques to mitigate cultural clashes and misunderstandings during the translation process. Additionally, the reading habits and aesthetic sensibilities of readers also play a role in shaping translations. Each reader brings their unique reading practices and aesthetic predilections which, to a considerable extent, dictate their level of acceptance of translated works. Therefore, it is crucial for translators to gain a thorough understanding of the readers' reading habits and aesthetic standards throughout the translation process to better cater to these preferences. In summary, the impact of readers on translation constitutes a multifaceted issue encompassing language proficiency, cultural familiarity, reading patterns, and aesthetic criteria. To delve deeper into this subject, this article will systematically examine and explore both the advantageous and disadvantageous factors emanating from readers from an academic standpoint. Through this study, we aspire to provide fresh perspectives and insights for translation practice and research, ultimately fostering continuous advancement and evolution within the translation field. During this endeavor, we must not only pay heed to the needs and characteristics of readers but also proactively investigate how to address these through adaptations and innovations in translation strategies. Concurrently, attentiveness to readers' feedback and evaluations is essential to promptly identify issues and make necessary improvements. Ultimately, our aim is to discover more efficacious translation methodologies and strategies through meticulous research and ceaseless practice, thereby constructing a more robust bridge for cross-linguistic and cross-cultural dialogue. This paper aspires to scrutinize deeply the various positive and negative impacts readers have on translation,

contributing novel insights and vantage points to enhance translation practice and scholarly inquiry.

2. Positive influence of readers on translation

In the intricate, multidimensional fabric of translation activities, readers occupy a distinct and pivotal position. Their engagement, feedback, and expectations not only mold the final form of translated works but also profoundly impact the trajectory of translation endeavors.

(1) Facilitating Strategic Translation Choices

The selection of translation strategies is a cornerstone in the translation process. While traditional theories often stress the dichotomy between literal and free translation, in practical application, translators must make nimble adjustments based on the readers' actual circumstances. The language proficiency level of readers constitutes a critical factor guiding these adjustments. For readers with less advanced language skills, a more literal approach may be necessary to ensure clarity and readability in the translation. This strategy aids in reducing comprehension barriers for readers, thereby enhancing their understanding and acceptance of the translated text. Moreover, the cultural context of readers is another essential consideration in fine-tuning translation strategies. Translators must consider that readers from diverse cultures might interpret the same text differently. To minimize cultural conflicts and misunderstandings, they might opt for domestication strategies, making pertinent adjustments and explanations to the source text. Such an approach heightens the cultural adaptability of the translation, aligning it more closely with the target readers' cultural milieu and reading preferences. Throughout the translation endeavor, the translator must choose suitable strategies based on the original text's characteristics and the target audience's needs. Here, reader participation plays a pivotal role by providing personal background information, reading habits, and aesthetic inclinations as reference points for strategic choices. These insights not only assist translators in better navigating cultural disparities but also render translations more attuned to readers' cultural backgrounds and reading conventions.

(2) Fostering Translation Innovation

Translation transcends mere language conversion; it is also an exchange and collision of ideas and cultures. The quality assessment of translated works often relies heavily on readers' feedback. Such feedback can encompass multiple facets, such as word choice, sentence structure, cultural references, etc., offering invaluable guidance and revision directions to translators. Through this feedback loop, translators discern readers' genuine needs and preferences, enabling them to innovate and adjust in subsequent translation practices. During this process, readers' expectations and feedback exert a profound influence on the translator's innovative consciousness. Readers' expectations are a powerful catalyst for translation innovation. As society evolves and cultural exchange and integration intensify readers' expectations of translated works are continually rising. They yearn for fresher, more unique translations that cater to their expanding cultural and aesthetic appetites. This anticipation spurs translators to make bolder, innovative attempts within the translation process. They might explore novel translation methodologies, apply diverse techniques, and experiment with different linguistic expressions, among other strategies, to create translations that better meet readers' anticipations. This drive for innovation not only enriches the

artistic merit and social impact of translated works but also propels the ongoing advancement of translation theory and practice.

(3) Encouraging Enhancement of Translation Quality

The quality appraisal of translated works often hinges significantly on readers' feedback. As the final arbiters of translated content, readers' input furnishes translators with invaluable insights and guidance for revisions. Their feedback can encompass various facets such as word choice, syntax, and cultural nuances, among others, which enable translators to more precisely grasp the essence of the source text and make corresponding refinements in their translations. Not only do reader comments pinpoint errors and inadequacies within translations, but they also supply vital information about reader expectations and preferences. This kind of data is indispensable for translators since it helps them better comprehend the needs of the target audience, adjust their translation strategies accordingly, and align translations more closely with the readers' reading habits and aesthetic standards.

(4) Fostering the Ubiquity of Translated Works

The dissemination and acceptance of translated works are paramount objectives of translation endeavors. In this endeavor, readers' active engagement and endorsement play a critical role. When readers express strong interest in and high praise for a translated work, they may share it widely through social media, personal recommendations, and other channels. This "word-of-mouth" promotional method not only amplifies the influence of translated works but also enhances the translator's visibility and reputation. Moreover, readers' proactive participation serves up valuable market intelligence and feedback data for translators. These datasets empower translators to better discern market demands and reader inclinations, thereby fine-tuning their translation strategies and directions to create works that resonate more effectively with market demand and reader anticipation. The degree to which readers accept and understand translated works reflects their linguistic competence and cultural literacy, thus these works inherently serve an educational and popularizing function. Through the consumption and appreciation of outstanding translated pieces, readers can bolster their language skills and cultural knowledge, deepening their understanding of diverse cultures and ideas. Simultaneously, translators can amplify the reach of translated works via education and popularization efforts aimed at readers. For instance, they can aid readers in better comprehending original texts and translations by providing guides, annotations, and post-translation notes. They can also engage readers through organizing lectures, seminars, and similar activities, fueling interest and involvement in translation. Thus, we should fully acknowledge and value the pivotal role and impact of readers in translation activities, actively engaging and communicating with them to better meet their requirements and anticipations. Concurrently, we must continually explore and innovate translation methodologies and strategies to generate more outstanding and diverse translation works, making greater contributions to cultural exchange and international cooperation.

In essence, recognizing and harnessing the role and influence of readers in translation activities is essential. By proactively exploring and practicing translation strategies tailored to readers' needs and expectations, we can more effectively leverage translation as a crucial tool for cross-cultural communication and propel the continuous evolution and advancement of human culture.

3. The negative impact of readers on translation

Translation transcends mere linguistic transformation and constitutes a significant cultural exchange. However, during this process, cultural misunderstandings and conflicts often arise due to profound disparities in the cultural backgrounds, values, and historical traditions inherent in source and target languages. These misunderstandings and conflicts can not only diminish readers' appraisal of translated works but also negatively affect the broader context of cultural exchange.

(1) Cultural Misinterpretations and Conflicts

The emergence of cultural misunderstandings and conflicts primarily originates from the discrepancies and misinterpretations between distinct cultures. Such differences might encompass various dimensions like language conventions, value systems, religious beliefs, and historical customs. For instance, certain behaviors or expressions that are accepted norms in the source culture could be perceived as offensive or inappropriate in the target culture. Consequently, when such content is directly translated into the target language, readers may encounter misunderstandings or resistance due to their inability to comprehend or accept these elements. Cultural misunderstandings and conflicts have multifaceted implications for translated works. Firstly, they may result in a decline in the reader's evaluation of the translation, perceiving it as inaccurate or lacking authenticity. Ultimately, persistent cultural misunderstandings and conflicts can erect deeper barriers between different cultures, impeding cultural exchange and integration.

(2) Language Barriers and Reading Challenges

As an activity involving cross-linguistic and cross-cultural communication, the quality of translation is influenced by several factors, among which the language proficiency and reading difficulty experienced by readers are two crucial aspects that cannot be overlooked. The interplay between these two elements is intricate and nuanced, profoundly impacting the quality and effectiveness of translation. Firstly, the language proficiency of readers significantly influences translation quality. One fundamental aim of translation is to allow readers to accurately and fluently grasp the meaning of the original text. If the reader's language skills are low, they might struggle to understand vocabulary, grammar, and expressions in the translated piece, leading to misunderstandings and skewed interpretations. This comprehension difficulty not only increases the challenge of reading but can also lower the overall assessment of the translated work by readers.

Thus, translators must thoroughly consider the language level of their readers during the translation process, adopting language and expression methods that suit readers' comprehension levels to ensure that the translated work is accurately understood. Secondly, the reading difficulty itself is another critical factor affecting translation quality. Although closely tied to the reader's language proficiency, it is also shaped by the characteristics of the translated work and the adopted translation strategies. Should the language used in the translation be overly complex, sentences too long, or vocabulary too esoteric, the reading difficulty will naturally rise. Excessive reading difficulty can lead to confusion, exhaustion, or loss of interest for readers during the reading process, thereby influencing the dissemination and acceptance of translated works. Thus, translators must prudently manage the reading difficulty

throughout the translation process, avoiding excessively complex or obscure vocabulary and sentence structures, and maintaining the fluency and coherence of sentences to enhance the reader's experience. Moreover, the language proficiency and reading difficulty faced by readers also influence the selection of translation strategies. For readers with lower language abilities, translators might opt for more direct and concise strategies to facilitate understanding. Conversely, for translations that pose high reading challenges, translators might need to adopt more flexible and innovative strategies to pique readers' interest and assist them in overcoming reading hurdles. By doing so, they can tailor the translation to better accommodate the needs and expectations of the target audience while promoting effective cross-cultural communication.

(3) Personal biases and subjective evaluations

Translation is a sophisticated undertaking that engages multiple dimensions, such as language, culture, and cognition. During this intricate process, the translator's inherent biases and subjective assessments inevitably exert an influence on the translation outcome. These influences may reveal themselves in the form of interpretive deviations from the source text, lexical selection preferences, and the shaping of the overall translation style. Every individual possesses a unique cultural milieu, linguistic idiosyncrasies, and cognitive frameworks that significantly mold their perspectives and comprehension of the world. When translators engage with an original text, they might interpret its contents through the lens of their personal experiences and biases, potentially resulting in misinterpretations or over-interpretations. This deviation in understanding can have further repercussions on the accuracy and faithfulness of the translation. Moreover, personal biases and subjective evaluations can sway the translator's preference in vocabulary choices. Diverse words and expressions carry distinct emotional and cultural implications, and a translator's personal inclinations and biases could lead them to favor certain specific phrases while overlooking alternative, potentially more accurate options. This tendency can potentially result in semantic deviations from the original text or distortions during cultural transmission within the translation.

Additionally, the translator's subjective assessment also impacts the stylistic rendition of the translation. Each translator has their own aesthetic standards and linguistic flair that largely dictate how they convey the style and appeal of the source material. However, excessive subjectivity may steer the translation towards being overly personalized, thereby eroding the original text's distinctive and universal qualities. Thus, while striving for a personal touch, translators must also maintain a respectful and faithful adherence to the essence of the original work.

Therefore, readers exert both constructive and detrimental influences on translation. To optimally harness the positive contributions of readers while mitigating their adverse effects, translators must thoroughly consider the needs and attributes of their audience throughout the translation process, employing suitable strategies and techniques to enhance the quality and acceptance of the translated piece. Simultaneously, readers should approach and evaluate translated works with an open-minded and inclusive perspective to foster the healthy evolution of the translation industry.

4. Suggestions and Outlook

(1) Enhance the Professional Competence of Translators

As the central actors in translation endeavors, the professional acumen of translators directly impacts the quality of the translated product. It is thus recommended to bolster their professional training and practical experience accumulation, thereby enhancing their language proficiency, cultural literacy, and translation techniques. Concurrently, translators should continuously engage in learning and exploring innovative translation theories and methodologies to adapt to the ever-evolving market demands and reader expectations.

(2) Strengthen Reader Education and Guidance

The linguistic abilities, cultural backgrounds, and reading habits of readers significantly influence their reception of translated works. Hence, it is advisable to elevate readers' language skills and cross-cultural awareness through educational initiatives, publicity campaigns, and other means, thereby fostering a deeper understanding and appreciation of translated texts. Simultaneously, readers can be guided towards forming accurate reading perspectives and evaluation criteria through recommendations, reviews, and similar measures, thereby promoting the dissemination and acceptance of translations.

5. Drive Innovation in Translation Theory and Practice

Translation theory and practice are symbiotic, each informing and shaping the other. With a comprehensive consideration of readers' needs and characteristics, translators can experiment with novel translation approaches and methods to enhance both the quality and acceptability of translated works.

(4) Implement a Comprehensive Evaluation Framework

To mitigate the sway of personal bias and subjective evaluations on the assessment of translated works, it is suggested to establish a diversified evaluation system. This would encompass various appraisal methods such as professional critiques, reader assessments, and market feedback, comprehensively weighing the opinions and suggestions from different evaluators to provide a holistic evaluation of the quality and worth of translated pieces. Moreover, ensuring fairness and credibility in evaluations can be achieved by adopting transparent and open evaluation standards and procedures.

In summary, the impact of readers on translation is an essential factor that cannot be overlooked. In future translation practices, we must fully consider readers' needs and traits, fortify the cultivation of translator professionalism, propel innovation within translation theory and application, and erect a multifaceted evaluation system to gauge the quality and value of translations comprehensively. Only by doing so can we optimally harness the positive potential of translation while mitigating its negative effects, ultimately contributing to the healthy advancement of the translation industry.

References

1. Guangjun, W. (2007). The Progress, Meta Evaluation, and Development Direction of Contemporary Chinese and Western Translation Quality Evaluation Models. *Foreign Languages Research*, (4), 73-79.
2. Hansen, G. (2009). Some thoughts about the evaluation of translation products in empirical translation process research. *Copenhagen Studies in Language*, (38), 389-402.
3. Jaaskelainen, R. (2012). *Translation psychology*. Y. Gambier & L. van Doorslaer. *Handbook of Translation Studies: Volume 3*. John Benjamins: 191-197.

4. Kruger, H. & J. L. Kruger. (2017). *Cognition and reception.*||J. W. Schwieter & A. Ferreir. *The Handbook of Translation and Cognition.* John Wiley & Sons: 72-89.
5. LanXiu, Z. (2007): Receptor's Influence on Translational Action—With the Novel Translation in the Late Qing Dynasty as an Example, *Journal of University of South China (Social Science Edition)*, (2),110-113.
6. Nida, E. A. (1993): *Language, Culture, and Translating*, Shanghai Foreign Language Education Press.
7. Paulina. A. & P. Pollastri (2008). Evaluation criteria for the improvement of translation quality. *CIUTI Forum*: 239-260.
8. Rosa, A. (2006). Does translation have a say in the history of our contemporary linguacultures? Some figures on translation in Portugal. *Polifonia* (9), 77-93.
9. Schaffner, C. (1998). *Translation and Quality.* Multilingual Matters.
10. Xingcheng, Ma., Dechao, Li. (2020): A Study on the Cognitive Process of Translation Teachers and Ordinary Readers in Online Translation Review: Translation Quality Evaluation Based on Eye Movement Tracking Data, *Foreign Languages Research*, (4),28-36.