

An Exploration On The Transplantation Of Literature In French Language Teaching On The Track Of Engineering Institutes

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Abstract

Having a unique intricacy in French language acquisition at the tertiary level in India, literature plays a significant symbolic role, signifying a disciplinary tradition that can be seen in both the corpus and the teaching techniques. One of the rationales for intricacies is the mobility of French native speakers, who are scarce, compared with European countries or on the continent, intricacies are there. Academics have attributed new sorts of metaphorical and cultural value to literary texts as a result of social change and the introduction of new teaching/learning methodologies. The data is based on interviews done in 2021 in Tamil Nadu with professors of the French Language at the Engineering institutes. The analysis is done using a qualitative method. Academics are distancing themselves from traditional approaches in their shift from text-centeredness to learner-centeredness, carving out a new place for French literature in the Tamil Nadu context by "performing" it as teaching as part of the democratic project, as described in both discourse and practice. The new disciplinary ethos aligns with reader reception theory and French foreign language pedagogy, and it offers more light on the cultural and pedagogical responsibilities, literature can play in foreign language teaching and learning. The paper travels around the transplantation of literature in French language teaching on the track of engineering institutes.

Keywords: French Studies; Tamil Nadu; Engineering College; literature; teaching; Shifting.

I. INTRODUCTION

Having been centered on literature, French as a tertiary language (FTL) yields a lot of job and travel opportunities in India. The review of literature has long dominated collegiate curricula and approaches, existing independently of the language component. This may be seen as an outlier in India, where learning French as a foreign language is a key part of undergraduate education. It is an academic setting that assigns literature a significant symbolic significance as a cultural "extension" of language teaching and hence "representative" of French cultures, as well as a means of developing critical abilities through text analysis. This predicament is even further complicated by the significant role of literature in academic research. Indeed, the academic focus and character of French Studies (and, by extension, most languages

departments at the collegiate level) have traditionally been literary.

Since there has been a minimal examination of learner levels, needs, and interests, Everson (2005; 2008) claims that there has been very little thinking on acceptable techniques for teaching written works in French Studies. While traditional French designs of examining the literature have ruled the textual approaches used and are now a disciplinary norm, the research scholar argues in this article that scholars teaching French literary works in India are deliberately and intuitively changing their teaching patterns in reaction to current profiles and pedagogies, resulting in the formation of disciplinary norms. These disciplinary shifts coincide with changes in the learning and teaching of French as a different tongue in India, and they speak to a growing

disciplinary consciousness that values the function and results of studying French literature in the country. This paper offers a succinct overview of the evolution of French Studies in India and a reflection on the indications of scholarly works of a growing academic atmosphere in literacy instruction. In order to understand the pedagogic and ideological consequences of this process, a comparison is made between normative, text-centered, and learner-centered cultures. Finally, the final section of this essay, which takes a qualitative approach, includes excerpts from interviews with professors who have changed their teaching methodologies with respect to previous processes and rules. In India, the researcher looked at how these disciplinary transitions are "acted" in discursive utterances and instructional methods. These trends reflect broader socio-political shifts in India. Teaching language theory and practice, like the discourse in which they are embedded, are dynamic rather than static.

"Textuality" is understood as a discourse marker that asserts disciplinary identity and allows academics to redefine their field and legitimize the teaching of literary translation in India. "Performance" is defined by Bauman (2000: 1) as a "situated, interactional, communicatively motivated" linguistic practice in which "identity is an emergent building, the situated result of rhetorical and interpretive processes in which conversations make situation-specific- specific motivated choices from socially constructed repertoires of recognized and affiliated resources and craft these signification resources into identity claims for a demonstration to others." The term "socially constituted words and sentences" is used in this article to refer to disciplinary repertoires that provide a communal frame of reference within which academicians position themselves based on affiliation or identification. This refers to literary corpora (and accompanying forms of expression and patrimony) as well as orienting and teaching/learning cultures in the case of literature. Textuality is incorporated more literally in instructional rituals as a counterpart to discursive utterances, as seen by altering educational uses of the reading piece, which become acts of representation (showings) of these discourses.

II. THE GROWTH AND DEVELOPMENT OF FRENCH STUDIES IN INDIA

In India, French education has seen a number of significant changes in the previous decade, owing

to social development and the diversity of student profiles. The image of the French language has moved from elitist and European (with France as the projected cultural and disciplinary "center") to more utilitarian. To put it another way, learning French is now connected not just with literary and cultural wealth, but also with practical utility. Academic publications and shifting curricula reflect the emphasis on its possible usage in professional situations, and it has been highlighted that students' major purpose in studying French today is to achieve communicative fluency in the language (Horne 2010).

Several local academics have reacted to student requirements by emphasizing the importance of adapting teaching methods to foreign language learning, which has hitherto been disregarded (Balladon & Peigné 2010; Everson 2008). It is noteworthy that academics' research interests are no longer exclusively literary, but also include French foreign language pedagogy (*Didactique du Français langue étrangère*), a relatively new development in research orientation in French Studies in India. Indeed, in Indian academia, there is a growing emphasis on French foreign language didactics and the accompanying teaching concepts, which include a strong emphasis on communication, task-based learning, and learner-centered approaches. Furthermore, while literature is still ubiquitous in collegiate courses, its purpose and function appear to be altering. The growth of learner-centered teaching cultures, as well as the post-apartheid democratic moment, has undoubtedly resulted in transplanting literature, which involves new ways of engagement with the text, as shown in current academic discourse.

III. PROMISING PUNITIVE CULTURE

As stated in the materialization, trying to redefine the place of French systematic review educational programs is linked to academics' search for its significance in the contemporaneous Indian context: it goes hand in hand with the recognition of cultural plurality, a desire for inclusiveness, and impliedly, the need to pull free from cultural forms hegemony in the discipline space. The concept of a linguistic and literary "center" (traditionally bound to the land of France) has been completely debunked and rendered superfluous within the democratic regime and in terms of newer discourses around "French," and the discipline of French Students in India is now a gender fluid and multilingual disciplinary space. This "all-

encompassing" word refers to a variety of linguistic platforms and emergent literary genres in the south, as well as culturally diverse (Klinkenberg 2013). This is evident in the literary works taught to French Students in India: there is a substantial presence of French literature that may possibly create a newer "canon" alongside a modest but continuing representation of French classics (Horne 2013). Several interviewees resurrected the studying of French poetry as a means of promoting both variety and a feeling of belonging to the region. Academics are actively and overtly supporting diversity and conversation in the multi/inter/trans-cultural educational methodologies employed, in addition to the types of literature studied. Marie's article "Traiter la diversité culturelle :le cas de la littérature French en classe de FLE" (2010) investigates the notion of diversity in French literature amongst students of different linguistic and cultural backgrounds at an Indian university. In a similar vein, Snyman's article "L'écriture de soi pour promouvoir l'interculturel en classe de FLE: les racines en Afrique, les feuilles sur l'univers" (2010), "investigates and promotes intercultural skills through the introduction of writings of an autobiographical nature in Collegiate curricula for French as a foreign language (FLE) in India" (2010: 303). Women's memoirs from Dakar and Belgium are among the works included in this collection. Beyond the apparent reader-centered orientation of "writing the self," the author aligns this strategy to the Indian representative democracy venture by aiming to "promote a profound understanding of different cultures, as well as respect and understanding and sensitivity for values required for the construction of modern democracies" (Ibid). Everson's article "Getting under their skin: A cross-cultural approach to the teaching of literature" proposes a learner-centered, trans-cultural approach to the teaching of literature which clearly stands in opposition to normative text-centered approaches. The books offered, Moroccan male sexual literature, deal with variety once again. "Plurality of meaning indicates there were as many possible readings of any one text since there are users; poetry thus gains a democratizing role, and that alone is valid sufficient argument to justify its [literature's] instruction in the Indian context," says the author. (Everson 2005: 57)

On several levels, the starting emerging emerges disciplinary discussion in teaching literature, as demonstrated in the above articles, can

be seen as an achievement of "disciplinary democratization": in terms of discourse trying to distance itself from a prime example (viz. the French canon and message); inclusive practices around learner and viewer; and advancement of the tolerance, diversity, and collaborative reflection, which has become substantial teaching aims. Indeed, it would seem that inter/trans-cultural approaches, as espoused in these articles from "par excellence" to the post-apartheid "Indian moment" in their self-conscious positioning of literature as a platform to question and construct identities and cultures.

Traditional models of reading instruction, in which French Study have largely been canonized and institutionalized, are greatly deviated by new approaches to the text and altering conventions as indicated above. As Everson argues, native speakers of French in India "perpetuated the techniques by which they too were taught," emphasizing "in-depth study of literary works, for which the major educational tasks and assessment methods [were] textual interpretation and artistic dissertation" (Everson 2005: 53). In this respect, the academic genres of dissertation and exposition de texte have arguably shaped a classroom of youth, professors, and scholars' disciplinary imagining. The performance art power of the educational process, according to Donald (1992:46), is "less manifest content of syllabi...than the cultural rules personified in what was instructed and how it was tried to teach: those implied rules that define what is pertinent, what is common, what is valuable, and who has the chance to grant tone to a particular discourse." Academics are both generating and exemplifying new cultural values and conventions in the teaching of literary texts, as evidenced by the shift away from text-centered approaches, which are prevalent in academic contexts, and toward learner-centered approaches, which are encouraged in the framework of foreign language pedagogy. The appendix summarizes the symbol and actual importance assigned to poetry as a social and instructional item under these paradigms. The literary text has enjoyed a preferential place in educational environments (expressed by the term "sacralization," making literature sacrosanct); and has been presented as a type of "specialization," with the linguistic component taking on a distinct and secondary role, as seen in the above table. These roles are generally inverted in foreign language instruction, with literature serving as a "resource" to assist the main goal of vocabulary

knowledge. In this regard, a contract may be made between the role of literature in "big C" and "small C" culture: the former regards the text as a canon or cultural relic; the latter regards it as a work of art. The latter, on the other hand, is concerned with culture in daily life, or "native speakers' modes of behavior, eating, talking, dwelling, customs, beliefs, and values" (Kramsch 2006: 66). This concept of culture was later expanded to include the concept of a disposition or "existential competence," which, as per the Common European Framework regarding Languages, "may be considered as the sum of individual characteristics, personal characteristics, and attitudes concerning, for example, self-image and one's view of others, as well as willingness to engage in social interaction with other people" (2001:21). Traditional approaches to literature imply that the performative roles of teacher and student are stable and distinct, in that the teacher holds a normative authority on the subject (e.g. concerning the author, the era, the artistic movement); as such, the place of the *intentio auctoris* and *intentio operis* (the intention of the author; the "intention"/ functioning of the text) are prioritised over that of the *intentio lectoris* (the reader's responses). In second language pedagogy, on the other hand, the teacher serves as a facilitator, participating and promoting dialogue without being prescriptive. The pedagogical repercussions of text- and reader-centered orientations are clear within these two paradigms: the former emphasizes learner interaction, involvement, and subjective and affective reactions to the text, whereas the latter underscores learner interaction, involvement, and openness to interpretation and affective reactions to the text. Scholarly forms of reading and analysis such as the *explication de texte* and the dissertation focus on critical analysis; whereas reader-centered approaches aim to develop comprehension, reading competency, and communicative capacity, as well as creative and personal responses, all rooted in the learner's/reader's primary engagement with the text. Needless to say, these orientations are far removed from the traditional disciplinary ideal of the *intentio auctoris* and *intentio operis*, which focus on the workings of the text within an aesthetic and historical framework.

IV. INTERVIEWS AND DATA SET

- 1 Eleven professors from 5 distinct engineering institutions in Tamil Nadu were questioned about how they studied literature in the area of

French Students in India. Several respondents positioned their instruction of literature by including what they thought to be more egalitarian and authentic approaches to the text in their reflections on teaching methods to literature. The following excerpts demonstrate this by examining disciplinary speech and performance as "situationally motivated choices from socially constructed repertoires" for "display to others" (as defined above).

- 2 Decentralisation, desacralisation and dialogue
Within the disciplinary space, the idea of "desacralization" and "decentralization" of the literary text indicates a weakening of its dominant position, as well as a separating effect from a real or perceived literary center (i.e. France). The following excerpts from interviews with "Shiva" and "Tina," respectively, track similar themes, which are manifested in the formation of new standards in text selection, organization, and use: (Refer to Excerpt 1: Original in the French Language)

S: It was based on [the literature curriculum where he teaches] a tradition in this department, of teaching "dead" literature....as I say, in inverted commas..." dead writers" ...there were no contemporary networks.

When I introduced my favorite texts, as I say, it's to introduce them [the students] to another kind of literature, to let them know there's a different story to literature. There aren't only old Baudelaires and Verlaines and all these people who are dead.... there are living writers, writing today whose themes reflect and intersect with the old ones...there is no need to create boundaries.

We use excerpts, but I make absolutely sure that each one addresses a topic that is important to me in the context of learning French in India... I selected Ms. Diome's *La préférence Nationale*, which is an important work for Indian students because it deals with immigration issues. People who come to our country are accused of attempting to steal jobs from others... These are the types of topics that cross paths... A text like that, I believe, resonates with them more than *Le Pont Mirabeau* and others.

Int: In what part of the curriculum does literature appear?

S: It works as...um...supporting text... This means one might discuss a theme and use an excerpt to demonstrate how a certain issue is addressed in a current literary work. So, poetry would be a supporting text...helping to

comprehend specific messages of today and French society today [...] rather than teaching kids rhyming couplets, enclosing rhymes, and all that stuff...they don't need.

The new types of textual representation promoted in the above excerpt are based on Shiva's rejection of the idea that the literary corpus chosen is a site of French canonical procreation: this is firstly noted by the writers and texts that are considered irrelevant and outdated in the contemporaneous Indian context (Baudelaire, Verlaine, and Apollinaire). He asks for its renewal in modern works and significance in relation to Indian social issues, in contrast to the notion of "dead literature," in which the book is seen as a "monument" ("great 'C' culture") (the example of immigration is particularly apt in this regard). Within this literary "devolution" in French literature, the work of literature only partially "represents" another culture; it is mostly employed to illuminate the reader/own learner's culture, using their cultural habits as a starting point. Literature works to bridge gaps among local and global civilizations by "bringing" the text to the reader's socio-cultural frame of reference.

Another notable change is how literary texts are organized inside courses. This is demonstrated by the concept of literature as "supporting text(s)" and its (re)organization into extracts based on the subject. This movement deviates from the customary practice of presenting literary works in their entirety and organizing them according to historical periods (French literature is typically presented chronologically, by century). As a result, the synchronic approach to literature departs from the traditional "author and his period" approach by embracing current events. Furthermore, focusing on the text's meaning rather than its form ("rhyming couplets" are regarded as unneeded and useless) reflects realities outside of the text, subordinating (or at least, attenuating) the study of its internal workings, i.e., its aesthetic and autotelic functions. In this way, "big C" literature is desecrated and re-imagined as a tool for fostering discourse with the "other."

Shiva purposefully separates himself from an imagined ethnocentric (or even xenocentric) disciplinary "center" while still making claims to more inclusive modes of textual representation that reflect different identities in this discursive performance. He readjusts the study of French literature as a relevant and valid undertaking in the

Indian context by recovering the kind of material taught and the way it is taught.

V. SOCIO-CULTURAL OCCURRENCES IN INDIA

This viewpoint is mirrored in the following interview with Tina, whose textual selection criteria are similarly based on socio-cultural occurrences in India: (Refer to Excerpt 2: Original in the French Language)

T: I think it's helpful to identify texts in which either a universal element is highly present/or texts in which societal issues that exist in India are also present/as is the case with modern Moroccan literature in particular, but not exclusively [sic] literature written by women. It has to do with polygamy, young women's education, the female condition, and all that have to do with marginalization, abuse, power dynamics, and the value of virginity... umm...

Int: Do you believe they relate to that theme?

T: Without a doubt/because it's here... These are social issues that people are already aware of, as is the relevance of religion. It's all quite fascinating because we know that religions and ideas are very important in India, and there is a great deal of religious diversity, just as there is a great deal of language variation. There are always Hindus, Muslims, Christians, and other sectors in the same group of students, and there is always something to say.

Tina's point of departure in choice and method is intercultural, similar to Shiva's, but her approach has a more anthropological bent. The literature here serves as a conduit between both the learner and the "other," and the classroom is transformed into a miniature of civilization. Diversity and conversation are stressed as principles to be promoted in the classroom, and the multicultural mix of students is referenced. Sarah's teaching approach emphasizes responsibility to society and engages in the country's process of "unity in diversity" through the channel of the text in a similar and possibly more explicit way. The two excerpts above radically alter the traditional function of literature in second language learning and teaching curriculum, demonstrating Kramsch's explanation of the "postmodern approach to culture" in language instruction: "They [applied linguists] emphasize the interrelatedness of self and other across provided earlier in a decentred point of view, where the significance of events arises in a non-linear way in conversations with others, and

social world is crafted minute-by-minute in the ongoing discourse," they write (2013: 67). According to this viewpoint, the reader actualizes literature as a cultural "object" by their interaction with the text and in discourse with other readers/learners with and who they do not always share a common history, culture, or belief system. Interpretation takes place in this inter-subjective area.

VI. CONCEPT OF "TEXTUALITY" IN LITERATURE

The concept of textuality is also visible in what is known as teaching scripts (or classroom rituals), which are enacted in the roles that students and teachers play. Activities to promote communicative competence in foreign language classrooms are frequently "performed" through simulations and role play, in which normative, academic approaches to literature are typically lacking. The advent of participatory approaches to teaching literature, which is based on the ideas of identification and authenticity, deviates from this norm by allowing the learner/reader to take on new roles in connection to the text. This is more evident at the primary language levels, where language development and textual expropriation may occur simultaneously. (Refer to Excerpt 3: Original in the French Language)

T: I don't think it's particularly effective [close textual analysis] at the undergraduate level... It's the learner who fascinates me.

It's all about learning a new language.

T: They do learn the language, but there are always five competencies to consider. Because the student is a social actor, if he's learning French, it's because he wants to utilize it, make use of it, and act with it in society, whether it's with his Bangladeshi buddies or the Delhi student sitting next to him.

Tina's approach to literature is noteworthy since it is competency-based and action-oriented. Sarah takes a practical, functional approach to literature that supports the main goal of building language/communicative competency by focusing on various linguistic skills and their use in the context of social interaction. This is essential because the conventional academic distinction between literature and language is eliminated; the literary study is no more an end in itself and the text serves as a "pretext" to achieve a communicative goal, namely, to freely express in the chosen language.

Similarly, Meera describes a situation in which learners of various levels (beginners and "ex-matrices") are mixed in the same second semester, resulting in various – and hard to manage – language levels. Meera describes a situation in which teaching literature in the "conventional manner" is no longer viable, and she modifies her teaching methods to accommodate for learners' language levels: (Refer to Excerpt 4: Original in the French Language)

Our course content had to be re-evaluated... So, here's what I'm going to do next... I am a college professor... I looked at the competencies and objectives at the level I'm teaching, which is more or less A2, but for those who come from the beginning class, it's A1. If it's A1 at all... and I devised a six-week course based on excerpts that address the same competencies that my colleague [sic] focuses on in grammar class, but rather through literary texts, and it's actually not that difficult... It's about introducing myself and talking about my family....and introducing myself and talking about my family just happened to fall within my autobiography field.... So, I just picked a few excerpts from works that we thoroughly examined in class over the course of six weeks, during which I worked on literature, language, and expression... [...] It's challenging to manage, but I'm happier than I was before since I can now understand the degrees and competencies of students' linguistic abilities....and then I try to construct something...

The instructional use of the autobiography genre in this case is learner-centered, and the literary text is once again employed to promote language competence by allowing learners to make speech actions that are genuine to themselves and appropriate to their levels of language proficiency. The textuality inscribed in the activities above is visible in the *mise en scène* ("staging") of the reader/learner's voice, and in the self-referentiality of the activity.

As seen in the discussion with Ernaux below, the rising importance placed on sensory and emotive modes of reading literature is also being used at higher levels of language. "Create links among literature and students' life," is one of her driving concepts in teaching literature. The following excerpt demonstrates how she uses autobiography as a form of "self-writing": (Refer to Excerpt 5: Original in the French Language)

For example, I didn't know what assignment to give kids for La Place this year for autobiography [...] They had already authored an

essay on some motifs, they had already analyzed Philippe Lejeune's theory on the biographical pact and on Anne Ernaux's text, and there wasn't much more to give them [sic], so I thought, why don't I ask them to write their own memoir using two components from the text; the message is really about Anne Ernaux's revelation about her dad [sic], and secondly, she opted a style that Because her father was a simple man, she chose a simple style, and their task was to "write an essay as an autobiographical about your connection with your father using a style that you think reflects his character." And there I was... I cried when I read the students' essays because they were so genuine and gave so much of themselves... After that, two of them came to visit me and said it was tough because they didn't want to talk about their father's relationship with them, or "I didn't know how to express it since I have a terrible relationship with him," for instance... As a result, I believe there is... I successfully demonstrated the connection between books and their personal lives, and I strive to do on a regular basis.

The dual emphasis in both text and student orientations, or, to borrow Dufay's words, "distance" and "participation," is noteworthy in Anne's approach to teaching literature. The "critical distance" entails research into the autobiographical genre as well as text analysis of the novel *La Place*. The active and effective involvement of the readers/learners, in this example, in mimicking the writer's linguistic strategies to build their own autobiography, renders the word "genuine." In this way, the reader/voice learner becomes an active participant in the meaning-making process.

VII. THE "PRIVILEGES" OF THE TEXT AND THE "PRIVILEGES" OF THE READER

The liberalization of reading regimens in the French multilingual setting in India, as presented in this article, leads to a field of values and practices in which both reader-response response theory and foreign language teaching intersect in the subject's ethos (the learner and reader). Participation, cooperation, diversity, education for socially responsible, and experience in reading/learning are not new to the "new" India, but they (re)affirm the legitimacy of teaching "foreign" literature in a "foreign" language within a local context, by confirming learners' expectations. Academics' performative utterances are thus informed by a need to "find a space" for French literature teaching in

India that students can identify with, as well as a wish to distance themselves from a perception of French literature and its teaching as foreign, elitist, and alienating. In both content and approach, the emergent disciplinary repositions poetry as an inter-subjective and multicultural place that plays out in both the social and personal realms (in the co-construction of the meaning) (in the construction of personal narratives). Teaching/learning scripts contribute to a disciplinary narrative of empowering by "performing" the presentation and negotiating of identity in a contextually explicit manner.

Emerging disciplinary "laws" provide a case for the "rights" of the reader, which possibly outweigh those of the text, in this perspective (intention auctoris and intention operas). The ramifications for how people read literature are obvious and discipline-specific. Foreign language teaching strives to expose the denotative meaning of texts and language in order to make them understandable and facilitate communication and cultural competency. Reader-response orientations, for example, favor the reader's primary affective involvement with the text. On the other hand, building literary competence needs historical contextualization as well as awareness of the aesthetic and evocative purposes of literature. Whereas most scholars, like Anne, want to improve both literary and reading/communicative competence in the chosen language, the job is challenging and necessitates the use of many performative postures.

VIII. CONCLUSION WITH SUGGESTIONS

The research indicates that English Language Learning may thrive in French as a Second Language (FSL) programs; provinces should think about creating rules that routinely integrate such students in FSL programs. The new intensive French models are supported by interactions between the amount of instruction time and its intensity/distribution, which motivates us to continue testing out compact formats. Depending on what learners could do in French at different points in their program, pragmatic French program outcomes must be developed. To ensure that this knowledge is widely shared, it is critical to document effective educators and best practices. The Ministry and bodies of education ought to give great attention to this kind of research.

A complicated negotiation of discursive perspectives is required to balance the linguistic limits of the foreign language (and sometimes inexperienced) reader with the development of a capable and critically engaged reader. Subjectivity, affect, and self-expression may lead to the "naive," subjective, and solipsistic interpretations mentioned before when reading literature. In this sense, the goal of enabling the reader should be clarified and expanded, and it should ideally encompass a variety of performance roles, ranging from direct interaction to meta-fictional enjoyment.

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