

TRANSLATION - AN ART OR SCIENCE?: A REVIEW

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ABSTRACT

The paper reviewed opinions from literary analysts on whether translation is an Art or Science. Based on the differences in opinions of experts reviewed on the subject matter "translation being an art or science," this paper is of the opinion that translation is both an art and science, because translation requires creative problem solving in novel, textual, social and creative condition in intelligent ways. It is a form of cross-cultural communication which consists of two branches, that is pure and applied phenomenon of translation, both of which are interrelated and their relationship is dialectical. The paper recommended that language analysts should understand that translation is an art and science, because translation requires creativity, skills, oratory, objectivity, systematic observation and experimentation. So the essence of translation is to maintain the original meaning, using different languages to communicate the needed information to the targeted audience without missing the core meaning in the message.

INTRODUCTION

Translation supposes to preserve the appropriate stylistic resources of the target language by using the same register as it is in the source language. To achieve this, the translator must, first of all, be a subject specialist so that he/she will be able to communicate accurately, clearly and naturally the content of the original text. This can be achieved through arts, crafts and science. By art, is an activity such as drama, poetry or sculpture in which people try to create something beautiful or to express a particular idea or meaning through works. It is an activity that

requires a high level of skill which someone acquired naturally or which he develops through experience.

Translation as science is described as the study of nature and behavior of the natural things and the knowledge one obtains about them through observation and experimentation.

Craft in relation to translation means activity that involves making things skillfully and well.

The history of translation can be traced back to the biblical account in Genesis about the building of Tower of Babel. Because people could not understand themselves, they needed an interpreter or translators to enable them communicate freely with one another.

The paper is set to determine whether translation is an Art or science, so as to end the age long controversy between language experts as to if translation is an art or science.

LITERATURE

Ford (2011:20) defines translation as the 'replacement of textual materials in one language by equivalent textual material in another language.' It is the general term used to refer to the transfer of thought and ideas from one language (source) to another language (target) whether the languages are in oral or written form, whether the languages have standard established orthographies or not. Translation is a process of finding text language equivalent for a source language utterance.

Another very important definition which will be useful to our work is that given by Elom (2016 cf. Piaget, 1976) which states that "translation is an intelligent activity involving complex processes of conscious and unconscious learning". He goes further to explain that 'translation as an intelligent activity

requires creative problem solving in novel, textual, social and cultural conditions., this definition sees translation as both scientific and artistic, the definition is similar to the one given by Okolie (2009) which states that translation is a process whereby a message expressed in a specific source language is linguistically transformed in order to be understood by readers of the target language. It is a form of cross-cultural communication.

The importance of translation cannot be over emphasized. In today's world, people are fundamentally dependent on translation even when it emerges in its literal form. Finley (2005) holds that 'without translation, our work would narrowly be merciless.'

In order to be able to successfully transfer the message from the source language (SL) to translated language (TL), translation is supposed to preserve the appropriate stylistic resources of the target language by using the same register as it is in the source language. To be able to effectively do this, the translator must, first of all, be a subject specialist so that they will be able to communicate accurately, clearly and naturally the content of the original text.

There has been writes as to whether translation is an art or a craft. For instance, Berkeley (2011) writes that literary translators, such as Gregory Rabassa in "If This Be Treason," argue that translation is an art though one that is teachable'. Other translators, mostly those who work, on technical, business or legal documents, regard translation as science that can only be taught, but that is subject to Linguistic analysis and those benefits from academic study. This debate has a long history. In fact, views vary from individual to individual on the question. It

is pertinent to consider the salient terms, that is, science, art and craft.

Art has been described by Collin Cobuild English Dictionary (2003) as an activity such as drama, poetry or sculpture in which people try to create something beautiful or to express a particular idea or meaning through the works. It is equally an activity which requires a high level of skill which someone acquires naturally or which he develops through experience. Art, in relation to languages, is used to refer to subjects such as history or language in contrast to scientific subjects. The key word here is creativity. Science, on the other hand, has been described as the study of nature and behavior of the natural things and the knowledge one obtains about them through observation and experiment. Here the key words are 'observation' and experiment. Craft, in its own case is the activity that involves making things skilful and well.

Translation, a process of communication, whose objective is to import the knowledge of the original to the foreign reader, can be traced back to the tower of Babel (cf. Finley, 2005). Translation is a bilingual mediated process of communication which ordinarily aims at the production of a target language text into functionally equivalent to source language text. Translation is seen by some individuals as a process of creative thinking which makes it subjective in contradiction with science which ordinarily should be objective.

Some language analysts also believe that translation is an exact science, and that there is a one-to-one correlation between the words and phrase in different languages is not in any way less scientific than theoretical (cf. Bell, 2008), but translation as a science seems to be more directly related to contrastive linguistic than the other applied science. Most translation

practitioners support this view. For instance, Okolie (2009) believes that translation, as a cognitive science has to reach beyond linguistics and calls it 'interdisciplinary.' This is because, it has generally been used as a bridge between cultures and languages and this makes it a multi-science faceted activity or phenomenon. Since science has to do with observation and investigation, translation can be sub summed under it. This is because parallel corpora are sources of data for investigating the differences and similarities between languages and translation equivalence, is one of the best methodologies that can be adopted for contrastive analysis. For instance, James (2003), sees translation equivalence in light of Holiday's (2000) three metafunction of language, and writes "for two sentences from different languages to be translationally equivalent, they must convey the same ideational and interpersonal and textual meanings."

In this case, the structure found in both languages, the differences with regard to the frequency with which certain verbs and verb forms occur in the structure are investigated scientifically before normal translation is carried out. Translators receive extensive practice with representative texts in various subject areas, learn to compile and manage glossaries of relevant terminology, and master the use of both current document- related software (for example, word, processors, desktop, publishing systems, and graphics or presentation software) and computer- assisted translation (CAT) software tools.

The translation of video games is equally a very recent and specialized area within translation studies and its has to be carried out scientifically. Video game translation presents a variety of challenges to translators as they may convey the

intricacies of both technical and colloquial language to the target text. This is also true of the translation of computer program and related documents (manuals, help files, web sites).

However, some language translations analysts believe that translation is an art, not a science and that like most arts, it is a lot more complicated than it looks. Contributing to the debate, Nida (2014) writes that translation is first and foremost, an art and not a science. To him, it is art because it has to do with technical theatrical journalistic or cinematographic activities.

It may not be contestable that translation is an art, even when that art is based on a scientific or technical approach. This is because, like all artistic activity, it consists of a significant part of creativity. It is far more than a science in that it is a skill and, in the ultimate analysis, fully satisfactory translation is always an art. Okolie (2009) also sees translation as an art whose main objective is to reproduce an original text (ST) in another language in such a way that the 'reproduced text' closely identified with the original, without betraying any telltale signs of artificiality or imitation in his contribution, Bell (2008) writes that translation is a process, an operation, an act of transferring a message from one language to another. To him, it is mainly a skill, a technology that can be acquired, which often involves using language in which often involves using language in a creative manner so that it is also an art.

This corroborates Barntone's idea (2005) when he referred to translation as a craft and that literal translation is the basic producer both in communicative and semantic translation. Translations is an art or a craft which is teachable, technical translators, particularly, those professionals working on technical, business or legal documents see translation as a craft,

one that can be taught but it is subject to linguistic analysis and benefits from academic study. Berkeley (2011) points out that translation is a separate academic discipline which, like any recent discipline needs to draw on the findings and theories of the other related disciplines in order to develop and formulate its own method.

The fact that a choice can be made on how to do the job makes translation a work of art. It has been observed that most of the theoreticians of linguistics believe fervently too, that linguistics and translation are inseparable and interdependent, even though each of them is also seen as an exact discipline with specific techniques and problems. Translation (and translating) cannot be a science but can only be a discipline that treats or advances scientific frames of reference.

Writing on whether translation is an art or a science, Barnstone (2005) believed that literary translation is only a science in the same way that any form of writing is. This actually means that translation is never a science but an art. If literary translation is to be classified at all, it must be an art in its activity and product.

According to him, the activity of literary translation, of transferring meaning between tongues constitutes an art, its analysis and description- linguistic or semiotic may be called a science in so far as the instruments of its analyses (linguistic and semiotics) are language and communication sciences.

Barnstone (2005) also advised that it is necessary to distinguish between the activity of translation as an art and its analysis and description as a science, because frequently the activity itself is indeed a linguistic science or science of translation. Just as linguistics, studies of literature largely keep to their terrain and

do not make literature a science, so also literary translation cannot be regarded as a science.

Belloc (2010) believes that translation, as a second hand art, has never been granted the dignity of the original work and has suffered too much on the general judgment of letters; hence it can only be categorize as a science.

In the same vein, Gaber (2001:2) considers translation as both as a science as well as a craft when he writes that translation being a craft on the one hand requires training, i.e. practice under supervision and being a science on the other hand, has to be based on language theories.

Ford (2011) writes that whether translation is considered an art or a science is in the by-product of a long history of trails and errors, developments, improvements and innovations. However, because of the interaction of languages, literary translation may probably be subsumed into languages science. Such an approach has limited the usefulness of linguistic theory in itself and has resulted in its isolation from those who practice literary translation since painting, musical composition, fiction and poetry cannot be described as science, translation, particularly literary translation, can also not be described as a science.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The following recommendations are made:

1. Translation must preserve the stylistic resources of the target language
2. A translator must be a specialist in the subject area for a more understandable and accurate translation.

3. Every art of translation we must add and apply the ingredients of science which is observation using all senses, theory and practice and experimentation.
4. Translation is an art and science because in translation it is expected that the translator follows a logical sequence using his/her skills (craft) to send the required message to the targeted audience. Based on the above, the paper suggests that translation is both an art and science.

CONCLUSION

All said and done, one can easily conclude that whether translation is a science, a craft or an art depends on the nature of the nature of the text. Translation can be regarded as a science if the product thereof is taken into consideration whichever it is, translation should play the same role in the TL as the original did in the SL most translators will agree that the situation largely depends on the nature of the text being translated. A simple document, e.g. a product brochure, can often be translated quickly, using techniques familiar to advance language- students. By contrast, a news paper editorial, a political speech, or a book on almost any subject will require not only the craft of good language skills and research technique, but a substantial knowledge of the subject matter, a cultural sensitivity, and a mastery of the art of good writing.

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