

THEORIZING TRANSLATION AND TRANSCREATION

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Abstract

The present paper is an exploration of various issues connected with translation in order to examine the skills and strategies employed in it. The purpose of the paper is to show that translation is a creative and artistic work. The results of the attempt successfully lead to transcreation, a new and novel field of knowledge and insight. Translation is both an art and a science. The translator attempts to deal with choices, combinations, testings, expungings, constructing and reconstructing the order of words. The existence of possible alternatives between which the translator must make his choice is, according to Theodre Savory, the essence of his art. The experimental technique of translation is to articulate the innate innovations and creative visions. The echo of the originality is consistently maintained in the task of translation by the translator.

Key Words: Artistry, imitative, semantics, semiotics and flexibility

Translation is a dynamic art with creative functions and operations which permits the internal dynamics of one language system upon another. Translation is a process which involves not only the linguistic faculty of the translator but all his inner resources, poetic as well as imaginative.

Translation is a matter of method which implies a certain technical rigour, a discipline of thought, a demonstrable capability for linguistic verification. The multiple theories are propounded to clarify the simple methodologies for the difficult and complex processes of translation. But no single theory can claim to be normative, to provide a set of norms for effecting the process of translation. Nonetheless, translation does involve theoretical problems, however indirectly or implicitly, and the problems can only be understood and responded to issues which concern the working knowledge of language system. Translation is, therefore, a scientific activity. There is a science of translation as there is science of language.

The great French poet Mallarme said ‘.....the diversity of idioms on earth prevents everybody from uttering the words which otherwise, at one single stroke would materialize truth.’ (qtd. In Bassnet-McGuire, 5). He has emphasized the need and importance of

translation in the broader canvas of literature. This artistic work is possible in order to blend and converge the thoughts, feelings and imaginations and arrive a complete process of perfection and beauty of languages. The task of the translator is difficult in the sense for his choice of words, sentence structures and creative angle of imagination. The choice or selection is not between alternative-yet-exact-equivalents, but between number of equivalents. The personality of the translator matters a lot in connection to his selection. It is purely a subjective choice. The function and mechanism of the work is the satisfaction of the translator. The aesthetic enjoyment of the translator encompasses his/her free choice of words and expressions, structures and styles.

Transcreation is an entirely a new horizon of thought induced in the various stages and phases of the translation. The sense and meaning is not divorced from the original plane of thought. The difficulty is to maintain the same aura of thought and imagination, but in a new light and focus. The emergence of beauty of language, uniqueness of meanings and aesthetic enjoyments are the creations of a good piece of transcreation.

At a very simple level, translation is an imitative art, a reproduction resembling the original. This is certainly an elementary view. But there is an element of truth in it. Art, opined by Aristotle, is mimesis, an imitation of the original reality of something. In this sense, translation is an original art. Imitation is an aesthetic process and enjoyment. It is not at all a mechanical reproduction but rendering into another form and style of a creative art. It is an another intensity of an originality of art. Walter Benjamin was correct when he called translation 'the afterlife of the original'

Translation is a systematic method of science. The translator experiments all levels and aspects of language. He/ she has to understand the nature and function of language both as a system and process, both as semiotics and semantics. A language is a hierarchical taxonomy, a repertory of signs, an inventory of units, and combinatory system of phonological, lexical and syntactic elements. The greater function of the translator is to harmonize and negotiate all these aspects, levels and elements of language.

The central purpose of the present research is to reach an understanding of the processes undertaken or problems faced in the act of translation in the broader field of Descriptive Translation Studies (DTS). The pragmatic dimension can not be categorized, just as the inspiration of the work of art can not be defined or prescribed. Theory and practice interact to create the work of art. Understanding the problems and processes can only help in the in the translation as an art, since the translated text is the result of a complex system of decoding and encoding at the semantic, syntactic and pragmatic levels.

There are prominent questions raised in order to focus the quality of the translated text. The questions are elaborated below:

1. How does the translated text differ from the original?
2. What is the nature of the transformation of a text that takes place in the process of translation?

3. Is it possible to specify the quality of the translation?
4. What is the relation between the original and the translation :whether it is one of the static predetermined equivalence or are they dynamically connected to each other?
5. What is the intention of the translator:to give us an equivalent message or an equivalent effect?
6. What are the losses/distortions of meaning and their extent?
7. What are the 'Sifts' that might have taken place at different levels and as a result how has the translation suffered or been enriched by them?Are the 'Sifts' inevitable?

Every discipline has its technical vocabulary. Translation studies has its no exception. The basic concepts connected to this field of study like, 'loss', 'gain' or 'equivalence' need greater familiarity by the scholars of translation. The abbreviations representing the simplicity and clarity of the translated text are mentioned below with definitions :

1. SL for source language ,the language from which an act of translation is carried out.

2. TL for target language , that is, the language into which a text is translated.

In introduction to *Translation Studies* , Susan Bassnett McGuire writes:

“What is generally understood as translation involves the rendering of a source language (SL) into the target language (TL) so as to ensure that the surface meaning of two will be approximately similar. The structures of SL will be preserved as closely as possible but not so closely that the TL structures will be seriously distorted.”

The art of translation is not a monistic composition, but an interpenetration and conglomerate of two structures. On the one hand, there are semantic content and the formal contour of the original. On the other hand, the entire system of aesthetic features bound up with language of translation. Since language is the heart of culture, translation, by definition, is an inter-cultural negotiation. (qtd. In Bassnett, 5-6)

In his essay, “On Linguistic Aspects of Translation” , Roman Jakobson distinguishes mainly three types of translation:

“ (1) Intralingual translation, or rewording (2) Interlingual translation, or translation proper, and (3) Intersemiotic translation, or transmutation” (232)

Language as a system is constituted by verbal signs. Intralingual translation, according to Jakobson, is an interpretation of certain verbal signs by means of certain other verbal signs in the same language. Interlingual translation is what we usually call translation :an interpretation of verbal signs

of one language by means of the verbal signs of some other language. Intersemiotic translation is an interpretation of verbal signs by means of non-verbal sign system or vice-versa. Making of a novel into film can be said to be an act of intersemiotic translation.

J.C. Catford defines translation examining the linguistic view of division. Translation can be “full or partial, total, restricted, free or bound” (21) In Catford’s classification, a full translation is one in which the entire text is submitted to the translation process: every part of the source language text is replaced by target language textual material. In a partial translation, some part or parts of source language text are left untranslated: they are simply transferred to and incorporated into the target language text. This distinction relates to the extent (in syntagmatic sense) of the source language text which is submitted to the translation process.

The total translation is the replacement of all levels of SL text by TL material. It entails “the replacement of SL grammar and text by equivalent TL grammar and lexis with consequent replacement of SL phonology /graphology” (22) The restricted translation is the replacement of SL textual material by equivalent TL textual material.

A free translation is an unbounded act of translation. The process moves up and down freely in the rank scale of thoughts and imaginations of the translator. The rank scale is the scale on which units are arranged in a grammatical hierarchy:

1. Sentence
2. Clause
3. Group
4. Word
5. Morpheme

In a rank-bound translation, the target language equivalents are bound to one rank in the hierarchy of grammatical units. In this sense, machine translation is rank-bound translation: it sets up a word-word equivalence, but not between clauses and sentences. The distinction relates to the rank in a grammatical hierarchy at which translation equivalence is established.

There is no universally regulative principle for a good piece of translation. The flexibility and freedom of the translator is taken into account for transcreation. The task of the translator is to approach the problem from different angles. The translator is not a passive parasite, nor is translation a matter of unilateral derivation. He/she repeats the original creative process anew. His job is not the mere repetition of the original, following it slavishly through an alien language. As an artistic work, it does not imply a mechanical point-to-point correspondence.

The translator, as a reader, is not a passive consumer of the text. He is also the producer of the text. This is the implication of the plurality of the text. The text does not

convey only the meaning. It encompasses the overwhelming impact of the text through the dynamics of translation. The ideal concepts as 'total', 'full' and 'complete' translations are nothing but myths. All translations are inevitably partial. It is only possible to specify the quality of the translation rather pondering the general terms such as 'tolerably good', 'very good', 'excellent', 'outstanding', 'poor', 'incompetent' and so on. Perfect translation comes down to the level of value judgements.

The theoretical principles are not the sole and whole principle for achieving transcreation in translation studies. It is an art of possible in true sense of devotion and determination. If the limits of translatability are real, they are nonetheless relative. They occur at various levels such as lexical, syntactic, stylistic, and cultural and demand particular case oriented approach for the negation of any level. Limits are not exact boundaries, they are rather potential sites. The translator discovers a limit only when he hits against it. In other words, it is a modal phenomenon and not a substance that can be predefined. To ask what are limits, therefore, boils down to the question where are limits to be found in a particular text?

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