

Translation: Is it a Science or an Art?

B.Satyanarayana, Lecturer in English, Sri Y.N.College (A), Narsapur, W.G.Dist.,
Andhra Pradesh, S. India.

Abstract: One must bear in mind the distinction between a science and art. A science is a systematized body of general principles; an art is a body of practical rules. A science is an acquired by study; an art chiefly by practice. A science aims at giving us knowledge; an art aims at utility and teaches us to do. Though science and art are thus distinct, there is a close relation between the two. An art is always based on scientific knowledge and grows in perfection with the progress of science. An art always presupposes a certain amount of science or some practical purpose.

Key words: science, art, Transliteration, Transference

Narration:

Translation is a science because it presupposes knowledge of the principles of translation. It is a science because it involves the acquirement of the technique for the different methods of translation – Literal Translation, Transliteration, Transference, Transcreation, Adaptation and so on. It is a science because it requires the application of Anthropological Semantics with its insistence upon deep knowledge on one hand and culture on the other.

It is a science because it requires the application of high qualities like linguistic knowledge, bilingual scholarship, literary capacity, acquaintance with subject matter and a knowledge of equivalence and its function.

It is a science because it involves the extension of translation into other disciplines such as Psychology, Philology, Psychiatry and Cultural Semantics.

Eugene Nida calls it a science. He titles his book, towards a science of translating, Frenz in his Comparative Literature defines it as a science.

Translation is a science when it comes to technical translation. There, the subject

or the content alone matters. The form need not be created in translation. The translator of a technical document can approach the text with the detachment of a scientist.

Translation : An Art

Translation is an art because it gives us practical guidelines in translating a text from one language into another. It is an art because it can be acquired chiefly by hard study. It is an art because it teaches the know-how in the transfer of meaning from one language into another. It is an art because it requires a great skill-interpretative skill and imaginative faculty.

Theodore Savory calls it an art. He titles his book The Art of Translation. Anton Popovic claims it an art because translation involves the transfer of aesthetic and intellectual values from one language into another. Eric Jacobsen calls it a craft. The use of the term 'Craft' highlights the aspect of skill involved in it.

According to Douglas Knight, a translator should be an artist. It means the artistic sensibility as the requirement

of a translator. A good translation always merits a careful study as does any other work of art. Every translation as an art relates a particular artistic experience.

The employment of verbal accuracy in translation makes it an art form as that of the original composition. The translator has to seek a word, to express a thought or describe a feeling or an experience as found in the original.

Translation is an art because translation may be blunt or subtle, sober or cheerful, majestic or paltry as the writing of the original author, according to the skill of the translator. The distinction between the translation of prose into prose, of poetry into prose and of poetry into poetry provides an analogue and a contrast to make it an art form.

In literary translation, the translator has to retrieve the style, the texture and the word. This calls forth both passion and involvement in his relation with the SLT. Here, the translation is slipping into the realm of art... The realm of form and art. Lam Finlay claims that Translation is both a craft and an art.

Translation : Both Science and Art

Since art depends on science, translation must first be a science before it can become an art. Can it be regarded as an art as well? Yes, it is both a science and an art. Translation is an art which demands the rigour and discipline of science. It seems to involve an accurate and controlled manipulation of language which is tempered by a degree of freedom, imagination and creativeness. In Translation studies, both theory and practice are indissolubly linked and are not in conflict but in complement to each

other. Translation involves both artistic sensibility and scientific temper. Therefore it is both a science and an art.

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