

TRANSLATION :WESTERN TRADITION

This essay will deal with two issues – how translating developed in the West till mid 20th century and the beginning of the field of Translation Studies.

It is important to discuss the development in the field of Translation studies while tracing the tradition in translation because Translation Studies includes the analysis of key texts, enabling students to develop an awareness of the problems of understanding and interpretation. It also involves the development of the analytical, practical, evaluative, aesthetic, and expository skills required in dealing with translation problems. Finally, it includes the development of research skills, practical translation skills, and the ability to develop expertise for managing complex linguistic and cultural issues involved in translation.

What is Translation?

- The English term translation, first appeared around 1340. It has been derived from the Latin word translation, which comes from *trans-* and *latum*—together meaning "a carrying across" or "a bringing across" .
 - Translation is the communication of the meaning of a text in a source language (SL) into a comprehensive version of target language (TL) without causing any loss to the original message.
 - In the field of languages, translation today has other meanings apart from
 - ❖ the general subject field or phenomenon of ‘translation’ mentioned above.
- They are-**
- ❖ the product of the activity of translation – that is, the text that has been translated; and
 - ❖ the process of producing the translation, otherwise known as translation.

What is Translation Studies?

- A clear distinction has to be made between the notions of translation and Translation Studies. Translation Studies is the discipline that deals with the study of translation.
- The term “Translation Studies” was coined by Holmes in paper, “The Name and Nature of Translation Studies”, originally presented in 1972 to the translation section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen. It was later published in 1988.
- Holmes outlined the following two main objectives in the field of Translation Studies: (i) to describe the phenomena of translating and translation(s) as they manifest themselves in the world of our experience, and (ii) to establish general principles by means of which these phenomena can be explained and predicted.
- Translation Studies has developed as the field of study that deals with the theory, description, and application of translation. Translation Studies entails the systematic examination of translation both as an applied practice and also as a means of understanding the movement and transfer between diverse languages and cultures.
- Translation Studies deals with the practical experiences of the translator; it also explores from theoretical and methodological perspectives the history and philosophy of translation, as well as current trends in the field.
- Translation Studies may also explore how issues of culture, power, gender, ethics medium affect the act of translating. The study of these enables students to apply their theoretical understanding to the approaches, techniques, and choices that are used daily as a practicing translator

Translation and Translation Studies : From the beginning till mid 20th Century

- With the evolution of human society, we became more anxious to know about the thoughts and feelings of people in distant places. Hence we used two sets of symbols and codes to transfer the thoughts and ideas of people speaking a different language to our own language. This gave rise to translation as we see and use it today.

- The story of translation dates back to the third millennium BC. The Babylon of Hammurabi's day (2100 B.C.) was a polyglot city, and much of the official business of the empire was made possible by writers who translated edicts into various languages.
- . For centuries people believed in the relation between translation and the story of the tower of Babel in the Book of Genesis. According to the Bible, the descendants of Noah decided to challenge God's authority and build a tower that could reach Heaven. God, recognizing their wish, regained control over them through a linguistic stratagem. He caused them to speak different languages so that they could not understand each other and scattered them all over the earth. Since there were numerous languages, people started to look for ways to communicate. This paved the way for the birth of translation.
- With the beginning of translation studies and increase of research in this domain, writers started to look for specific dates and figures that mark the periods in translation history.
- Jacobsen in his work *Translation : A Traditional Craft* claims that translating is a Roman invention. Writings on translation go back to the Romans. Early attempt at translation studies can be traced back over 2,000 years around the key notions of literal and free approaches. These varying sets of terms derive from traditional dichotomies between "sense-for-sense" and "word-for-word" translating which date back to antiquity, to Cicero and Horace, Jerome and Augustine.
- Cicero and Horace (first century BC) were the first theorists who distinguished between word-for-word translation and sense-for-sense translation. Their comments on translation practice influenced the following generations of translation up to the 20th century. This is the area which Newmark calls the pre-linguistic period of translation.
- The Jewish scholars who translated the old testament never anticipated any controversy over the issue of translating the Holy scriptures, no intent or structure besides those of the Holy Scriptures could be of any value, because they were God's words, and since human beings were in reality in an inferior position, no discussion on the relationship between objects and symbols was deemed to be possible
- . Another period that knew a changing step in translation development was marked by St. Jerome in fourth century CE. His approach to translating the Greek Septuagint Bible into Latin affected later translations of the scriptures.

- The invention of printing techniques in the 15th century developed the field of translation and the 17th century witnessed the birth of many influential theorists, such as Sir John Denhom, Abraham Cowley and John Dryden, who became famous for his distinction between three types of translation; metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation: Metaphrase, which is literal and word for word; Paraphrase, which captures the general sense or meaning; and Imitation, which is a more liberal adaptation.
- In the 18th century, the translator was compared to an artist with a moral duty both to the work of the original author and to the receiver. The study of translation started to become more systematic; Alexander Tayler's volume *Principle of Translation* (1791) is a case in point.
- The 19th century was characterized by two conflicting tendencies; the first considered translation as a category of thought and saw the translator as a creative genius, who enriched the literature and the language into which he is translating, while the second saw him through the mechanical function of making a text or an author known.
- In nineteenth century, translations in the domain of literature were carried out, especially poetic translation. An example of this the one carried out by Edward Fitzgerald for Rubaiyat of Omar Al- Khayyam in 1859.
- In the beginning, studies of translation were mainly prescriptive and extremely simplistic regarding their approach to meaning. It is important to note that there were far fewer descriptive and explanatory approaches than there are now.
- The debate over literal and free translation went on up to the second half of the 20th century when the need for more systematic analysis of translation was quite apparent, and the only discipline which comprised adequate theoretical and lingual frameworks for handling the above mentioned dichotomies was linguistics. It can be said that in consequence to the debate over 'literal', 'free' and 'faithful' translation, in the 1950s and 1960s more systematic approaches to the study of translation emerged and they were linguistically oriented .

Sources:

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