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Is Translation an Art, Science or Both?

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Abstract

Translation, throughout human history, has always been an important means of communication among and between nations. It had existed since the time of the Egyptian Old Kingdom and continued to develop until it has acquired particular forms of translation theory. The present paper presents three different views of scholars and translators on the concept of translation. There are scholars and translators who hold the view that translation is a pure art as it is mainly based on the skill. Conversely, there are those who believe that translation is a pure science as it requires knowledge of the source and target language in addition to familiarity with translation theories. The last type of scholars and translators take the view that translation is a mixture of both art and science as it requires a skill, knowledge of the source and target language in addition to acquaintance with translation theories. The paper will argue that it is the last view which seems valid as evidently supported by the majority of current professional translators who have been questioned on the aforementioned concept.

Keywords: Translation, art, science, communication, skill.

A. Introduction

Throughout human history, translation has always facilitated and made inter-linguistic communication among and between nations possible (Ordudari, 2008). Needless to say, linguistic and cultural differences between languages worldwide may be viewed as a major obstacle in the way of communication. However, it goes without saying that translation has played a substantial role in minimising this crucial problem of communication (ibid). It has also played a major role in the development of thoughts and dissemination of technology (Bates, 1943: 7). It differs from interpreting in that it refers to the transfer of knowledge from a particular language into another in the form of a written text, while interpreting means the transfer of knowledge from a particular language into another in the form of an oral text, an issue which is beyond the scope of the present paper.

This paper will discuss the concept of translation taking into consideration the views of both scholars and translators. It particularly delves into the notion of whether translation is a pure art, a pure science or a combination of art and science. The paper starts by providing a considerably succinct account of the history of translation until the formation of translation theory. It then defines translation and shows how different scholars perceive translation differently from both linguistic and communicational point of view. The status of translation as both a profession and field of study will then be addressed, showing how translation used to be underestimated as a profession and how linguistics should offer translation a great deal as a newly established field of study.

Three different views of translators and scholars on the concept of translation will be presented. At one end of the continuum, there are translators and scholars who hold the view that translation is a pure art as it is mainly contingent on the skill. At the other end of the continuum come other translators and scholars who regard translation as a pure science as it primarily hinges upon the knowledge of both source and target language alongside acquaintance of translation theories. Other translators and scholars place themselves in the middle, arguing that translation is a combination of both art and science. A questionnaire, which has questioned current professional translators on the present theme, will next be analysed and discussed, followed by a clarification of the results of a translation task that has been given to the questionnaire participants to further demonstrate

their views on the present theme. The paper will reach the conclusion that translation is a combination of both art and science as it requires a skill, knowledge of the linguistic features of both the source and target language and to a lesser degree knowledge of translation theories.

B. Brief Account of the History of Translation until the Formation of Translation Theory

Various methods of communication have long been considered and utilized by people, with the aim of transferring knowledge among nations and preserving this type of knowledge to be acquired by new generations (Ordudari, 2008). One important method of communication that has been known among nations is translation, which can be traced back to the Tower of Babel (Finlay, 1971: 17). "The first traces of translation date from 3000 BC, during the Egyptian Old Kingdom, in the area of the First Cataract, Elephantine, where inscriptions in two languages have been found" (Newmark, 1981: 3).

In 300 BC, translation became an important element in the West when the Romans had control of multifarious aspects of Greek culture including the religious organizations. After that, the West became cognizant of Islam through Moorish Spain in the twelfth century. This situation provided a golden opportunity for a large-scale translation between the two nations: Western people and Muslims. Although there was a qualitative difference in culture between the two nations, there was a continuous connection between the two languages, English and Arabic (ibid: 3; Storig, 1963). When the world witnessed the collapse of the Moorish supremacy in Spain, Greek scientific and philosophical classics were translated into Arabic by The Toledo School of translators. An important period of significant translations preceded the era of Shakespeare, his contemporaries, classicism of French culture and the Romantic Movements (Newmark, 1981: 3).

In the nineteenth century, translation was the most noticeable way of communication between eminent men of letters, scientists, philosophers and educated readers around the globe. International agreements between states were also translated along with those held between public and private organizations. Other factors which gave translation a prominent political importance were the formation of a multi-national company, the establishment of a new international body and the constitution of an

independent state. Other demands which raised the need for translation lied in the increase in technology and the need for transferring it to developing countries, in addition to the important publications which were always published in several languages. Another demand for translation was represented by the increase in communication around the world as the whole universe became a global village (ibid: 3). In the twentieth century, translation flourished to the extent that the aforementioned age was called the age of translation (Jumpelt, 1961) or the age of reproduction (Benjamin, 1923).

Translation flourished further as medical, scientific and technical journals were translated in America and Soviet Union. Translators were also employed in the European Economic Community (EEC). Around eighty thousands scientific journals were translated every year in 1967. Some translated materials had a better record in sale, compared with their original copies. In Italy and smaller European countries, some writers relied on translation for living, whether this translation was for their own works or for others' (Newmark, 1981: 3-4). By contrast, literary translation was clearly neglected in developing countries (ibid: 4).

It is worth noting that only little was recorded about the volume of translation. There was a clear ignorance of important aspects of translation. One important aspect which was neglected was the contribution of translation to the promotion of national languages. Other crucial aspects were the links of translation to thought, meaning and language universals. However, translation was primarily discussed in light of two important concepts. The first was free/literal translation debate, whilst the second was the contradiction between the translation's definite necessity and its intrinsic impossibility (ibid: 4).

One significant work on translation was Tytler's (1790) in which he points out that a good translation is that which involves successful and complete transfer of the merit of the original text into another language in such a way that the target text is as strongly understood by the target reader as the source text by the source reader. In the nineteenth century, works on translation by authors such as Goethe (1813 1814), Schleiermacher (1813), Humboldt (1816), Schopenhauer (1851) and Nietzsche (1882) tended to adopt literal translation approach, whereas Arnold (1928) preferred a simple style in the translation of Homer. In the twentieth century, scholars such as

Croce (1922), Ortega y Gasset (1937) and Valery (1946) probed into the adequacy of translation, with special reference to poetry. Benjamin (1923) viewed translation as a bridge between languages. He favoured literal translation approach at word level as well as sentence level, claiming that word for word translation can serve as a bridge between languages. Indeed, this period of translation development witnessed an undeniable inclination towards literal translation approach.

Some frame of translation theory was formulated as a result of the increase in number of translators and materials to be translated (Newmark, 1981: 4). The increase in technological terms, electronics, and the desire to obtain standardised terms, all these factors created a need for some form of translation theory. However, it can be claimed that the main reason behind the formulation of translation theory, devising methodical strategic approaches to translation and running translation courses was the extremely weak quality of several published translated works (ibid: 4-5). There was hardly any translation with no mistakes. In contemporary time, it has become generally politically significant to have an agreed decision on the general principles of translation and what determines accurate translation (ibid: 5).

Translation theory is derived from comparative linguistics and is an important aspect of semantics. It is influenced by sociolinguistics which is concerned with questioning the social registers and problems of languages in contact within a single state or between neighbouring states. Since the field of semantics is always thought of as a cognitive discipline without connotations, rather than as a practice to obtain communication, translation theory would unquestionably involve semiotics - the science of signs – as a crucial factor. The founder of translation theory is the American philosopher C. S. Peirce (1934). He emphasised the communicative element of any sign, asserting that the meaning of a sign is composed of all effects that may practically influence the interpretant, and which will differ according to the interpretant per se. No sign will ipso facto have an independent sense (Newmark, 1981: 5).

This is a considerably succinct account of the history of translation, which unquestionably proves that translation had existed since old times and that it passed through different stages of development until it has reached a particular form of knowledge of generally established and specified

criteria. Translation, at current times, has a theoretical framework, methods and strategic approaches, which every translator has to bear in mind before embarking upon any translation project.

C. Definition and Perception of Translation among Scholars

'Translate' can be defined as "turn from one language into another; express the sense of in another language. Also, express in other words, paraphrase" (Shorter Oxford English Dictionary, 2007: 3324). According to Lewis (1947), 'translate' is derived from the Latin terms 'trans' + 'latus', which carry the sense of 'carried across'. Foster (1958) and Bell (1991) view translating as the process in which the meaning of a particular text is rendered from a particular language into another. This is espoused by Catford (1965), who contends that translation points to the replacement of a textual element between two given languages. This is advocated by Pinchuck (1977), who claims that translating is a process through which a translator seeks to find an equivalent term in the target language (TL) that can stand for the source language (SL) term 38. Within the same line of thought, Bassnett (1980) asserts that translating is concerned with rendering meaning from an SL text into a TL text so that the meaning in both texts would be approximately identical. This is done while preserving as closely as possible the structure of the SL, but not to the extent that the TL structure will be distorted.

From a communicational point of view, Levy (1967) sees translating as a process of communication the goal of which is to transfer the knowledge in question from the SL to the target reader (TR). Within this line of thought, Savory (1969) points out that translation is concerned with the communication of ideas between languages, which is beyond textual equivalent. This is lent credence by Hatim and Mason (1997), who see translation as "an act of communication", the goal of which is to convey another act of communication across different languages and cultures (1). Taking this concept further, Nida (1984) states that translating is a process of reproducing in the TL the closest natural correspondent term of the SL with regard to both meaning and style (83). Considering equivalent effect a paramount criterion for a good translation, both Edwards (1957) and Knox (1957) contend that the target text (TT) has to create nearly the same effect on the TR as that created by the source text (ST) on the reader of the original text. This notion is given credence by Foster (1958), who stipulates that the

translation has to fulfil the same function as that fulfilled by the ST in order to be a good translation (6).

From another perspective, Robinson (1997) views translation as a type of learning, arguing that when translating, learning is achieved whether consciously or unconsciously as a result of different complex processes that take place along with translating (49). He goes on to add that translation is considered a problem-solving activity that is usually exercised in new cultural, social and textual conditions (51). This is seconded by Kaur (2005), who confirms that translation is a problem-solving activity. Hatim and Mason (1990) put forward the notion that translation is a useful tool through which the role of language in social life can be examined (1).

D. Status of Translation as Both a Profession and Field of Study

Translation, throughout its history, has never been as respected and recognized as other professions like medicine and engineering. Translators have always spoken about the underestimation of translation compared to other professions (Baker, 2002: 2). Translation has never been given the status of an original work and has been oppressed on the basis of general judgment of letters (Belloc, 1931: 6). In the first conference which was held at the Institute of Translation and Interpreting, Professor Bellos was reported to have said "The main impetus and concern of this first ITI Conference was the unjustly low status in professional terms of the translator. An appropriate theme, since it was one of the main reasons for the formation of the ITI" (1987: 163).

Baker (2002) argues that it is unequivocal that translation does not enjoy high status in society, which is with no doubt unjust; however, this is not totally the public fault. The translation community is to blame as they have underestimated matters in translation, such as the complexity of the translation process. Therefore, the need for formal professional training in the field of translation is necessary (2).

Skilful and gifted translators, who have never been on formal training translation courses, but who have nevertheless acquired good competence through diverse and lengthy experience, are likely to hold the view that the translation community can achieve a high level of competence in translation once they follow the same path. This is supported by Castellano (1988), who states:

Our profession is based on knowledge and experience. It has the longest apprenticeship of any profession. Not until thirty do you start to be useful as a translator, not until fifty do you start to be in your prime.
The first stage of the career pyramid – the apprenticeship stage – is the time we devote to investing in ourselves by acquiring knowledge and experience of life. (133).

Baker (2002) problematises this lengthy path for translation career indicated above. She points out that it takes translators a very long time to acquire the skills required for translation that your profession is almost over before it really starts (3). Another point that is worth mentioning here is that unlike other professions, such as medicine and engineering, translation is deemed a young field within academia. It is just starting to exist as an independent field of study in a number of colleges and universities worldwide. Being a new field of study, it unequivocally needs to draw on the findings of related fields in order to build and formalise its theories and methods though the fields that are thought of being related to translation are still undetermined. Generally, any field which is broadly concerned with how meaning is conveyed among and between different groups of people who belong to diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds is related to translation (ibid: 4). In order for translation to be a profession, translators are required to acquire a good knowledge of the raw material that they make use of in their work. They are also responsible for understanding what language means and how it is used by its speakers (ibid: 4).

In fact, it is the field of linguistics, which is concerned with the study of language as both an independent science and a tool for creating meanings. It should ipso facto have a good deal to offer to the newly established field of translation studies. It enables translators to be aware of the nature of language and how a particular language is functioned within a particular speech community (ibid: 4).This with no doubt applies to modern linguistics, which does not only focus on the study of language itself, but it also encompasses two other important sub-fields. The first is known as text-linguistics, which studies text as a communicative event, while the second is called pragmatics, which studies language in use (ibid: 4-5).

E. Views of Translators and Scholars on the Concept of Translation

Translators are not yet certain "whether translation is a trade, an art, a profession or a business" (Bellos, 1987: 164). The longitudinal debate as to whether translation should be viewed as a piece of art or science has an extended historical basis (Ordudari, 2008). In theoretical terms, translation can be seen as a science, while it appears reasonable to be considered an art from a practical point of view (ibid). Indeed, having acknowledged the important role of translation, which lies in acting as a bridge between diverse and different cultures, it seems that translation is a phenomenon of multifarious and complex dimensions (ibid).

Some translators argue over the merit of regarding translation as an art asserting that translation is one of these professions that need general knowledge, aptitude and practice, and therefore, they argue against formal academic training in translation (Baker, 2002: 3). They believe that a person who is capable of translating from one language into another is a talented and gifted person, clarifying that the ability to translate is a talent which a person may or may not possess. They also add that the term 'theory' is ipso facto irrelevant to the field of translation (ibid: 3). This goes in line with some academics who hold the view that translation can never be systematised by a particular law as it is subjective and is a result of a process of creative thinking (Ordudari, 2008). Long (1996), for instance, believes that the notion of turning translation into a science is just a wishful idea, and has no applications in reality. This is in line with Bassnett (1980), who confirms that any debate about the existence of a science of translation is outdated as there exists a particular discipline of translation studies questioning the process of translation and seeking to explain the question of equivalence and the constituents of meaning. However, there is still no theory which is deemed normative within this field of knowledge (p. 37).

Although translation plays an essential role in contemporary world, some academics view translation as a second-hand art (Ordudari, 2008). Savory (1969) claims that translation lacks a set of universally accepted principles to be regarded as an autonomous science. This is due to the disagreement among academics in this particular discipline upon the identification of specific rules that can be used to govern the field of translation. Consequently, translation in the view of Savory (1969) is a kind of art. This is advocated

by Chukovskii (1984: 93), who does not regard translation as a science, asserting that translation should be seen as a high art.

By contrast, the majority of translators are likely to view their work as a profession and would like to be treated as professionals rather than as workers with a particular skill. However, achieving this would require translators to reflect on their work and how it is done. They need to demonstrate to other professionals and to themselves that they have control over what they do; that their well-respected translation does not stem from the notion that they have the skill of translating, but rather springs from the fact that they have made a concerted effort to be cognisant of different aspects of their work (Baker, 2002: 4). Within the same line of thought, Kelly (1979) and other academics and translators like St. Jerome believe that translation is a branch of oratory (51).

Holmes (1972/1988) divides the science of translation studies into two main divisions: pure translation studies and applied translation studies. He then goes on to explain that the aim of pure translation studies is to provide a descriptive account of the translation phenomenon and question all aspects specific to this particular field. On the other hand, he asserts that applied translation studies are primarily concerned with the application of translation theories and aspects of translation, such as the teaching and learning of translation and translation practice. He argues that the relationship between all factions of translation is dialectical. Toury (1995: 7) holds the view that pure and applied translation studies are related to one another in a unidirectional way. In other words, theories emanating from pure translation studies may serve as a supporting source for applied translation studies. Moreover, Toury (1982) points out that translation as a cognitive science has to reach beyond the field of linguistics, and therefore he views translation as an 'interdisciplinary' field.

Some scholars support the notion of viewing translation as a science in the form of word for word. Among those scholars is Norton (1984: 59), who quotes Horace (65-68 B.C.) stating that "it is the duty of a faithful interpreter to translate what he undertakes word for word." Within the same line of thought, Newmark (1988: 7) contends that translation begins with the method of literal translation, which is deemed the basic procedural technique in both communicative and semantic translation. Newmark (1981) goes on to claim that literal translation above word level is the

appropriate technique adopted in a particular translation project if the SL and the TL conceptual meanings correspond.

Although amongst the salient features of science are precision and predictability, some scholars, especially those who view translation as a science, argue that some sciences do not seem to attain one hundred percent predictability level. Berkeley (1991: 83), supporting this theme, claims that some sciences, particularly those dealing with humanities, do not possess a complete predictability level. Translation, according to a group of scholars, may be subject to development, which supports the notion of regarding translation as a science. This goes in line with Miremadi (1991: 39), who argues that translation in its modern sense is a 'by-product' of a history which is full of trials and errors and is subject to development and innovation.

Other scholars view translation differently; they believe that translation is both an art and science. Among those is Zaixi (1997: 339-340), who contends that translation is a process of transferring knowledge from one language into another. It can be viewed as a skill which can be acquired and it involves also the use of language in a creative way, hence, it can be considered an art. Conversely, Zaixi expressly confirms that translation is a science. He then concludes that 'translation studies', the field to which translation is related, should also be dealt with as a science. This is due to the fact that 'translation studies' contains a corpus of translation knowledge which seeks to present the laws applicable to translation process. This is lent credence by Gabr (2001), who regards translation as both art and science. He goes on to explain that translation, on one hand, is an art as it requires a skill which needs practice and training. On the other hand, translation is a science as it is founded on language theories. The same theme is echoed by Azizinezhad (2004), who asserts that translation shares some features with art as well as science. At times it involves some idiosyncrasies and the translator's intuition. The translator's thought and personality are often reflected in his/her work.

F. Views of Current Translators on the Concept of Translation

From a practical point of view, and in order to enrich the present discussion; make the most relevant argument and reach the final conclusion, views of twenty current translators who are registered at the Institute of Linguist (IOL) website have been recorded with regard to the concept of translation. Twelve of these translators are males, while eight are females. These translators must have passed a rigorous exam in translation in order to be able to register in the IOL website, which indicates their high standard in this particular field. Moreover, the twenty translators, who have taken part in the present questionnaire, have been meticulously selected on the basis of recommendations given by eminent academics in the field of translation studies. A questionnaire of ten closed-ended questions, each of which is tailed with space for adding possible comments, except for the first two questions, has been electronically distributed to the target audience. In addition to the first two questions which are deemed personal as they tackle issues like the length of experience in translation each of the target translators has and the type of translator each of the target translators belongs to, the questionnaire contains eight questions which clearly raise eight important points.

The first point is related to the type of text/texts each of the target translators often deals with. The second is concerned with the notion of whether or not the translator should possess a particular skill in order to be able to cope with translation work. The third point throws an important idea which resides in whether or not the translator should be gifted to be qualified to translate. The fourth investigates the concept of whether or not the translator should be acquainted with the linguistic characteristics of both the source language (SL) and the target language (TL). The fifth point covers translation theories and whether or not these theories are crucial to the translator to be cognisant of. The sixth involves the translation strategy and whether or not the translator is required to adopt a translation strategy prior to the start of translation work. The seventh point presents three elements and questions the importance thereof to the translator. These are: 1. possession of a special skill for translation 2. Awareness of the linguistic features of both the SL and the TL 3. Knowledge of the translation theories. The question which is raised is whether these elements are equally important to the translator or some are superior to others. The last point includes the main theme of the whole questionnaire which is also the core point of the present paper; this

lies in the concept of whether translation is a pure art, a pure science or both. Beside the questionnaire, the participants have been given a translation task and have been asked to comment on their translation as whether it is a pure art, a pure science or both. They have been given a two-paragraph text selected from (Dickins, Hervey and Higgins, 2002: 14) to translate from Arabic into English. This task has been assigned to the participants in addition to the questionnaire to further investigate their views of whether translation is a pure art, a pure science or both.

F.1 Data Analysis and Discussion

Four out of twenty translators, who have taken part in the present study, have from three to ten year experience in the field of translation. On the other hand, sixteen out of twenty translators have been working in this particular field for more than ten years. This with no doubt strengthens the results of the present survey as the majority of the participants have vast experience in the field of translation. With regard to the nature of the work of the translators who have participated in this survey, sixteen out of twenty translators work as freelance translators while three work as both employed translators and freelance translators. The last translator works as a freelance translator in addition to being a 'level-6-interpreting-lecturer' and examiner for the diploma in translation, which is a postgraduate qualification recognised as level 7 according to (UK National Vocational Framework). Having the majority of the participants as freelance translators undoubtedly enhances the findings of the survey in hand as the freelance translator must have worked for different places and have had the experience and expertise of dealing with diverse text types.

As an answer to the third question, three out of twenty translators, who have completed the present survey, often work on general texts. One of these translators has specified some of the text types which he usually works on, pointing out that amongst the text types he often translates are scientific, military, social, literary, technical, historic, instructional texts, etc. On the other hand, two other translators usually work on specialist texts, one of whom is specialised in translating technical texts, while the other seems to have a more general and broader scope in his translation work as he works on diverse text types, such as educational, political-current affairs, monetary, legal and financial texts. Fifteen out of twenty translators often work on almost all types of texts. One translator has determined the text

types that he often translates as media and legal texts. Another translator has indicated that he principally works on official documents, such as birth, marriage certificates and so on. She also translates technical documents, such as civil engineering, defence documents and websites. Her translation work also covers official and confidential correspondence. Considering the fact that the majority of the participants seem to have a vast experience working on predominantly all types of texts, the results of the survey in question will hopefully be of great significance and effective implications. This is due to the large input and wide knowledge gained by the participants and reflected on the survey results.

With regard to the fourth question, eighteen out of twenty translators, who have taken part in the present questionnaire, have indicated that translating always requires a skill. One translator states that "a skilled translator would – at all times – make the target text read and sound original; while someone else, who evidently (and hypothetically) knows the language well, would transfer the meaning but – on the other hand – fails to produce a transparent translation. The reader would remain uncomfortable with the target text as it demonstrates artificial." Two other translators agree with the aforementioned concept. One of them regards the skill in translating as a necessary requirement in order to reproduce an appropriate translated text. The other translator asserts that skills are always needed in translating in order to arrive at an accepted translation. He indicates that the use of a skill in translating hinges upon the nature of translation and the target reader. He then sheds some light on the characteristics that should be possessed by the skilled translator, claiming that a skilled translator should be fully aware of both the source and target language in both written and spoken form, along with being conversant with the subject matter of the text that needs to be translated.

Two other translators accord special emphasis on the lexical and contextual aspects of the source language. One translator believes that the translator has to be cognisant of the specific area of the text he is translating, along with the technical terms and expressions employed in that particular text. The other translator gives special importance to the context of the source text as lexical items on their own do not mean much. She also brings up the necessity of choosing the appropriate terms when translating. Another translator agrees with the concept of possessing the proper knowledge of

the specialised field of translation, together with the linguistic knowledge of both source and target language. He goes on to explain that the translator is required to have logic in order to arrive at the right meaning, identify the ST style, recognise its mistakes and understand what sort of message the ST author is trying to convey. The last translator, who agrees with the concept that translating always requires a skill, contends that in addition to being acquainted with both the source and target language, the translator needs to be fully aware of the cultural sensitivities and differences between the source and target language and that development of cultural awareness between languages should always be prioritised. Another translator, who has participated in the survey, believes that translating, often, not always, requires a skill. The last translator claims that translating sometimes requires a skill, explaining that it is the type of text prepared for translation, which determines whether or not a skill is needed in translating. Considering the fact that the majority of the participants hold the view that translating always requires a skill, it seems plausible that art plays an essential role in the process of translation, as many translators and scholars claim, which will be presented again after discussing the concept of talent and its relation to translation.

Answering the fifth question, eight out of twenty translators, who have participated in the present survey, claim that translating always requires a talent. One translator believes that the necessity of having a talent in translating is primarily contingent upon the nature of the source text. He then determines the type of text that requires a talent, clarifying that legal and literary texts always require a talent. He adds that translators have to read and understand the source text, with full comprehension of the author's ideas. They are then required to precisely reflect these ideas with no ambiguity in such a way that meaning of the original text is accurately relayed to the target language. Another translator, supporting the notion that translating always requires a talent, points out that there exist several factors related to language which need to be fully understood. She contends that language is a living entity and is deemed part of the whole society. She holds the view that being familiar with different words is pointless in translating, such as machine translation, which is out of question in her views. She then explains that translating requires intelligence, which she believes crucial to the process of making decisions in translation, and which

the machine clearly lacks.

On the other hand, ten out of twenty translators argue that translating often, not always, requires a talent. One translator indicates that talented people are always positioned on the top in every profession, including translation. Another translator holds the view that the translator has to have a certain ability to enable him to read between the lines. A third translator claims that the necessity of having a talent in translating is dependent on the nature of the text/job as translation work can at times be very mechanical, in his opinion. The last translator in this group distinguishes first between talent and skill, stating that "talent is a natural trait, a profound taste for subtle grammatical rules, and the savvy appreciativeness of mirroring register, effectively using appropriate cohesive devices, and the ability to produce a coherent equivalent text. Skills, however, are acquired through academic study and professional training which result in embracing advanced linguistic approach." He then brings up the importance of specialisation to the translator, pointing out that the talented translator will be most capable of working on the text he/she is specialised in, while his/her translation may be of a poor standard if he/she worked on a text of a different field.

Two translators, who have completed the survey in question, claim that translating sometimes requires a talent. One of them takes the view that talent is required if the source text in hand is a literature-related text. The other translator sees that the talented translator is more confident and more efficient than the untalented one though he considers the question of talent a controversial matter. Having considered the answers of the participants, it seems clear that all of them view that translating requires a talent. This runs in line with the claims of translators presented in section (E.) who regard the person who can render a particular text from one language into another as a talented and gifted person. Consequently, translating is a special talent that is only possessed by translators (Baker, 2002: 3). This confirms the concept that art is involved in the process of translation. This is lent credence by academics, such as Savory (1969), who views translation as a kind of art. The same theme is seconded by Chukovskii (1984), who takes the view that translation should be regarded as a high art.

With regard to the sixth question, twenty out of twenty translators, who have taken part in the survey concerned, claim that the translator needs to be aware of the linguistic features of both the source language (SL)

and the target language (TL). One of them contends that the translator is required to be well-versed in the linguistic system of both the source and target language, particularly if these languages follow different linguistic systems. This is in line with another translator, who asserts that knowledge of the linguistic features of both the source and target language is necessary to give the whole picture required for producing a precise translation.

Another translator, supporting the aforementioned notion, explains what sort of areas the translator should be familiar with in both the source and target language. He states that the translator should be conversant with the language skills, including reading, writing, speaking and understanding both languages. He should acquire the relevant knowledge of the grammatical rules specific to both languages, in addition to being abreast of the culture of the languages concerned. The last translator, advocating the same theme, claims that the translator is required to appreciate the significance and requirement of the source text. He then admits that the highly complex process of cultural transfer involved in the translation process inevitably entails gaining a wide knowledge of the source language and having a good linguistic repertoire of the target language. This cultural transfer process also necessitates experience of the TL literary traditions, research skills as well as the skill of subordinating one's ideas and style to the author's. Cultural elements specific to the SL culture should receive careful treatment, and the translator should analyse the source text before rendering it into the target language, a process which involves both conscious and intuitive procedures.

Taking on board the above, it goes without saying that all participants point out that the translator needs to be aware of the linguistic features of both the SL and TL. In other words, translation involves a great deal of science, which resides in gaining linguistic knowledge of both the SL and TL. Another sign which indicates that translation involves science is its acceptability to improvement. This is supported by Miremadi (1991), who asserts that translation is full of trials and errors and is amenable to change and development.

As a response to the seventh question, six out of twenty translators, who have participated in the present survey, claim that the translator has to be aware of the translation theories in order to render a particular text from one language into another successfully. One of these translators points out

that it is always useful for the translator to have knowledge concerning translation theory and/or schools of translation. This helps establish specific boundaries for translating texts. Ten other translators hold the view that the translator perhaps needs to be aware of the translation theories in order to render a particular text from one language into another successfully. One of these translators believes that cognisance of translation theory in the field of practical translation hinges upon different factors; among them are the target language, the country in which this language is spoken, the specific field of translation, the amount of translation work and the target reader. Another translator, though supporting the aforementioned claim, asserts that throughout thirty years of work in the field of translation, there has not been any need for being acquainted with translation theory.

Three out of twenty translators, who have completed the questionnaire concerned, argue that it is not necessary for the translator to be aware of the translation theories to be able to translate efficiently. One of them admits that she has never studied translation theories, but studied both the source and target language in addition to being conversant with translation methods. Another translator, advocating the present theme, contends that although it is not necessary for the translator to be well-versed in the translation theories, it is fruitful to know these theories and discuss them within the field of translation. The last translator takes the view that the translator does not have to be aware of the translation theories in order to be able to translate effectively.

Taking the foregoing into account, it seems obvious that the majority of the participants are of the opinion that the translator needs to be acquainted with the translation theories in order to translate in an appropriate way though these participants differ in terms of their emphasis on the concept in question. This again supports the scholars' claims that since translation involves translation theories along with translation practice, translation is unquestionably a science. Another witness that confirms the importance of the translation theories in the world of translation and advocates the concept that translation is a science is what has been offered by Holmes (1972/1988). He distinguishes between two types of translation studies: pure and applied. He indicates that the former is concerned with translation theory, while the latter deals with translation practice in such a way that both are related to one another. This is also seconded by Toury (1982), who confirms that

theories derived from pure translation studies may act as a useful source for applied translation studies.

Concerning the eighth question, seventeen out of twenty translators, who have taken part in the present survey, are of the opinion that the translator needs to adopt a translation strategy before embarking upon any translation project. One of these translators states that "absolutely without any doubt. Scanning a document at the outset is a must. Then one decides upon a strategy to embark on the translation." Two other translators agree with this translator on the present concept. One of them claims that translation work that lacks clear translation strategy may inevitably result in time loss and lack of energy, which lead to failure at translating the text required. The other translator mentions the factors according to which the translator may adopt his/her translation strategy, arguing that the translator needs to be cognisant of the subject area to which the source text belongs, in addition to being familiar with the essential terminologies specific to this particular subject area. Having relevant expertise in the foregoing along with considering the nature of the source text, the translator will be in a good position to adopt the translation strategy pertinent to the translation project in question.

Two other translators are of the view that the translator perhaps needs to adopt a translation strategy before embarking upon any translation project. One of them believes that it is beneficial to develop a translation strategy for large translation projects; however, small translation projects may not in practice need a strategy. The last translator, who has participated in the survey in question, holds the view that it is not necessary for the translator to adopt a translation strategy before embarking upon any translation project. He believes that adopting a translation strategy is dependent on several factors, among which are the target readership, the impact of the translation, the scope of the translation and the volume of the translation work. Taking what has been previously mentioned on board, it is evident that the majority of the participants are of the view that the translator needs to adopt a translation strategy before embarking upon any translation project. Given that adopting a strategy requires a skill as well as knowledge of the linguistic features of both the source and target language, and since adopting a strategy is an essential part in the field of practical translation, as supported by the majority of the participants, it goes without saying that translation is a combination of both art and science.

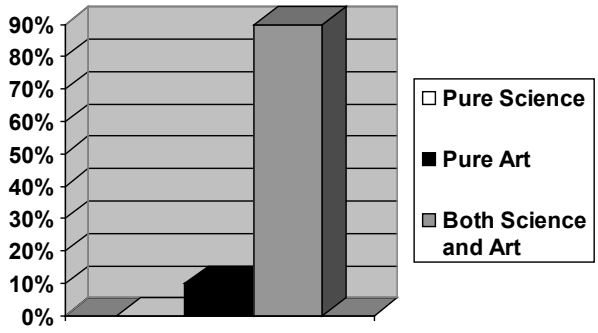
Reacting to the ninth question, sixteen out of twenty translators, who have completed the survey in hand, claim that the translator needs to have a skill and be aware of the linguistic features of both the SL and TL to be a good translator. One of them asserts that linguistic knowledge of both the SL and TL is deemed substantive to the translator. Another translator, following the same path as the previous one, argues that linguistic skills specific to the SL and TL alongside having the relevant experience count more than being acquainted with translation theories. This is in line with another translator, who points out that knowledge of translation theories does not particularly qualify someone to be a good translator. Nonetheless, it unequivocally plays a crucial role in strengthening the translator's capability and choosing the optimum translation strategy which would ipso facto result in achieving the unrivalled TT. The last translator, who is in agreement with the present notion, believes that the translator has to read, understand and convey the message of the ST in the TT. This should be done in such a way that relays the original meaning to the TL with no ambiguity or distortion.

Three other translators hold the view that the translator needs to have a skill, be aware of the linguistic features of both the SL and TL in addition to being conversant with the translation theories to be a good translator. One of these translators contends that it is important for the translator to be familiar with linguistic and cultural features of both the SL and TL to be a good translator. The last translator, who has taken part in the present questionnaire, is of two opinions; he believes that the translator either needs to have a skill only to be a good translator or needs to have a skill and be aware of the linguistic features of both the SL and TL to be a good translator. Looking into the preceding discourse, it seems obvious that the majority of the participants believe that the translator needs to have a skill and be conversant with the linguistic features of both the SL and TL in order to be a good translator. Given that a good translation should involve both skill and knowledge of the linguistic characteristics of both the SL and TL, as supported by the majority of the participants, this clearly lends credence to the concept that translation is a mixture of both art and science.

Coming to the core issue of the whole questionnaire, but the entire paper per se, eighteen out of twenty translators, who have taken part in the present survey, are inclined toward the concept that translation is a mixture of art and science. One of these translators states that "the text translation is the

part of the work involving science. Equally important is the part phrasing the translated text into a presentable and acceptable form i.e. producing an artistic piece. Without both parts only a very basic interpretation can be obtained." Two other translators are in line with the quoted one. One of them explains that the translator needs to have an artistic mind and scientific approach when translating in order to reproduce a TT which is as close as possible to the original text, regardless of whether the ST can be easily rendered into a different language or it involves complications to be translated into the TL. In the latter, literal approach will unquestionably fail to achieve the purpose sought from the translation.

The other translator, who is also in agreement with the quoted translator on the aforementioned concept, presents the meaning of both art and science according to his understanding. He explains that in order for a translator to be artistic, he/she should be able to present a combination of dexterity, passion and subtlety in his translation. He goes on to argue that the translator may inevitably resort to use new terms to stand for inadequacies of other terms. He then provides an example for this case asking how 'to have access to', which means, among other options, 'to make available', may be translated into Arabic. Translating the above example would not be done properly if it did not involve art. On the other hand, he sees science as having knowledge of both source and target language. One out of twenty translators, who have participated in the questionnaire in hand, holds the view that translation is a pure art. The last translator calls translation a 'skill', which clearly shows that he regards translation as a pure art. Below is a chart which shows the percentage of the participants' views regarding the concept of translation:



As the chart shows, 90% of the participants are clearly inclined towards the concept that translation is a mixture of both art and science. This conclusion has also been arrived at by a group of scholars one of whom is Zaixi (1997), who contends that translation involves a skill and creative use of language, and therefore it can be regarded as an art. By contrast, he states that translation is also a science as it contains a corpus of 'translation studies', a field which provides the rules followed in the translation process. The same theme is echoed by Gabr (2001), who claims that translation is both art and science as it requires a skill and is grounded in language theory. This concept is given credence by Azizinezhad (2004), who points out that translation is a combination of art and science as it reflects the translator's skill and personal knowledge. Within the same line of thought, Krishnamurthy (2008: 27) claims that translation has been differently viewed by different academics and translators on the basis of their personal knowledge and translation purpose though it remains evident that translation is a mixture of art and science. This goes in line with Shiyab (2006: 29), who points out that translation is a combination of art and science as it requires artistic skills, mastery of both SL and TL, experience in text analysis and patterns of thinking. Following the same line of thought, Das (2008: 2) asserts that it is inadequate to regard translation as a pure art, a pure craft or a pure science. This is in agreement with Anderman (2003: 14), who contends that translation is both art and science. It is also a matter of taste and a kind of craft.

Under the section of 'other comments', one translator sheds some light on the issue of multilingualism and its relevance to translation. It enables the translator to compare and contrast languages which have some similar linguistic features, such as English-French and English-Spanish, and those which are of different linguistic roots, such as English-Arabic, English-Farsi or English-Kurdish. Another translator stresses the importance of the concept that translation is a mixture of both art and science, the main issue of the present paper. He adds that taking on board that translation is a combination of both art and science is contingent on both text and context. Good knowledge of both SL and TL would unequivocally enhance the translation with both its artistic as well as scientific form. He then concludes that separation between art and science within the context of translation is deemed unacceptable.

With regard to the translation task that has been given to the participants, all the participants have commented that they have viewed the translation that they have done as a combination of art and science. Having meticulously examined their translations on the basis of Nida's (1969: 14-28) system of priorities, particularly the first two priorities, their comments seem correct. Their translations demonstrate preference for contextual consistency over verbal consistency with varying degrees, with extreme caution that the meaning is rendered correctly into the TL. At the same time, there has been a respect of the TL linguistic rules with full understanding of the nature of the SL and how it relays meanings. At the equivalence level, it seems to me that the participants have favoured dynamic equivalence over formal correspondence with varying degrees. They have not paid considerable regard to the ST form; rather they have been much more concerned with the transfer of the ST content to the TL in a well-formed and acceptable format. Considering the above, it seems that all participants have regarded their translations as both art and science since they have demonstrated full understanding of the TL linguistic features, clear acquaintance with the ST nature and a relevant skill to render the ST into a well-structured and comprehended TT.

G. Concluding Remarks

It is clear that translation, as an important method of communication among nations, had existed since ancient times and has passed different stages of development until it has reached a particular form of generally accepted and specified principles and criteria. Translation on today's world has specified theories, methods and strategies that need to be known to both translators and teachers of translation.

In crude terms, the present paper revolves primarily around three main questions: is translation an art? Is it a science? Is it a combination of art and science? Scholars and translators take different positions with regard to the concept of translation. Three broadly distinct camps can be distinguished in this respect. At one end of the spectrum, there are scholars and translators who view translation as an art, claiming that what matters in translation is the possession of the relevant skill and the talent required for translating. At the other end of the spectrum come scholars and translators who believe that translation is a science, arguing that knowledge of the linguistic features of

both the SL ant TL along with expertise of the translation theories are of paramount importance in translation. Other scholars and translators take a more reasonable view; they see translation as a mixture of art and science. The last view is what has been concluded from the survey that has been answered by twenty current professional translators. The majority of these translators confirm that the translator needs to have the relevant skill and the talent pertinent to translation. At the same time, they affirm that the translator has also to be armed with the knowledge of the linguistic features of both the SL and TL alongside familiarity with the translation theories. They stress that the translator is required to adopt a translation strategy before embarking upon any translation project. All these together prove that translation is a combination of both art and science. This theme has also been reached at through the comments made by the participants on a translation task that they have performed and through my assessment of their work. This paper has questioned a limited group of translators on the aforementioned concept due to space restrictions. Further research in the field is needed to arrive at better and more comprehensive results. This can be achieved by conducting questionnaires and interviews that target a larger number of translators who are of different levels and work between different languages.

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هل الترجمة فن أم علم أم كلاهما؟

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ملخص البحث

كانت الترجمة على مر تاريخ البشرية و ما تزال وسيلة مهمة للاتصال بين الأمم. و قد وُجدت الترجمة منذ زمن المملكة المصرية القديمة و استمرت في التطور حتى اكتسبت صوراً معينة تكونت منها نظرية الترجمة. و تعرض المقالة الحالية ثلاث رؤى مختلفة لعلماء و مترجمين بشأن مفهوم الترجمة. يوجد علماء و مترجمون يرون أن الترجمة فن خالص و ذلك لكونها قائمة بشكل أساسي على المهارة. و على العكس من ذلك، هناك علماء و مترجمون يعتقدون أن الترجمة علم خالص و ذلك لأنها تتطلب معرفة بلغتي المصدر و الهدف بالإضافة إلى المعرفة بنظريات الترجمة. و ترى فئة أخرى من العلماء و المترجمين أن الترجمة خليط من الفن و العلم و ذلك لأنها تتطلب مهارة و معرفة بلغتي المصدر و الهدف بالإضافة إلى المعرفة بنظريات الترجمة. و ستتجه هذه المقالة إلى الاعتقاد بأن آخر هذه الرؤى الثلاث هو ما يبدو صحيحاً مدعوماً ذلك بشكل واضح من غالبية المترجمين المحترفين و الذين يزاولون الترجمة في الوقت الحاضر و الذين قد استُجوبوا بشأن المفهوم الآنف الذكر.

كلمات رئيسة: ترجمة، فن، علم، اتصال، مهارة