

# History Of Translation From Rosetta Rocks To Modern Machine Translation

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**Abstract:** *This paper in its present form is the result of a study on translation. It would deal with the Bible translation, translation from the Rosetta rocks to the modern machine translation. It would also try to make an overview of the history of translation.*

**Keywords:** *Rosetta Rocks, Bible, Translation, Authorized.*

## I. INTRODUCTION

The process of translating words or text from one language into another is called translation. It is the conversation of something from one form or medium into another. No two languages are similar and therefore no two cultures are. Literary prose translation transfers a story written in one language into another. In doing so the translation seeks to convey the qualities of the original text. Prose translation is a recent arrival in literature. Translation is the communication of the meaning of a source - language text by means of an equivalent target - language text. The word *translation* derives from the Latin *translatio* (which itself comes from *trans* - and *fero*, the supine form of which is *latum*, together meaning "to carry across" or "to bring across"). The Ancient Greek term for *translation*, *μετάφρασις* (*metaphrasis*, "a speaking across"), has supplied English with *metaphrase* (a "literal," or "word-for-word," translation). A secular icon for the art of translation is the Rosetta Stone. In the United States of America, the Rosetta Stone is incorporated into the crest of the Defense Language Institute. Machine translation (MT) is a process whereby a computer program analyzes a source text and, in principle, produces a target text without human intervention. In reality, however, machine translation typically does involve human intervention, in the form of pre-editing and post-editing.

## II. OBJECTIVES AND METHODOLOGY

The objective of the paper is to make an analysis of the history of translation in a very brief manner. The methodology used is analytical and help of secondary sources of information has been taken.

## III. DISCUSSION

In the 8<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> century Baghdad was a centre of learning and most of the scholars from Rome and Greece settled there and translated most of the Arabian literature into Latin. In the next century the importance of centre of learning was shifted from Baghdad to Italy and the Arabian scholars now tried to translate literature from Rome and Greece into their mother tongue. In 1441 Robert Retines translated Koran into Latin. The Life of Buddha was translated much earlier in the year 1200 into different European languages. In 1559 Plutarchs "The Lives of Famous Greeks and Romans" was translated into English and it was infact a great inspiration for Shakespeare to write his historical plays. In 1612, Thomas Shelton translated Don Quixote into English. It was admired by people of all religions. In 1656, Coverley translated Pindar's Ode's.

The history of translation according to some critics dates back to the genesis of mankind. When the first man, they say, was born, with him also was born the art of translation. People in the past must have lived in different ethnic groups inside big jungles. They must have of course communicated successfully with the help of translators to know both the languages of the people. They in fact, acted as a bridge

between different sects of people. The work of a translator is not as easy as we presume. He must have a thorough knowledge of both source language and talking language.

Sometimes he may come across idiomatic pitfalls like, 'It's raining cats and dogs'. When the translator tries to translate such phrases he can't all the time adhere to word to word translation which may sound absurd and understandable. He therefore, chooses to sense for sense translation to translate such sentences without losing the real sense. The translator moreover is supposed to know, the culture of both the people of SL and TL.

The scientists are of the view that translation is five thousand years old quoting examples from the inscriptions found on the Rosetta Rocks. Here, a message is conveyed in two languages – Egyptian and Greek. We therefore, consider this as the origin of translation. Bible is the only book which has been translated into almost all the languages of the world. It was Jerome who in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C., for the first time translated Bible from the original. Whatever the translations we have nothing but the translation of translations. Wycliffe in the 12<sup>th</sup> century A.D., translated Bible from Latin into English. Before him the natives had to read Bible in a foreign language. Not satisfied with the translation of Wycliffe as he in places deviated from the original Tyndale another Puritan took to translating Bible into his mother tongue. As he was unfortunately martyred, his work was completed by his friend Coverley.

There were quite a number of Bible translations after that. King James with the help of ecclesiastical, scholars and thinkers brought out his own version of Bible translation and it is till date acclaimed the best of all the translations. Martin Luther, the great reformer also translated Bible into German in the year 1483 but he got his translation which was not appreciated by the majority. He divides the work of translation under three heads metaphrase, paraphrase and imitation. Metaphrase in his opinion is but word for word translation. Paraphrase goes with the modern transcreation which does not prohibit the translator to deviate from the original sense. Imitation, according to Dryden is no translation at all. Here, the translator actually forgetting the fact that he is a mere translator steps into the shoes of another.

Fitzgerald can be quoted for a model translator. Omar Khayyam, the little known Persian poet came to limelight, thanks to his translator Fitzgerald. Although, he did not follow word for word translation, he saw to it that he did not damage the sense of the poems of Omar Khayyam.

The dawn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw machines substituting the work of human being in the field of translations. It was Russians who introduced MT as they intended to translate most of their work of art into different languages of the world next perhaps to Bible. They were immediately followed by the Americans who used MT for a different purpose. They tried to translate the difficult scientific and technical words into their mother tongue with the help of MT. The Bible translation has been very much following word for word translation at the same to suit all the people. Thus history translation dates back from Rosetta Rocks to the modern machine translation.

Bible is the only book that has been translated into 1500 languages. It was Jerome in the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. who translated it from the originals. Wycliffe, one of the Puritans

translated for the first time into his mother tongue English. Martin Luther, a reformer also tried his hands in translating the holy book into German, his mother tongue but his translation did not appear to be a word for word, it was not accepted by the majority of Germans. It was King James, with the help of clergies and laymen brought out his own version of Bible translation the authorized version of Bible translation. Although his translation was very much following the Bishops translation, people recognized only the former. There was one more translation even after the Authorized Version called the revised version of the Bible translation. The translators of Bible were forced not to deviate from the originals. They were very careful not to add or excise. For this is the book which gives solace and comfort to millions of Christians all over the world. They, therefore, do not permit the translators even to rectify the errors. They are ready to read Bible even with errors but the translators of Bible translation were not able to do fault justice in their translation when they faced words with different meanings in their target language.

The translators were not allowed even to change the construction of the sentence. For example, "The word was God", was not allowed to change into "God was word". The atmosphere of ancient times was very much preserved in their translations. For instance: The words, demon possessed must not be translated into mentally distressed. According to Eugene Nida, the word 'Soma' in Greek means 'body'. We therefore, have different translations in different versions like this one

- ✓ She felt in her body.
- ✓ She knew in herself.
- ✓ She had the feeling in herself.

Similarly, the Greek word 'sarks' means 'flesh' but the word flesh has got different connotations in English like

- ✓ The flesh you buy from the butcher.
- ✓ She has put on flesh.
- ✓ The dirty trade in flesh.

#### IV. CONCLUSION

So, the translators of Bible, when they had to translate such words into TL, they could not arrive at the correct translation.

The translation of Bible in modern times is very much diluted without very much sticking on to the rules of translation to suit everyone. As Nida says, we have three types of Bible translations at present and purely meant for the clergies, Bible for the literary people, Bible for the common people. Most of the people nowadays instead of reading Bible listen to the scripture thanks to the mass media. No language is superior or inferior to other. To be a good translator one should have a feel and sensitivity for the languages, have a resourceful, interpretative and imaginative mind. Translation Method has some advantages like quick learning, easy comprehensibility, easy expression by the student and quick grasping of grammatical rules and language structures. Process of Translation is not that easy as it seems.

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