Translation Over Time

The discovery of the Rosetta Stone was an important development in deciphering two languages previously not understood for centuries. French and English scholars successfully translated the hieroglyphic portion of the stone in 1822 [1] in the middle of an evolution of the translation field that occurred across the $17^{th} - 21^{st}$ centuries. In the earlier part of this period, the dominant practice for translators was not to translate "word-for-word," but instead to inject some relatively large amount of their own voice and creativity into the work.[2] However, translation scholar Andrea Rizzi reports that starting as early as the 1600s, translators began losing their visibility, resulting in diminished influence on the source that they were translating. [3]

Over time, the practice of literal translation gained popularity, and by the middle of the 19th century, it represented a growing ideological split in the field.[4] At the same time, the mid-1800s was a nation-building era for Europe, where many countries such as Germany and Italy became united. So, translation into those, *newly national*, languages was a way for scholars to privilege their own "cultural hierarchy" instead of the source material's language. [5] These shifting cultural priorities leaned again more towards the side of the split that favored translators' voices over a more word-for-word style. Around this same time, though translations like Benjamin Jowett's "clear, straightforward," translation of Plato's works privileged "the text, the whole text, and nothing but the text." [6]

The mid-20th century, around 1960, marks a turning point in this long debate and became a "golden age for linguistic equivalence," (or the word-for-word style). [7] With globalization, the genres of works that needed translation became more diverse. In translations of science and politics, people began to advocate more seriously for adherence to the original source's text and

[1] Virginia L. Salmon, "Discovery of the Rosetta Stone," Ebsco, Ebsco Information Service, 2023, https://www.ebsco.com/research-starters/history/discovery-rosetta-stone.

[2] Lawrence Venuti, "Cannon," in *Translator's Invisibility A History of Translation (*Taylor and Francis, 1994).

[3] Andrea Rizzi, Birgit Lang, and Anthony Pym,"On Relationality: Trusting Translators." In What Is Translation History?, (Switzerland: Springer International Publishing AG, 2019).

[4] Datta G. Sawant, "History of Translation," ResearcheGate, January 2013, https://www.researchgate.net/publication/271640678_History_of_Translation.

[5] Lawrence Venuti, "Nation," in *Translator's Invisibility A History of Translation (*Taylor and Francis, 1994).

[6] Marie Labert, "A short history of translation through the ages," International Association of Professional Translators and Interpreters, March 2022, https://www.iapti.org/iaptiarticle/a-short-history-of-translation-through-the-ages-marie-lebert-2/.

[7] Andy Cheung, "A History of Twentieth Century Translation Theory and Its Applications for Bible Translation," *Journal of Translation* 9 no. 1 (2013), https://www.sil.org/system/files/reapdata/14/62/43/14624328759038259204428723874636767616828/siljot2013_1_01.pdf.

tone with limited leeway given to translators in adjusting for socio-cultural differences.[8] Several decades later, though, the field seems to be trending in the opposite direction again, with translators attempting to gain more visibility for their work. Additionally, there has been increasing "spillover of source language" words and phrases, acknowledging that some sentiments just cannot be captured in the target language. [9] In contrast to earlier decades, those outside of the field are beginning to recognize that translation work is about more than being bilingual. [10] This process is becoming increasingly recognized as an interpretative process that requires deep knowledge of multiple languages and cultures, as well as specific skills that enable both translators and readers to travel between them.

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[8] Lebert.

[9] Lebert.

[10] Lebert.