CHAPTER - 1
TRANSLATION: A DISCUSSION OF DEFINITIONS AND METHODS

INTRODUCTION:

Translation is an activity of enormous importance in modern world. The theory of translation established a relation between languages and is therefore considered as a branch of contrastive linguistics. Translation is human activity of great antiquity, long before the invention of writings. Communication between linguistically divergent groups must have been facilitated by bilinguals who acted as interpreters. Translation in the 20th century has become extremely important activity. With some 5000 languages in the world and ever-increasing international communication and extreme specialisation in disciplines is calling for professional and amateur translators and language teachers.

Translation has often been condemned as an act of violence, parasitic and subservient to creative act. This was
because creativity has been considered a sacred act and translation, as it comes to us appears as second hand product ignited by an already existing work, an extension of a creative exercise. Translation therefore has been argued to be the work of a disappointed or a failed writer. However, if closely examined translation is a creative work in its own right, because translation is a way of reading, interpreting, criticizing and in the same process creating a new text for those who have no access to literature in the alien language system.

The difficulty and challenge involved in the effort of translation emanates from the fact that it requires expertise in two languages. As Lew (1963) puts it "a translation is not monistic composition, but an inter-penetration and conglomerate of two structures. On the one hand there are the semantic content and formal contour of the original, on the other hand the entire system of aesthetic features bound up with language of the translation.

For translation we need two languages. The language from which translation is done is the source language and the other is the target language or receptor language.
There are some principles of translation, which are keenly followed to make the task of translation meaningful and resourceful. However, the principles of translation have been subjected to significant changes in various periods owing to changes in technological structures, social requirements and increased communication. These factors have enabled translation as any other branches in literature to evolve its own history. George Steiner divided history of translation into four periods. The first period is characterised by immediate empirical forms, that is the statements on theories, that arose in this period were the direct result of the practical work of translation. The central characteristic of the second period is the theory and Hellenistic inquiry with development of a vocabulary in approaching translation. The third period is a period in which structural linguistic communication theory was introduced into the study of translation. The fourth period was characterised by a reversion to hermeneutic, almost metaphysical inquiries into translation and interpretation (George Steiner 1975; 238).

In the wake of Christianity, translation had acquired another role, that of spreading the Gospel. The history of the bible is the miniature representation of the western culture. The New Testament was translated into Modern
English for the first time by the William Tyndal in 1926. In his translation Tyndal made use of the principles of translation employed by Luther that made his work accepted as a basis for later English translation of the New Testament.

The concept of translation was used in the medieval education system as a writing exercise and also as a means of improving oratorical style and the imaginative powers of the students.

With the invention of printing in the 15th century, the role of translation had undergone many significant changes. Serious attempts were made to formulate a theory of translation. Dolet (1509-40) was the first writer to formulate a theory of translation.

The principle of translation underwent significant changes during the 20th century due to such factors as

1) The development of communication theory.

2) The expansion of the field of structural linguistics.
3) The application of linguistics to the study of translation and the outgrowth of machine translation.

When it comes to India, Sanskrit was the dominant source language. The leading intellectuals of the Indian Language translated the Sanskrit texts into local languages. Most of the translations were free renderings, which suited the native language better.

There are two schools of thought when it comes to translation.

First school believes that the translator has to be true and as close as possible to the original, that the translator has no right to deviate from the original, that any such deviation is a case of violation of the basic text and its style of composition. The other school clings on to the view that translator cannot and should not blindly stick to the original if it cramps his natural style, that he can take liberty with the text.

The old translation is the general term referring to the transfer of ideas and thoughts from one language to another. Translation is the replacement of text in one language by an equivalent text in other language.
Translation is an operation performed on languages, a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another. (Catford, 1965)

There are some other words like transference, transliteration and transcription close to the word 'translation'. The word transference refers to an operation in which the target language or parts of target language text have values set up in the source language carrying the meanings and essence of source language text. Transliteration in an effort, which involves the replacement of each source language letter by a target language letter on the basis of a conventionally, established set of rules. Transcription is a representation of phonological unit.

1.1 Definitions of Translating:

There are numerous definitions of translation, but there is certain diversity in the definitions of translation. This is because of the differences in the materials to be translated, and also the purpose of translation.
According to him, translating consists, in reproducing RL (receptor language) closest natural equivalent of the SL (source language) message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style. According to him, the basis to any discussion of principles and procedures in translation is a thorough acquaintance in the manner in which meaning is expressed through language as communication code. He gives importance to the communicative aspects of translation. His views on translation are essentially discourse oriented with a focus on the various socio-linguistic variables, which determine the nature of the translation. He propounds a pragmatic theory of translation by considering the connotative or pragrammitic as the central focus in transforming the message from the source language to the receptor language.

He says, "basic to any discussion of principles and procedures in translation is a thorough acquaintance in the manner in which meaning is expressed through language as a communication code - first in terms of parts which constitute such a code; secondly, the manner in which the code operates; and thirdly, how such code as language is
related to other codes. Nida in his theory of translation gives importance to the communicative aspect of translation. His view of translation is essentially discourse oriented with focus on the various socio-linguistic variables, which determine the nature of the translating. The role of the receptor is central to his theory of translation.

Nida attempts to study translation process in an analytical and descriptive mould. Nida has taken illustrations primarily from biblical materials because he believes that biblical translations with over 1200 translations has had a long history involving many different languages.

Nida also talks about old focus and new focus in translation. While the old focus was on the message of the receptor, the new focus is on the response of the receptor.

Underlying all the complications of translation is the fundamental fact, according to Nida, that languages differ from each other drastically. Further the fact that the translator has the challenging task of reconciling the conflict between form and meaning, letter and spirit to reproduce the tone, feeling and usage of the text. Further,
the need of the translator to deal with medium of communication which is dynamic and constantly evolving is of utmost importance to make the work socially serviceable.

Nida feels that a thorough acquaintance with the manner in which meaning is expressed in the language is central to understanding the procedures and principles in translation. The words of a language constitute what are generally called symbols. There are different kinds of symbols and signs and there are also diverse kinds of contexts in which such elements occur. Meaning of a text or of a word can be equated in some manner with the 'mental image' associated with the symbol. Nida however points out to the various divergences of opinion regarding the approach to the meaning.

Languages, according to Nida consist of more than meanings of the symbols and combinations of words; it is essentially a code in operation, therefore the dynamic dimension of message transmission is to be analysed. Five important phases of communication were identified by Nida, which must be considered by the translator.

(1) Subject matter
(2) The participants who engage in the communication. In written communication, the author and the audience both are to be considered.

(3) Process of writing or art of speech.

(4) Code used or language in question with all its dimensions.

(5) The message Nida feels that a really successful translating judged through the response from the audience for which it is designed must incorporate newness in form, new ways of rendering old truths, and new words in fresh combination, (as Summarised in Lakshmi, 1993:58)

Nida feels that translator is the focal element in the process of translation and he can not be totally ignored of personal subjectivity, since he is a part of the cultural context in which he lives. Cultural differences between societies widely separated by time and radically divergent degree of cultural diversity in the contemporary society entail the need for the translator to be completely bilingual in source and receptor language participating at the same time in more than one cultural world. Nida then goes on to deal with the qualities of a good translator at length:
thorough knowledge of the languages and subject matter. He says that empathy should be combined when working with the source language and the translator should also have capacity for literary expression and stylistic facility in receptor language.

Nida then enumerates different types of translation. Traditionally, he says translation has been divided into two types. Free or paraphrastic translation contrasted with close or literal ones. Differences in translations can generally be accounted for by three basic factors in translation. They are,

(1) The nature of the message.

(2) The purpose or purposes of the author and of the translator.

(3) The type of the audience.

According to Nida, fundamentally, there are two types of equivalence; formal and dynamic equivalence. Formal equivalence focuses on the attention of the message itself in both form and content while the dynamic equivalence is based upon "the principle of equivalent effect" where the relationship between the message and the receptor should
be substantially the same as that which existed between original receptor and the message. Nida feels that there has been an increasing emphasis on dynamic equivalence.

Nida's theory of translation gives importance to the communicative aspect of the process of translation. Nida says that in translating, one must seek to find closest equivalents, as there are no absolute equivalents. Nida identifies three fundamental criteria for the evaluation of translation work. These are

(1) General efficiency of the communication process.

(2) Comprehension of the content.

(3) Equivalence of the response.

If the translation satisfies the above criteria it can be generally termed as a good translation.

In this work, Nida places more importance on the receptor. The efficiency and correctness of a translation depends on the understanding of the average reader for whom translation is intended. He feels that comprehension of the message is the true test of a translation work.
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Likewise Nida defines translation as a process "consists in reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, firstly in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style".

Nida says that there are essentially two different models of translation process.

(1) Direct method in which the source language gets translated into receptor language through a universal linguistic structure.

(2) The second system which consists of three stages is a more acceptable one. They are,

   a) Analysis of the text for meaning and combinations of word as also grammatical structure.

   b) Transfer.

   c) Restructuring to make the receptor language text more acceptable.
Nida made communicative aspect central or crucial to his theory of translation. So translation according to him is a socio-linguistic exercise with a focus on the receptor. Nida's approach is pragmatic and is end-oriented.

1.1.2 CATFORD (1965)

Catford defines translation as the replacement of textual material in one language (Source Language) by equivalent textual material in other language (Target Language). Translation according to him is always unidirectional (from source language to a target language).

Catford's 'A linguistic theory of translation' is an analysis of the process of translation. It is a discussion of the problems a translator might encounter in his effort. In his work Catford attempts to evolve a theory of translation, which is directed to answer general or specific problems that may arise when any translation is undertaken. He discusses briefly on the languages and categories of general linguistics. His theory is based on the linguistic theory developed by Halliday. According to Catford the theory of translation branches out of comparative linguistics since it
pertains to relationship between languages which make it essentially a theory of applied linguistics.

Various issues involved in translation process like extent, meaning, and level of languages, phonological and graphological translation etc were examined by Catford to evolve his theory of translation. Catford stresses on the term 'equivalence' when he talks about translation. He says the central task of any translation is to find out the Target language' equivalents. Defining the nature and conditions of 'translation equivalence' is the main aim of a translation theory.

While discussing about translation equivalence, Catford makes a distinction between translation equivalence as an empirical phenomenon (which can be discussed by comparing source language and Target language text) on the one hand and the other hand the underlying conditions or what he calls "justifications" of translation equivalence.

Treating translation equivalence as an empirical phenomenon led Catford to make a further distinction
between textual equivalence and formal correspondence. A textual equivalence is defined as "any target language text or portion of text which is to be equivalent of a given source language text or portion of text. A formal correspondent is defined as "any target language category which can be said to occupy, as nearly as possible, the same place in the economy of the target language as the given source language category occupies in the source language. Catford uses the process of communication for discerning textual equivalence. Through communication systematic changes are to be introduced in the source language text and the consequent changes in the target language text are to be observed. Formal correspondence between the source language text and target language text can be established at relatively abstract levels. Catford uses an example to explain this concept: he identifies two languages (English and French) which operate with grammatical units at given ranks and concludes that there is formal correspondence between the two hierarchies of units. This correspondence is to be used as a frame of reference for identifying correspondence at lower levels. It is to be realized that formal correspondence operates at abstract level only with approximation. However Catford feels that formal correspondence is an essential basis for the discussion of problems which are important for translation theory and necessary for its application.
Conditions for translation equivalence is said to occur when a source language and a target language text or item are relatable to (at least some of) same features of substance. Catford feels that these conditions for translation equivalence demands that source language and target language text should be relatable to the same features of substance.

Catford defines some broad types or categories of translations relating to extent, levels and ranks of translation. Based on extent of source language text which is subjected to translation, he distinguishes between full translation, where every part of source language text is replaced by target language text material through translation and partial translation where some parts of source language text are left untranslated and or incorporated in the target language text. Secondly, based on levels of language involved in translation, Catford differentiates between total translation—which involves translation at all levels viz., grammar, Lexis, phonological and graphological levels and partial translation, which involves translation at one or two levels. Finally based on rank, Catford makes a distinction between rank bound
translation and unbounded translation. Unbounded translation is also called literal translation and is rank free.

Catford analyses the importance of 'meaning' in translation. Meaning captures the essence of the text and meaningful translation also can transfer the essence. Meaning is defined as "total network of relations entered into by any linguistic form". Catford discusses two kinds of relations entered into by the formal linguistic units of grammar and Lexis. These relations are (1) formal relations and (2) contextual relations. The relations between one formal item and others in the same language are called formal relations. Contextual relations according to Catford are the relationships of grammatical or lexical items to linguistically relevant elements in the situations in which the items operate in texts. Catford states that the formal and contextual meaning of source language and target language items can rarely be the same. Each language carries with it its own meaning since message is the property of a language. Catford thus proceeds into making a distinction between transference and translation. In transference there is an implantation of source language meaning into target text. In translation, there is
substitution of target language meaning for source language meaning.

While discussing the limits of translatability, Catford makes it clear that translatability is a function of many factors. It is conditioned by role of language varieties. He feels that there cannot be a clear-cut dichotomy between translatability and untranslatability because the source language texts are more or less translatable rather than absolutely translatable or untranslatable.

The limits of translatability are difficult to state, as the limits that are accounted for are difficult to understand due to linguistic ambiguities which may be functional or cultural. Polysemy of a source language item is the target language is a condition of untranslatability. Similarly oligosemy which means that some specific items in the source language, which convey a narrow constricted meaning with no lexical item correspondingly in the target language also leads to untranslatability.
1.1.3 Newmark's contribution:

Newmark defines translation as "a craft counting in the attempt to replace a written and / or oral statement in one language by the same message and / or statement in another language. His contribution to the theory of translation is the detailed treatment of semantic v/s communicative translation. Translation theory according to him must be concerned with the full range of text types and their corresponding translations. "Approaches to Translation" (1981) of Newmark is generally considered an improvement over the theory of translation propounded by Nida. Following Nida, Newmark also placed excessive importance on the concept of communicative treatment of the translation i.e., he placed emphasis on the receptor, his role and his comprehension. His other concern uses the semantic treatment of the original text. Newmark based his theory of translation on Buhler's statement of the function of language.

Newmark says that translation, as a process is a complicated operation with various forces operating in various directions. Often operating in opposite directions also; an example of this fact may be the divergent cultural traits of the source language and the receptor language.
However, he feels that translation can act like a bridge between the divergent cultures and can help in transmitting cultural value, truths etc. In this way, he brings out the dynamics of translation as a process which can operate to assimilate within its stride even divergent processes and societal institutions. Thus, Newmark makes translation both a semantic and communicative exercise.

Translation theory according to Newmark should firstly, identify and define a translation problem. Secondly, it has to indicate all the factors that have to be taken into account in solving the problem. Thirdly, it has to list out all the translation procedures and finally, to recommend the most suitable procedure and an appropriate translation.

Translator has to make a distinction between a literary and a non-literary text. In a non-literary text, the translator should look for an 'underlife' and he should realise that denotations of a word usually come before the connotations. But, in a literary text, he has to give precedence to its connotations. The translator should also take note of cultural aspect of the source text. The translator should also divide as the likely setting of target language, type of target language readership and also the
intention of the translation. Apart from these, the translator also should make an intuitive search for the intention of the text and there should be an attempt to characterize the readership of the original.

According to Newmark, translation procedure starts with choosing a method of approach. Secondly, translation should operate with four levels more or less consciously in mind.

1) Source language text level- level of language, which is to be maintained throughout.

2) Referential level- visualization of the objects and build up which is essential first for proper comprehension and finally for efficient reproduction.

3) The cohesive level which encompasses both comprehension and reproduction and

4) Level of naturalness- to see the deviations, if any, between the author's level he is pursuing and the natural level.
Newmark says that there are two approaches to translation, which are basic. However, there might be many compromises between them. First approach is to translate sentence by sentence for a considerable extent to get the feel and tone of the text and then review the position and then translate rest of the text. This approach according to Newmark is useful for literary translation. The second approach is to read the whole text two or three times, find the intention, tone, and mark the difficult words and passages and start translation only when the translator properly comprehends his intentions and task.

Regarding translation methods, Newmark says that semantic translation is used for expressive texts and communicative translation for information and vocative texts. However based on the emphasis, translation can be source language emphasized or target language emphasized.
Source language - emphasized:

Word for word translation

Literal translation

Faithful translation

Semantic translation

Target language - emphasized:

Adaptations

Free translation

Idiomatic translation

Communicative translation.
Newmark places emphasis on equivalence effect as the important guide for efficiency in the effort at translation. He says that the purpose of his theory of translation is to be of service to the translator acting as a link between translation theory and practice.

1.2 Methods

Methods of translation were debated more than anything else. This pertains to the extent of literal translation and free translation. Up to the beginning of 19th century, many writers followed free translation. From the turn of 19th century, translation was asked to be as literal as possible. By far, Newmark gave the most systematic clarification of methods. It is as follows.

Word for Word Translation:

Methodologically, word for word translation focuses on formal correspondence, where in the specific form of the source text is seen as its most important feature and seeks to produce a counterpart in a receptor language whose form corresponds to the original text as nearly as possible.
To achieve this aim, a word in the source language is reproduced as far as possible in correspondence with a word in receptor language. Whenever possible, both word order and syntactic structure are preserved.

The source language word is maintained and the words are translated to the nearest meaning in the receptor language out of context. The main use for word for word translation is to understand the mechanisms of source language and translate word for word translation, a difficult text as a pre translation exercise.

Communicative translation:

It attempts to produce on its readers an effect as close as possible to that obtained on the readers of the original. Communicative translation addresses itself to the second reader, does not anticipate difficulties or absences, and would expect a generous transfer of foreign elements into his own culture as well as his language where necessary. Basically, a communicative translation is simple, clear, more direct, more conventional, conforming to a particular register of language, tending to under-translate. However, in communicative, as in semantic translation, word for a
word is not only the best, it is the only valid method for translation. In communicative translation, the translator is trying in his own language to write a little better than the original, unless he is reproducing the well established notices or correspondence. Communicative translation is concerned mainly with the receptors, usually in the context of language and cultural variety. Most non-literary writings, journalism, informative articles and good text book reports. Scientific and technological writing, non-personal correspondence, popular fiction etc., are the materials, which suit communicative translation.

Semantic Translation:

Semantic translation attempts to render, as closely as the semantic and syntactic structures of the second language. It allows the exact contextual translation of the original. Semantic translation remains within the original culture and assists the reader only in its connotations if they constitute the essential human message of the text. Semantic translation is more informative but less effective. It tends to be more complex, more detailed, more concentrated and process the thought-processes rather than the intention of the translator. It tends to over translate, to be more specific than the original, to include
more meanings in its search for one nuance of meaning. Original expression, where the specific language of the speaker or writer is as important as the content. Whether it is philosophical, religious, political, scientific, technical or literary it needs to be translated semantically.

**Literal Translation:**

The grammatical constructs in the source language are translated to the nearest equivalence in the target language, but the lexical words are translated simply, out of context, this method is used to solve the problems, as a part of a pre-translation process.

**Faithful Translation:**

A faithful translation is done reproducing the exact contextual meaning of the original within the limitations of the target language's grammatical structures. It transfers the cultural words and preserves the degree of grammatical and lexical deviation from source language in the
translation. Effort is made to stick faithfully to the intentions and text-realisations of the writer in source language.

**Adaptation:**

This method is considered to be the 'freest' form of translation. Adaptation is mostly used for comic plays and poetry preserving the themes, characters, plots, the source language culture converted to the target language culture and the text rewritten.

**Free Translation:**

This method by some is not considered as translation at all. It reproduces the matter without the manner, on the context without the form of the original. Usually it is a parasite different and much longer than the original, as so-called 'intra lingual translation' after lengthy-complex and presentations.
**Idiomatic Translation:**

Many scholars consider this method as a form of lively and natural translation. Idiomatic translation reproduces the message of original but twist the subtitles of meaning by preferring idioms and colloquialisms which do not exist in the original source text.