Core Linguistics and the Essentials of Translating

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Translating involves decision making in every step; such a decision depends on knowledge which, in turn, lies in both art and science. This depends on the text type and the problem(s) to be solved. Both art and science are gained through experience and the precise application of principles; the dividing line between them is not clear cut. Science is there as a theory and art becomes clear via practice. Without science no principles will come to the translator’s rescue and without art there is no chance for learning and improvement.

Specific examples to clarify the need of art or science will be taken according to the two linguistic notions of additions and omissions in translation. Through the examples, an attempt is made to show when translation is an art and when it is a science. Text type plays an important role in this classification; generally, though not always, it can be said that scientific, legal and technical translations in general are more of a science than an art, contrary to literary translation which is much more of an art than a science.

In theory, translation is a science; in practice, it seems rational to consider it an art. Nevertheless, what determines accepting any of them is transferring the actual meaning intended in the original text.

Areas related to different cultures, cohesion and coherence, different kinds of readerships, differences in educational background, among others are discussed to further illustrate the issue.