

TRANSLATION THEORIES

"Translation is not only an art, but a high art indeed."

(Chukovsky, Kornei)

1 Whether translation is considered an art or a science, it is, in its modern sense, a by-product of a long history of trials and errors, developments, improvements and innovations. The same is true in other fields of science or art, where new findings and discoveries are deeply rooted in the efforts made in the past. Take calligraphy, pictography, philosophy, political and many other fields of science. All of them enjoy rich histories beginning from simple ideas, mostly considered fallacies in our modern time, to the most developed and complicated theoretical considerations of modern science today. Modern artists have developed new techniques in their art reproductions, most probably ridiculed by their ancient pioneers had they been alive today. On the other hand, most techniques used by the predecessors are considered creations of simple-minded people in antiquity.

Translation is not an exception. However, what makes translation more prominent than others is that, all great thinkers and not a small group were involved in translating and translations. They all enjoyed and benefited from

● Theories of Translation and Interpretation

good translations. Were it not because of translations, Chaucer's 'Boerce', 'Melibee', 'Parson's tales', and 'Knight's tales' might not have been created (Machan, 1985:2). Most Shakespeare's lofty ideas and imaginations came from translations (Raffel, 1973:2). The Islamicized versions of Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates could not have reached Europe again if Toledo (Spain) translators had not vigorously and energetically rendered Arabic versions into Latin (Robin, 1967:75).

In order to have a better understanding of what the modern theories of translation are, the students of translation must get familiar with the milestones to these theories. They must know their shortcomings and deficiencies. They must have a clear picture of whats and hows of developments in the field.

To safeguard and secure this understanding, this chapter has been devoted to the chronological developments in the field of the theories of translation. The ultimate intention is to introduce the pioneers and to provide the students with a background on the forerunners, thoughts and techniques. Merits and defects have been discussed briefly; nevertheless attempts have been made to trace the improvements and developments as well.

This chapter has been divided into three major subheadings, namely, developments of the theory in Europe, Modern Theories, and the developments in the theory of translation in Iran. The sub-subheadings have been devoted primarily to more explanations and examples about different eras.