

The End Justifies the Means: A Functionalist Approach to Translation

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ABSTRACT The contemporary research in translation has shown that there is a shift from the straitjacket of the prescriptive and normative approach to translation. However, in some Sesotho translations, the source text (ST) still serves as the norm against which a translation is judged. Sesotho translators sometimes disregard the fact that the purpose of the source text does not necessarily have to be the same as that of translation. Viewed from the perspective of the functionalist theory of translation, this particular problem culminates in stilted translations that are non-communicable and inaccessible to Sesotho cultural communities. Within the context of this study, the problem will then be discussed within the functionalist theoretical framework. The idea is to demonstrate the crucial role that the purpose of translation (**the end**) plays as part of the translation brief and as one of the determining factors towards a meaningful translation process (**the means**). A total disregard of the socio-cultural aspects as embedded within the translation 'skopos' (Vermeer's concept) of the Basotho target readership as enshrined in the whole translation process, characterizes itself as a formidable problem in Sesotho translation. The purpose of translation will therefore be operationalized to put Sesotho translation process into its proper perspective. The results show that Sesotho translation as a multi-faceted, culturally based phenomenon needs to consider the translation purpose as its guiding principle in every act of the translation process.