

The Virtues of Cultural Context and the Vices of *Translationese* in Sesotho Translation

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ABSTRACT The paper challenges the straight-jacket perception among some translation scholars that a source text-oriented translation (*translationese*) is a vice whereas a target text-oriented translation is a virtue. The researcher argues that a source text-oriented translation which may sometimes presents itself as *translationese*, is subjected to the principle of indeterminacy in the same way as indeterminacy is also embedded in the target text oriented translation. The method applied to test the argument empirically, is, in fact, to determine the role of cultural context in the translation process to determine whether the translation is a virtue or a vice. It is also imperative to determine whether the purpose of translation (*skopos*) and the equivalence principle between the source text and the target text have an effect on determining the translation as a virtue or a vice. The results reflect that cultural context is crucial and justifies the virtue of translation. Unfortunately, the equivalence principle is limited only to a special case scenario, whereas purpose-driven translation may be regulated by the translation brief. The paper finds that the principle of indeterminacy operates as a fundamental doubt in translation events, and suggests that it could have caused a paradigm shift from equivalence to the introduction of *skopos* paradigm, where purpose instead of mere equivalence is the underlying determining factor.