

Nature and Scope of Translation

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Abstract: Translation is an art: it requires a certain experience, a certain education and a substantial amount of talent. Despite all these requirements, translators are undervalued, underpaid and their status in society is a rather complicated one. They receive minimal credit and almost no attention from readers and from critics as well. Nowadays, translators are undervalued; their work is thought of as unimaginative and secondary. The study of creativity is possible only if the translations are creative to a certain degree, but the creativity of translations depends on that of the source text. Translation is as old as human civilization. Since the dawn of civilization, we, human beings, have been using language to translate our thoughts and ideas. We use a set of symbols or codes to communicate or transfer an idea or thought or a feeling to the person whom we address during an act of communication. Here too we have translation. In this sense, we translate every day. With the evolution of human society, we became more anxious to know about the thoughts and feelings of people in distant places. Hence we used two sets of symbols and codes to transfer the thoughts and ideas of people speaking a different language to our own language. This gave rise to translation as we see and use it today. India is multi-lingual country where all the regional languages coexist simultaneously on an equal basis but the dominance of English continues. Over the years English has become the only means of communication in all political, business and educational affairs. Hence it is essential that we understand English and our Mother tongue to be able to connect to our own communities in the immediate environment as well as other cultural communities in the outer environment. Here comes the role of translation. Translation allows different cultures to connect, interact, and enrich one another. The main motive of this article is to portray how the translation exists and plays a vital role in all over the world.

Keywords: Coexist, multi-lingual, civilization, regional languages, cultural communities etc.

I. Introduction

The English word **translation** has been derived from the Latin word *translation*, which itself comes from *trans-* and *latum*—together meaning "a carrying across" or "a bringing across. In other words, it is the business of carrying across a message/written content from one text to another, from one person to another and from one language (source language) to a different language (target language) Translation is the communication of the meaning of a text in a source language (SL) into a comprehensive version of target language (TL) without causing any loss to the original message. It is often thought that if one is a bilingual he/she can be a good translator, which is not the truth. People having good communicative and writing experiences in both the languages can be good translators, which includes their being **bilinguals**. While translating, a translator discovers the meaning of a text behind the forms in the source language (SL) and reproduces the same meaning in the target language (TL) with the forms and structures available in the target language. The form changes but the meaning or sense or message remains the same. Nowadays we find translators using computers to translate one language into another, but human beings still play the major role in deciding the final output. While translating **images/metaphors** and **emotive** expressions in literary texts, computers cannot replace human beings. Translating is more than simply looking up a few words in a dictionary.

We cannot confine translation to one or two definitions. It is elastic in nature and depends upon the person who does the translation. It differs from language to language, and from culture to culture. Hence it is not as easy as it is thought to be. While trying to be a different version of the original, it maintains its own uniqueness, an identity of its own. We will discuss the nature of translation, responsibilities of a translator and the complexities involved in the process of translation. The role of translation is very significant as it is the home to people speaking 22 recognized languages and hundreds of mother tongues and **dialects**. Every day in business and office communication, we are required to make use of English and one of our Mother tongues to communicate with people. So we are bilinguals by default and use translation as a means to communicate. It is through translation that people in the periphery and the centre, the dominant and the dominated cultures communicate with one another. We can say that India would not have been a nation without translation as we use translation to communicate and communication keeps us united as a nation.

Nature of Translation

Translation is an interpretative process. The nature of translation depends upon the nature of the document. Translation of a technical or promotional document is easier and requires less skill and expertise than the translation of a text of literature. The vocabulary, grammatical rules and the sentence structures would match with the nature of the document, the source language and the target audience. A successful translation satisfies the needs of the target audience, either in terms of suitable structures or forms or in terms of the appropriate transfer of meaning from the source text to the target text. Besides having equal expertise in the source language and the target language, a good translator should also have a flair for writing in the target language and be familiar with the socio-cultural context in which a text is set. A successful translator is not a mechanical translator of a text. She/he puts in his/her creativity to the fullest extent and goes into the soul of the content. We can visualize him/her as a co-creator of the target language text as the translated text he almost recreates the text reflecting his culture and personality.

While translating, a translator takes into account the **lexicon**, grammatical structure and cultural context of the text in the source language to understand the meaning built in the text and then transfers the same meaning to the text in the target language with the help of lexicon and grammatical structure appropriate to the target language and its cultural context. In this process, every care is taken to ensure that there is no or minimum loss of meaning. Earlier, faithfulness to the original text was considered to be one of the greatest responsibilities of the translators. But now, with the mushrooming of multiple cultures and languages and diversity of political views in a given context, the translator takes liberty with the original text to allow some accommodation or adaptation in order to keep pace with the sense or spirit of the original. Accommodation is inevitable in practice if the translation is to maintain the essence, impact, and effect of the text in the source language. This is particularly true of poetry where the text is highly emotive and artistic in nature. A translator may come across a couple of words which are culturally-rooted and thus untranslatable. Such words are difficult to be translated if the cultural context is missing. But the fact is that individual words may not be translatable, but language is.

Responsibilities of a Good Translator

A good translator is not born, but made. With a little care and some labour, a person can acquire the skills of a good translator. Some of the qualities that distinguish a good and successful translator from a bad or unsuccessful translator are mentioned below.

Faithfulness to the Original Text and the Author: A competent translator should try to get into the mind of the writer of the original text in the source language. She/He should also fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author. She/He should try to put in every effort to ensure that the translation resembles the original text or is very close to the original text in terms of its sense and message. Expert and experienced translators know the requirements of a text, and make changes to communicate the style and essence of a text with minimal variations from the original.

Technical Expertise: The translator has to be an analytical person with necessary flexibility, adaptability and expertise in the use of technology so that she/he can pay close attention to all details and adapt whenever there is a need. Moreover, she/he should have thorough knowledge of the subject that she/he deals with. A person translating the biography of a great personality should have thorough knowledge about the life and achievements of the person concerned. A translator should be an excellent writer with good research and language skills so that she/he can find out things which she/he requires and make use of them in appropriate places. Writing skills help a translator make intelligent choices in regard to words, structures and expressions. **Using the Right Tools:** The experienced translators know how to use the tools like good monolingual and bilingual dictionaries, encyclopedias, e-dictionaries, glossaries of technical and standard works, etc. pertaining to the SL text and style guides to help him/her out in moments of difficulty. **Linguistic Competence:** A seasoned translator should be well-versed with the grammatical, syntactic, semantic and pragmatic features as well as the socio-cultural contexts of both the source language and the target language. She/he may have the liberty to interpret an idea in a different way but in no case should try to insert his/her own ideas or personal impressions in the new product. **Specialization:** A mature translator should have sound knowledge of the discipline to which the target text belongs, particularly the materials which have highly technical vocabulary.

Giving a Finishing Touch: In an act of translation, you should have enough patience and do the job sincerely. Before preparing the final product, you should go through the translated work two or three times and see if any last minute changes can be made to make it look more accessible and acceptable. You may like to change a few words, expressions or forms to improve the quality. Before letting the work out for publication, you should ensure that the product is suitable for the intended purpose and audience. You may have to change the style or language in accordance with the audience and purpose. Once you are satisfied with the work, you should put the original passage aside and listen to/read your translation with the ears tuned in, as if it were a passage originally written in the target language.

Audience and Purpose of Translation

As translators we should also make it clear what kind of a text it is: technical, narrative, or interactive or descriptive. After describing the text that is to be translated, we must then mention the audience and purpose. A work of translation has a fixed audience and purpose. The same text may be translated for different audiences and serve different purposes. Say for example, *Gulliver's Travels* of Jonathan Swift has been translated into many languages for different purposes and for different audiences. The same text is read by children and the adult readers alike. When the purpose differs, the audience also changes. When a text in a foreign or alien language is translated into a local language, we are required to impart a local flavor to it to suit the needs of the local readers. This is called **domestication**. On the other hand, when we are translating a text for a global audience, from a local language, into a foreign or international language, we need to take into account the cultural set up where we expect the translated text to be accepted. This is called **foreignisation**.

Audience and purpose are closely inter-related. Audience determines the purpose and purpose also determines the audience. The audience could be any group: very young children, adolescents, young adults, mature adults, senior citizens or people working in different professional organizations or engaged in different vocations. They could be a mix of consumers belonging to different age groups yet working in the same professional work-setting. If children are our audience, we can translate something to entertain them, inform them or educate them. But if adults are our audience, we may have purposes other than the ones we have mentioned for children.

Scope of Translation

In the earlier days, translation was considered to be a sub-branch of linguistics. Gradually it developed into an inter-disciplinary field of study. In the last three decades of the 20th century Translation Studies started functioning as an **autonomous** branch of study. Today, in this age of globalization, the scope of translation is immense. The significance and relevance of translation in our daily life is **multidimensional** and extensive. Translation helps us to know about the developments in the field of creative arts, education, literature, business, science and politics. In the post-modern world,

translation has become so relevant that people visualize it as a socio-cultural bridge between communities and countries. People now feel the importance of interacting and remaining connected with the people of other socio-cultural communities, both in their respective countries as well as countries across the world. In this backdrop, translation has acquired an increasing importance and satisfies individual, societal and national needs. Let's take the Indian society as an example. Whatever we see as Indian, be it literature, culture, history, politics, economics, it is a reality only because translation has made it possible for people to understand, interpret and compile the literature, culture, history, politics and economics of the respective states. In other words, we can say that it has become a unifying factor for the country. K Satchidandnandan, eminent poet, critic and former Secretary of the Sahitya Akademi, India has rightly said:

“Translation has helped knit India together as a nation throughout her history. Ideas and concepts like 'Indian literature', 'Indian culture', 'Indian philosophy' and 'Indian knowledge systems' would have been impossible in the absence of translations with their natural **integrationist mission**.”

Translation as a Mediator

Translators are the mediators between the source language/culture and the target language/culture. It is their responsibility to ensure that this linkage between the known language/culture and alien language/culture is properly established so that the readers don't lose the essence of the original. Translation of a language opens the doors to unknown cultural and linguistic environments. In course of translation, the translator is also required to use new terms, coinages and expressions to suit the requirement of the text in the source language. At the same time translation also promotes the growth of local literature and culture by bringing the great wealth of literatures and cultures from foreign lands. When we translate the great masters of world literature like Shakespeare, Homer, Dante, Valmiki, Kalidasa or more contemporary writers from Tolstoy, Dostoevsky, Kafka, to Gabriel Garcia Marquez, J. M. Coetzee, Pablo Neruda, Octavio Paz and others, we not only enrich our own knowledge base, but also raise the standards of our own local or regional languages.

Globalization and the Increasing Importance of Translation

With the rapid inflow of MNCs into the country due to the globalization of Indian economy and the increasing need for translation in sectors like Universities, publishing houses, research organizations conducting market surveys, medical science, tourism, entertainment, public relations and mass communication, international organizations, embassies, diplomatic service, BPO's, now translation and interpretation services are being offered by many organizations which provide training and placement facilities for the people working in the field of translation. All the Government Ministries like External Affairs (MEA), Agriculture, Science & Technology, Textile and Education and so on require Junior Translators, Senior Translators, Subject Experts and Assistant Director (for official languages). Private companies such as HP, Oracle, Samsung, Hyundai, LG, Thomson, GE and Aventis, etc also provide opportunities for language experts. You can also take up assignments with the Indian National Scientific Documentation Centre (INSDOC), Delhi if you are good at your job. In the state of Odisha, after the implementation of the Odia Language Act by Government of Odisha, Odia has become the official language with effect from 15th August 2016. The opportunities are endless provided you have the quality and competence to deliver good work in time. Translation is set to be a multi-billion dollar industry in the near future. So there can be a no better occasion than this to start a career in translation.

Translation is not just word-by-word translation of text from one language to another; it is putting the soul of a text into the body of another. Before starting translation as a career, it is wise for you to have look at the works of famous translators to have an idea of the level of originality and creativity required to make a piece of translation look natural and professional. It is essential that a beginner in the field of translation should understand the skills of translation before starting the translation of any work. Starting from ordinary subjects or technical subjects with less ambiguity you should gradually move to complex and difficult texts like literary **masterpieces** and knowledge texts in various disciplines. Similarly you should move from small assignments to large assignments and projects so that you can keep on sharpening the skills to match the requirements of the employers. The more is the exposure, the more is the rate of success.

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