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## The Difficulties in Translation Work and the Role of Translator

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### 1. Introduction:

The role of translator can be defined as the special career that does the translation work of languages or it can be defined as the person who is the reader, researcher and changer of languages. In the modern society, this occupation is becoming more and more important in the international activities of commerce and cooperation etc., however, I can say that any translator will face and overcome the different problems in the translation working in a variety of fields. The role and difficulties of translator was the interacted actors which should be considered by any translators always.

The importance of translator: Translator is a necessary occupation for international activities and cooperation.

I understand how important the work of the translator in our society is because I had worked 7 years as an English translator & interpreter in overseas in Nigeria, Ethiopia, Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Tanzania and Zambia. I can't say that the translator play the core role or is the chief leader at any activities or companies, but I can say that many international activities can't be completed successfully without the work of qualified translator.

The first important fact is that the translator will take a lot of necessary work to complete; otherwise, the whole work of the project will never be carried out successfully. In my memory, in the past 7 years, I had done a lot of work of translation and interpretation on paper as well as orally such as the official & unofficial paper translation of correspondences, letters, documents, files, specifications, technical files, official & unofficial weekend & monthly meetings, communications & conversations between the engineers from different countries, the site interpretation, interpretation in the public relationship work etc.. Meanwhile, I had undertaken some of additional jobs in English which instructed by the company leaders such as court issues, costumers clearance, insurance, local administration, employee management and so on. For such kind of work, the translator must have a wide knowledge. Except above mentioned, actually the process of translation is a complicated process which considering and changing within two or more different languages as well as different cultures, customs and grammars. Generally speaking, a translator is the necessary communication-bridge for any international activity or different language work.

The second important fact is that translator is the best motivator. A good and qualified translator can improve the work effectively, but an unqualified translator can make the work bad or even worse. I remember an incident when I was working in Ethiopia for the immigration issues which lead to incorrect interpretation from one translator of our subcontractor because he didn't



On the monthly meeting of project progress, I was interpreting for the Owner, Chief Consultant Engineer and Contractor of the project.

interpret the right word from Chinese to English when he was communicating with the officers. The immigration officers were confused and decided to reject all the applications of the Visa Extension from him which meant that the Chinese engineers will have to stop their work and go back to China. For this issue, he had to communicate with the immigration offices for a long period. At last, I went to solve this issue by explaining carefully and correctly to the immigration officers. So we can understand that a qualified translator is a good lubricant for the operation of a car or equipment. Choosing and speaking carefully in the process of translation or interpretation is very important.

The third important role of a translator is the key process of fund management. More and more international commercial companies employ the translator to work for very important translation work. Some years ago, I had heard that one young and fresh translator had made a serious problem because of his incorrect translation on the Employment Agreement for the local employees. In his translation, he didn't rightly translate the Chinese words meaning "after from..." to English, his translation is "from...". We know that there is a big difference between "after from..." and "from..." especially in some documents with legal force. Then many of local employees sued this company to the court. This is one very serious problem. Just because of his fault, the company had to pay a big sum of money as well as penalty which ordered by the court. Further, the company lost its reputation at the local place. For fine management, a qualified translator especially with full experience is very important.

Generally speaking, by the increasing cooperation of international states, the occupation of the translator or interpreter is becoming more and more important. Meanwhile, the organizations and companies are also aware about the significance of translator or interpreter. However, this career is not really an easy job; the translators or the interpreters will have to face and overcome all kinds of problems which they have never faced or solved before.

## **2. The difficulties of translation practice:**

The translators can't learn all kind of English, but they do different translation works in different fields e.g. culture, project, education, business, tourism, electric, hydropower etc. As we know that English is an international language, however, it is just one language. May be the students can learning in different English majors like business English, English teaching or English majors, but the future translation work may differ from their study such as the translator working in the construction for the graduate student of English literature. At that time, even you will feel that you're so poor in knowledge to do the translation work. Yes, something may not be totally controlled by us. For this issue, we have either to overcome it otherwise we had to give up our work. I can say that this is the first problem for most of the fresh translators even including me. After I graduated from the college in China, I went to work in Nigeria as a Department Manager in one Textile Company in 2007. But I felt that there were so many differences from my study in school. I couldn't understand the words that appeared in my work. At that time, in front of the English Terms, I felt that I just like a stupid pupil. This is the first difficulty in my translation career and I had to keep learning from my work. The process of translating is one comprehensive process of learning, understanding and translating of languages. Learning from your work will solve many problems for you.

According to translation theories, a translator must translate the meaning to the speaker correctly and exactly. However, in the actual working, we can't exactly do like that because some Chinese words can't be translated into English especially the translation of classical Chinese poems.

So, for translation, whatever the methods like literal translation or free translation is used, the translator must translate the basic meaning correctly. For any translators or interpreters will learn the second, third or even more other languages. So the continued study in wide fields must go on, otherwise, the translators will be very weak in wide acknowledge and translation quality. Studying with your life! This is the best point for a translator.

Although a translator had mastered one language, this is not enough. One unpredicted condition is the translator will translate for any person comes from the different countries of the world. They will speak with different accent. For example the English people speak very fast even you can't hear what is talked or the people from other countries speaking with very native accent. Once when I worked in Nigeria, I caused a misunderstanding by my listening between the "forty" and "fourteen", actually, the price was "fourteen", but I made it as "forty", so I paid more than the true price. Facing such a kind of situation, the translator must be very confident to face the different accent and carefully in listening to the speaker. So, they have to quickly adapt to the different accent as soon as possible or immediately as the essential ability for any translators or interpreters because the people who are communicating haven't more time to wait for your thinking in different accents. For example, the conversations between one Chinese who doesn't understand any English and one native English man who doesn't understand any Chinese. The ability to quickly adapt the different pronunciations is the key requirement for any translator.



I was translating the daily letters, documents and drawings for The Chinese bridge engineer from English to Chinese.

The difficulty of time-limitation. Translators must efficiently complete the work of language changing within the limited time. In the limited time to complete the instructed work is not a challenge, it is the duty of the translator or interpreter, so the ability of high efficiency of translation is very important for any translator or interpreter. For the paper translation or verbal interpreting, the translator should complete the translation work on time. For instance, in my memory, many of emergent translations happened in my past working experience. The manager required me to translate one technical document to the consultant engineer immediately from Chinese to English for urgent approval, so I have focus all my energy to do this work and make sure that there is no any mistake on my translation. The problem of time-limitation is always with the translator. They have to undertake the heavy pressure always. For this situation, experience is the key assistant and the useful resource from the internet, the software of computer-translator like Lingoes & dictionary etc. will help us largely.

Translators also affected by their mother language. Any two languages may different in meaning, pronunciation and from. However, no one can forget the mother language. When I translate the Chinese to English, I was also affected by the Chinese word. Sometimes the meaning of Chinese words is not so detail and exactly, it is very general, but if the translator translate it into English, the meaning must be elaborated, for example, on the working site, if the Chinese engineers say Chinese word "che", the translator should know that the exactly meaning in English because the Chinese work "che" has some of meaning like "vehicle","car","truck" and "pick-up" etc. if the translator can't explain exactly, the audiences will be confused. Imaging that, if a translator or interpreter translates the right sentence like "5 trucks of black soil" to "5 cars of black soil" will be

a very funny joke. This is just one very simple sample, however, translators or interpreters are used puzzled to find out a right word or sentence in the process of translation. The work of translation is one hard intelligent work; it is not only the changing of languages, it is the changing of cultures represented in different languages.

The problem of the translator or interpreter is easily be affected by the emotion of the speaker or the situation of the circumstances. For a translator, one idea should never forget that is the role of translator. The role of translator is the people who do the language translation. However, some of translators were affected by the emotion of the speaker ever the emotion of themselves. For example, if the speaker is talking very angrily, however, for the translators must keep their emotion in normal and translate correctly whatever happened is un-relative with. The translator should only translate or interpret the words what he should do it, more or less words is never permitted during the work. Moreover, whatever the situation is bad or worse, don't put your emotion in your words when the translator is working because the translator is not the right person who can decide and make the final decision. For example, especially in the negotiation or argument discussion in the business activity or other conditions which happened sometimes, the translator shouldn't translate with the emotional tone or manner in the translated words, if the translator do it like that, the situation will be became very bad or worse because the listener will believe that the speaker is communicating emotionally. However, facing such kind of situation, the only thing needed to done by the translator or interpreter is choice the best right word(s) to translate correctly. Only always remember the role of translator and enhancing the skill of translation, the translator can do a very better satisfied work.

The occupation of translator or interpreter is a wide conception including the person who doing the work of language changing in different situation and circumstance such as in UN or in a company etc. without any doubt, the translator had to understand the background of his work in that field, otherwise, the translation work will be done very badly with possible mistake happened whatever how good or bad you are. I am clearly remembered that there was one event happened when I was working in Zambia. I translated the Chinese words "Jue Ding" means "decide" in English according to the "Chinese Construction Plan", however, I had made a serious mistake on the translation of "decide", the correct translation should be "plan" or "propose". This mistake made just because I didn't understand the "Rule of South Africa Specification". According to the specification, contractor hadn't any right to carry out the construction work before the "Work Schedule" approved by the consultant engineer. So our submitted schedule had been rejected by the consultant engineer, and also I had to translate it again.

### **3. Conclusion:**

In my opinion, I define the translation as the "Art of Beautiful Bridging" and the translator is the "Builder of the Art of Beautiful Bridging". As a translator, we have enjoyed the beauty of this Art in our career lifetime; also we have suffered enough in our working period. With the progressing of technology, some useful of software like Lingo used for translation had been invented, this has largely improved our efficiency of working, however, the human brain is the best wise one can translate any languages.