

TRANSLATOR FOR THE NEW INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS ENVIRONMENT

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The aim of this paper is to analyze how different concepts of translation are adapting to the actual context, and how the function and role of the translator has affected the International Business framework. The explanation of such shifts is the political, social but especially the cultural context that suffered many change, which eventually determined the emergence of new conceptions, mentalities, opinions. It also offers an analysis of the translation profession from the point of view of intercultural communication as the translator is a "message conveyor", a bridge between peoples, cultures and mentalities.

Keywords: translation, message conveyor, communicator, intercultural.

Cod JEL: F29

Going back to the history of this profession, we could say that people opinion about what the translation was, changed several times. For example during Renaissance, translation was by no means a secondary activity, but a primary one, exerting a shaping force on the intellectual life of the age, and the figure of the translator appeared almost as a revolutionary activist rather than the servant of an original author or text.

Later during the seventeen-century sees translator and original writer as equals, but operating in clearly differentiated social and temporal contexts. Translator's duty is to extract what he perceives as the essential core of the work and to reproduce or recreate the work in the target language.

The eighteenth-century finds the translator as painter or imitator with a moral duty both to his original subject and to his receiver. According to the nineteenth-century conception, the translator must focus on the Source Language text and must serve it with complete commitment. The Target Language reader must be brought to the Source Language text through the means of the translation. During the next century there are taken into consideration other aspects, such as the practical problems of translating and the whole question of the status of the translated text.

Experience, good translating skills, competitive fees are simply no longer enough to meet the many requirements translators are now faced with and to ensure a sufficient material to work on for a long period of time. In fact, the rules of the game have changed, and a good command of bluffing techniques is not enough.

A couple of decades ago, translators were usually highly regarded by clients or at least recognized for what they truly were, that means high-level linguists with a satisfactory level of experience in one or several fields of specialization and a decent knowledge of the industrial world. And this was because they provided a service that was considered useful in spite of the cost it entailed.

Unfortunately, nowadays, mainly because of the widespread feeling of distrust in the working world, most translators, or at least those with under 10 years' experience, are looked upon as opportunistic service providers with few or no skills that professional translators master. Clients often consider them as "artificial" specialists, with no real expert knowledge, and self-proclaimed language experts. They also think that translators are people of whom they can dispense with, since most people now perfectly understand English anyway.

People tend to wonder what exactly the translators do if everyone has a minimum English knowledge. Although the people working in his specific field are obviously expected to have at least a basic understanding of English, languages and more specifically, the transmission of shades of meaning from one language into another, hardly come within their knowledge. But, as

long as the client does not realise where the translator's skills as a linguist can benefit his business, there are many chances that he will always consider the translator as a person who only tries to take advantage of the lack of professionalism of certain individuals in his field.

The widespread feeling that most people are now fluent in English is of course a major disadvantage for translators. We have all heard stories, regardless of the language combination, of how a large number of companies now satisfy their translation needs by using a so-called "multipurpose" employee of whom they believe is best qualified to do the job (usually, the "employee" in question often turns out to be an assistant manager or someone from the communication department with no proper translation background).

The question in fact is the following: when a translator is faced with a client with few or no language skills, how can he prove his competence as a linguist? How can the translator show his client the difference between "being fluent for business purposes" and being able to master every subtlety of language? Nevertheless, this is the main problem to discuss: the idea is not so much about providing proof of the translator's own competence, but trying to make the client aware of the gap that exists between his own skills and those of the translator.

The client's perception of translation profession is one of the many misunderstandings that the modern translators have to deal with nowadays. In addition to their sometimes difficult relationship with clients, translators are usually faced with a multitude of challenges which can appear even if a long period of time has passed since they have their translation work done.

The first challenge the translator has to take into consideration is directly related to his profession and is something that translators often do not treat as seriously as they should. And this aspect refers to maintaining one's language skills. Many translators feel that just spending time translating is enough to ensure that their skills are maintained at an appropriate level of quality. And this is obviously wrong: translators, regardless of their personal level of competence, should usually spend a certain amount of time, before and after translating, researching information, speaking or otherwise practicing their languages, following training courses in their fields of expertise and other more. This is probably the first step towards improving a translator's work. A translator who does not even bother to read the papers (in both his source and target languages), travel abroad or listen to foreign news on the TV or radio is definitely not a good translator, because he lacks the one quality that all translators should exhibit in the first place: curiosity.

In addition to updating his linguistic skills on a continuous basis, the translator needs to have a minimum of computer literacy, according to the standards set by his clients. Updating the information technology skills is probably more of a challenge than "simply" maintaining the linguistic competence. Indeed, while there are many ways for a translator to maintain or improve his knowledge of languages by himself, having a certain IT competence proves to be a much harder task. It is true that the fast-changing world of computers represents a major challenge not only for translators, but for all people, and although senior translators sometimes manage to retain their previous clients despite their obvious reluctance to use modern means of communication, their "new-entry" colleagues will often find that a strong IT background usually is an essential condition for a career as a freelancer.

The best solution would probably be having the necessary ability to anticipate what will become tomorrow's standard requirements. More and more freelancers are now trying to sell their skills via the Internet, which is a proof of the increasing awareness of the potential of this medium.

However, even complying with all these requirements, it is not enough to ensure a steady workload over a long period of time. Nowadays, clients' top requirements are now increasing for shorter deadlines to the obvious detriment of quality. This trend has been noticeable for some time now and it certainly does not look like things are going to improve in the near future. Unfortunately, clients do not take too much into consideration the effects that may appear eventually. Anyway, they should be "educated" in order to understand that a translation cannot be done as clapping hands. So, translators have an obligation to their profession to make clients

aware that translating is a very demanding occupation and that quality takes time and does cost money. And here comes the idea of respect towards this profession. Anyway, this is very hard to achieve, as every clients wants the translation to be done “yesterday”, if possible.

Translators believe in the necessity of giving translation the importance it deserves, rather than considering it a mechanical process that can be carried out with the help of a dictionary alone. It is a much more complex and interesting activity, which involves going beyond simply linking a series of words to produce a translation that is correctly understood by the target audience unfamiliar with the source language. The skills and experience for translation include the ability to write and read very well in the language the translator is working into. Even complying with these essential requirements does not mean that one can be a good translator

The translator, before being a “writer”, is primarily a “message conveyor.” In most cases, translation is to be understood as the process where a message expressed in a specific source language is linguistically transformed in order to be understood by readers of the target language. In the translation process, there is fulfilled a fundamental role by breaking down language barriers in a world that is increasingly interlinked, at a time when “globalised” communication is fundamental for both international business and social relations. In this line of work, translators have the opportunity to open doors, bringing people, cultures and countries together.

In conclusion, translation transport ideas and events through time and space in order to make something understood, to accomplish, to prove. In fact, people translate to communicate, transform, and revert. Even with all the apparent cultural impediments, a translator can create equivalence by the logical use of resources. Translation is an intellectual activity that will continue to thrive, deriving inspiration from fiction in the source language and passing on this inspiration, or at least its appreciation, to target-language readers.

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