



A scientific study of translation problems and their solutions

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Received 6 Jan 2025; Accepted 19 Jan 2025; Published 7 Feb 2025

Abstract

As in any field, there are numerous problems in the translation industry; some of these problems are faced by translators, while others are faced by clients. Some problems can be considered structural issues, as they affect the translation process itself. This research aims to present a theoretical framework regarding the most significant problems and challenges faced by translators during the translation process, clarify the concept of translation and its types, and study the differences between literary, academic, and scientific translation. The researcher employed a descriptive research methodology, relying on previous studies and articles available online, and through this approach, the most important findings and recommendations were derived.

Keywords: translation industry, numerous problems, Iraq

Introduction

Translation is one of the most important literary arts. Through translation, the translator conveys information from one language to another, thus contributing to the dissemination of knowledge and the exchange of information between different cultures and societies. Translation is an extremely ancient art, as most ancient civilizations engaged in translation [1]. The Greeks translated from the ancient Egyptians who preceded them, and the Romans translated from the Greeks, and the Arabs also translated from the Greeks. Thus, Greek philosophy and science spread to the Arab and Roman worlds, thanks to the efforts of translators [2].

In the modern era, translation plays a crucial role in our lives. With the widespread use of modern communication technologies, particularly the internet, which is overflowing with information, [3] translation has become essential for disseminating this information across languages, translating it into other languages, and republishing it in those languages. Thus, knowledge can now be transmitted from one language to another very rapidly. Given the importance of translation, this research aims to discuss translation in general, its types, its principles, its challenges, and the differences between literary, academic, and scientific translation [4].

Research problem

As in many other fields, there are numerous challenges and problems that translators may encounter in their work. These challenges can affect both translators and clients, or they may be structural issues that arise from the translation process itself. Linguistic structural differences, cultural disparities, and complex terminology are common challenges in this process. In this study, we will discuss both the major structural difficulties in translation and the key challenges faced by translators, clients, and the translation industry as a whole. While we cannot provide a solution for every translation challenge, we can offer some practical advice based on the

experiences of professional translators to help mitigate their impact [5].

Research questions

- What are the most common differences in the translation process?
- How do translators' experiences influence the translation process?
- What difficulties do translators face?

Research objectives

- To present a theoretical framework regarding the most significant problems and challenges faced by translators during the translation process.
- To clarify the concept of translation and its various types.
- To study the differences between literary translation, academic translation, and scientific translation.

The significance of this research

lies in its theoretical contribution to enriching the Arabic literature on translation problems and solutions. From a practical standpoint, it helps senior officials in government institutions make informed decisions regarding translation issues and its solutions [6].

Research methodology

In this research, the researcher employed a descriptive approach, relying on previous studies and articles available in Arabic libraries and online resources. Through this approach, the researcher will derive the most important findings and recommendations.

Previous studies

Ghazala's study (2012), "Translation as Problems and Solutions – A Textbook for University Students and Trainee Translators":

This textbook (the first in a 10-volume series on translation) approaches translation from a problem-solving perspective. It views the entire subject as a series of problems (the practical aspect) that require solutions (the theoretical aspect); without problems, translation theory is meaningless. The book includes four main chapters that address the primary types of translation problems: grammatical, lexical, stylistic, and phonetic. Numerous translated examples (primarily from English to Arabic) are presented and discussed in English to identify the problem, and then a solution (or solutions) is proposed using the simplest language possible.

A study by Roskoša, A., & Rūpniece (2019) ^[2], "Challenges in the Translation Process and Possible Solutions":

This study examines the opinions of 35 undergraduate and postgraduate students in the Applied Linguistics program, specializing in technical translation, at Riga Technical University, regarding the problems they encountered during the translation process. The research data were collected from student essays and analyzed using content analysis. According to the opinions of these technical translation students, understanding the type and nature of translation problems helps translators overcome them and produce accurate, high-quality translations.

In their study (2000), Scott-Tennent et al. discuss translation strategies and solutions: In the early stages of learning translation, some learners mistakenly believe that translation is simply a matter of word-for-word conversion. Therefore, they view translation as nothing more than a mechanical process. However, translation is undeniably a human activity, and the translated text in the target language must be written in a style that aims to persuade or influence the reader, and should have the same linguistic impact as the source text ^[7]. This cannot be achieved without employing the imagination and skills that distinguish the human mind. Consequently, it is unrealistic to consider computers as a viable tool for translation.

Students in English language programs often encounter difficulties in translation, particularly with grammatical and lexical issues. Translation is viewed as a process involving various problems that require appropriate and feasible solutions. English and Arabic belong to different language families—Germanic and Semitic—which inevitably leads to challenges. Certain grammatical and lexical features of both languages pose problems when translating from Arabic to English or vice versa. Translation plays a crucial role in converting a text from one language into an equivalent version in another ^[8]. Through translation, highly advanced international communities can be established, despite the differences or similarities in the cultures, levels of civilization, and achievements of their respective peoples

The majority of problems faced by translation students are grammatical and lexical in nature. This research paper on strategies, problems, and solutions in translation from English to Arabic provides a detailed overview and examples of these problems, and proposes solutions. Therefore, this research is divided into two chapters. In the first chapter, we will discuss translation strategies ^[9].

Theoretical framework

Language structure

The structure and word order of sentences can differ between English and other languages, and this is one of the most important structural issues in translation. The cultures of speakers of different languages can vary significantly, and some words may not even exist in other languages ^[10]. This is one of the most common challenges that translators face daily, and it can be a major reason why translation is difficult. In English, for example, the adjective comes before the noun, but in French, the adjective comes after the noun. In Arabic and some other languages, the pronoun is part of the verb, indicating the gender of the subject ^[11].

Do you find this confusing? Yes, things can really get complicated! Language is a complex and ever-evolving phenomenon, and therefore, a translator must understand the structure of each language and use it effectively, while ensuring that the translation does not alter the meaning ^[12].

Cultural differences

The cultures of different language-speaking groups can vary significantly, and colloquial language is often interwoven with formal language, making the translator's task more difficult ^[13]. This is especially true for technical, legal, or medical documents. The larger the geographical area where a language is spoken, the more dialects and slang terms you are likely to encounter. For example, the British are known for their dry, witty humor, which is a common comedic style. However, this type of humor may not be appreciated not only in a different language-speaking culture, but also in another country. Other languages are also spoken there, including English. Therefore, there is the issue of how to translate accurately without offending or upsetting the intended audience in any way. Cultural considerations are sometimes an integral part of the translation process ^[14].

Missing terminology

This is one of the most significant challenges in translation. Some terms may simply not exist in certain languages—this could be due to cultural differences, where such terms are not used, or because the related activities or concepts are not recognized or practiced in that culture. This can pose a difficult problem for the translator, and it raises another important structural issue that deserves discussion. For example, the phrase "child adoption" might not have an equivalent in another language because child adoption is not practiced in that region ^[15].

Types of translation

Translation can be broadly categorized into written translation and oral translation. Below, we will explain the difference between the two:

First: Written Translation: This type of translation involves converting a written text from one language to another. To successfully translate a text, the translator must have a thorough understanding of both the source and target languages.

Written translation encompasses several sub-types, including literary translation, academic translation, and scientific translation. We will discuss each of these types in more detail below:

A) Literary translation

This type of translation involves the translator conveying a text from one language to another in a literary style. The translator must have a thorough knowledge of the source language, as well as an understanding of its culture, history, civilization, and achievements ^[16]. The translator must possess literary writing skills, enabling them to formulate the translated text in a way that sounds natural and flows smoothly in the target language, ensuring that it is easily understood and appreciated by the reader. The translator must remain faithful to the original text, adding or omitting nothing. Literary translation varies depending on the literary genre being translated; translating a speech differs from translating a play, and translating a play differs from translating a novel

Academic Translation

- This involves translating academic papers and documents from one language to another.
- The translator must translate each word literally, without altering the word order, even if this results in a less fluent translation.
- Academic integrity must be maintained, as academic translations involve documents that determine students' future prospects for university admission.
- An academic translator must be well-versed in all relevant scientific terminology within the subject areas they translate.
- The translator should have experience with the types of documents required by universities, and thus can help the client by automatically excluding any irrelevant documents.
- The translator must ensure that the documents received for translation are complete and free of any errors

The translator should have an academic terminology dictionary in the target language to facilitate their translation work ^[17].

Scientific Translation

- It involves translating technical and scientific content from one language to another in a precise and accurate manner.
- This type of translation requires the translator to adhere strictly to the original text, without making any modifications or additions.
- The translator must find the appropriate equivalent terms for modern scientific terminology in the target language dictionary.
- If the translator encounters difficulty explaining certain points when translating directly, and feels that the reader might not understand them, they can provide an explanation in a footnote ^[18].

Simultaneous interpretation

- This type of interpretation involves the interpreter listening to a speaker or reading a text, and then

immediately translating what was said or read into another language.

- This type of interpretation is commonly used at the United Nations, during meetings between heads of state, and at other important international events.
- There are several types of simultaneous interpretation, including:

a. Consecutive interpretation

- This type is considered the most challenging form of interpretation.
- This method relies on the interpreter listening directly to the speaker, and then translating what they say once they have finished speaking.
- The interpreter must be highly attentive and focused to ensure they don't miss any part of the conversation.
- The interpreter must have a complete mastery of the language they are translating from.
- This type of interpretation is commonly used in online discussion programs that feature guests from different countries.

B) Film translation

1. Translating films is a challenging task, as films often use colloquial language, which makes it difficult for the translator to find culturally appropriate equivalents.
2. If a written script for the film is not available, the translator must rely solely on their auditory comprehension.
3. Conversely, a written script may be available, but not the film itself. In this case, the translator will face difficulties distinguishing between masculine and feminine forms in languages that do not have such grammatical distinctions, such as English ^[19].

Principles and requirements for professional translation

- To be a professional translator, one must have a sufficient level of proficiency in both the source and target languages.
- The translator must create a suitable environment for translation. They should read the text to be translated several times before beginning the translation process, and they should not start translating until they have a complete understanding of the text.
- A translator must adhere to the specific type of translation they are undertaking. If it is literary translation, they should add their own stylistic touch to the text. However, if it is scientific or academic translation, they must maintain strict accuracy and fidelity to the original text.
- A translator should always have access to the most up-to-date dictionary for the target language, to help them understand any unfamiliar terminology.
- In literary translation, in particular, the translator should try to put themselves in the author's place in order to produce a professional translation
- The translator should leave translating the title until the end of the translation process, so that they have a complete understanding of the text and can therefore translate the title accurately ^[20].

- A translator must be able to avoid making grammatical and spelling errors.
- A professional translator is one who can accurately translate common terminology from one language to another.
- A translator must be aware that the meaning of a word in English can change depending on whether the first letter is capitalized or not.
- When translating from Arabic to English, the translator should avoid using overly ornate or figurative language.
- The translator can express their opinion on certain matters if they wish to do so.
- A translator must study all the suffixes in the target language in order to understand how to use them.

Translation Problems

- The translator's inability to convey the meaning accurately and appropriately.
- The inability to distinguish between synonyms in the same language, which leads to errors during translation.
- Differences in grammar rules between languages, which can pose a challenge for the translator if they are unable to accurately reproduce the structure.
- Cultural differences between countries can lead to significant problems in translation, as a translator translates individual words, not an entire culture.
- The lack of sufficient cultural knowledge and understanding required for a successful translator.

To overcome these challenges, a translator must take several steps, including:

- Mastering the source and target languages, with a thorough understanding of their nuances and intricacies.
- Utilizing available resources, such as computers, the internet, and dictionaries.
- Possessing sufficient literary knowledge to enable professional translation.
- Translating in a calm and comfortable environment that allows the translator to concentrate effectively

The difference between literary and academic translation

There are many differences between literary translation and academic translation, due to their differing purposes. Among these differences are:

- a) Literary translation requires the translator to read the text and rephrase it in a way they deem appropriate, adding or omitting words as needed, especially if certain expressions are difficult to translate. Academic translation, however, requires the translator to provide a direct, verbatim translation, without any alterations. This is because academic translations convey scientific information from one language to another, information that is crucial for shaping the future of students.
- b) Literary translation requires the translator to have extensive literary knowledge in the relevant field and in both the source and target languages. Academic translation, on the other hand, requires the translator to be

familiar with the academic terminology of the subject matter and to have a thorough understanding of its proper usage.

- c) Academic translation is easier than literary translation because, once an academic translator becomes familiar with the specialized terminology, the translation process becomes simpler. However, literary translation requires the translator to possess strong writing skills and the ability to use various literary styles, in order to transform the translated text into a work of art that captivates and enriches the reader.
- d) Literary translation demands creativity and talent from the translator, whereas academic translation does not require these qualities.

Results

Thus, we see that translation, in its various forms, has played a major role in transferring cultures between civilizations since ancient times. Even today, translation continues to play a leading role in disseminating knowledge and information across different cultures worldwide. Therefore, anyone entering this fascinating yet challenging field must be well-educated, objective, and capable of producing accurate and reliable translations.

Recommendations

- It is advisable to consult with the client before making decisions about the best translation and approach. They may suggest keeping the wording from the source document as is, or they may offer their own preferred phrasing, or they may encourage you to come up with a new, original term that conveys the intended meaning as accurately as possible.
- Thoroughly research the most common slang words and expressions in the target language, and familiarize yourself with the most widely used dialects. This will provide you with valuable insights and helpful ideas when you need to translate. Try to immerse yourself in the culture as much as possible by watching movies and TV programs and reading magazines and books in that language. Movies and TV programs are also very useful for understanding the culture and local accents.
- Develop your skills in a few languages that you already know well, and use grammar checkers, translation memory tools, and other techniques to ensure that the structure of the source text is preserved in the target language without altering its meaning.

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