EFFECTIVE TRANSLATION AT THE CORE OF SUCCESSFUL BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

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Abstract: Businesses all over the world are expanding both nationally and internationally. In the process of broadening their base, business leaders need to communicate with their counterparts based in other countries. However, to establish effective communication and to interact formally, a translator is needed to communicate their ideas mutually. The competence of a translator reflects in the translated work. Even if the translation is outstanding but it fails to reflect the actual concept of the source text, the entire effort put in turns out to be useless. Therefore, a translator must understand and implement the core concepts of the source text. The present paper discusses what steps need to be taken by translators in order to maintain consistent quality of their work without expressing personal views and remaining impartial.

Key words: *business communication, translation, competence*

Translators are people capable of building bridges between linguistic communities. Their ambitious objective is sometimes perceived as the art of the impossible: to express in a particular language ideas originally intended and formulated in another language, reproducing the use of language which, by definition, is uniquely formulated in a different cultural context. Despite some theoretical difficulties, translation is an effective communication tool. It allows citizens of an increasingly interconnected world to interact and participate in building a common future without having to give up their language - an integral part of their identity.

Translators who provide their services can be grouped based on their specific activity of translation. Therefore, there are: - interpreters, who provide interpretation at conferences, - professional translators, working with specialized texts in companies, - literary translators, who translate literary texts, - academic translators, who teach translation courses or languages. Professional ethics has a special place in the work of the translators, since their job is to keep the transmission of information. The translator is responsible for this information. Therefore the translator must be honest and protect the confidentiality of information.

Furthermore, translators must not say things that were not said or written, and they should render as accurately as possible both the linguistic and the extralinguistic level of the translated work. That is, they must read written materials such as legal documents, scientific works, or news reports, and rewrite material into specified languages. In their work the translators should refer to reference materials such as dictionaries, lexicons, encyclopaedias, and computerized terminology banks as needed to ensure translation accuracy. For interpreters it is particularly important to translate messages simultaneously or consecutively into specified languages, orally or by using hand signs, maintaining message content, context, and style as much as possible.

Competence as Richards and Schmidt (2002: 93) state is "the implicit system of rules that constitutes a person's knowledge of a language. This includes a person's ability to create and understand sentences, including sentences they have never heard before, knowledge of what are and what are not sentences of a particular language, and the ability to recognize ambiguous and deviant sentences. Emphasizing the foregoing, one can say that translation competence would be the translator's ability to "analyze, compare and

convert two cultural systems, while respecting the conflicting forces within cultures and interplay of these forces when) the two languages and two cultures are brought into contact." (Bantas and Croitoru, 1998: 99) In order to achieve the role of mediator between two languages / cultures, the translator has to possess a complexity of skills. Thus the translator has to have double integrative capacity (bilingual and bicultural competence) to provide translation with communicative purposes.

Ideally, the interpreter should have extensive experience using both languages in similar business deals. It is critical that the interpreter have immediate and deep understanding of the potential business partner's message. The interpreter needs to be able to correctly translate the meaning, not simply the words.

Therefore, there is a need to identify the specification of 'translator competence'. In this regard, Bell (2001) argues that the professional (technical) translator has access to five distinct kinds of knowledge; target language knowledge; text-type knowledge; source language knowledge; subject area ('real world') knowledge; and contrastive knowledge. (Hosni, 2010: online) This means that the translator must know (a) how propositions are structured (semantic knowledge), (b) how clauses can be synthesized to carry propositional content and analysed to retrieve the content embedded in them (syntactic knowledge), and (c) how the clause can be realized as information bearing text and the text decomposed into the clause (pragmatic knowledge). Lack of knowledge or control in any of these cases would mean that the translator could not translate. (Hosni, 2010: online) Without (a) and (b), even literal meaning would elude the translator. Without (c), meaning would be limited to the literal (semantic sense) carried by utterance which, though they might possess formal cohesion, would lack functional coherence and communicative value (Bell, 2001).

Thus, the basic competences that a translator or interpreter needs is the grammatical competence - i.e. knowledge of the rules of the code, including vocabulary, word formation, pronunciation. The choice of words influences the degree to which the receivers can understand the translator/ interpreter. Great attention should be paid to every single characteristic of the words through which communication is carried out by the translator/ interpreter. (Avval, 2011, online) The socio-linguistic competence, i.e. the necessary knowledge and capacity to produce and understand utterances from the context, the status of the participants, their interaction, is another important competence along with the power of speech, the ability to combine form and meaning to render oral or written texts of different genres, i.e. to obtain texts that keep the original form and content.

As Toury notes, "translation is a kind of activity which inevitably involves at least two languages and two cultural traditions" (1978: 200). As this statement implies, translators are permanently faced with the problem of how to treat the cultural aspects implicit in a source text and of finding the most appropriate technique of successfully conveying these aspects in the target language. These problems may vary in scope depending on the cultural and linguistic gap between the two (or more) languages concerned (Nida, 1964: 130).

Language and culture are closely related and both aspects must be considered for translation. The notion of culture is essential to considering the implications for translation and, despite the differences in opinion as to whether language is part of culture or not, the two notions appear to be inseparable. (Hosni, 2010: online) Lotman's theory states that "no language can exist unless it is steeped in the context of culture; and no culture can exist which does not have at its centre, the structure of natural language" (Lotman and Uspensky, 1978: 211–232). Thus, when translating, it is important to consider not only the lexical impact on the target language reader, but also the manner in

which cultural aspects may be perceived and make translating decisions accordingly (Pym et al., 2006).

Language is socially constructed and therefore embedded in the culture. Understanding the embedded meanings requires mastering the language, a process that can be extremely time consuming and difficult. Misinterpreting the words or the cultural meaning associated with them may negatively affect the entire interchange. In the case of a business deal, it may be a deal-breaker. In this situation, a good interpreter can become a major asset. He or she may even construct bridges and open doors that would not be opened.

Translators must avoid some misunderstandings and ambiguities based on certain linguistic similarities. The greatest difficulty in the choice of words is the polysemy, homonymy and synonymy. Technical translators must be familiar with issues of ambiguity and polysemy. They must take into account the beneficiary (the end user). Such a type of translation (technical) must be very clear and concise in order to avoid ambiguity. As Jennifer Roney notes, (2011: online) there may be regional, educational, economic, and even generational differences in dialect and colloquialisms can also add to the complexity. The interpreter must know how and when to make adjustments in the translation so that the message received is the same one that was sent. An understanding of the technical "jargon" of the business area is also very important.

At certain critical points during business communications a combination of competency in the language and human intuition are required to assess the reaction of the other parties and to assist, if necessary, in clarifying hidden implications and potential misconceptions. The intonations and wording of responses may give important clues as to the implied meaning, as may body language. The sincerity and genuineness of a response may be evaluated more accurately from subtle inflections of words than from the words themselves. A good interpreter can help read these intonations and steer the conversation accordingly. Emphasis can be conveyed either during the translation or through supplementary interpreter comments to help absorb the meaning behind the words. (Roney, 2011: online)

Punctuation is everything in written language other than the actual letters or numbers, including punctuation marks, inter-word spaces, and indentation. Punctuation marks are symbols that direct the reader to the way of reading and understanding the text. Sometimes a hesitation in speaking or a comma in writing can lead to totally different meanings. Not all differences will be radical, but sometimes small differences can lead to important misunderstandings and gaps. In interpretation, hesitation in the right place can lead to the ideal understanding and no hesitation can lead to breakdown in communication. (Avval, 2011: online)

Feedback is a key aspect, especially when it comes to interpretation. The reactions or feedback that the translator/interpreter gets from the receivers, especially in interpretation can guide or misguide. In written translation, it is not always possible for the translator to correct the problems of translation which lead to breakdown in communication. But in interpretation, the feedback from the interlocutor can help the interpreter to correct him/herself whenever a gap or breakdown takes place during the communication process. This feedback can be an eye contact or a nod.

There are now electronic translator machines to help with email and websites, although the accuracy still leaves much to be desired, and natural language patterns are lost. But these do not help with real-time, face-to-face business. When face-to-face communication in two languages is required, one may have to rely on an interpreter, and selecting the right interpreter can impact the successful completion of the objectives. Both

long-term business relationships and short-term business transactions are likely to be much smoother when there is a level of trust established. The interpreter is a part of that trust factor. Once a good relationship is established, consistency is important in order to maintain trust and move the business forward. (Roney, 2011: online)

People who are proficient in grammar and have a vast vocabulary are not necessarily good communicators. Such people may also be faced with communication breakdowns because a good knowledge of grammar and vocabulary is not enough to overcome the unavoidable gaps and misunderstandings that occur during the communication process. Good language competence, knowing cultural differences, good knowledge of grammar, vocabulary and punctuation, paying attention to the feedback, age and gender of the receivers are the tools in the hand of the translator/ interpreter that help to save a translation/ interpretation as communication process from breakdowns.

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