

EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION SKILLS

TRANSLATION

What is Translation?

Translation is the process of converting text from one language into another. It is the transmittal of written text from one language into another. Translation refers to the written language (unlike interpretation, which is practised for spoken word). Translation is the process which includes interpretation of the meaning of a given text, and subsequently converting to its equivalent text into the target language. Translation is the practice of communicating the same message from one language into another; without losing the emotion and essence of the original.

The text to be translated is called the source text and the language in which the text is originally presented is source language. The language it is to be translated into is called the target language; the final product is sometimes called the target text.

Translation must take into account constraints that include context, the rules of grammar of the two languages, their writing conventions, their idioms and other nuances. A common misconception is that there exists a simple word-for-word correspondence between any two languages, and that translation is a straightforward mechanical process. A word-for-word translation (also referred as **verbatim translation**) fails taking into account the context, grammar, conventions, and idioms of the target language at times. Such fails usually occur when a translator relies on technology-assisted translation (Google Translate, etc.).

Necessary Aspects in Translation

- Message
- Intention
- Time
- Manner of Delivery
- Medium of Communication
- Place
- Participant

The Need and Importance for Translation.

Translation isn't simply conversion of words; it is a transfer of views, ideas and values. With rising globalisation and cultural awareness, more and more ideas are being transferred from one nook of the world to another. The text from one source language is being converted into hundreds of other languages. It is a booming and profitable business but also a responsible one. Translation is needed for a few reasons, namely;

- Growth of Multi-National Companies

Many companies across the globe insist on businesses being run in the

language of the country they are based in. It is not necessary that the entire business setup runs on English and thus, translators are always a call away at these places. Tapping global markets requires understanding of the market they are stepping in and the communication material will be super impactful if it is published in the language of the target country. *“If you speak to person in a language he **understands** it shall go to his brain, but if you speak to a person in the language he **speaks**, it shall touch his heart.”* Otherwise, the business will end up just the way Chevrolet NOVA* did.

- Cultural Interchange

With far flung Russian movies making it to the Oscars, Rajnikanth’s Kabali breaking screening records globally and anime being popular binge-watching material; it testifies the growing need for translation. In fact, cultural interchange has been the raison d’être for translation right since 8th Century A.D. Right from the debatable translation of the New Testament, Ramayana, Mahabharata, Panchtantra, Jataka Tales to the written astrophysical observations of Galileo Galilee.

- Nation’s External Affairs

- News

Journalism translation is a field of expertise that presents unique features, tempered by the way in which journalism works and by the channels that circulate its texts, as the field of expertise imposes certain ways of translating. To approach it, it is necessary to be aware of and analyse the specific techniques of the text in hand. At the same time journalism texts have their own textual conventions. The journalism translator, as a user of this type of text, should be aware of these conventions and possess the necessary textual competence so that these texts work in a new linguistic and cultural context. On occasions the translator needs to work like a journalist. And in some cases journalism translators are journalists themselves.

- Tourism

All professional tour operators need qualified translators, and there is a good reason for this. Translators are essential in the tourism and hospitality sector. Hotel and restaurant owners, travel agents, tour operators, and tourist guides, all require content in multiple languages to serve their clients’ needs. The better translated the guidebook text is, the better would your guest know about your land.

The Need for Professional Translators over Amateur Translators.

Translation demands a rare combination of linguistic and writing skill. Even writers who have become proficient in two or more languages rarely combine these two types of skill well enough to translate quickly and well. A skilled translator offers benefits that someone who is "only" bilingual cannot provide:

- Translation involves the communication of concepts, not just words. The most common mistake an amateur translator makes is to translate each word literally, rather than striving to communicate the author's intended meaning.
- Amateur translators often choose words that seem right instead of choosing the ones that are right. The most common such error involves what's called a faux pas (a false interpretation) in French: words that resemble each other so closely that the translator forgets they differ in meaning between the two languages.
- A professional translator will help you identify your most important goal: preserving the author's voice and style and idiom as closely as possible, creating something with a new voice and style and idiom that communicates the same message more effectively in the second language, or finding an acceptable compromise between these two approaches.
- Professional translators are subject-matter experts, and have the expert's ability to understand a subject's jargon and communication style. Moreover, we know the right jargon and usage patterns to communicate successfully with different audiences in the target language.
- Professional translators are more efficient. In addition to our advanced knowledge of a subject, we use tools such as lexicons and terminology databases to find the right words quickly, and can use a range of tools such as computer-assisted translation to speed up our work and improve consistency. This technology can't yet replace a human translator, but instead helps us complete jobs more quickly and accurately than would otherwise be possible.

Skills Required To Translate Well.

- A translator must be good with the source and the target language.
- Must possess excellent reading and comprehension skills.
- Informed about cultural knowledge.
- Lexical Skills.
- Free of biases (throughout the process).
- Must possess time management, must be organized and disciplined.

Qualities of a Good Translator.

- A translator must be expressive.
- Updated with cultural, social, political happenings.
- Motivated to update his/her vocabulary.
- Familiarity with their subject area.
- **MUST BE A RESEARCH WHIZ!**

TEXTUAL RELIABILITY

Translation users need to be able to rely on translation. They need to be able to use the translation as a reliable basis for action, in the sense that if they take action on the belief that the translation gives them the kind of information they need about the original, that action will not fail because of the translation. And they need to be able to trust the translator to act in reliable ways, delivering reliable translations by deadlines, getting whatever help is needed to meet those deadlines, and being flexible and versatile in serving the user's needs. Let's look at these two aspects of translation reliability separately.

CASE STUDY

Chevrolet Nova.

Sooner or later in almost any conversation about global brand names, someone will bring up the “well-known story” about the Chevrolet Nova, the compact car manufactured by General Motors between 1962 and 1979 and again from 1985 through 1988. The Nova “failed” in Latin America, the story has it, because its name means “no go” in Spanish.

That tale has been taught to generations of business students and recounted in hundreds of marketing seminars. It was repeated without challenge last October in the *New Yorker*, when, in an article about name development, reporter John Colapinto told readers: “The industry abounds in tales of cross-linguistic gaffes, like ... the Chevy Nova—in Spanish, the ‘no go’.”

In June of this year, one of my blog readers saw fit to remind me of this history lesson. In a comment, he wrote that the Nova “did better when it was renamed.”

So, as a public service, here’s my summary:

- In Spanish, “nova” and “no va” are pronounced differently and have different meanings. The latter has a stress on the second syllable and means “doesn’t go”; the former has a stress on the first syllable and means (as it does in English) “a big, bright star” or “Latin for ‘new’.” A native Spanish-speaker would be no more likely to confuse “nova” and “no va” than an English-speaker would be to confuse “notable” and “no table” or “carpet” and “car pet.”
- Even before the Chevy Nova, “Nova” was a familiar brand south of the border: it was the name of a gasoline brand sold by Pemex, the state-owned petroleum company. People throughout the Spanish-speaking world had heard of Brazilian bossa nova, too.
- The Chevy Nova was never renamed for the Latin American market.
- GM “was aware of the [‘no go’] translation and opted to retain the model name ‘Nova’ in Spanish-speaking markets anyway, because they (correctly) felt the matter to be unimportant’.”

And there’s some logic to this legend. Linguistic screening is an important element of global branding: you don’t want to risk an international incident over an unintended vulgarity or an inappropriate connotation. By all means, vet your brand name for language conflicts as thoroughly as you do for legal ones. But let’s give credit where credit is due: big companies like General Motors have squadrons of localization experts, consultants, and lawyers whose job is to watch out for language blunders. They did the appropriate research. GM may be a big, easy target, but in the case of the Nova, all systems were definitely go.