

# THE EFFECT OF THE CHANGING ROLE/S OF TRANSLATOR IN THE TEACHING OF TRANSLATION STUDIES

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**Abstract:** Technological advances have changed all aspects of life. One aspect that is forced to follow the change is language teaching. In this article, I intend to examine the effects of technological change on the changing ways of teaching, especially in teaching translation. Nowadays, translation is helped much by technology. In fact, in relation to technology, translation studies can be distinguished into two, i.e. machine translation and machine-assisted translation. My focus in this article is the second one. Technological change requires a change in the translator's role in translation. With such a change of role, I intend to find out the changes which should be applied in the teaching of translation. The results of this study are expected to provide enlightenment to the teachers of translation studies in particular in teaching their students.

**Keywords:** roles, technology, translator

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## INTRODUCTION

The widespread and increased use of artificial intelligence and automation forces people to improve their abilities so that the anxiety of being replaced by machines will be unfounded. This phenomenon affects all professions, including translators. Researchers all over the world have responded to these changing demands. However, some of them focus on the changes which must; be made by the translators, and not by the teacher of translators. This article aims to address that issue.

Prior to explaining about the changes which must be undertaken by teacher of translators, this article will begin by explaining the changes which are happening in different profession which triggers the changes in the translation industry. The research will then elaborate on the roles which must be assumed as a result of the changes in the industry. The current translation technology will also be discussed in this research. Finally, this research will then address the issues of translation pedagogy.

## FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

### *Changes in the Profession and Translation Industry*

Translation automation has casted fear on the head of translator. They fear the inevitable; human translator will soon be replaced by machine. Latest trends or technologies in other professions encourage translator to be updated with it. Therefore, in the teaching of translation, students need to be made aware of the changing trends and the elements which accompany it. Gone are the days of translating a text word by word uncontextually. Instead, teacher of translators need to present them with various changes in the industry which uses the service of translators.

This automation of translation has also created fear in the heart of most translators. They think that their positions as translator will soon be replaced by machine. However, in 2017, the Common Sense Advisory (qtd. in Sundaramurthy, 2017) issued a statement that only 1% of the content in the public was translated. This shows that the market for translator is still wide open. In addition, according to Sundaramurthy, some of the services which are thought to trigger the changes in translators role, and are largely remained untouched (at the least in the context of translation teaching in Indonesia) are that of post editing machine translation, digitization of legal content, web based interpretation, testing of online multi-lingual software, providing tips to gaming companies on ways to localize their games/content to attract gamers from across the globe, providing multi-lingual email/customer support using chatbots, to creating e-learning courses for a global audience (2017).

Henke, Levine, and McInerney (2018) pointed out that businesses nowadays have been relying on AI and advance analytics to assist in business decisions making. They also pointed out that in addition to data scientists, data engineer, and other analytical specialist; translators play an important role in turning the insight gathered through analysis into impact, especially within an organization. As per this new role, in the US alone, McKinsey predicts that the demand for translator will increase to two or four millions.

### ***Translation Technology***

Translation industry also makes use of technologies to help them with their work. Big data, computer-aided translation, and Google translate are some of the most common technology implemented in the translation industry nowadays. In the terms of machined-translation, De Palma and Lommel (2017) have characterized it into three. The first is adaptive machine translation. This refers to when a concept in which technology learns from the translator. It goes beyond translation memory since it provides suggestions in the form of quality translation which can be used by the translators.

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The second is neural machine translation (NMT). This technology is what currently being developed by big companies such as Google, Facebook, and others. This refers to a better version of MT in which it is said to be able to mimic the human translation.

The third is related to Automated Content Enrichment (ACE). This technology greatly helps the transcreators since the machine automatically links terminologies to resources and helps making them less ambiguous. By implementing this, the transcreators to find 'locale-specific content' and resources which can make their translation more relatable to target audience.

Most translations are in the form of writing. Since it is written, manually typing the text has been the common practice. However, in relation to the hazard of typing for a prolonged time, and in order to avoid the typing-related disease, translators have begun using voice recognition softwares. IBM's Via Voice and Dragon's Naturally Speaking are some examples of commercially produced softwares to assist translation in creating the 'text'. Monteiro (2009) pointed out, however, that the use of this automation requires a lot of training. There is actually one other method which can be used by translators to automatically render their voice into text, and it is free. Translator can use the voice recognition software integrated in YouTube. Translator trainees do not need to do a lot of practice to make use of this. However, the process to create the text

includes the making of a video containing the voice which needs to be rendered. This longer process might be too tedious for some translators.

Another automated technology which can help translators is the Optical Character Recognition (OCR). This technology is especially helpful to translate image-only text. This software works by optically recognizing characters in such image into text. As it is with voice recognition however, as Monteiro pointed out, it has its flaws, especially when dealing with overlapping texts or small fonts.

Corpus linguistics has also become one of the alternatives for translators to check the 'naturalness' or 'acceptability' of their translation. The use of corpus will further increase the acceptability of a translator especially if coupled with ACE. Furthermore, some search engine has now incorporated corpus-like feature in their engine. For example, to find out whether 'put off your shoes' or 'take off your shoes' is more commonly used in a sentence, search engine users can just enter the query into Google, for example, and it will give you the number of results each generates. This has also been confirmed by Monteiro through his example of searching the frequency of the phrase 'heavy rain' and 'strong rain' (2017).

### ***The Changing Roles and Skills Set of the Translators***

In relation to translation technology, the biggest change in the translation industry and the one which directly influences the translators and their role is the increasing usage of Computer to aid translation and Machine Translation (CAT and MT). In addition, other automated text generation softwares which have become noticeable by the community, and might be useful for the translators as they increase translators efficiency, such as the voice recognition and optical character recognition softwares, needs to be addressed as well. Because of them, most translators nowadays have adopted the role of editor and software specialists.

In the industry, one of the must-have roles of the translators according to Henke, Levine, and McInerney (2018) is that of an analytical translator. To be specific, in said context, translators assist business leaders to identify and prioritize problems which will generate the highest value when solved. The translators then will transfer the goals specified by the leaders to the data analysts to create model for solution. This process ends when the translator ensure that the model is implementable in the organizations and communicates the benefits to business users.

In this role, new sets of skills must be possessed by the translators. Since they can assume a variety of position (leader, project manager, communicator, industry experts, etc.), they need to have an excellent understanding of domain knowledge, general technical fluency, good management skills, and great entrepreneurial spirit.

As mentioned previously, there are still many contents left translated in the industry. This calls for the need of 'transcreator' (Alpha Omega Translation, 2018; Densmer, 2017). Transcreator refers to a profession whose main job is to recreate content which could elicit the same emotions as intended in the source language. The people of Alpha Omega Translation states that this profession requires 'creativity'. With such demand, new skills are expected to be nurtured by the translator trainees. Transcreation usually deals with product names, taglines, slogans, advertisement, and anything which is branded.

Densmer added culture consultant as another role which must be taken as a translator. Earlier, it has been stated that one of the services which could trigger the changes in roles of translators are that of tippers to gaming companies on ways to localize their games/content to attract gamers from across the globe. This requires expertise on the target language culture so

that the target culture gamers will be interested in playing the games. Culture consultant also needs to be a researcher of the target culture behavior and motivation stimuli.

### ***Consequences***

Having found out the areas which have been affected by translation technology and the current and most common translation technology used, the author will try to formulate the changes which can be adopted by translation trainers and teachers. Computer-aided translation is the most common practice in the translation industry nowadays. Trados, WordFast, and the likes are some examples of the technology which aided translators in their translating process. In my opinion, their software skills should take center stage. Mastery of the software skills will help them a lot in their work later, especially if the tools used for teaching are always updated. In addition, since translation memory plays a great role in this, data management might be very beneficial for the trainees.

Another adaptation which needs to be made in teaching is in its relation to Machine Translation (MT), and that is their editing skills. In this sense, I believe translators need to be a master of sentence formation and word selection. It would also be beneficial for the translators to know beforehand what common errors are made by the MT.

Translator also needs to be an expert of the tools they are using. In the case of VR and OCR (Voice Recognition and Optical Character Recognition), a generous amount of time should be provided to train them in becoming an expert in it. In fact, in my opinion, the use of voice and optical character recognition should be made into one of the subjects in the translation studies. In the case of manual writing, on the other hand, the training on using word processors is also necessary, since there are features which might be really useful for translators, especially in dealing with writing issues and grammatical errors. Some of the examples of said features are the 'autocorrect' and 'spelling' options.

Search engines have been really helpful for translators; however, as it has been stated earlier, the results generated by search engine cannot be taken wholeheartedly. The fact that there are entries for phrases which we might consider wrong shows that search engine is not entirely trustworthy. Therefore, trainees need to have training on sorting out the source for their translation, especially if the sources they are using are from search engines such Yahoo, Google, etc. Search Engine Optimization is also one of the skills which might be beneficial for translators, transcreator, and language consultant since it does not only provide a huge corpus of written, and sometimes spoken discourse, but it also provide insight on the internet users habit which might be useful for content providers.

As company nowadays are relying more on AI and advance analytics, one of the parts which could be included in the translation curricula is to study specific AI techniques and methods. For this role of analytic translator, however, it is best if it is combined with apprenticeship since it will also encourage translator trainees to work in a team. In addition, by combining the training with apprenticeship, translator trainees can also experience the problems and approaches to the solution in transferring analysis results to applicable company strategies and its communicational activities to the end-users.

As a transcreator, translators are expected to be creative. To achieve this purpose, the author believes that the same practice given in creative writing might be effective to nurture the translator trainee's skills. This creative writing subject can wither be integrated as a part of overall curriculum, or made into a specific subject. In Indonesian universities, translation studies are

often made into a minor. The subjects for this minor might include creative writing. In addition, since the aura of marketing and communication is thick in this subject. It might also be beneficial to include several marketing and communication subjects to be studied, or students can be asked to join a subject focusing on marketing strategies and communicative writing from different major.

The role of culture consultant presents yet another challenge for translators. As earlier mentioned, they need to be a researcher or conduct research on target language culture, be an expert on it, and on the motivation and behavior. To solve this problem, translators need to learn how to do a research, especially, in my opinion, a marketing one. The previously mentioned solution can also be the key to solving this problem.

## CONCLUSIONS

As it is clear now that the translator roles nowadays are multifaceted and complex, the teaching of translation studies, in my opinion, there is only one conclusion which is logical; translation studies in Indonesia can no longer be a part of a curriculum; it needs to be a major. This opinion is not unfounded if you think about it; most European countries have realized this and make translation studies as majors. One thing which needs further investigations, however, is whether it can be done in the bachelor level.

The universities in the US and the UK have made translation as their majors. To the best knowledge of the author, only Singapore University of Social Sciences has established a major in translation studies. It remains to be seen whether Indonesia and the rest of Asia will follow suit.

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