Emerging Trends in French Studies in Nigeria: Areas of Machine Translation & Transcreation in View

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Abstract

Translation studies began as an academic discipline in the early 50s. The discipline was founded by a group of scholars who were interested in exploring the different methods of translation and translation theory. According to them, translation is simply when the meaning of a text in one language is written into a text in another language, that is, from a source language to a target language and this can be done by a human or a machine. Over the years, many linguists from different parts of the globe (Peter Newmark, George Mounin, Jacques Flammand, Deslisle J, Sagar, etc.) have come up with definitions and definitions of the word translation. Considered alongside with translation is its oral aspect which is interpretation. Humans, in combination with machines have put in concerted efforts to bridge the communication gaps existing among nations. Obviously, it was never an easy task for them until the advent of the translation industry with its attendant emerging trends identified as "post-editing machine translation, video translation and transcreation. These growth trends, as have been observed, take different dimensions in different regions of the world. This article, has made an attempt to explain the functioning of these major trends in the translation industry within and outside Nigeria.

Keywords: Translation, Interpretation, Post-editing machine translation, Video translation and Transcreation.

Introduction

There is no gain-saying the fact that translation (and interpretation) are age long exercises destined for bridging the communication gap existing among the nations of the world. It is so indispensable in our daily life. This communication gap confronts interhuman cum social relationships. No

wonder Newmark (1981) sees translation as "*an exercise which consists in the attempt to replace a written message in one language by the same message in another language*". The need for the duo became more intensified with the emergence of globalization which has turned the world into a global village. With the proliferation of products of all kinds in our markets, the technological areas involving specialized terms, the involvement of sports, etc, the need for translation and interpretation became inevitable. Suffice it to say that without translation activities and interpretation, there would always be enormous problems of communication among countries of the world.

Worthy of note is that up until today, no one can say precisely the origin of translation. There hasn't been any acceptable theory as regards the origin of translation.

But before the 1950s when translation industry came into being (1), translators had it rough and tough, carrying heavy loads of dictionaries and other translation tools travelling long distances to accomplish their tasks. That was the era of human translation which was later accompanied by automated translation (AT) and Computer-assisted Translation (CAT).

Today again, we thank the inventors and founders of more new technologies that emerged, bringing with them some major emerging trends in translation globally both in and outside our country Nigeria. These emerging new trends include the following: post-editing machine translation, video translation and transcreation.

This article, has taken steps to discuss these emerging trends in and across the globe. The paper have tried to highlight these trends, their raison d'être, their advantages and disadvantages in comparison with the earlier forms of translation.

Earlier forms of translation:

- Human translation (HT)

This is the most ancient form of translation and is also the most reliable even till today. Human translation uses professional human translators who are highly qualified in translating languages. They are often native speakers and will understand the nuance of the original text. Professional translation services using skilled linguists have been used for thousands of years, and the

experience and dedication of human translators can ensure high-quality results (www.espresotranslations.com) consulted on 1st August, 2023.

Machine translation

This type of translation uses highly advanced algorithms to translate texts. These can be more advanced than just Google translate: "(Ref) Neural machine translation".

Computer-assisted translation (CAT)

Generally speaking, computer-assisted translation is mainly a translation done by a human translator with the help of professional translation software.

Automated translation (AT)

This one, as the name implies, is fully machine-operated. It does not require human translators except to input the source text in the computer. Automated translation sounds too good to be true. Suffice it to say that automated translation, like every other thing in the world, has its own disadvantages and for automated translation the disadvantage is mainly inaccuracy. Google translate, as it is known, is the most widely used form of automated translation for its convenience and its free nature.

Differences between the forms of translation discussed above

Human translation Versus machine translation

As earlier mentioned, human translation is more efficient and accurate than machine translation. This is because humans understand the three Cs of Content translation: Context, Colloquialism and Creative writing, better than robots (involved in machine translation) can. Human translation is the best method to use in translating creative works such as marketing copy or novels. HT is also the best method to use in translating content that involves specific expertise such as texts filled with medical, legal or engineering terminologies.

As opposed to Human Translation, machine translation, that is, automated translation, lacks 100% accuracy given that the software cannot comprehend context well. In spite of some improvements in machine translation and computer-assisted translation alike, they still get confused when faced

with vague phrases, and possible colloquialisms and slangs which cannot be translated or may be mistranslated by machines.

However, the advantage of machine translation/computer-assisted translation over human translation is speed. So human translators are advised to choose translations that involve the machines if their priority is quick translation over 100% accuracy. Neutral machine translation also plays its own roles. It means that translation software learn as it translates. In this case, the software learns more neuralistic ways of phrasing sentences trying to make the text more easily understood by humans. This brings in improvement in translation memory as machine translation programs can also get faster at translating texts as they remember words or phrases they have already translated in the past. This could also create problems given that the already translated phrases may have been in a different context.

Additional emerging trends in translation

These are specifically in the translation industry. As the digital realm continuously pushes for more globalized and shared experiences, researchers never got tired of pushing forward for more improvement in the translation industry. In 2021, researchers predicted that the growth of translation industry would be worth $56.1 (fifty-six point one dollar). The pandemic that was ongoing as from 2019 aided this estimated growth given that people were mostly in their homes working in front of their computer screens making this period the time when multilingual content can help businesses get ahead of the game. Within this period, some major growth trends emerged in the translation industry and they include:

- Post-editing machine translation.

- Video translation

- Transcreation

Of note is that these growth trends differed in different regions of the world.

Post-editing machine translation OR Machine translation post-editing (MPPE)

This term is the process of proofreading texts translated by a machine engine. The process aims at improving translations to achieve the same level of output quality as human translation can give.

[Posted on 30th March, 2022; extracted from Google 2nd Aug. 2023 crowdin.com>blog>2022/03/30]. Post-editing in translation is the process whereby humans amend machine-generated translation to achieve an acceptable final product. A person who post-edits is called a post-editor. The concept of post-editing is linked to that of pre-editing (Wikipedia).

How to master post-editing machine translation

With post-editing machine translation, the linguist reads through the source text carefully, reads the machine translation output and compares it with the source text to identify and correct any errors. In this case, "linguists have to pay close attention to grammar, punctuations, spelling, word order, style, non-translated words, any potential mistranslations, to arrive at a final translated text." (toppandigital.com>Blog).

The key to successful post-editing

The key here is quick decision making. After reading the machine translation output and comparing it to the source to understand how accurate it is, the linguist makes prompt decision on whether it is more efficient to post-edit the machine translation or to delete it and translate from the scratch. If the MT output is of good quality and only needs some tweaks, then it should be post-edited. On the contrary, if the MT output is of poor quality and would take more time to post-edit, the linguist opts immediately for translation from the scratch.

It's worthy of note that the process of editing machine translation will only prove productive and time-saving if the linguist uses as much of the MT output as possible. This is again when the MT is good enough, not full of errors.

At this juncture, let us note that, there is also over-editing and under-editing. Over-editing refers to situations where the linguist engages in making amendments which are not completely necessary. For example, if the post-editor is tempted to replace a word with its synonym while both variants are viable options. This should be avoided as it simply results in waste of time. The same thing is applicable to word re-ordering in languages with no strict sentence word order, for example, in Hausa language where one can say: Babu Turenchi or Turenchi – babu: The two signify the same thing "no English."

On the other hand, under-editing also exists. This is the practice of leaving errors in the target copy, for example, failing to correct mistranslations, spotting punctuation errors, leaving the translation sounding not fluent and robotic, failing to make sure the approved terminology is used.

Useful guidelines in the process of post-editing

- The final post-edited machine translation should always be an accurate representation of the source text that is semantically, syntactically and grammatically correct.
- No information in the source text should be missing from target copy.
- Equally, the target copy should not contain any information that did not feature in the source copy.
- Ensure that the terminology is consistently used and in line with client's approved glossaries. Terms that should not be translated need to be left in the source language (possibly retained as loan words or "emprunts" in French).

  [Source: Machine Translation Email, Toppan Digital Language].

Video Translation

Video translation is a method of processing the content of a video for use in another language (the target language) and this will typically include the following steps:

1. Transcription of the original audio.

2. Translation into the target language and,

3. Subtitling the video, adding a voice-over track, or dubbing.

Put in another way, video translation focuses on ***creating subtitles, translated voiceovers, or dubbed audio for your existing content***. It also includes translating any on-screen text that is included in the video. The goal of video translation is to make the same content available in more languages. [www.veed:10>VEED TOOLS/www.translation.com>what-is-Veed. Posted on 27th Feb. 2021 by Hana].

Why video translation is worth it: A guide to video translation

[summalinguae.com>last uploaded June 2nd, 2021]

One of the most important advantages of video translating is that more customers could be watching your videos. Let's take for example, most videos are written in English. If non-English speakers were to come across your videos, they will probably click away from them once they realize they can't understand them. Although visual cues in a video can go a long way, viewers are also less likely to share your content if you haven't translated and localized it. To buttress our point, we are saying that localization and translation can improve the chances of any content being relevant for a global audience. This leads us to why video translation is important to a content strategy.

By translating your videos, you can boost your reach, increase engagement, and improve the ROI (Return on Investment) on your content. Here, video translators are very important and they translate automatically your videos into any language online. To this end, there will be no need to download software. [www.Veed.10>VEED TOOLS].

Added to translating your videos for boosting your content and ROI, boosting your ***organic reach*** is another effective way of reaching out to your audience. Organic Reach is a metric in social media marketing that shows the number of unique accounts that have seen a post or piece of content on a social media platform. In other words, the number of eyes that have seen the post once. Organic Reach excludes the use of any paid promotional tools that would be used to boost the visibility of the post (<u>www.hopperhq.com</u>). As a matter of fact, Organic Reach is one of the most important factors that determine the potential engagement rate of a post. This is to say that the more organic reach you have, the more engagement you can potentially receive.

Transcreation: This is a process of adapting a message content from one language to another maintaining the desired intent, style, tone and context. (www.dynamiclanguage.com) It is heavily used by the marketing industry when a new product or service is about to be launched in foreign-language speaking countries.

Another definition of transcreation is the intersection between language, culture and emotion (ehlion.com>magazine>transcreation). This definition brings to limelight why transcreation is much more than a mere literal translation from a source language to a target language. Transcreation not only requires linguistic expertise but also creativity and a cultural understanding

of the target market. This way, you can make sure your content, such as advertising slogans and marketing texts, resonate with the target audience on an emotional level.

Basically, while translation is the conversion of text from one language to another, transcreation takes it many steps further to ensure the massaged intent remains intact after translation. With transcreation, the original words or images may be tweaked or changed entirely to convey the message's original purpose in a different language or culture. So transcreation is a highly nuanced translation that focuses on eliciting a specific response and finding the best way to **recreate** that in another language or culture.

Transcreation is also described as a fusion or combination of the words "translation" and "creation". It describes copywriting content in a source text that needs to be coherent, relevant, etc. in a language. Sometimes transcreation is also called "creative translation." This is because the content is not translated word for word (just like in literal translation where understanding the content of a target culture matters a lot).

Purpose of transcreation

Originally conceived by marketing and advertising professionals, the goal of transcreation is ***to duplicate the message thoughtfully and seamlessly without audiences realizing that a translation ever occurred.*** That is to say that "the finished product should give the audience an identical emotional experience as the source message (www.weglot.com>blog>transcreation).

At this juncture, I wish to draw our attention to the fact that there exists good and bad examples of transcreation.

Good examples of transcreation

Browsing through this topic, I was able to select just a few examples of transcreation. Here they are:

1)   *Nike* (a company) is a great example where a straight translation of key marketing messages, like their slogan "Just do it" doesn't have the same impact in foreign languages as in English. So *Nike* brilliantly applied transcreation to its Chinese commercial by producing a series of marketing companies that communicate the intended meaning of "Just Do It" with visuals and words scripted to convey the meaning behind the slogan.

2)   *Intel – In love with the future*

Intel gave us another successful transcreation advertising example with its Brazilian debut. In America, the Computer-Chip Manufacturer's slogan is "Intel: Sponsors for Tomorrow." However, in Brazil's native tongue, Portuguese, the straight translation of the slogan implied ***Intel*** would not deliver on its promises immediately. So ***Intel*** used transcreation to update the message used in Brazil to ***"Intel: In Love with the Future."***

3)   *Red Bull adapting their colours*

Transcreation done by ***Red Bull Foray*** was beautifully done. ***Red Bull*** has built its brand around the idea that the beverage will help you achieve more and do more with its energy inducing formula – after all it gives you wings. However they made some big changes to their product and its marketing before debuting in China to ensure the messaging was conveyed in Chinese culture.

First they altered the formula to a non-carbonated version, which is preferred in that market.

Next, they changed the can's colors to red, gold and black – a color scheme that signifies luck, wealth and good fortune to Chinese consumers. These significant brand changes helped ***Red Bull*** successfully launch in China and illustrate successful transcreation in action.

4)   *White Friday Vs Black Friday*

This is another good example of using transcreation to successfully market a brand to different cultures. "Black Friday" in America is a well-used phrase to signify a big sale. It's so ingrained in American culture and they live up for the door-boosting deals advertising every Friday after thanksgiving. However, Black Friday doesn't have the same connotation in other countries. Let's take Arabic-speaking countries as an example. The word "black" signals mourning and tragedy in Arabic. It's the color associated with sadness and people will wear it to express grief and sorrow. (This is same in our country, Nigeria). Therefore advertising a black Friday sale in Arab countries would evoke unfavourable feelings around the event. Therefore they (Arabians) call these major events "White Friday" instead.   Again changing the name is transcreation in action. (www.dynamiclanguage.com>good...).

Bad examples of transcreation

We have illustrated good examples of transcreation that helped brands successfully launch in foreign markets. Let us see some brands that missed their target due to wrong transcreation.

a)   ***Pepsi Bringing People Back to Life in China***

In the 60s, Pepsi launched a campaign using their slogan, "Come alive! You're in the Pepsi generation." However, when the brand launched the same campaign in China, it translated thus: "Pepsi brings your ancestors back from the dead." Obviously, this didn't augur well with the citizens.

b)   ***Mitsubishi Pajero Wildly Failing in Spanish Market***

When Mitsubishi Motors launched its Pajero model in Spain, they made a major transcreation blunder. In Spanish, the word "pajero"is pejorative. It means tosser or wanker (that is terms of abuse for a masturbator). They chose to change the name to Monteiro for the Spanish audience when they realized the mistake which was likely a costly one for the car maker etc. [same source as for good examples of transcreation].

There are so many other cases of transcreation playing out in advertising either positively or negatively. All these take us to the fact that language experts should always have a say in overseas marketing efforts. Even in our own country here, the need for language experts in transcreation activities cannot be over-emphasized.

Conclusion

In all we have discussed, we can ascertain that truly there have been emergent new trends in French studies with particular focus on the world of translation. So far, we have seen that translation and its oral counterpart interpretation are very integral aspects of French studies in our country and beyond especially in the area of translation.

First, it was human translation with its attendant problems. Gradually, computer assisted translation joined, followed by Automated or machine translation. All these eased off the problems of the human translators to an extent. Later on, precisely in 2021, we witnessed the most recent emerging trends in translation studies, vis-à-vis post-editing machine translations, video translation and transcreation.

All these we have discussed extensively with some examples where necessary. This work, has created a window for more research in this area. I therefore call on other researchers to go into more expansion of this topic for future use by students and our younger researchers.

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