

FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND VIETNAMESE

**THE TRANSLATION LANDSCAPE IN THE
RAPIDLY SHIFTING GLOBAL CONTEXT:
IMPLICATIONS FOR CURRICULUM DESIGN****PHAM HUY CUONG***

ABSTRACT: In an increasingly interconnected world, translation contributes to transcending linguistic and cultural boundaries. The pervasiveness of globalization and technological innovations has called for radical changes in the translation industry. This study aims to provide a panoramic overview of this field, highlighting contemporary trends and emerging issues. It situates translation in the globalized and technologically mediated context, addressing the significance of adopting a collaborative approach for international translation projects. It also delves into localization and content creation as evolving areas to respond to the rising demand for rendering multimedia content from one language to another, international branding, and penetration into the global market. Further, the article examines the utilization of computer assisted tools and artificial intelligence in enhancing translation efficiency, consistency and accuracy. These shifts have, however, sparked off certain ethical dilemmas concerning intellectual property rights, accountability in collaborative projects, and the devaluation of human translators. The article concludes with a brief discussion on the knowledge and skills required for the translation profession and the opportunities afforded in this swiftly transforming world. It also provides implications for curriculum design for English Language or English Linguistics programs in the face of dynamic shifts occurring in the translation industry.

KEY WORDS: translation industry; translation landscape; global context; curriculum design; computer assisted translation

RECEIVED: September, 09th, 2024.

EDITED: November, 25th, 2024

1. Introduction

With the advent of modern technology, especially the internet and artificial intelligence, communication across countries and cultures have become less of an obstacle and more of an opportunity for socio-economic development, inducing significant transformations in the translation industry. Bielsa (2021, p.3) highlights “the centrality of translation in constantly producing and reproducing the global reality that shapes our lives.”. Translation contributes to facilitating communication and understandings across languages and cultures in the contemporary interconnected and globalized world. Vibrant international business activities and the proliferation of mass media have stimulated burgeoning demand for translating various types of documents to reach a wide range of audiences from different linguistic and socio-cultural backgrounds. Information transmission in the globalized context requires not only rendering meaning from the source language (SL) to the target language (TL) but also ensuring the relevance of content. This means that translated text must account for the specific features of the target audience, local settings, and the purpose of communication. In other words, some degrees of adaptation are mandated aiming at effectively conveying the intended message across languages and cultures while honoring their distinctive and unique features. Further, recent innovations in machine translation and natural language processing have also boosted translation workflows, efficiency, and consistency, making translated materials instantly accessible to every corner of the world (O’Brien & Vázquez, 2020; Yuxiu, 2024). This changing context has, however, posed numerous challenges for the translation industry that question the traditional roles of translators and necessitate a shift in perspectives as well as the development of

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new competencies and digital literacy. This study reviews major shifts in the translation landscape under the impact of globalization and technological advancement as well as the issues emerging from this context. It juxtaposes translation with localization and content creation in response to the escalating need of achieving a global outreach and penetration into new markets. The study also examines the application of machine translation, computer assisted translation (CAT), and artificial intelligence (AI) in this field. It then delves into translators' code of conduct by address prominent ethical dilemmas they encounter in the current world of dynamicity and complexities. The study concludes with some implications for the design of the English Language or English Linguistics curriculum with a prime emphasis on practical elements in translation teaching and learning.

2. Translation in the context of globalization

Although English has confirmed its global standing as a lingua franca (Kirkpatrick, 2011), the demand for translation is constantly increasing with the emergence of large markets such as Eastern Europe, Russia, Brazil, India, and China (Orlando & Gerber, 2021). The rapid rate of globalization and dynamic international cooperation has escalated the frequency and necessity of communication across borders in which translators act as mediators for mutual understanding and exchange within a world of linguistic and cultural diversity. In this regard, Koskinen and Pokorn (2021, p.5) associate translation with the image of a "the cultural bridge-builder" that brings people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds together. Globalization has fostered the interconnectedness of economies, cultures, and societies leading to "translation's key role in mediating between different localities and between the local and the global" (Bielsa 2021, p.3). Further, translation enables multinational businesses to expand their global operation by reaching out to different populations with diverse characteristics and preferences. Entrepreneurs can communicate with customers or clients in their mother tongue, thus establishing trust, engaging effectively, and maximizing the chances of success in foreign markets through translation as an important mediator in this process. Globalization has also led to higher mobility and migration, resulting in multicultural societies with linguistic diversity. As Cronin (2003, p.6) notes.

If contemporary reality is inescapably multicultural and multinational, then it makes sense to look to a discipline which has mediation between cultures and languages as a central concern to assist us both in understanding globalization and in understanding what it might mean, and why it is sometimes so difficult, to be a citizen of the world.

Translation provides immigrants with easy access to essential services, such as healthcare, legal assistance, and government services in case they are not capable of using the dominant language in the new environment. This helps resolve linguistic issues and promote equity and inclusivity in multilingual communities. Further, translation takes a crucial role in disseminating information, knowledge, publication, and other intellectual materials to the global audience irrespective of their geographical and linguistic backgrounds. It expedites the sharing of knowledge, research and ideas, and international research collaboration among academics, scientists, and researchers worldwide. With the blooming of the mass media and social networking sites, globalization allows content such as games, books, movies, and other creational means to reach out to audiences in different parts of the world. As a result, translation contributes to sharing and preserving cultural heritage, promoting intercultural understanding and appreciation.

However, many challenges confronting the translation industry have ensued as the aftermath of globalization. Although communication has overcome territorial and geographical constraints through translation support, cultural issues remain a formidable deterrent. In Cronin's (2003, p.126) words, "Translation is a return ticket: the voyage out is complemented by the journey home". This means translation is a two-way undertaking that involves rendering the SL including its linguistic and cultural context into the TL and then returning to the original context. This process also requires conveying the meaning, nuances, and cultural aspects of the SL content in the translations in a way

that accurately reflects the essence and intentions of the original text. However, if translators adhere strictly to the cultural features of the SL, translated texts may seem foreign and incomprehensible to the target audience. As a result, some degrees of adaptation are needed to customize the content so that it can suit the local norms and preferences (Orlando & Gerber, 2021). As such, cultural nuances, idiomatic expressions, and context-specific references need to be concisely interpreted and relevantly transferred to the TL to ensure cultural sensitivity and avoid misinterpretations. Translators must navigate the complexities of different linguistic and cultural norms, adapting content while maintaining its essence and intended message. The global status of English and the escalating translation demand are also attributable to the rise in the number of amateur and freelance translators. While they contribute a huge amount of translated material in different languages and proactively participate in crowdsourcing projects, this has sparked off many ethical issues in the translation industry. The adoption of machine translation, CAT tools, and AI technologies has revolutionized translation, they are not problem-free. All these emerging issues out of the globalized context will be discussed and tackled in later sections.

3. Contemporary trends in translation

Two major factors that have substantially influenced the translation industry include globalization and technological breakthroughs. The former has escalated the need for translation as discussed earlier while the latter has radically revolutionized the translation landscape worldwide and shaped current trends in this field. Firstly, CAT tools and AI-powered systems have become more sophisticated and efficient, expediting the translation process with a high level of consistency and accuracy. O'Hagan (2020, p.1) propound that "technology has contributed to translation of diverse types and quality, accompanied by an increasing awareness in society at large of translation and the role played by technologies in the translation process." As a consequence, in addition to linguistic knowledge and translation skills, translators nowadays need to develop capacities in leveraging CAT tools and AI for enhancing productivity and translation quality. The facilitation of latest technologies in fulfilling international translation projects has led to the second trend in the field, i.e. translation collaboration through crowdsourcing (Moorkens & Rocchi, 2021). Translators around the world have resorted to crowdsourcing to engage peer translators in large-scale translation projects. These communities of practice are facilitated by collaborative translation tools that allows real-time collaboration among translators, project managers, and clients. This trend requires translators to sharpen their teamwork skills as well as cultural and interpersonal insights when collaborating with international partners. Thirdly, as more businesses have started to enter foreign markets, localization has gained momentum as an indispensable branch of translation. This trend involves adapting not only words but also visuals, symbols, colors, and cultural references to make content culturally relevant and appealing to specific markets. According to Jiménez-Crespo (2021, p.385), localization has grown to become "a key translational phenomenon to enable globalization, since the adaptation of products and services to the specifics of end users is key in achieving global success." Fourthly, the widespread dispersal of multimedia content, such as videos, games, e-learning platforms, social networking sites, mobile applications, has led to a surge in demand for multimedia translation. This covers a broad range of translation activities such as subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, audio description (primarily for visually impaired audiences), and video game localization. In other words, translators need to develop new expertise and strategies for working with such multiple platforms and roles. Finally, as machine translation and translation facilitated by CAT tools and AI have become more prevalent, the focus in translators' work has shifted toward quality assurance and post-editing. Given the limitations of machine translation in rendering cultural and expressive content among other drawbacks (Somers, 2012), translators still hold an important role in reviewing and refining machine-generated translations to ensure accuracy, intended nuances of meaning, and compliance with client requirements and the preferences of the target audience.

4. Translation and localization

With the unprecedented vibrant global trade and cooperation, more multinational businesses have penetrated into new markets, requiring them to develop strategies for reaching domestic clients and consumers. This economic dynamicity has given rise to the need for customizing and marketing products and services that best suit each of the market they enter. Translation does not adequately respond to such changes, thus mandating a higher level of localization. Translation and localization are two closely related processes that involve adapting content from one language and cultural context to another. By definition, localization involves “customizing a product for consumers in a target market so that when they use it, they form the impression that it was designed by a native of their own country” (Lingo Systems, 2002, p.2). While translation focuses primarily on retaining the original message between the SL and TL, localization entails a high degree of adaptation to meet the linguistic, cultural, and other specific requirements of a particular country, region, clients or target audience. This means that direct translation is insufficient in accounting for linguistic and cultural discrepancies between SL and TL. According to Lange (2023), “Localization is like a seasoned tour guide for your marketing message. It knows the local landscape and helps your message navigate through the cultural nuances, language idiosyncrasies, and societal norms of different markets.” Localization facilitates access to the target market by responding to its cultural and functional expectations and other unique features as well as fostering quality customer experience. Items for localization are diverse including software user interface, warranties, “readme” files, CD/DVD labels, printed product documentation, entertainment content (movies, novels, games, TV shows,...) and ad campaigns.

There are a number of issues concerning localization such as cultural sensitivity, legal and regulatory compliance, regional differences, and end user experience (Jiménez-Crespo, 2021; Lingo Systems, 2002; Wright, 2020). Firstly, sensitivity to the target culture is one of the priorities of localization. Localizers must account for elements such as the cultural norms, values, and practices of the target audience by modifying images, colors, symbols, or references to avoid any offensive or misled interpretation in the TL text. Secondly, conformation with local laws, regulations, and industry standards is critical for entering foreign business environments. Localizers need to be cognizant of any specific regulatory or statutory requirements of the target market in translating disclaimers, privacy policies, product labeling, and other legal contents. The third aspect encompassing the work of localizers is regional variations in terms of language, particularly the use of dialects, and preferences of the local customers/clients. It ensures that the localized content resonates with specific characteristics of the target audience in a given locality. Finally, care needs to be taken to optimize the user experience by aligning the translated content with the expectations of the target audience so that it can be easily accessible, navigable, and understandable for them. This involves adapting date and time formats, user interfaces, menus, buttons, and other interactive elements to respond to different groups of users.

It is evident that translation and localization are interdependent processes in the effort to align the content with different linguistic, cultural and user-centric elements. Localization is partially attributable to effective communication across languages, compliance with local statutory requirements, resonance with diverse audiences in different markets. It is a highly essential approach for multinational businesses to leave far-reaching impacts on the global market in response to the specific demands of each international market they work with.

5. Translation and content creation

As more and more clients are seeking translation service providers not merely for pure translation but rather modifications tailored for certain global markets or regions that make the translated text more relevant and intriguing to target audiences, a promising avenue for translators is transcreation. The term results from a combination of translation and content creation. In Gaballo's (2012, p.111)

view, this portmanteau word denotes the amount of creativity required in the translation process that consists in “intra-/interlingual re-interpretation of the original work suited to the readers/audience of the target language which requires the translator to come up with new conceptual, linguistic and cultural constructs to make up for the lack (or inadequacy) of existing ones.” Transcreation goes beyond literal translation, aiming at recreating the content that evokes the same emotions, cultural references, and impact as the original by rephrasing sentences, restructuring paragraphs, or changing cultural references, idioms, humor, and even the overall concept in response to the target audience's expectations and preferences. Unlike localization which solely relies on adapting content to suit the target market or audience, transcreation requires a high level of creativity to the extent that substantial divergence from the original message may be useful for certain markets or audience (Austin, 2020). Translators with outstanding content creation skills can enhance the quality, readability, flow, clarity, and communicative purposes of translated content. Transcreation is widely employed in marketing, advertising, and creative campaigns where cultural nuances and emotional connections are crucial for appealing to the target audience. With this strategy, a multinational company may compose original content in English and then translate it into various languages to cater to their global audience. The translated text may be adapted to ensure effectiveness in branding, messaging, and user experience worldwide. In this vein, Starbucks provides an interesting illustration of extreme transcreation in which their US and Japanese websites offer a completely different experience in terms of graphic design, color palette, and copywriting. Transcreation is also a major determinant of translators' employability in the highly challenging and competitive global and local job market (Martín, 2020). Given its evident significance, some researchers and practitioners in the field have started to view transcreation as a discrete translation service that provides further opportunities for translators in their career path (Carreira, 2022; Pedersen, 2017).

6. Computer and AI-assisted translation

CAT tools and AI-assisted translation are two emerging approaches that leverage technology to enhance translation productivity, drawing on the recent advancements in the field. The use of these tools and platforms are necessary in the face of the escalating demands for translation and localization as a result of globalization and dynamic global trade. Unlike machine translation that performs automated translation of text or speech from one language to another using algorithms and computational methods, CAT tools or AI-powered platforms do not generate automatically translated text but rather support translators in their work. They include features such as translation memory, terminology management, and alignment tools that assist translators aiming at higher efficiency, consistency and accuracy (Yuxiu, 2024). State-of-art technologies for translation do not necessarily replace the work of human translators or doom their employment prospects as many may wonder (Kenny, 2020). In fact, human translators still play a critical role in controlling the final output in terms of quality assurance, cultural appropriateness, and translation of complex or specialized content that may challenge machine translation systems. Pym (2021) observes that they have other functions to perform such as “an adapter, an editor, a journalist, a marketing expert, a public-relations professional, a curator of databases, and so on, with many new names for such mixes.” However, mastery of translation technologies is essential and contributes to higher employability for translators in the current job market that places a strong emphasis on performance, efficiency and turnaround time (O'Brien & Vázquez, 2020).

There are two issues emerging from the adoption of CAT tools and AI-powered systems in the translation process. The first one concerns translation teaching and learning that exhibit a dilemma between teacher and student preferences. While students have a tendency to see the development of practical skills for using specific translation technologies as their priority, teachers hold a firm belief in the reward of teaching about concepts, strategies and analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of technological implementation in translation. O'Brien and Vázquez (2020, p.271) point to the

reality that “market leaders can be toppled from year to year, hence the need for students to learn to learn” as solid evidence for their argument that “it would seem sensible not to focus only on specific tools and to attempt to establish a good balance between the ‘what’ and ‘why’ (lectures) and the ‘how’ (labs).”. In other words, empowering students with adaptive skills to rapid technological transformations in the translation industry is as significant as teaching them about the latest technologies. The second issue arises from the widespread utilization of CAT tools that pose the danger of workplace monitoring and aggregation of translation and personal data (Moorkens & Rocchi, 2021). Many commercial translation tools can record data on user activities and private information, placing translators at the risk of identity theft and other security problems. If these tools lack proper security protocols, the stored data could be exposed to hackers or misused for unintended purposes, such as targeted advertising, without prior consent. This problem requires translation businesses or services to take certain action in protecting translators’ data security and privacy or eliciting their consent before their personal information is retrieved and used for unstated reasons.

7. Emerging ethical issues in translation

The radical transformations in the translation industry in the context of globalization and international collaboration discussed earlier have sparked off a number of ethical problems. In addition to the conventional ethical obligations of the translation profession such as faithfulness to the original text, compliance with confidentiality requirements, and translators’ liability for their own work (see The Institute of Translation and Interpreting, 2022 for further details), the field is facing some new ethical challenges concerning intellectual property rights, accountability, and devaluation of human translators’ skills beyond the national regulatory requirements when translators and translation businesses enter the global environment. Firstly, machine translation, CAT tools and AI technologies can potentially infringe upon intellectual property rights. Translators must be aware of copyright issues, respect intellectual property rights, and obtain proper permissions when working with copyrighted materials. This is even more challenging when they have to thoroughly understand and abide by international legal contingencies underpinning their expanding operations in a given country or on the global scale. Further, social networking sites and the internet make it easy for copyrighted texts and unauthorized translations to be shared publicly in print and online. This is a serious violation of the intellectual property rights owned by both the original author and the translator. Secondly, technology, especially the internet, has facilitated collaboration in international translation projects through crowdsourcing. Jiménez-Crespo (2021, p.385) notices that crowdsourcing has boosted efficiency in translation by drawing on “the cognitive capital” of both professional and voluntary translators. However, the participation of multiple translators in a shared project has provoked the issue of accountability when incidents arise. Moorkens and Rocchi (2021, p.331) refer to this as “the “problem of many hands” in which it is improbable to identify a single person that should be held responsible for the errors he or she made. The final ethical consideration is the tendency to downplay the skills and expertise of human translators in the face of widespread implementation of machine translation, CAT tools and AI-supported platforms in the translation industry. Kenny (2020, p.506) raises the anxiety about “technological unemployment” among translators as the majority of translation tasks are performed by translation machines or AI-powered systems. These tools have enabled faster and more consistent translations that far supersede human translators (Yuxiu, 2024). With technological innovations and evolution, translators may be confronted with a gloomy future with limited occupational opportunities in which their role becomes more marginalized. As such, translators and translation businesses must comply with both local and international legal obligations as they take part in the global playground with more intense competition with international translators and translation agencies, and particularly machine translation and AI-mediated translation platforms.

8. Conclusion

This study has critically analyzed the impacts of globalization and technological developments on the translation industry and the trends emerging from this context. The field of translation is undergoing remarkable transformations that present translators with both opportunities and challenges. Although the dynamic global market has induced rising demand for translation, localization and content creation services, computer and AI-mediated systems have reshaped translation practices and the whole translation industry at large. These conditions and factors have significant implications for translation teaching and learning as well as curriculum design for English Language or English Linguistics programs.

Firstly, trainee and novice translators need to develop a diverse set of skills and knowledge that extend beyond linguistic competence and traditional translation techniques and methods. These include but are not limited to teamwork skills for collaborative projects and technical insights into working on different translation platforms (e.g., videos, games, e-learning platforms, social networking sites, and mobile applications) or translation functions (e.g., subtitling, dubbing, voice-over, and audio description). Curriculum designers should incorporate both theory and practice into the curriculum, providing students with hands-on experience in using CAT and AI-powered tools and exposure to emerging technologies (Yuxiu, 2024). This could be achieved by allocating a higher proportion of class hours for students to explore these tools and platforms, their features and functions such as how to utilize translation memory, manage terminology databases, ensure alignment and consistency in translation projects, and refine machine translation or AI output. Together with lecturers and fellow students, they can discuss the issues arising from such experiences and formulate strategies for tackling them. These practical insights will enable them to flexibly adapt to the ongoing and rapid changes in the translation industry and enhance their employability (O'Brien & Vázquez, 2020). However, developing students' familiarity with state-of-art translation technologies remains a formidable challenge for educational institutions in Vietnam due to financial and facility constraints and the high cost of installing these systems. To surmount this obstacle, universities may form partnerships with translation businesses and translation service providers in granting students with short-term access to such technological platforms. They may also invite industry speakers to give talks and share their translation experiences with students. These activities are crucial for preparing students with an adaptive mindset and skill packages necessary for the translation career.

Secondly, it is important that a proportion of the curriculum should be devoted to raising students' awareness of the ethical practices in their field and the dilemmas they will probably encounter in future workplaces. Through the use of case studies or workplace scenarios, students can gain insights into the professional code of conduct, enabling them to become law-abiding translators, especially when it comes to translating texts for use in international environments or disseminating translated texts on social networking sites where intellectual property rights and copyright are strictly observed. Compliance with professional integrity standard also helps them build trust with clients and colleagues in the context where collaborative translation has become a global norm. Awareness of ethical issues in translation enables them to protect own privacy and interest in working in technologically mediated environments where translators' identity and person information may be in jeopardy.

Finally, to enhance students' competitive advantage in the global market and AI-mediated settings, curriculum designers should consider a fusion of translation with content creation to build their capacity in producing creative content, adapting messages to different cultural contexts, and engaging with diverse media formats. Courses on creative writing, transcreation, multimedia translation, and digital content management should be made available to trainee translators, if not added to the curriculum as mandatory components, to address these evolving requirements. These

skill sets are essential for future translators to retain their position in the translation industry against the harsh backdrop of globalization and the prominence of AI adoption.

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Ngành dịch thuật trước những biến động toàn cầu:

Ý nghĩa ứng dụng trong thiết kế chương trình đào tạo

Tóm tắt: Trong thế giới ngày càng kết nối chặt chẽ, dịch thuật góp phần thu hẹp các rào cản về ngôn ngữ và văn hoá. Quá trình toàn cầu hoá và các sáng kiến về công nghệ mang đến nhiều thay đổi lớn trong ngành dịch thuật. Nghiên cứu này nhằm giới thiệu tổng quan về lĩnh vực dịch thuật, các khuynh hướng đương đại và các vấn đề phát sinh. Bài viết xem xét lĩnh vực dịch thuật trong bối cảnh toàn cầu hoá có sự hỗ trợ của công nghệ, từ đó cho thấy tầm quan trọng của việc phối hợp trong các dự án dịch thuật mang tính quốc tế. Bài viết cũng thảo luận hoạt động bản địa hoá và sáng tạo nội dung, hai lĩnh vực đang phát triển mạnh để đáp ứng nhu cầu chuyên ngữ ngày càng cao trong thời buổi truyền thông đa phương tiện, xây dựng thương hiệu quốc tế và xâm nhập vào thị trường toàn cầu. Bên cạnh đó, bài viết cũng thảo luận việc sử dụng các công cụ dịch thuật có hỗ trợ của máy tính và trí thông minh nhân tạo nhằm nâng cao hiệu quả, tính đồng nhất và độ chính xác trong dịch thuật. Tuy nhiên, những biến đổi này cũng gây ra nhiều vấn đề về đạo đức trong dịch thuật như việc vi phạm quyền sở hữu trí tuệ, yếu tố trách nhiệm trong các dự án cộng tác dịch thuật và vai trò ngày càng lu mờ của dịch giả. Trong phần kết luận, tác giả thảo luận các kiến thức và kỹ năng cần thiết cho nghề dịch thuật cũng như các cơ hội mở ra trong thế giới đầy biến động. Tác giả cũng đưa ra các khuyến nghị liên quan đến việc thiết kế chương trình đào tạo ngành Ngôn ngữ Anh và Ngôn ngữ học (tiếng Anh) trước những thay đổi đang diễn ra trong ngành này.

Từ khóa: ngành dịch thuật; tổng quan về dịch thuật; bối cảnh toàn cầu; thiết kế chương trình; dịch thuật có sự hỗ trợ của máy tính.