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THE ART OF TRANSLATING; CAN EVERY BILINGUAL BECOME A SUCCESSFUL TRANSLATOR?

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ABSTRACT

Translation, which is considered as one of the intricate and complex art forms, has a huge influence in communication, and intercultural exchange processes. In this scientific article, the art of translation, and the potential of all bilingual people to become translators are discussed by shedding light on the individual's skills and abilities. The article also emphasizes that being bilingual itself is not enough for being a professional translator, and it aims to provide with other skills that are sufficient to ensure competence in the process of translation.

KEYWORDS

Translation, compound bilingualism, coordinate bilingualism, meta-linguistic skills, training and individual opportunities.

INTRODUCTION

With global trade, travel, and communication becoming more widespread, the need for translation in today's globalized world becomes increasingly vital. Because translation plays a crucial role in fostering effective communication, overcoming linguistic

barriers, promoting global understanding, and allowing people to exchange ideas, and learn from different cultures, and perspectives. That's why many books have been translated until now and this process is still continuing in the present day. But, why is the

only value of translation apparent today, while hard work and efforts behind it go unnoticed?

At first glance, the art of translation seems only to convert a written text or speech from one language to another; however, while converting, its original meaning, tone, and style should also be carried. It appears to be an attempt to resolve an unsolvable issue, as every translator is inevitably confronted with either adhering excessively to the uniqueness and style of their own culture, or striving for complete faithfulness to the original language. Finding a balance between these two proves to be not only challenging but ultimately unattainable.

The process of translation is definitely an art, but a complicated one which requires the ability to deeply understand both the source and the intended target language. That's why translators face numerous challenges while translating. What makes this process even more complex is the fact that all languages are not perfectly equivalent at all. Each of them has its own unique vocabulary, grammar, and syntax structures. Even, cultural references and lots of idiomatic expressions of two or more languages completely differ from each other. Sometimes, some words and concepts might not have a direct meaning in another language, leading translators to find creative solutions, and to bridge both cultural and linguistic gaps of different people from all over the world. Despite these

difficulties, accuracy and huge responsibility is required from translators all of the time.

The process of translation can occur anytime when there is a need to convert information or text from one language to another. It can happen in various contexts, such as literature, business, legal documents, or communication between individuals who speak different languages. But it will never take place unless there are at least two languages. For this reason translation and bilingualism are two concepts that are absolutely connected to each other.

What is Bilingualism?

The term bilingualism originates from the combination of "bi" and "lingua," indicating the ability to use two languages. Complete fluency in two languages is referred to as bilingualism. Typically, individuals first acquire proficiency in a single language, commonly known as their first language or mother tongue. Additional languages are then acquired to varying levels of proficiency under diverse circumstances. Individuals who grow up speaking these acquired languages become bilingual, although the process of learning a second or subsequent language is distinct intellectually, as it is built upon the foundation of mastering one's first language.

There are lots of languages spoken worldwide. Every person knows at least one language which is acquired during childhood, and regularly used for

communication and writing. Nevertheless, considerable amount of people prefer, or forced to learn additional languages. And every person has the ability to acquire proficiency in a second language, whether it would be a language from within their own country or a completely different language from another country. Nowadays, there are numerous institutions and schools that provide courses for learning foreign languages. Additionally, many colleges and universities have incorporated foreign language courses into their regular curriculum.

But, why everyone prefers to learn another language in addition to their native languages? Because, being bilingual not only enhances one's linguistic skills, but also offers greater mental flexibility, and improved listening skills. It enhances one's comprehension of their native language and exposes them to different cultures. Moreover, possessing knowledge of multiple languages increases career prospects and provides further job opportunities.

Coordinate and Compound Bilingualism

The categorization of compound and coordinate bilingualism has been examined deeply. There are generally two types of bilingualism that can be distinguished based on how the two languages were acquired. The first type is when someone can speak both languages equally well. The second type is when someone has two native languages. For example,

Russian children who lived in Central Asia during the times of Soviet Union learned Russian from their parents and an Uzbek language from their teachers or friends. In the case of the second type of bilingualism, it is important to understand what is meant by "mother tongue" and how languages are acquired.

A coordinate bilingual refers to someone who has acquired two languages in different settings and at different times like the first type of bilingualism. This means that one language is learned at home while the other is learned outside of home, such as at school or in the neighborhood. Being coordinate bilingual means being proficient in a second language for practical use, but not necessarily speaking it fluently. For instance, someone may speak excellent Uzbek but struggle with English. In the mind of a coordinate bilingual, words and phrases are associated with unique concepts. Therefore, the associations for words like "choy" and "tea" would be different for them. Usually, one language, often the first language learned, is dominant and can influence the thinking in the second language.

A compound bilingual is someone who has learned two languages simultaneously from infancy, with both languages being used equally well like the second type of bilingualism. This is also known as true or perfect bilingualism. For compound bilinguals, words and phrases in different languages represent the same concepts. For example, a Uzbek-English language speaker of this type would understand that "choy" and

"tea" refer to the same thing. Typically, these speakers are fluent in both languages.

The relationship between Translation and Bilingualism

In fact, being bilingual has many advantages. For instance, people who can speak two languages have a unique way of understanding words that goes beyond what is written in the dictionary. This can also be explained psychologically. Bilingual individuals often encounter words within specific contexts, influenced by their surroundings and personal experiences, which shape their understanding of these words. Their mental and emotional states play a huge role in how they interpret and assign meanings to the words when they hear or read them. But does this mean that all bilinguals can have the capability to become professional translators?

Translation is often seen as a valuable ability that is thought to be only accessible to bilingual individuals. It is not commonly believed to be a skill that can be naturally performed by any bilingual child although some scholars argue that all bilingual children have the capability to translate from a very young age. It is true that translation is a skill that requires bilingual proficiency, but that does not mean being bilingual alone does guarantee proficiency in translation. While being bilingual is important, it is not enough to be proficient and efficient in translation. Each translator's

unique style, terminology, and way of conveying meaning are another most important things in the translation process. Other factors such as natural talent, education, and cultural knowledge are also necessary to be a good translator.

Training and individual opportunities for bilinguals

Bilingual individuals have lots of opportunities to become professional translators compared to ordinary people who know only one language. But, if they want to pursue a career in translation they should also need some language training activities. Nowadays, many colleges and universities are offering degree programs and online courses in translation and interpretation studies. Language training courses are extremely vital for those who want to become successful translators; because, they provide bilingual individuals with the foundation skills and knowledge to become proficient and efficient translators. For example, they help them to develop a deep understanding of both their source and target languages, including grammar, vocabulary, idiomatic expressions, and cultural nuances. Training in translation also covers ethical considerations such as confidentiality, accuracy, and impartiality, which are essential for maintaining standards in the field.

All in all, we cannot deny the fact that the science of translation is not limited to a specific time or place, as it continues to enrich cultures by the numerous works of bilingual translators. But, we cannot say that

bilingualism is the same thing as being a good translator. And, the art of translating is the result of a combination of both bilingual proficiency and other meta-linguistic skills.

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