

The Evolving Translation in the Changing World

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ABSTRACT

With the increasingly change of the world, translation has been different from that at any stage in its history. The change in its nature needs to be explored in the special era of the combination of globalization and 'Internet plus'. For the purpose, this paper is presented to delve into the evolving translation in the changing world. Through the analysis of the literature of translation studies and documents from translation profession, what is translation at different contexts is discussed and redefined with the aim to follow the changing world. In the end, the paper depicts a complex of translation with the shades of meanings as a new map of different definitions of translation for present translation studies and translation profession.

Keywords: changing world, evolving translation, definitions of translation

I. INTRODUCTION

One thing can be realized that in the early year when translation originated from the need for exchange or communications among different peoples within and outside, it is practical or professional, not academic. At that time there is no existence of translation training, not to mention real translation education. The education of translators or interpreters only turns to traditional apprenticeship, namely, master-disciple training. Professional practice is laid as priority. However, modern translation education comes into being, especially greatly influenced by human studies. Translation education falls onto the education of academic professionals, not really professional talents required by translation industry. Professional practice and professional translation competence cannot be educated and acquired at such a setting. Translation is naturally developed as translation studies in this sort of atmosphere. Too much study is emphasized in the course of the education of translation talents, leading to the great gap between translation education and translation profession and translation industry. Translation education is reduced to simple translation exercise, typical of 'chalk' and 'talk' or 'read and translate'. This is teaching method in translation education (Kiraly, 2014). It is methodologically linked with structuralist programme and teacher-centered classroom (Davies, 2004). Two tendencies can often be found. One is overemphasis on literature, leaving little care about pragmatic translation. Even in the teaching process, there is no professional standard, only with so-called example translation version in teacher's hand. The following statement depicts a vivid picture like this.

The basic approach to academic training for translators seems to remain unchanged from the time of the School of Scribes in ancient Egypt. Student translators are given short texts to translate, then their translations are evaluated by teachers, and finally the translations are discussed in great depth and detail among all the students in the class and the teacher. Variations occur in the length of the assignment, though 500 to 1000 words per week seems to be average, the subject matter in the assignment, including but not necessarily limited to business, financial, legal, medical, computer-related, or political material, and the direction of the translation, with some programs requiring students to translate both into and out of their native language, while others choose to have students translate exclusively into their native language (Chriss, 2000).

To some extent, teacher serves as the authority on whether students' translation is wrong or right. Thus teaching methods or education philosophy remains unchanged. The other tendency is the seclusion of translation education, far isolated with the happenings outside classroom or campus. Teachers and students know little about translation profession or industry or other changes in other fields involved. Obviously this is not a proper choice for translation education in the age of globalization and 'Internet Plus'. The closure of the door to outside has to be broken. Only in this way teacher can change his teaching methods and philosophy, and students can learn something fresh or new from life, especially from translation profession or industry. Academic education as one type of all educations in the world shares something in common with the others in the nature of education, but it is still different from the others in its own nature. This is largely because translation in nature is increasingly

changing with the development of the times. In order to put teachers and students at the scene of the present life and society, the great change happening to translation itself today is necessarily and urgently detailed in the following section.

II. TRANSLATION IN THE CHANGING WORLD

The world changes greatly with the fast development of science and technology, and translation follows its step closely, especially in the age of 'Internet Plus' with great changes as shown in the following.

A. *Translation as a concept*

1) *Translation as action*: In translation itself, its connotation is largely extended far beyond the past in the accelerating times (Yuan, 2018). In the past translation is defined as the transference from one language to the other. However, in the age of informationization, translation as action is not limited to pure texts. The diversification of texts characterizes today's information society, dominated by internet, from traditional texts to hybridization of text types and genres: multimodal texts, even super-text or hypertexts. Numerous hypertexts have formed the Internet, which has become the translator's new working environment in the digital age. The digital age changes the working environment and working content of translation. It brings about new types of translation such as website translation, multimedia translation, software localization, mobile application translation, etc. Also, as action, the working manner has changed a lot from the past traditional workshop with one or several persons to team cooperation, even to crowdsourcing. Thanks to the emergence of internet, people in the world can be easily organized online to collaborate with each other for translation on the large scale. Thus in the age of the exploration of information, messages or products timely and speedily delivered or promoted to the rest of the world within very short period, even overnight. The quantity and the quality cannot be reached by one or several ones as done in the past. For example, for Windows Operating System, its localization involves many languages as Windows7 with 35 languages for SKU, 60 languages for system interface, 100 languages for internal resources; Windows8 with 109 languages for all resources. This great work cannot be done by translators alone. It needs a big working network, which is management system of project localization. (Wang, Leng, & Cui, 2013). This type of translation has to be done collectively within one country or many countries. It can be called as the worldwide-cooperation translation not offline but online. It makes translation

possible to challenge the big translation project with great efforts from all the world. It can also improve translation quality than ever before with the optimization towards the economic human cost. In this way, translation project can be divided into small proper pieces and sent to proper persons, places, or countries with the lowest or relative low human cost in time as required by messages or products. In this sense, as action, the function of translation has changed from the past transference of the meaning of one text to the speedy delivery of messages or the promotion of products in the globe. On the one hand, as often said, thanks to the great development of globalization and internationalization, globalization has caused an exponential increase of translation (Bielsa, 2009). Translation achieves the largest scale in the history and develops into a big industry; on the other hand, admittedly, owing to the great contribution from translation, the globalization and internationalization have been greatly deepened and reached the precedent level. This is the greatest contribution of translation to the world not simply understanding of the transference, linguistically and culturally. The discussion above from the working content through working manner to the working function, it is clear that the present translation is greatly different from the past in nature. The brand-new translation should be paid too much attention to with different views as shown in the following section.

2) *Translation as product*: In the seminal essay of 1972, "The Name and Nature of Translation Studies", Holms proposed the overall framework of translation studies consisting of theoretical one, descriptive one, and applied one. Descriptive translation studies is regarded as one of three breakthroughs in the history of translation studies (ZHAO, 2014). He makes the distinction among process, product, and function in translation and proposes the framework of descriptive translation studies consisting of these three ones. In his view, as product, translation is a target-language text after a source text is translated text. The very emphasis is laid on the result of translating. Actually, the meaning of the word of 'product' here is not the real one in modern industry. However, with the development of translation, especially when translation has developed into a large-scale industry stimulated by globalization, internalization, and informatization, as product, translation in nature is very close to the meaning of the real product in modern industry. In this sense, translation is produced as product according to the specifications as done in modern factory, not decided only by translator. In most cases, translators have to follow the specifications for translating, more precisely, for producing. For example, for product,

several typical professional standards are thus used in different contexts. SAE J2450 model is initiated by General Motor, Ford and Chrysler as quality metric for language translation of service information. It is a USA-based standard. The LISA QA model is developed by the Localisation Industry Standards Association (LISA). It provides an extensive, broad solution to evaluating translation quality and recognising errors. The model applies a far broader meaning to translation than SAE J2450 does. The DQF model is created by the Translation Automation User Society (TAUS) as its own translation quality assessment (Horváth, 2016). Besides the product-oriented one, function-oriented translation studies is also concerned. As product, translation has to meet with the client's expectation and requirements besides the standards required by translation industry. It is a little or even entirely deviated from the author of the original text or the translator of the text, but with more emphasis on the target audience. This is the routine practice not followed in the traditional translation but in the modern industry. It is beneficial to the improvement of translation quality, especially the standardization of translation as product.

3) *Translation as process*: 'Translation as processes' is clearly expressed as "process-oriented translation studies concerns itself with the process or act of translation itself." (Holmes, 1988). The process is described as translating: the process (to translate; the activity rather than the tangible object), not only physical but mental process (Bell, 1991, cited in Munday, 2009). Physically, as discussed above, 'translation as product' means translation has developed as the product of modern industry. The process of producing it naturally develops as the producing process of modern industry. The process has to follow the standardized workflow or procedure as done in the streamline in a factory. EN 15038 and ISO 17100 are two types of these professional standards, the former used in the framework of European Union and the latter used internationally. These two professional translation standards are focused on the process of translation, especially on the function and responsibility of each stage of the process. These standards are aimed to improve translation quality with the control on the process and its different stages. In this way, translation process is standardized nationally, regionally, and internationally. Naturally, translation can be produced with the same quality controlled under the same process standard. It is required by globalization and internationalization. It also makes translation easy to break through the barriers of regions and countries, facilitating the further depth of globalization and

internationalization. Mentally, the inner mechanism of the translation process is the focus on exploring cognitive and psychological process in bilingual conversion. It is the research on the black box of translation. It is not an easy job in the past. Nowadays, with the development of science and technology, it becomes more and more possible and even a reality especially with the artificial intelligence and brain neuroscience involved. Machine translation is the typical case. Neural translation is the hope in the future. In this context, translation process is optimized towards the biggest volume and the best quality with the lowest cost, even with the humane flavor in the future. To great extent, compared with the traditional way of workshop, the present translating process is typically visible with the Hi-tech means involved with different fields. More possibly, the visible trace of translating process will be melted away with the further development of science and technology. At that time, translation will be humanless, and naturally happen among people's communication. Translation is really far away from the mechanic equivalence and heavy manual labor and turn to something new and high, especially the thinking way discussed as in the following.

4) *Translation as philosophy*: The thinking way is similar to the statement of "the abstract concept that encompasses both the process of translating and the product of that process". (Bell, 1991, cited in ZHAO, 2014). For Bell, translation is not the process of using one language in place of the other. It involves the thinking actives through the whole process. On the surface translation is the transference of the meaning between two languages, actually, it is really the transference of two thinking ways behind the two languages and cultures. Only if the transference of the two thinking ways occur, the same message or information can be understood by target audience in the context of the other language and culture. Here one fact can be found that no matter whether it is the transference of languages, cultures, or thinking ways, the very core word is transference. In the great sense, transference is the very core of the nature of translation. Simply put, it is raised to philosophic level, namely, translation philosophy. When barriers appear or problems occur, the type of philosophy is needed to come across. The present connotation of translation is very close to its etymological meaning rather than a coincidence or a subjective assumption. In reality, especially in translation industry, translation philosophy finds its way in the process of the localization of products. To some extent, localization is the representation of translation philosophy. Through the

localization, products are promoted into target markets with target culture in another language. In the process of promoting products, ideas or philosophy is transferred, even pushed forward with the connotations of politics and economy. In some universities such as Renmin University of China, orientates their students not limited to talents with language skills or translation competence but talents as leader with international view and global competence. They can move from one language to another, one culture to another, and one thinking way to another. This is representation of translation philosophy in educating talents.

B. Translation as an industry

Historically, translation as a solitary craft has been done by one or several persons. However, with the extension of globalization of markets and production, the digital revelation, and the advent of the information economy, translation has been transformed translation as a full-fledged industrial sector. In the United States, Canada, Mexico, and European Union translation has been recognized as a distinct industrial sector (Dunne, 2012).

1) *Translation economy*: Once translation develops as industry. It shows that translation goes beyond individual's workshop. In nature, translation has been one large-scale economy similar to other industries. In terms of the scale or turnover, according to studies by the Common Sense Advisory (CSA), the global language service market had a value of USD 34.8 billion in 2013, almost 37.2 in 2014, and in 2015 it was USD 38.2 billion – resulting in an annual growth rate of 6.46%. In 2015, the revenue was distributed as follows: Europe 53.09%, North America 34.82% and Asia with 10.49%. The expected global turnover for language services already stands at USD 49.8 billion for the year 2019. According to Verified Market Research, the Global Translation Services Market was valued at USD 39.61 billion in 2019 and is projected to reach USD 46.21 billion by 2027, growing at a CAGR of 2.1% from 2020 to 2027 (“Global Translation Services Market Size By Type, By Application, By Geographic Analysis And Forecast,” 2019). Consequently, translation as large-scale economy, belongs to economic phenomenon in nature. Besides product-oriented, translation has to be economy-oriented. It means that translation can bring benefits for all shareholders involved in its industrial chain. Economic benefit is one of engines driving translation industry forward. Accordingly, as economy, translation has to follow general economic laws and specifications enforced by market and corresponding authority. It is not meant for the professional identity of translation,

but for its social identity. It is the specific representation of the social-cultural turn of translation studies in translation industry. Naturally, translation can be researched based on economic principles, just like other economic phenomenon. Levý (1967, cited in Schwieter & Ferreira, 2005) started the research in this respect. He proposed the general “minimax” principle that the translator must exert minimum effort for maximum effect. This is the basic economic principle followed by any industry. It is significant for translation studies. More importantly, it is a significant move building the bridge between translation industry and translation education in academic context. To some extent, such economic principles are also followed within the academic context, just in translation industry. Similarly, from the angle of cost analysis, Pym explained translation activities with more emphasis on mutual benefits of all communication acts. In order to reduce the cost, he also introduce the concept of risk into translating (Pym, 2017). His theory of translation cost lays the foundation for the research on the translation project management. From the perspectives of economics and international business, translation can be understood as managerial act (Steyaert & Janssens, 1997, cited in Ferreira-alves, 2006). Compared with the traditional discourse such as equivalence, accuracy, adequacy, etc., Zhong tried to describe translation with economic concepts and terms (2006, cited in Chan, 2008). It is not only the great change in narrative discourse but also in the point of view towards the nature of translation. All the efforts made by scholars mentioned here, shows that translation has been different from the past, and as industry, translation has to go beyond the past confinement of the action from one language to another or one culture to another into the proper trajectory of the economic action very linked with the economy, national, regional, and worldwide. Economically, it is an independent industry not subordinating to any other industries.

2) *Translation service*: Compared with product of the action of translating, in the shifting age, translation has changed in nature as a special type of service (Yuan, 2018). This service provides not only translation product through translating, the process, but also added value service. The change of translation in nature promotes translation as service industry, not limited to the translation product from one language to another. The service involves a lot as the following shows.

TABLE I. ADDED VALUE SERVICES (BIEL, 2011)

Text preparation	Text preparation
ST/TT adjustment	Pre- and post- editing Transcription Adaptation, rewriting Updating Internationalisation Localisation, Globalisation Transliteration Legalisation, notarisation
Quality control	Review and revisions from third parties Back-translation
Audiovisual	Subtitling Voice-over
Translation memories and terminology work	Translation memory alignment Alignment of bilingual parallel texts Terminology database creation and term base management Terminology concordance
Technical Services	DTP Graphic design Web design Camera-ready artwork
Consulting	Language consultancy culture consultancy

From the shown above, one fact is obvious that translation is transformed from simply pure transference from one language to another as complicatedly various service provision. Theoretically, the complication can be traced back to the very root of skopos, especially functionalist approach. In this approach, compared with all aspects of source text, target language, target audience, target culture, and so on, are attached first priority. This great emphasis on target text, leads to the new definition of translation conceptually. In reality, with the fast development of information technology, especially in the digital era, translation itself has changed greatly and gains great momentum to push its service to different subject areas and beyond as added valued service. On the one hand, the added value service extends the function of translation from simply translating action to service provision; on the other hand, translation is developed as a special means to deal with other things linked with languages far beyond language arrangements. This is the development tendency of translation industry in information age. More and more translation companies or translation agencies have forged their ways, following the tendency. Naturally added value is put great emphasis, even developed as major source of benefits. As a case of this, Lionbridge, which has the largest disclosed revenues (\$489m in 2013), makes much of its money from services other than translation.

3) *Translation engineering*: Through the whole literature in translation studies, there is no trace of translation engineering. It is a coinage by the author of this paper. It is largely because of the following reasons. One is linked with the concept of translation as philosophy discussed above. Translation philosophy is

a thinking way to realize the world. Instead, translation engineering is coined as the opposite to the thinking, a way to change the world. The development of internationalization and globalization has proved translation serves as the very catalyst, greatly pushing them forward. In this sense, translation plays the role of engine to open a new world internationally and globally. This leads to proposing translation as translation engineering. The emphasis is laid on the fact that translation functions as other subjects or disciplines just as architecture or computer engineering, even artificial intelligence with the great faculty or competence to change the world. Renaissance in western world can occur, largely attributing to the role of translation. Such a role played of translation is similar to that played of engine. To great extent, translation is promoted as the means to change the world, not the transference from one language to another. Another reason lies in the fact that translation is getting more involved with different types of engineering with their own special technologies. Translation cannot be excluded out of engineering. Translation is gradually developed from the aided means to independent engineering. Last reason is that the present translation studies cannot give answers to different phenomena involved with translation, especially applied translation. In fact, since the map of translation studies is pictured by James Holms(1964, cited in Kovanian, 2012), applied translation study has been put in the focus in translation study. Many applied translations subjects or disciplines as audio translation, comes into existence as the times goes by, especially in the digital era. However, the

concept of applied translation in the map cannot show the great technicality of translation linked with the present information technologies including internet. It suggests that the concept lacks the connection with other industries or engineering. Together with this, other features of the present translation, like time management, process management, crisis management, standardization, etc., makes it share the great common with other engineering. Thus translation engineering is designed as a proper term to represent the nature of these translation subjects or disciplines as applied but also shows its great function for other industries, building its status as one type of engineering similar to others. This means translation engineering can be built as an independent subject or discipline for exploring how to make translation play as other engineering for the change of the world. It also shows that translation engineering, on the one hand, serves as means to open and change the world. From the analysis above, one fact is found that no matter whether translation engineering is proposed as a subject or a real engineering in practice it can make applied translation more specific and easier to build the connection between translation studies and translation industry as well as the link with other engineering. Theoretically, it is a move beyond applied translation in the map of translation studies. Disciplinarily, translation as a pure liberal major finds its way to new literal one sharing the nature of engineering, extending the horizon for further study. In practice, translation as engineering can play its role more than ever for the change of the world.

III. CONCLUSION

From the description of former sections, it is obviously visible that translation has changed a lot from translation as a concept, through as industry, to as engineering with too connotations: one is one type of engineering as action or means to change and build the world; the other is one of translation disciplines with the orientation to develop students' engineering knowledge in application-oriented translation, preparing students as translation engineer or language engineer in future. Here the vast difference from traditional translation education lies in this orientation. Traditional translation education prepares students as translator. The orientation is too narrowly-defined, neglecting the change in the role of translator in the changing translation industry. Even if translation education places its orientation on preparing students as professional. Owing to lacking established system or framework in translation studies, this orientation still remains nonsense, leaving itself in the long-time struggle for what should be educated. It is translation competence, translator competence, or professional translation competence. Thanks to the induction of

engineering into translation studies, translation engineering can be built as a discipline to develop students' professional translation competence with the borrowing of the established system or framework from other engineering disciplines. This is a great breakthrough for translation studies. The spotlight is focused on the integration among different disciplines centering on translation as discipline. More importantly than this, translation is also raised up to philosophy level. Up to now, based on the two significant implications above-mentioned, translation in the changing times is greatly different from itself in the any past year. At the top, it is a philosophy as one special thinking of transference between different things, not limited to that between two different languages; at the bottom, it is one type of engineering as one means to change and build new things in the world, not traditional translation practice alone; in the mid, there leaves a great span to be covered with the present interpretation as translation action, translation product, translation industry, and so on. A large span can be enriched in future by scholars and professionals involved. Among all mention in this paper, one truth can be realized that translation becomes more and more complicated than ever before. It needs more complicated thinking to delve into its nature. This does not only cares about translation but also about human being, largely about human's realization of the world around it.

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