

## The Relationship between Globalization and Translation

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### ABSTRACT

Globalization is a phenomenon that has been propelled by advancement in information and communication technology and which has affected the way many things are done in the world today. Its tremendous impact in the economic sector has led to a situation where many people fail to appreciate the changes in other areas of human endeavour that are also traceable to globalization. This paper highlights the apparent relationship that exists between globalization and translation and suggests that efforts should be made to encourage translation activities in every country since effective globalization could be a mirage without it.

Keywords: Relationship, globalization, translation.

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### INTRODUCTION

Globalization has been defined as “the spread of communication networks at a worldwide level” [1]. Advancement in information and communication technology made this possible. The development of computer and internet services served as a catalyst in the process of globalization. The effect on all aspects of human endeavour has been unprecedented and the scope very extensive. Virtually all aspects of human life have been affected -political, social, economic, judicial, cultural and religious aspects have all been affected in one way or the other.

The world is now perceived as a global village not only because information now spreads like wild fire across the globe but also because changes in any part of the world are most likely to be felt in the other parts within a very short time. The rapidity with which business activities are internationalized lends credence to this new trend. All occupational groups’ benefit from globalization- business men, sports men and women, film producers, musicians, political and all other professionals in different fields.

While almost every person benefits from globalization, only very few people pause

to ponder on what drives this process. Some might argue that globalization is business-driven. This could be true in the sense that business provides the product in the form of goods and services but goods and services in themselves cannot go international without some facilitators. It is our contention in this paper that the two key facilitators of globalization are ICT and translation. These two serve as vehicle that moves the product (goods and services) to their final consumers. It is not within the purview of this paper to discuss the first facilitator- information and communication technology. We shall, however examine the relationship between globalization and translation which we view as positive since each derives a lot of benefits from the other.

There is one fact that everyone will readily agree to and that is that there are numerous languages in the world. The English language that some people see as “international lingua Franca cannot be understood by all citizens in the French speaking world, in China, in Germany and even in Africa where some of the countries have it as their official language. This implies that there will certainly be a problem if the business

communities of the entire world are to rely on English as the only means of communication. But for the invaluable services of translation, this problem would have become manifest long ago and perhaps there wouldn't have been anything called globalization in the world today. Translation has therefore, been a very great facilitator in the whole process of globalization. In view of the above, we have taken time to examine the relationship that has existed between globalization and translation over the years and we have come to the conclusion that both have mutual relationship since each derives a lot of benefits from the other.

In the course of this study therefore, we shall examine the concept of globalization. We shall also take a look at the concept of translation. The impact of translation on globalization will be examined next. We shall also examine the impact of globalization on translation. There will be a discussion based on our findings. Finally there will be recommendation and conclusion.

#### **The Concept of Globalization:**

Though some occupational groups tend to relate this term to their different fields, there appears to be a consensus with regard to the perception people have of this concept. Dictionary.com which was quoted by [2] defines "Globalization" as "to make global or worldwide in scope and application. [3] also sees it as; "the spread of communication networks at a worldwide level"

[4] defines the same concept as "the movement from local to global" The second definition given by Chuang could create the impression that globalization has to do with information dissemination only. This may not be very true. Consequently, the other two definitions will be more acceptable in this paper hence the concept could be defined as to make global in application or to transform from local to global status. This definition could be applied to all human activities. That is why some professionals relate the definition to their field of activity, for instance, Wiersema, a professional translator defined globalization as;

To make source texts global or worldwide in understanding or application, where application refers to the teaching and/learning about different cultures.

The above definition shows the translator's idea about globalization. The business man who has his products to sell sees it as internationalization of trade while the bankers and other professionals will showcase the services they give while defining the concept. One fact is clear and that is that globalization is a phenomenon that respects all professions and ignores virtually none. The global train therefore accommodates all human activities. A careful observation of the environment will reveal that this phenomenon that is driven by ICT and translation has affected all facets of human life. [5] quoted Marcus as having observed that "it is of several types: economic, political and cultural". No matter the angle from where one is coming, the point has to be made that globalization is about products and services. In view of the fact that translation plays key role in this process, we will at this point examine the concept of translation.

#### **The Concept of Translation**

The Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictionary (Revised Edition) defines translation as "a word, speech, written text that has been put into one language from another".

The above definition highlights the product of the professional activity called translation. The act of translating involves a process that requires skill, training and experience [6]. Many especially the uninitiated only see translation as the passage from one language to another; however, most experts in this field of human endeavour also view the act of translating as the passage from one culture to another [7], [8]; [9], [10].

The aspect of the translation process highlighted above is particularly important for this work. This is because we are considering the role translation plays in facilitating the globalization process. The phenomenon of

globalization involves the movement of goods and services from the local level to the global scene. The movement from local level to the global scene implies movement across cultures. Therefore, if the translator is the professional that mediates between two different cultures, it means that he can equally facilitate the movement of goods and services across cultural lines. Just as no two individuals are the same in all aspects even if they are identical twins so also no two countries are identical culturally. In view of this, achieving cultural harmony between two different countries could be one sure way of promoting more enduring economic cooperation between them. This is where the mediatory role of the translator comes in. Applying his professional skills, the translator prepares the ground for a more robust economic cooperation and business activities between two different countries. Unknown to many all the goods and services that had successfully gone through globalization had to first undergo this process of cultural transformation, usually facilitated by a professional translator. This is why we say that globalization could be difficult to achieve without translation. Having clarified the concept of translation; we will now examine the impact of translation on globalization.

**The Impact of Translation on Globalization**

At this point, we will examine the specific role translation plays in facilitating the process of globalization, [11] highlighted two factors that would have made the implementation of the globalization process difficult as follows:

Through the reduction of barriers, such as time and distance, space has been dematerialized and information has become accessible with the simple click of a computer mouse. The last remaining barrier to overcome, language, has become much more obvious and necessary to remedy.

The same author quoted above also stressed that "opening up the pathway for international trade couldn't have been possible without translation". This implies that translation facilitates the process of globalization by eliminating this linguistic barrier that could have impeded the globalization process. It was this important role that [12] referred to when he said that "in our globalized world, translation is the key to understanding and learning foreign cultures".

In spite of the popularity of English language and its use in many countries of the world, the fact remains that "minor language communities prefer messages in their own languages for the sake of better understanding" [13]. Most companies have since realized this and they have taken this into consideration in the presentation of products designed for the global market. To reach out to more customers of different linguistic backgrounds, manufacturers ensure that inscriptions on their products are written in two or more different languages. For instance, in the pharmaceutical products "purecal", we have inscriptions in two languages- English and French.

**PURECAL**

Inscriptions in English	Inscription in French
Chewable tablets of milk calcium As directed by the physician	comprimés croquables de calcium au lait. comme dirigé par le médecin.
Keep away from children	A tenir loin des enfants.

Even in the production of a simple seasonal greeting card, the producers are no longer satisfied with the use of English

language alone. On a valentine day, we can see cards with the following inscriptions; Happy Valentine! Bonne Fête

de Valentine! Products with such inscriptions are not made for the local market; such products are highly marketable in all the Anglophone and Francophone communities. Translation for the purpose of globalization is not only limited to verbal transfer of messages from one language to another. It also incorporates what Chuang called "transformation" of the products. According to her:

The verbal messages of the source text are dealt with first, by translating them into target language verbal messages. Then non verbal messages, such as pictures, music, sound effects, textual elements, such as the layout, the colour scheme and the font are transformed with local appeal. The translation and transformation are used to repackage a product to become globalized.

From the forgoing, it becomes very clear that the producer ensures the proper packaging of the products for sale but the translator does the re-packaging of the same products for globalization. This is why Newmark (quoted by Chuang) observed in 2003 that, there is "No Global Communication without Translation". It should be noted that the transformation aspects of translation can be observed whenever any products is to be advertised in the internet, the print or electronic media. During such advertisements, everything is done to respect the culture of the target audience. The picture displayed, the layout and the sound effects must reflect the culture in question.

#### **The Impact of Globalization On Translation**

Just as translation facilitates the process of globalization, so also globalization does have some positive effects on translation [14] [15] [16]. Chuang highlighted the "expanding scope of translation" brought about by globalization in the following words.

There is no doubt that the situation of translation in the world has undergone radical changes over the past decade. These changes are directly or indirectly related to the changes in human communication, pushed by technology, tourism, international finance, and economy. The scope of communication is expanding; more modes, forms, media and channels are available.

The above view is supported by [3] who said that:

Globalization has also led to an expansion in the amounts of legal and commercial files on the table. Hence, now you are left with a stack of never ending, Important piece of files in languages that you have no understanding of and which often may very well make or break your business. Translation companies often hire native speakers who are fluent in both the language of the papers and the target language you intend the document to be translated to.

The two quotations above captures the true situation of translation as it is practised in the world today. It is no longer a pen and paper business of yesterdays but a modern business that is technology-driven. The computer and internet now play a great role in the translation activity that propels the globalization process. Globalization, therefore, makes enormous documents available for translation. The translator gets glued to his computer and manipulates the mouse to achieve the desired results. The translator that knows his onion gets translation work from across the globe via the internet. He attends to and returns same through the same channels (the internet). Thus it is

apparent that a harmonious relationship exists between globalization and translation. The link between globalization and translation is the subject of the next segment of this work.

### **The Link between Translation and Globalization**

There is no doubt that the two concepts - translation and globalization influence each other positively. Translation derives a lot of benefits from globalization and globalization on the other hand, derives enormous benefits from translation. This is why we see the relationship between the two concepts as very positive. In a paper we published in 2018 entitled "National Language and the Nigerian Translator". We argued that "if the world is becoming a global village, it is translation that illuminates every street in the village". In his contribution, Michael Cronin, a professional in this field, who was quoted by [9] contended that "translation is a constituent integral part of how the phenomenon both operates and makes sense of itself" Cifuentes himself sees the relationship between translation and globalization as being "circular". He did not mince words while stating that:

The relationship between globalization and translation is thus circular. Opening up the pathway for international trade wouldn't have been possible without translation. Likewise, as the world globalised, the demand for translation grew significantly.

There is one fact that is emerging from this study and that is that contributors to this subject matter agree that a certain relationship exists between translation and globalization. Every contributor, however, view this relationship from his own perspective as expected. For [12], the relationship between the two concepts is "hierarchical" According to this author, in this hierarchical relationship, globalization is superior to translation. She argues that the principal thing in the new era is the product which globalization projects and not the source

text that is attached to the products which the translator works on. I guess this author has a full right to her opinion. One may wish to ask of what use a product is if it is not solicited for due to linguistic inhibitions or if it is dumped in a particular country and could not be disposed of due to language barriers.

On the other hand, Cifuentes who seems to share the same view with us, sees the relationship between translation and globalization as "circular". The Chambers 21<sup>st</sup> Century Dictionary (Revised Edition) defines "circular" as "moving or going round in a circle, leading back to the starting point".

Translation makes the soil very fertile for globalization to thrive. This it does by removing all linguistic barriers to effective communication. It is no longer news that there is multiplicity of languages in the world. It is also obvious that, through the religious application of his professional skills, the translator can get two people from different cultural and linguistic backgrounds, to understand themselves better. It is for this reason that the mediatory role of the translator facilitates the process of globalization. Therefore, if globalization provides the product for international trade, translation provides the linguistic accessories to enhance the marketability of such products; there lies its indispensability in the globalized world. Globalization, on the other hand, provides the raw materials the translator needs for effective productive life. These raw materials are in the form of the products to be redefined for the global market and the numerous documents required for a robust international business activities that should be translated into the appropriate foreign language. Therefore one can safely say that while globalization keeps the translator in business, translation, on its part, makes globalization workable. What a harmonious relationship; just like the case of living organisms cohabiting in the same manner, one can describe the excellent relationship existing between translation and globalization as being very mutual and positive.

### RECOMMENDATIONS

In view of the observations made in this paper, we wish to make the following recommendations;

1. In view of the facilitating role of translation business men wishing to join the global market should seek the services of reputable translation companies.

2. Government at all levels should encourage the activities of translators in view of their positive contributions to the growth of the global economy.
3. Translators should approach the performance of their professional duties diligently as errors could have devastating consequences.

### CONCLUSION

In this work, we examined the relationship that exists between translation and globalization. We observed that translation provides the fertile soil for globalization to thrive since it facilitates the entire process by eliminating linguistic inhibitions while globalization feeds the translation industry by providing the necessary raw materials needed by the translator for effective productive life.

It was on this basis that we called on the business community especially those wishing to join the global train to patronize reputable translation companies while government is encouraged to support the professional activities of translators, given their enormous contributions to the rapid growth of the world economy.

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