

## **EXPLORING THE INTRICATE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN TRANSLATION AND BILINGUALISM: UNVEILING CONNECTIONS, FUNCTIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS**

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**Abstract:** Translation has become a global practice all across the world. Bilingualism as a term is founded on the discipline of psycholinguistics, with different scholars holding opposing views on its importance in translation theory. What exactly is translation activity? What exactly is bilingualism? Is there a strange connection between these two concepts? What are the special functions of bilingualism in translation theory? These are the questions that this paper addresses. The article also looks at the connection between intrinsic translation ability and bilingualism. Natural translation, social bilingualism, professional bilingualism, and native translation are all discussed. Is there a need for translator education? What role does metalinguistic knowledge play in a bilingual's translation activity? All of these serve as the foundation for our arguments in this article.

**Keywords:** Translation; Translation activity; Bilingual proficiency; Cognitive flexibility; Language interference; Language interference

### **Introduction**

There are numerous languages spoken around the world. Every person understands at least one language, which he learned as a child and uses regularly for speaking and writing. Many

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people, however, prefer or are obliged to acquire one or more other languages. Being bilingual has various advantages, including enhanced language and metalinguistic abilities, as well as improved cognitive flexibility in areas such as divergent thinking, concept formulation, verbal ability, and general reasoning.

Bilingualism is required for translation proficiency and efficiency, but it is not sufficient. Many people are capable of learning a second language. It could be another language spoken in the same country or a whole different language spoken in another country. Several institutes and colleges offering foreign language education are springing up all over the world these days. Many colleges and universities have also incorporated certain foreign language courses within their normal academic curriculum. When studying another language, you must first master its basic grammar and vocabulary. Being multilingual provides higher linguistic sensitivity, greater mental flexibility, and a sharper ear for listening. It also helps people understand their original language better. It provides access to other civilizations. Furthermore, knowing various languages broadens one's employment prospects, providing a variety of job opportunities.

Bilingualism is derived from the words 'bi' and 'lingua,' which signify two languages. Bilingual is defined as having, speaking, or writing in two languages by the Concise Oxford Dictionary. Bilingualism is the complete knowledge of two languages. Typically, humans learn just one language at a time, their first language or mother tongue. Subsequent languages are taught to varying degrees of proficiency under varying conditions. Speakers of these learned languages grow up bilingual, although learning a second or other language is typically an activity superimposed on prior mastery of one's first language, and it is an intellectually distinct process. When performed after puberty, when one has already or nearly or fully mastered the essential

structure and vocabulary of one's first language, bilingualism is a conscious action. Only via contact with a second language does one comprehend how intricate language is and how much effort is required to learn one.

There are two types of bilingualism based on whether the two languages were learnt by simultaneous use of both languages in the same environment and circumstances, or whether they were acquired through exposure to each language in different settings. Thierry (1978) notes in his study 'True Bilingualism and Second Language Learning' that the term 'perfect bilingual' implies two things.

One person is fluent in both languages.

One person speaks two languages.

For example, during the period of British control in India, English children acquired English from their parents and an Indian language from their nurses or family maids. This may not be considered a generic case of bilingualism because determining whether or not a person can speak two languages equally well may be difficult, if not impossible. This is because no comparison criterion has yet been established. In the case of the second form of perfect bilingualism, one might wish to analyze what the term "mother tongue" actually means, as well as how languages are acquired.

Thierry (1978:146) defines mother tongue as "the language or languages that the child has acquired through immersion, that is, through the child's natural reaction to the sounds made by its environment in order to communicate with it." As a result, mother tongue cannot be taught through another language. If this definition is accepted, a person cannot be called a true bilingual if he learned it through tuition, regardless of how well he speaks it. Mutual interference between the two languages occurs as a

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result of acquired bilingualism. Interference can occur in terms of pronunciation, grammar, and even word meanings. Because they carry specific pronunciation features from one language to the other, bilinguals frequently speak their two languages with 'an accent' in each. According to Thiery, a true bilingual is someone who is accepted by both language communities on the same social and cultural level. Because it involves two languages, translation is ideally an issue of bilingualism. Bilingualism is the ability to communicate in two languages at the same level of proficiency. It has to do with the acquisition and knowledge of the two languages, which involves getting the two to the same degree of expertise. Bilinguals are classified as Compound or Coordinate by Bell Rogers. Lambert (1978:137-138) concurs with this categorisation and claims that

A compound bilingual is someone who has learned two languages at the same time (from birth) and has interlocutors who speak both languages equally well and frequently interchangeably. This is also referred to as true or perfect bilingualism. Words and phrases in multiple languages are the same notions for compound bilinguals. For a French-English speaker of this type, 'chien' and 'dog' are two terms for the same meaning. These speakers are frequently bilingual and fluent in both languages.

A coordinate bilingual is that one who has different acquisition settings for each language, that is different times of acquisition (the second language learned after infancy) and socio-cultural context, one language at home and the other outside the home (at school or in the neighborhood. this can also be called 'la bilingual d'expression' which means mastering a second language as a working language but without competently speaking it. For example, speaking good French but managing to speak English. For coordinate bilinguals, words and phrases in the speaker's mind are all related to their own unique concepts.

Thus a bilingual speaker of this type has different associations for 'chien' and for 'dog'. In these individuals, one language, usually the first language, is dominant, and it may interfere in thinking in the second language. These speakers are known to use very different intonation and pronunciation features, and sometimes to assert the feeling of having different personalities attached to each of their languages.

The distinction between compound and coordinate bilingualism has come under scrutiny, with most multilinguals showing an intermediate behavior between the two. Some authors have suggested that the distinction should be made only at the level of grammar rather than vocabulary, while others use "coordinate bilingual" as a synonym for someone who has learned two languages from birth, and still others have proposed dropping the distinction entirely.

There is always the question of balanced bilingualism, the idea of language dominance, because one cannot speak of flawless bilingualism, therefore it is difficult to evaluate equivalence in terms of translation; one just needs to measure the dominance of one language over the other.

Bilinguals who are highly proficient in two or more languages, such as compound and coordinate bilinguals, have been found to have higher cognitive proficiency and to be better language learners (third, fourth, etc.) at a later age than monolinguals. Bilinguals benefit from the early understanding that concepts in the world can be labeled in more than one way.

Translation is a continuous link between two mutually incomprehensible tongues that does not result in either suppression or extension of either. And if two people speaking different languages need to communicate, translation is required, either through a third party or directly. Paul Kholer (1973)

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considers the lexical levels of translation and the function bilingualism plays when discussing the relationship between bilingualism and translation. Kholer goes on to claim that there is no satisfactory machine translation because language structure is complicated and words have multiple interpretations depending on the context in which they are used. Machine translation is incapable of distinguishing between multiple meanings of words.

Translation is a practical application of meaning theory. This meaning can be examined at several levels and for various units, ranging from word to phrase to sentence to text. The significance of meaning in translation can be seen in statements attributed to Peter Newmark (1982), who defines translation as "rendering the meaning of a text into another language in the way that the author intended the text." Eugene Nida defines translation as "reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style."

As Catford (1965:20) puts it, translation simply involves the "substitution or replacement of textual materials in one language by equivalent textual materials in another language." However, the concept of equivalence offers some difficulties because it can be construed in various ways. In equivalency, not only the word but also the context are taken into account.

Is bilingualism identical with translation?

One of the most common fallacies in translation practice is that translation is synonymous with bilingualism and that every bilingual person is inherently a translator. Is this, however, true? Is it possible for every multilingual to be or become a translator? Before answering this issue properly, one must first grasp who a multilingual is and what a translator does.

Understanding the link between bilingualism and translation is also critical. Understanding the preceding will help the reader understand that translation is not synonymous with bilingualism, but the two can compliment one other.

The various varieties of bilingualism, such as social, professional, and native, will be covered in this section.

### The connection between bilingualism and translation

According to Kholer (1973), bilingualism allows us to explore certain broad questions regarding language use and learn more about how the human mind handles many types of information. Because translation is a practical application of meaning theory, the translator's knowledge of meaning in a text can be studied at many levels and for various units.

Bilingual persons interpret words differently than dictionary translations of the same words, which has a psychological reason. Words are widely employed in context by bilinguals, in contexts determined by their physical qualities as well as their habits, attitudes, dispositions, and intentions regarding the words. These cognitive and emotional states influence how words are processed when heard or seen (Kholer, 1973:283), as well as the meanings assigned to them.

Words that denote ethnic, political, or emotional concepts or emotions typically have various meanings in different languages and cultures. Although these words exist in other cultures and languages, the meanings assigned to them vary from culture to culture, which explains why translating culturally distant languages is difficult and why bilingual translations sometimes differ from dictionary translations because bilinguals adjust the meanings to the other culture as they switch between

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languages. Because being bilingual entails being bicultural, the above is conceivable.

Learning to accomplish something in one language does not imply that one will be able to do it in the other. Languages, unlike natural sciences or pure arts, have unique qualities that affect translation work, making it more complex. For example, if a word-for-word or phrase-for-phrase translation is required, the result will be very similar to what machine translation would provide; this is because a word-for-word translation would produce an equivalent product, but even closely related languages have differences in idiomatic expressions or syntax (Malakoff and Hakuta, 1991).

A multilingual who does not exercise his native or near-native language may struggle to think in his native language and may find it simpler to express himself in his second language.

Translators are regarded extraordinary persons (Lambert, 1978) because of the seriousness with which they capture every aspect of the speaker's message and communicate it in another language without neglecting anything. According to Lambert, translators' bilingualism provides them with unique intellect, sensitivity, and talents in determining what is meant and what is suggested.

Translation is typically considered an innate skill that, like any other skill, may be developed with coaching. This is known as natural translation, which Harris and Sherwood (1978:155) define as 'the translating done in everyday circumstances by people who have no special training for it.' This idea is supported by the fact that almost all bilingual children can translate or interpret for adults in a variety of situations such as medical, legal, or administrative cases. According to Harris and Sherwood, although the ability is natural, there are stages that a

natural translator goes through, and translating is coextensive with bilingualism, that is, they have a relationship similar to the one between speaking a language and the ability to communicate.

Toury (1995), on the other hand, believes that, while the proclivity for translating is coextensive with bilingualism, the development of the translator's talent is dependent on interlingualism, or the ability to build a relationship between the similarities and differences between languages.

According to Harris and Sherwood (1978:165-166), a natural translator must go through the following stages:

- The first stage is pretranslation, in which the translator primarily employs single words. This is because the youngster, as a monolingual, is still at the one-word sentence stage.

- The second stage is known as auto translation, in which the translator translates what he has said or written to others. This is sometimes referred to as intrapersonal translation. Interpersonal translation occurs when the subject's own words are translated to other persons.

- The final stage is transduction, in which the translator acts as a mediator between two other people.

According to Harris, age is a crucial element in the intrinsic ability to translate, but we believe there are additional factors. Age is simply a biological issue; there are other linguistic and social factors to consider. Limiting the argument on bilingualism to age limits the argument's validity. Although children can and do translate without particular training in the subject, this type of translation ignores the cultural implications of the message and may create communication hurdles. It is

possible that the translation will be less functionally redundant and more spontaneous.

From the foregoing, it is clear that translation is commonly associated with bilingualism. In fact, Shannon (1987:115) claims that translating and bilingualism are coextensive, that they have a relationship comparable to that of speaking a language and being able to converse. Toury (1995) believes that, while translating is related to bilingualism, one's translating skills actually depend on the ability to establish a relationship between the similarities and differences between languages. Not all translators can translate in the same way because each translator's personal characteristics or knowledge of the two languages determines success or failure.

However, it is understood that competence may have some link with age because language proficiency may develop with age. It is also vital to mention that the differences in people's translations of the same work are attributable to the fact that the ability to transfer from one language to another varies from person to person. Everything is dependent on each individual's interlingual ability.

#### The effects of multilingual innateness on translation

In linguistics, the term innate refers to a hereditary language skill that allows a kid to speak sooner and more grammatically than can be explained by its exposure to the environment. It also refers to a unique proclivity in children to learn how to speak the language they hear in their surroundings.

It is an intentional action performed once one has virtually or completely mastered the basic structure and vocabulary of one's first language. Of fact, many people never have a meaningful mastery of more than their first language; it is only

when one comes into touch with a second language that one learns how intricate language is and how much effort is required for subsequent acquisition. So, knowing one language is a significant barrier to learning a second, and one should not expect one's fluency in both to be the same or adequate to be a perfect translator. It is true that the average person masters his mother tongue with unconscious ease; however, people vary in their conscious ability to learn additional languages, just as they vary in other intellectual abilities; thus, being bilingual may not imply being able to comprehend the complexities of the additional language(s) acquired. Acquired bilingualism causes mutual interference between the two languages, especially in word meaning; grammatical interference; and structural interference.

As previously said, age is not the only characteristic that distinguishes translation from bilingualism; additional aspects include personality, situation, and drive. and surroundings, which are critical elements in applying specialist proclivities to translation. Skills evolve with time, which contradicts the assumption of natural translation linked with age. This is because the act of translating loses its naturalness with repeated practice.

So, what is a natural translation? Many theorists, including Catford (1965), Toury (1995), Nida (1964), and others, have viewed translation to be a form of communication. From a socio-cultural standpoint, Toury (1995:248) describes it as a mode of communicative text production. According to this definition, which includes socialization, there is a feedback method in which the translator receives normative input. The target language and culture are reflected in societal norms. However, there is no one way to translate because there is no such thing as a universal standard of appropriateness. These requirements alter depending on the societal group.

It should be noted that a born bilingual frequently suffers from not genuinely understanding any language well enough to translate, with some even suffering from alingualism, a condition in which a person lacks full fluent command of any language. Second, many native bilinguals do not understand the culture of the target language well enough to give high-quality translations, or they do not realize which features of the source language and culture require special attention. Third, native bilinguals frequently lack the analytical linguistic skills required to work through a challenging material.

The acquired bilingual, on the other hand, may not have the same in-depth knowledge of colloquialisms, slang, and dialect as the born bilingual, although bilingualism, according to Bell Roger (1976: 132), is biculturalism, which means that anyone who calls himself a bilingual must also be familiar with the two cultures involved.

The translator's gifts demonstrate not only a breadth of vision and depth of understanding of human life, but also an extremely important feature for us—a vital receptivity to another people's spiritual makeup, an unusual sensitivity to their psychology, and an amazing ability to switch over to the manner of another ethnic group. It is thus not enough to simply speak a language; one must also be bilingual and bicultural. Aitmatov's bilingualism, for example, is inherent in his talent. It exposes an important component of his artistic "I"; thus, in his laboratory, the "author's translation" is not merely a mechanical copy of a previously generated text, but a new and carefully thought-through version of it, taking into account the ethnicity of the new group of readers.

As a translator, acquiring "the compound state of mind with two grammars" as (Cook: 2003) indicates remains an ideal attained by relatively few individual translators (even in a

"bilingual" country like Cameroon), but this does not imply that there are few bilinguals, because this paper believes that bilingualism is a continuum ranging from mastery of the official languages to mastery of two national languages.

It is not enough to conclude without mentioning that African languages validate all criteria for determining the quality of a language's vocal system. Because no language serves as a yardstick for another, condemning bilingualism including an African language is unwarranted snobbery, because acquiring any of them demands the same work as learning any European language. According to Jakobson (1953) and Romaine (1995), "Bilingualism is for me the fundamental problem of linguistics." This is true, given the linguistic truth that all languages are equally complex and difficult to master.

### **Conclusion**

As Kaya (2007) stated, there is no definitive solution to the question of whether any bilingual can translate. This is simple because it all depends on how the term translation is understood. I'll also finish with a quote from A. "A person who speaks two languages shifts the character and direction of his thought as he shifts from one language to the other, and shifts them in such a way that the effort of his will...changes the course of his thought and then affects its subsequent course only indirectly," writes A. Potebnia in Schäffner, Christina (2001). This effort is comparable to what a switchman does while moving a train to another track."

But, if we're talking about switches, rails, routes, and the driving forces behind bilingualism and author translations, then, to use Potebnia's metaphor, literary translation in general, and author translation in particular, is not when one route is "primary" and the others are only "secondary."

Bilingualism is undeniably required, yet it is not sufficient for translating ability and efficiency. Natural ability, training, and cultural background are also required. The requirement for each translation researcher to introduce his or her unique style, language, and method of conveying meanings plays an important role in translation efforts.

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