



## Challenges in Translation

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**Abstract:** this article is about translation and its linguistic and grammatical challenges. We know, translation has been studied for many years. However, we face these problems nowadays. So, we analyze some issues and their solutions in this article.

**Keywords:** translation, linguistic challenges, grammatical challenges, problem, translator.

The history of **translation** has been a topic that has long been debated by scholars and historians, though it is widely accepted that translation pre-dates the bible. The bible tells of different languages as well as giving insight to the interaction of speakers from different areas. The need for translation has been apparent since the earliest days of human interaction, whether it be for emotional, trade or survival purposes.

Translators have often been hidden characters, unnamed people who have paved the way for some of the greatest contributions to the dissemination of ideas, knowledge and theories throughout the ages. In some cases, working as a translator was incredibly dangerous and some even lost their lives because of their work.

Constance Garnett was a British translator who translated Russian classics including Tolstoy, Chekhov, Turgenev and Gogol into English towards the end of the 19th Century. Gregory Rabassa was an American literary translator who translated numerous Latin documents into English throughout the 20th Century.

### *Modern Translation Practices and Understanding.*

Following on from the Industrial Revolution, the economy developed rapidly and evolved into a machine with the potential for global success. New machinery allowed for swifter production of texts and business related materials and this means that more time could be invested in evolving a company and translating material to enter foreign markets. Since the 18th century, businesses have benefitted from formalised translation services but the dawn of modern practice came with the widespread introduction of the internet.

The internet has revolutionised the ability to access, translate and understand texts and documents from all over the world, whether they be contemporary or historical pieces. Crucially, the need to understand the culture of the original country and that of the target audience is further enhanced by modern tools and practices. Although some instant translation services are capable only of metaphrase translation (literal word-for-word translation), specialist firms, platforms and translators are able to translate texts and spoken word into multiple languages whilst observing the relevance and culture of the target receiver.

Translation is difficult, a lot of Common **challenges in translation** include knowing about a variety of features such as the language structure which differs between languages. For example, a simple English sentence has a subject, a verb, and an object, such as 'She eats chicken.' However, not all languages share this structure, so the Farsi language has the subject first, followed by a verb and then lastly the object.

## Linguistic Challenges You Will Face As A Translator

Everybody gets into this career, and sometimes they end giving up because, truth be told, it is not as easy as it is made out to be. You will come across translation jobs that need you to do a word-for-word translation, but you will also come across the ones that will need you to apply the cultural, linguistically, and technical aspects of your **language pairs to come up with conclusive translations**. All I'm saying is that you will meet challenges from time to time and you must be a translator ready to go above and beyond the challenges and come up with perfectly done translations. Below are some linguistic **challenges that you should be ready to face** ones you got into the translation world

### 1. Humor

With the world being a global village, everything is now widely available through the internet and people can interact with different content across the seas and still understand it and enjoy it. One thing that is not easily understandable across the board is humor. You might wonder why I say this, but the reality of the matter is that one language's humor will not be received the same way in another language. Have you ever interacted with an individual from another country who speaks a totally different language and every time they tell a joke you just don't seem to understand it? That is usually affected by the cultural, linguistic, and technical aspects of specific languages.

This is why translating humor from one language to another is an extreme **challenge that translators have to face** now and then. What usually happens when humor is being **translated from one language** to another, is that the meaning usually gets lost in translation. The translated version might end up being totally off context and off meaning. Something might be funny in the English language and offensive in the French language and as a translator, you should avoid offending your target audience. It takes a lot of skill and confidence to do great humor translations and only the very best translators will pull it off well.

### 2. Language structure

Language structure is another very important issue that has to be looked into by translators before they work on a project. You might wonder why, but it is because the structure of a language determines how sentences are created and whether they make sense or not. I will tell you this for free the essence of creating translations is so that people from other countries and who speak different languages may enjoy the content you are sharing and understand it. There is no reason to waste time translating an entire website into another language and risk the complete translation not making sense or being completely off context.

Different languages have different language structures and this is something that all translators should know. You must be a linguist translator to know exactly how language structure affects content being translated from a language with a particular structure to another with a totally different structure. You don't want to have your content **translated in another language** and risk it not making sense or having words that are totally jumbled up. When you are moving from one original language to a different, or even not so different, target language, it's difficult to not just translate the words. It's always important to know not just the language, but also how and why things are worded in certain ways.

### 3. Missing words

If you are a linguist, you already know that there are words that would be available in one language and totally miss in another language. It doesn't mean that the other language is not good or has a problem it just means that certain words are not translatable into their languages because they don't exist. A linguist is a professional who immerses themselves in the scientific study of different languages. Not all words are **translatable into other languages** and as a translator, know this and avoid forcing words to take up certain spaces and risk the translations not making sense. Have you ever realized that there are words in the English language that you can't possibly **translate into your Native** language? That time the words make perfect sense according to the English language but you just can't figure out what these words would be in your Native language?

It is a very normal phenomenon for translation and translators can tell you for sure how hard this usually is. Imagine trying to translate a word that exists in the source language but doesn't exist in the target language and remain in context and meaning. While most languages will have words and phrases for most things, there are always certain words and phrases that are just either different or missing entirely from target languages. Missing words don't make translation difficult; it just makes it challenging for translators.

#### 4. Multiple meanings

In the point above we have mentioned how challenging it is for translators to perfect translations for words that exist in a source language but don't exist in a target language. Imagine the opposite where one word might have five different meanings and as a translator, you must know all these different meanings in order for you to come up with conclusive translations. This is something that is very common in most languages where you get certain words having multiple meanings. It is not a surprise per se, but it becomes a challenge for translators when they have to translate such words.

This doesn't happen for all languages because others are straightforward. Languages like Japanese and English different in a large spectrum of linguistics, you will get a couple of such case scenarios. The only way for a translator to work around this challenge is for them to be kind to research on the different contexts in which certain words are used in different languages and how they might translate into other languages. Words in each of these languages (Japanese and English) can often have a double meaning. For example, in English, scales can either mean a part of a fish or a kitchen utensil, wherein Japan writing the kanji is not enough, because things can be written one way and said differently. Both are common issues in their languages, and each needs an expert at hand at all times to find effective and accurate workarounds.

#### 5. Cultures

If you are taking up translation as a career, you should always be ready to study and extensive research on the cultural, linguistical, and technical aspects of the pair languages you are working with. This doesn't just happen overnight, rather it is because of fully immersing yourself in the study and research of different languages, in order for you to understand them fully.

**During translation, it is very easy to just do a word-for-word translation and ignore the cultural aspects of your target language.** If they could, a lot of translators would because it would make translation easy and straight to the point. This is not possible though because ignoring the cultural aspect of a language might end up causing more damage than anything else.

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