Ilona Kryvosyienko

Kyiv National University of Technologies and Design (Kyiv)

Scientific supervisor - associate professor, Maryna Vyshnevska

CURRENT TRENDS IN FOREIGN LANGUAGES AND TRANSLATION STUDIES

The landscape of foreign languages and translation studies is undergoing a period of exciting transformation. Driven by factors like globalization, technological advancements, and a growing emphasis on intercultural communication, the field is witnessing a shift in focus and the emergence of innovative approaches. This article delves into these current trends, exploring how foreign language learning is evolving, the impact of machine translation on the profession, and the expanding role of translators in a globalized world.

The method of learning foreign languages is transforming. Traditional approaches that prioritize memorizing grammar rules are being replaced by communicative methods, which prioritize using the language for real-world interactions. This change is in line with the increasing popularity of online language learning platforms and mobile apps, which provide flexible and accessible learning opportunities. Furthermore, there is a growing interest in less commonly taught languages (LCTLs), reflecting a desire to engage with a wider range of cultures. This trend is further amplified by an increased focus on cultural competency alongside language skills, recognizing that effective communication goes beyond just vocabulary and grammar.

Machine translation (MT) has become increasingly popular due to its ability to quickly and efficiently translate large amounts of text. While these tools excel at handling basic translations and identifying core meanings, they often struggle with nuanced contexts such as cultural references, sarcasm, and complex sentence

structures. This is where human translators are necessary. The rise of machine translation (MT) has transformed the translation profession, with translators taking on a more supervisory role. They edit machine translations to ensure accuracy and fluency, leveraging MT's power to boost productivity. This human-machine collaboration is becoming the new standard workflow in the translation industry.

The role of the translator has expanded beyond simple language conversion in today's interconnected world. Translators must specialize in specific domains such as law, medicine, and technology to navigate the intricacies of these fields. This expertise allows translators to act as cultural intermediaries, ensuring not only linguistic accuracy but also the preservation of intended meaning within a specific cultural context. Additionally, the rise of creative translation further broadens their horizons. Localization tailors content to resonate with a target audience, while transcreation goes a step further, adapting the message for maximum impact. Technological advancements have also opened doors to remote interpreting and captioning, offering translators greater flexibility and a wider range of opportunities.

The meteoric rise of machine translation (MT) is undeniable, but ethical considerations linger. A major concern is bias, as MT systems are trained on vast amounts of data that might reflect societal prejudices. This can lead to translations that perpetuate stereotypes or even mistranslate sensitive content. Accuracy also remains a challenge, particularly for complex or nuanced language. While MT excels at basic translations, its grasp of cultural references, humor, and idiomatic expressions is often limited. To mitigate these issues, transparency about MT's limitations is crucial. Users should be aware of potential biases and the need for human oversight to ensure accurate and culturally appropriate translations.

To conclude, it should be mentioned that the field of foreign languages and translation studies is currently undergoing a dynamic transformation. The focus is

shifting from rote memorization to practical communication, driven by online learning platforms and a growing interest in diverse languages. While machine translation has undoubtedly impacted the profession with its impressive speed and efficiency, human expertise remains irreplaceable, especially in ensuring cultural sensitivity and addressing the nuances of language.

Translators have become more specialized, serving as cultural intermediaries and utilizing creative translation methods such as localization and transcription. Exciting new opportunities are emerging in this ever-evolving field with remote interpreting and captioning. As technology advances, the future of foreign languages and translation studies holds promise for an exciting interplay between human ingenuity and machine power. By embracing these trends and fostering a spirit of collaboration, we can harness the power of language to bridge cultures and promote deeper global understanding.

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