Difficulties Encountered By Translators When Referring Glossaries: With Special Reference To The Glossaries Of Technical Terms Of The Department Of Official Languages – Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Translation, the process of transferring the meaning of a text in one language into another language can be categorized as technical translation and non-technical translation. Technical translation, also known as non-literary translation, can further be subdivided into several sub-fields such as scientific translation, legal translation and commerce translation according to the subject field the document belongs to. When translating technical documents, translators often refer glossaries. Glossaries are alphabetical lists of words related to a specific subject field with the translation of each word. The main difference between a glossary and a dictionary lies in the fact that a dictionary is a collection of general words in alphabetical order with their relevant meanings and a glossary contains words belonged to a specific subject field. The study pays particular attention to the glossary collection compiled by the Department of Official Languages, Sri Lanka. The official translator to the government of the Department of Official Languages has published several glossaries belonged to various subject fields. In addition to the printed versions, the department has also compiled a collection of glossaries which can be accessed online via its official website, and a mobile and desktop application of glossaries. These applications, however, are at a developing stage, and this study aims to discover some of the difficulties novice translators encounter when referring glossaries of technical terms through both printed and electronic sources. Glossary applications are rarely up to date and contain many technical errors. They also lack new words; therefore the translator faces several difficulties. Apart from the glossaries compiled by the Department of Official Languages, glossaries published by several other institutes including Educational Publications Department will also be referred.

Keywords - Technical translation, glossaries, technical terms, application, novice translators

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