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1 Opportunities and Challenges Facing the Profession of Translator 2 in Africa

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7 **Abstract**

8 In many African countries, for historical reasons, European languages including English,
9 French, Spanish, and Portuguese are used in schools, churches, public and private institutions.
10 Therefore, translation from and into these languages is frequently done during international
11 conferences as well as for international organisations and projects located in the African
12 region. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the opportunities and challenges of this
13 linguistic situation for translators across Africa. So far, translation has played a major role in
14 the progress of humanity and should continue to do so, especially in Africa, a continent that
15 heavily depends on the wealth of knowledge and information available, especially, in English
16 and in a few other languages. History reveals that medicine, which was originally practiced by
17 the Arabs, was introduced through translation into Western universities in the 8th century.
18 Nowadays, thanks to the globalisation process, translations are increasingly done by
19 multinationals into many languages even in Africa.

20

21 **Index terms**— freelance translator, translation technology, market demands, africa, professional ethics.

22 **1 Opportunities and Challenges Facing the Profession of Trans- 23 lator in Africa**

24 Dr. Servais Martial Akpaca Abstract-In many African countries, for historical reasons, European languages
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27 for international organisations and projects located in the African region. The purpose of this paper is to discuss
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30 that heavily depends on the wealth of knowledge and information available, especially, in English and in a few
31 other languages. History reveals that medicine, which was originally practiced by the Arabs, was introduced
32 through translation into Western universities in the 8th century. Nowadays, thanks to the globalisation process,
33 translations are increasingly done by multinationals into many languages even in Africa. The methodology of
34 the paper is both descriptive and explanatory. The findings of the paper include the following challenges and
35 opportunities: a limited number of institutions employ translators in Africa, therefore job opportunities are
36 not plenty in this profession; translation studies fail to attract many students because of the limited number
37 of opportunities provided by the labour market; there are few schools of translators in African countries; small
38 corporations complain about the high cost of translations and expect every translator to excel in both their
39 mother tongue and their second or third language instead of employing more than one translator; translators
40 in Africa also play the role of terminologists because of the lack of terminology databases in most institutions;
41 freelance translators find it difficult to cope with this situation, especially when their working relationship with
42 these institutions date back to a recent past; the use of European languages is a challenge for many student

5 METHODOLOGY

43 translators and practising translators; there is a need for translators to have a noticeable web presence in order
44 to attract clients from all over the world; they also need to create an instrument (i.e. a journal or a newsbulletin)
45 to express their opinions and concerns; last but not least, national translators' associations need to register and
46 effectively defend their members' interests.

47 2 Introduction

48 translation has rendered valuable services to humanity from time immemorial. It not only disseminates knowledge
49 from one language to another, but it also brings people together and promotes friendly relations and international
50 understanding. Remember that from the 8th century, medicine was introduced to Western universities by the
51 Arabs through translation. Toledo, the erstwhile capital city of Spain, became a "beehive of translation", i.e. a
52 busy place where translations were done on a large scale. That is what ??erschin (1986, pp. 163-168) recalls
53 when he notes that:

54 En effet, Tolède, la capitale de l'Espagne à l'époque, est devenue un centre de traduction à la suite de la
55 conquête musulmane en 711. L'École de Traducteurs de Tolède a été créée au XIIème siècle par l'archevêque
56 de Tolède: don Raimundo. À partir de la seconde moitié du Xème siècle, Huesca, Tarazona, León, Pampelune,
57 Segovie et Barcelone ont suivi l'exemple. Tolède est devenue un centre culturel qui exportait le savoir à toute
58 l'Europe chrétienne. Des traductions étaient effectuées de l'arabe au latin. Plus tard, au XIIIème siècle, Alphonse
59 X dit Le Sage a continué à traduire des livres de philosophie, d'astronomie, de médecine, de littérature, etc., de
60 l'arabe vers le grec, le castillan et le latin.

61 Indeed, this conference provides an opportunity to recall the contribution of translation to civilisation and to
62 discuss practical aspects of the profession in Africa. It is a fact that the practice of this profession in Africa faces
63 opportunities and challenges, which need to be discussed in a bid to improve translators' working conditions and
64 status.

65 This paper shows that the demand for translation is increasing across the world, and Africa needs to find
66 ways and means to get a share of the market. In other words, African translators need collective strategies to
67 seize the opportunities available in the national, regional and international translation markets. To this end,
68 issues pertaining to training and curriculum, regulating access to the profession, education of work providers,
69 translation technology, official registration of translators' associations, tariffs, ethics, etc., are discussed.

70 The paper hinges on practical ideas developed by Gouadec (2007) and takes into account the current market
71 trends highlighted by Victoria Nicol (2018). Aspects relating to translation technology, i.e. Neural Machine
72 Translation and translation memories, are dealt with using papers published by Doucet (2022), Kook (2022),
73 and Martikainen (2022). Professional aspects of the topic are discussed using the regulations of a number of
74 translators' associations from Africa and overseas.

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78 The initial part of the paper presents the methodology which is mixed. Subsequently, the results are indicated.

79 The last part of the paper discusses the findings and makes some recommendations.

80 4 II.

81 5 Methodology

82 This paper has used both quantitative and qualitative methods to describe the practice of the profession of
83 freelance translator in Africa. A great proportion of the paper is made up of practical ideas developed by
84 professional translators. Statistics and figures have been collected from publications by translation agencies and
85 the United Nations.

86 The objective of the paper is to highlight the challenges and opportunities facing the profession of a translator
87 in Africa in a bid to chart a way forward and highlight the main areas in which action needs to be taken to
88 improve translators' status and working conditions.

89 The instruments used to carry out this research include the Internet, books, an interview, academic congress
90 materials, and the regulations of translators' associations.

91 The data include statistics on global translation market share, the percentage of Neural Machine Translation
92 and of Automatic Machine Translation in the global translation output, and the information obtained from
93 translators' associations' regulations.

94 Assumptions are made regarding the future of the profession in connection with the advances in translation
95 technology boosted by the development of artificial intelligence.

96 The variables in this research include Africa's share in the distribution of Global Language Services Market,
97 the spread of the Internet, and the rate of CAT Tools usage by translators in Africa.

98 The outcomes of this research include but are not limited to the following results: III.

99 **6 Results**

100 **7 3.1**

101 The profession of a translator in most African countries needs to be regulated when it comes to issues pertaining
102 to access to the profession, required qualifications, and tariffs.

103 3.2 African translators have no share in the global language services market. 3.3 African freelance translators
104 need to team up and ensure an effective web presence to attract more clients at the national and international
105 levels.

106 3.4 Mobility on the employment front is a fact because work opportunities come here and there.

107 **8 The use of CAT Tools and Neural Machine**

108 Translation (NMT) has become necessary to increase productivity and keep pace with the rest of the work.

109 **9 3.6**

110 Translator training is an issue of main concern and translation curricula should include topics such as language
111 and linguistics, website translations, medical/ healthcare translations, e-commerce, finance, legal services,
112 manufacturing industry, business, e-learning programmes/online certifications, media, collaborations tools,
113 software translation and localisation, marketing, advertising, PR.

114 IV.

115 **10 Discussion a) An Overview of a Translator's Job**

116 In presenting an overview of the translator's job, Gouadec (2007, p.13) mentions three stages in the translation
117 process:

118 The activities involved in providing a translation service are organised into three phases: 1. Pretranslation; 2.
119 Translation; 3. Post-translation.

120 Pre-translation includes anything that takes place up to the moment the translator actually receives the
121 material for translation: everything that has to do with getting the job, writing out estimates, negotiating,
122 getting the specifications right, and contracting.

123 As far as the pre-translation phase is concerned, the translator does job hunting by calling and visiting
124 companies and institutions likely to employ translators. It is recommended to drop a curriculum vitae and to
125 insist to see a senior officer including the Human Resources Officer or any officer in charge of (local) purchase
126 orders and contracts. Physical contact is particularly important because it can make a difference if the translator
127 is articulate, well-dressed, and gives a good impression of himself or herself. The knowledge of the service
128 provision rates applied in several local companies and institutions is equally important because most of the time,
129 the officers provide some information on their companies' official rates. If the rates are lower than the market
130 rates, there is always room for bargaining. Job hunting should be done vigorously and continuously.

131 There is also a need to constantly look for calls for tender in newspapers and on websites. Examples
132 of international websites providing information on job opportunities include cDiscussion.com, ProZ.com,
133 Gengo.com, OneHourTranslation.com, Unbabel.com, TextMaster.com, TranslatorsCafe.com, and jobs.ilo.org. In
134 countries where there are translators' associations, the members normally share information on job opportunities.
135 Finally, when a translator gets a call or an e-mail from a prospective client for work, s/he should make sure that
136 a contract is duly signed with the work provider. The contract normally specifies the number of pages or words
137 to be translated, the price, and the delivery date.

138 When the work provider sends the translation kit to the translator, the translation stage begins. On this score,
139 Gouadec (2007) indicates that:

140 Translation in turn is divided into three stages: 1. Pre-transfer; 2. Transfer; 3. Post-transfer.

141 Pre-transfer includes all operations leading up to the actual 'translating', including preparation of the material,
142 documentary searches, alignment, memory consolidation, terminology mining, deciding on options, etc. The
143 transfer is the well-known core activity of shifting to another language-culture combination; Posttransfer covers
144 anything that has to be done to meet the quality requirements and criteria before delivery of the translated
145 material. It mostly pertains to quality control and upgrading. It also includes formatting and various preparations
146 for delivery. (Ibid) Indeed, the translator analyses the material, clarifies ambiguities, and retrieves necessary
147 information including dictionaries, memories, templates, and terminology databases. S/he is free to get back to
148 the work provider to ask important questions regarding company terminology and policy documents. Existing
149 publications in both source language and target language are very helpful. It is important to visit the company's
150 website if there is one. It is equally important to relate to a contact person in the company that can provide
151 some useful information on the company's policies, procedures, terminology, and others. Depending on the size
152 and nature of every material, the translator can even train on specific aspects of the work. When the translation
153 is completed, it is imperative to proofread and revise it.

154 At the post-translation stage, the finished translation is validated. Thereafter, it is formatted, integrated, or
155 embedded and set up on a relevant medium. Furthermore, the need to operate and update a translation memory

12 C) PREREQUISITES AND CONDITIONS

156 cannot be overemphasized. After delivering the translation, the translator follows up on the payment after issuing
157 a bill.

158 Post-translation covers all activities that follow the delivery of the translated material. These include possible
159 integration of the translated material (as in the simulation of subtitles, layout prior to publishing, integration in a
160 Web site or an international soundtrack, etc.) but also, of course, all the "administrative" business of getting paid,
161 setting up an archive of the project, consolidating the terminology for future uses, and much more. (Ibid) Some
162 work providers give feedback on the quality of translated materials. This is a welcome development that enables
163 the translator to take note of the company's remarks on the errors found in the translation. These remarks are
164 most of the time related to issues pertaining to terminology, interpretation, acronyms, etc. Indeed, when I was
165 working for the African Airlines Association (AFRAA) in Nairobi, Kenya as a consultant, the Secretary-General
166 instructed the secretariat to always show me all the corrections made in my translations to ensure that the same
167 errors were not repeated in subsequent translations.

168 After this overview of the translator's job, Gouadec describes freelance translators.

169 11 b) Freelance translators

170 Gouadec (2007) describes freelance translators as follows:

171 Freelance translators, or so-called 'independent' translators, are self-employed, meaning they are not in any
172 legal sense 'bound' to their clients or work providers. They either work for 'direct' clients (whom they invoice
173 directly) or for agencies (or brokerage firms) that actually get the contracts and subcontract them to the
174 freelancers. (Ibid, p. 99) Furthermore, he states that freelance translators are expected to pay all mandatory
175 taxes and social security contributions. However, in several African countries, many self-employed professionals
176 and informal sector workers do not pay taxes because the income tax policies are lax and most of these workers are
177 not registered. In several countries, especially in West Africa, some freelance translators manage to avoid taxes
178 by refraining from opening translation bureaux. Given that they are very mobile because of the nature of their
179 work, tax offices find it difficult to spot them. Having said that, there are bona fide translators and interpreters
180 who do pay taxes even if they fail to declare all their incomes. In any case, it is important to stress that health
181 insurance and occupational pension schemes are vital matters that every freelance translator needs to subscribe
182 to. On this same score, Gouadec explains that freelance translators enter into voluntary contractual relationships
183 with their clients. In some African countries, there is no actual legal framework for freelancing and individual
184 translators as well as the few existing translators' associations are not registered. However, some translators'
185 associations are making an effort to register and claim status for their members. Some of the opportunities of
186 the profession include flexibility and the freedom to decide the working hours and places.

187 By contrast, the challenges include uncertain and irregular income, fierce competition, the tendency of some
188 translators to charge very low tariffs, unfamiliarity with their clients' terminology and policies, especially at the
189 beginning of the working relationship, etc. A freelance translator confessed one day at the end of a five-day
190 conference that he had no social security scheme. Therefore, he normally spent most of the money he earned
191 during conferences to buy plots of land hoping that in the future, the plots would generate enough income to
192 sustain his life. It is a bet. In this particular case, it may be recommended to subscribe to a national social
193 security and pension scheme even though in some countries private social security schemes are rather problematic.
194 Given that freelance translators are very mobile, whenever they decide to terminate or transfer the schemes to
195 another country, they lose a lot of money.

196 In mentioning another challenge facing freelance translators, one of them said that sometimes, he did not get
197 any work for more than six months and tended to forget that he had a profession. This situation of inactivity
198 was exacerbated particularly during the COVID-19 pandemic characterised by lockdowns and company closures.
199 In addition, freelancing is not a viable activity in several African cities where businesses and diplomatic activities
200 are scarce.

201 The next issue to be discussed is the prerequisites and conditions for becoming a freelance translator.

202 12 c) Prerequisites and conditions

203 As far as the prerequisites are concerned, Gouadec (2007) notes that from an administrative and legal point
204 of view, in most countries, everybody can work as a professional translator. People come to translation from
205 two opposing sectors, i.e. the language sector and the world of industry and technique. Those coming from
206 the language sector are linguists, while those from the world of industry have a commercial, legal, accounting,
207 engineering, or any other technical background. This is the background of translators in France.

208 In West Africa, some translators have a linguistic, legal or economic background. Technical translators are
209 very few. This is probably due to the labour market which provides few translation opportunities in the technical
210 areas. Unlike France, which is a developed and industrialised country, west African countries do not have
211 enough industries to provide technical translations. At Université Lumière Lyon 2 where I trained in France, for
212 example, students specialise in medical translation because there are many chemical laboratories and medical
213 research institutes in that country.

214 At this stage, an issue of particular importance is the need to regulate access to the profession. Regarding

215 this issue, the following questions were put to François, a freelance translator in Cotonou: What are some of the
216 challenges facing freelance translators in Benin and in the West African sub-region? Answer:

217 Lack of qualified translators and interpreters. Many people with linguistic backgrounds enter the profession
218 with a BA and compete with us. Somebody needs to regulate access to the profession. Some translators offer
219 very low tariffs because they want to get all the contracts everywhere. It is important for registered translators'
220 associations (if any) to fix the tariffs. Is there a bright future for this profession in West Africa? Answer:

221 It is not easy to predict what the future has in store for us. Translation technologies may take our jobs away. In
222 addition, many companies and institutions employ Bilingual Executive Secretaries who perform many functions
223 including translation. What advice do you have to give people practicing this profession in Africa as a whole?

224 Answer:

225 Freelance translators need professionalism and a sense of ethics. As far as professionalism is concerned, it is
226 important to stress that in every profession there must be rules. One of the rules is the need to avoid applying
227 very low tariffs. Another one is the need to be humble and meet the clients' expectations in terms of quality and
228 deadline.

229 François has raised important questions related to the need to regulate the profession by checking the
230 credentials of translators. Can somebody who has a BA in English or French call himself a translator? This is a
231 question an assembly like AITCO can address. The opinion of my own association, i.e. ATRAD -Association des
232 Traducteurs Diplômés du Bénin -is that to qualify as a translator, you need to have at least a MA in Translation
233 Studies. This is both a policy and a legal issue.

234 On this same issue, the following is the position of the Ghana Association of Translators and Interpreters.
235 Indeed, a competent translator must have a good command of his or her working languages and should be familiar
236 with several cultures. Translation is not only a lexical transfer but it is also a cultural transfer. The knowledge of
237 the cultural realities of the target language is critically important. A translator who does not know the cultural
238 realities of the target language is not likely to do an accurate job. Of course, this is a functionalist approach to
239 translation. An example of cultural realities in translation was given by Kpogue (2021) in her MA Dissertation
240 entitled: ETUDE DES POSSIBILITES DE TRADUCTION DES TERMES ET LEXIES TIRES DES ACTES
241 DE L'ETAT CIVIL ET DES DIPLOMES. In this dissertation, she describes the plight of a translator who
242 was requested by two students to translate into English a degree called Baccalauréat. One of the students was
243 traveling to Ghana to further his studies while the other one was going to attend a tertiary education programme
244 in South Africa. The translator used the term A'Levels as an equivalent of Baccalauréat in both cases. This was
245 a mistake because the National Senior Certificate seems to be the best equivalent of Baccalauréat in the South
246 African educational system, while the West African Senior Secondary Certificate of Examination (WASSCE)
247 seems to be the best equivalent of Baccalauréat in Ghana (Kpoguè 2020, p.41). As we all know, A' Levels are
248 a college or sixth form leaving qualification offered in England, Wales, and Northern Ireland. As a result, the
249 terms used in the various countries are different and the translator should be aware of these. Therefore, there is
250 a need for translators to have multicultural competence.

251 **13 Articles of Association**

252 The question of specialisation is equally important in translation. Quite often, freelance translators move from
253 one conference to another though the issues discussed in these conferences are different and technical. Given that
254 most conferences are attended by experts who make presentations on scientific and technical topics and issues,
255 it is necessary for translators to specialise and/or read widely on these issues to understand the technical terms
256 and concepts. Having said that, it is important to note that in the African context, a translator who sticks to his
257 or her area of specialisation may not earn enough money. Given that the industries are not developed in most
258 African countries, they are unlikely to provide enough opportunities to translators who decide to work exclusively
259 in these industries. Should translators work alone or in a team whether they specialise or not?

260 **14 Working alone or in a team**

261 A translator working alone receives the document, carries out research on key terms, concepts, and phraseology,
262 translates, and revises it. This situation is prevalent in many small companies in Africa where there is only one
263 translator who translates from and into two languages. The translator is both a reviser and a self-reviser. This
264 means that s/he revises translations done by independent translators and revises his or her own translations. It
265 is not an ideal situation because errors may find their way in the translations but the translator may not see
266 them. Translation is teamwork.

267 Gouadec notes that "Teamwork is now gradually becoming the norm in translation companies and is also
268 becoming more widespread among freelance translator networks." (Ibid, p. 106) The author uses the term
269 'Assembly-line translation' to refer to a situation where various tasks and functions are allotted to different
270 specialist operators including someone who is in charge of preparing the document (separating text from
271 code, extracting the terminology, extracting the graphics, etc.), a terminologist and phraseologist, a translator,
272 an information supplier (who supplies the scientific and technical language-specific information), a keyboard
273 operator, proof-readers and quality controllers, testers and someone who is in charge of readying the document
274 for delivery or publication.

275 Another issue of importance is what it takes to set up shop as a freelance translator.

276 15 Setting up shop as a freelance translator

277 The materials and equipment listed by Gouadec to start freelance translators off include a comfortable or
278 ergonomic seat, phone, scanner, computer, dedicated hard disc for backup, sound equipment, software that reads
279 PDF files, software for word counts and invoicing, search engines, backup Internet access providers, spreadsheets,
280 <http://www.google.com/google-d-s/tour1.html> highly recommended to create and share online glossaries, a
281 database management software, a firewall and anti-virus, a software for file zipping and unzipping, full CAT
282 software (translation memory, terminology management, tag editing, aligner), Web page editors, a terminology-
283 mining tool, a terminology-management software, a project-management software and a personal portal from
284 which to link with useful sites. After setting up shop as a freelancer, what invoicing modes are suggested?

285 16 d) Invoicing modes

286 Gouadec suggests that translators charge their clients on a word count basis, an hourly or per diem basis
287 depending on how the clients are used to being charged. Alternative suggestions made by the author include
288 levying a minimum flat rate service charge for any translation, working out the cost on the basis of specific
289 rates for all the different operations or tasks in the overall translation process (documentation, terminography,
290 quality checks, layout, etc.), counting as additional work any task undertaken over and above those related to
291 the translation process proper (e.g. correcting the source material, having another translator proof-read the
292 translation, aligning texts and translations, setting up a translation memory, etc.). Some work providers pay a
293 flat rate per page. The point is that some pages are full while others are almost empty. Organisations such as
294 ECOWAS, ITUC-Africa, and BOAD used to have a fixed rate that they paid per page.

295 While the average cost of professional translation services can range as low as \$0.08 to \$0.28 per word, the
296 final cost will be based on the number of services required for the project.

297 Below are the UN daily rates for free-lance translators, effective This UN daily rate should be a reference for
298 all translators and employers in Africa.

299 Equally important in this discussion is the issue of translation technology.

300 17 e) Translation technology i. CAT Tools

301 Nowadays translation involves the use of technologies such as word processing, desktop publishing software,
302 translation memory management systems, search engines, computer-assisted translation (CAT) tools, text
303 aligners, Web site design tools, Web editors, and many more.

304 Gouadec says that translators need to be familiar with different computer environments and platforms and
305 their resumes should mention several skills with a list of IT tools and techniques.

306 In addition to the traditional translation softwares and translation memories such as TRADOS, memoQ, and
307 Concordance, Neural Machine Translation (NMT) has been developed since 2017 in collaboration with Google.
308 NMT has drastically improved the quality, syntax, fluency, and accuracy of machine translation. It translates
309 at high speed and is user-friendly. It uses an artificial neural network, i.e. artificial intelligence. No human
310 intervention is needed in NMT.

311 In connection with this technological breakthrough, Isabelle Doucet of Université Laval in Canada published a
312 paper titled « Quelle place pour le numérique dans la formation en traduction? » in nouvelles.ulaval.ca on May
313 19th, 2022. In this paper, she poses the following critical question on neural machine translation:

314 Est-ce que l'IA mettra les spécialistes de la traduction au chômage? Doit-on initier les futurs traducteurs aux
315 outils numériques dès leurs premières années de formation? Ces questions au coeur du colloque La formation
316 en traduction à l'ère du numérique, tenu dans le cadre du 89e Congrès de l'Acfas, sont cruciales. Car des
317 technologies comme la traduction automatique neuronale (TAN) font maintenant partie intégrante du marché et
318 ne disparaîtront pas de sitôt.

319 It emerges from this quotation that neural machine translation is here to stay and there is a need to train
320 students in the area of translation technologies from the very first years. Other papers presented at the colloquium
321 include:). This presentation focuses on collaborative learning in the area of machine translation and post-editing,
322 the difference between translated texts and post-edited texts and feeding a translation engine with new terms.

323 On the question of CAT Tools, Sega Faye, chairman of the Senegalese Translators' Association (ASTRA) gave
324 his opinion in a newspaper article published in La Gazette on December 16-23, 2021.

325 L'intelligence artificielle ne menace-t-elle pas le métier de traducteur ?

326 La traduction est avant tout une activité humaine, un acte de communication humaine qui requiert la présence
327 de l'homme en amont et en aval du processus.

328 Le traducteur moderne ne voit pas les outils informatiques comme une menace mais plutôt comme un atout
329 incomparable dont il doit savoir se servir. En effet, un bon traducteur doit savoir manier les outils d'aide à la
330 traduction.

331 Comme leur nom l'indique, ils aident le traducteur dans l'exécution de son projet, mais c'est le traducteur qui
332 effectue le travail de traduction.

333 Ces outils sont plutôt des mémoires de traduction qui stockent les traductions déjà faites et les mettent à la
334 disposition du traducteur chaque fois que celui-ci en fait la demande. L'intérêt est qu'il y a une harmonisation de
335 la terminologie pour le client et que le traducteur passe moins de temps sur un projet qui présente des similarités
336 avec un projet précédent.

337 C'est là toute la différence entre un traducteur formé et un traducteur non formé : savoir utiliser ces outils à bon
338 escient. C'est pourquoi toutes les formations modernes dans ce domaine prévoient des modules sur l'utilisation
339 des outils d'aide à la traduction These are various academic and professional opinions on the use of translation
340 technology in this digital era.

341 On this same issue, Victoria Nicol, the founder of My Language Connection Ltd (MLC), explains that
342 previously, machine translation systems used software to first translate, and a human translator works on the
343 result and manually fixes all the errors. However, the current conversation about Machine Translation is centered
344 on adopting a hybrid solution, where both human translators and software work simultaneously on translation
345 projects to produce excellent translations. This is essentially the future of Machine translation postediting
346 (MTPE) services. In 2020, Statistical Machine Translation (SMT) alone contributed to more than 65% of the
347 overall global translation market revenue. Concerning business usage of machine translation, CSA Research in
348 2020 found that the percentage of projects for end-clients using machine translations climbed from 13% in 2019
349 to 24% in 2020.

350 Having said that, Nicol thinks that machine translation has a bad reputation for poor accuracy and lack of
351 localisation. Her answer to the following question: "Are businesses able to get the same quality from Machine
352 translation output as they would with a professional, human linguist?" is that Machine translation quality
353 remains flawed and significantly inferior to any professional human linguist. (My Language Connection, London
354 office, e-mail: london@ mylanguageconnection.com -London, England).

355 Translation technologies include not only the above-mentioned tools but also the world wide web.

356 ii. Web presence Translators need to be present on the world wide web because the world has become a global
357 village. What this means for translators is that they may live in Benin or Kenya and attract clients from any
358 country in the world. Indeed, some translators have blogs that enable them to market themselves and to work
359 from a distance. This is another area where African translators need to show a strong presence. Highly powered
360 and qualified translators need to get together to develop websites in order to attract work providers from overseas.
361 This is necessary because currently, the share of Africa in the international translation services market is nil.

362 iii. The impact of information technology Gouadec stresses that information technology is creating a rift
363 between those who can use it and those who are not. More specifically, some translators just use the basic
364 combination of 'word processor + translation memory + terminology management system + Internet', while
365 others go the extra mile to offer more elaborate services and process specific types of materials and media, by
366 using more sophisticated software systems (including subtitling applications, localisation applications, translation
367 project management systems). The latter make more money and are in a much better position to keep up with
368 the pace of technological advances.

369 Looking back at a more or less recent past when translators used pen and paper and later on computers to do
370 their work, it is obvious that the advent of the Internet, translation memories and Neural Machine Translation
371 has drastically enhanced productivity, accuracy, and translators' visibility.

372 Although the developments in translation technology have drastically enhanced productivity, Africa is lagging
373 behind in the distribution of the global language services market. The lesson that these figures teach us is
374 that Africa has currently no share in the global language services market. This is due to several reasons,
375 including the lack of major companies and the absence of African businesses in the process of globalisation.
376 The few institutions and companies that employ some translators and provide work to freelance translators
377 include government ministries, especially the ministries of Foreign Affairs, development projects, international
378 conferences, few regional and international banks.

379 More specifically in the West African region, the national, regional, and international institutions employing
380 translators include NGOs, ministries, development projects, UN agencies, EBID (bank), WAEMU, BCEAO
381 (bank), AfDB (bank), and quite recently the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), however, the
382 latter is a nascent organisation.

383 The implications of these social, economic, and professional realities are that African translators need to look
384 beyond national borders. Mobility on the employment front, networking, and an effective web presence should be
385 envisaged. The main question is: how do we get a share of the international translation market? Furthermore,
386 Nicol indicates that the translation industry is one of few global industries to experience continued growth despite
387 the harsh impact of the pandemic hitting in 2020 and continuing to cause disruption throughout 2021. According
388 to her, there is a growing demand for translation services industry in the following areas: website translations,
389 medical/ healthcare translations, e-commerce, finance, legal services, manufacturing industry, business, e-learning
390 programmes/online certifications, media, collaborations tools, software translation and localisation, marketing,
391 advertising, PR.

392 These are indications that translator trainers need to take into account and incorporate into translation
393 curricula.

394 Apart from curricular issues, work provider education should also be part of freelance translators' agenda.

395 **18 Educating the work provider**

396 Gouadec states that work providers need to be educated because some of them do not know how complex the
397 translation process is. They think that translation is just a matter of knowing languages; they feel it takes far
398 too long and is terribly expensive.

399 Indeed, work providers have many wrong assumptions about translation. One day, a work provider, a female
400 manager in a large company, said that if she knew that translation paid so well, she would have trained to become
401 a translator instead.

402 Below is a series of advice given to freelancers by Gouadec to educate work providers:

403 -Demonstrate that translation is, in fact, a complex process, by identifying and explaining the different stages,
404 -show, through an example, how any important translation requires no end of checking and counterchecking,
405 -explain how long each stage in the translation process takes, and why, -stop using word count as the basis for
406 estimates and invoices, and opt for a set rate or an hourly or daily rate (as in other standard business practices),
407 -refuse to lower rates, by arguing that basic costs and overheads cannot be reduced, -refuse to be underpaid for any
408 translation work, on any grounds whatsoever, -use a simple but useful battery of ordinary business instruments
409 (i.e. delivery forms, quality control forms, standard agreements, general conditions of sale, etc.) to show that
410 translation is just as serious as any other business. (op cit, p. 221) Work providers' education and professional
411 ethics should go hand in hand.

412 **19 Professional ethics**

413 Gouadec, the author of Translation as a Profession, proposes the following basic rules: Professional translators
414 shall: (1) never undertake any action or engage in any practice liable to throw the profession or professionals
415 into disrepute; (2) always show respect for other people and their opinions, especially when writing to mailing
416 lists and Web forums;

417 (3) always comply with the laws and regulations relating to tax and social security or other mandatory
418 contributions in force at the place of work; (4) always make available and use all resources needed to carry out
419 the agreed or contractual tasks in compliance with the required standards; (5) never knowingly cheat a client
420 (in particular, by concealing the fact that a source document is already available in translation); (6) always
421 resist any attempt to restrict their intellectual freedom and any pressures designed to make them knowingly
422 produce a deliberately distorted, or inaccurate, or misleading translation; (6) be prepared to admit full liability
423 for any deficiencies, errors or failings in the translation, unless such deficiencies, errors or failings be the result of
424 deficiencies, errors or failings in the source material, or of failure on the part of the work provider to carry out
425 his contractual or commonly accepted obligations or duties.

426 V.

427 **20 Conclusion**

428 This paper has attempted to discuss some of the challenges and opportunities facing the profession of translator
429 in Africa. It has noted among other things that challenges include the need to regulate the profession and to
430 strive to get a share of the global language services market. The new translation technologies are both a challenge
431 and an opportunity.

432 Translation brings people together, promotes international understanding, and disseminates knowledge.
433 Humanity has immensely benefited from the fruits of translation. However, in Africa, there are not many
434 recognised schools of translators.

435 African freelance translators need to work together to overcome the current challenges and those lying ahead.
This discussion needs to be carried on in forthcoming papers.



Source: <https://www.statista.com/statistics/190486/global-language-services-market-share-by-continent/>

Figure 1:

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