

# AN OVERVIEW OF KOREAN TRANSLATION STUDIES AND THE LATEST RESEARCH TRENDS IN THE ERA OF ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

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**Abstract.** This paper briefly explores and outlines the important features of Korean Translation Studies (TS) and looks at the recent trends in TS with the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution. It means Korean TS must undergo significant changes in the traditional role of the past focusing on essence of translation and TS itself. This paper pays attention to the changes in research topics of TS in recent years and present the following directions for future development: 1) Research on translation results should be planned from a linguistic point of view; 2) it is necessary to study the translation process in depth from the perspective of cognition; 3) research on translation technology should be expanded from the industrial and educational perspectives; 4) identity of translation subject should be studied from sociological point of view; and 5) the study of translation as human's native thinking activity should be expanded from the humanistic perspective. These proposals require the urgent implementation for the translation academia in the way of performance for the leading role and creation of a translation ecosystem in the 21st century where human and machine translation can coexist. And these are the mission of Korean TS at present, and which will apply in the world TS without any exception in the era of artificial intelligence (AI).

**Keywords:** translation studies (TS), Korea, the 4<sup>th</sup> Industrial Revolution, artificial intelligence (AI), machine translation (MT), post editing (PE).

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## I. Introduction

Translation, which is an act of translating one language's ideas and thoughts into those of another language, has been a long-lasting activity since human beings began to communicate with language and script. Translation Studies (TS) as an independent discipline, however, began to be acknowledged in Western Europe since the 1970s, and its history is still only half a century. In Korea, public interest in 'TS' as a discipline began to emerge before and after the publication of two seminal books of *Introduction to Translation Studies* (Um: 1993) and 『번역학』 *Translation Studies* (Kim: 1998). The history of TS as a field of study is very short, but Korean research on TS has been considerably developed for the

past 20 years. In response to this trend, several graduate school of professional interpretation and translation programs, which was focused on practical training for translators and interpreters, began to open doctorate courses for academic research. And the atmosphere led to provide translation-related courses and lectures in the undergraduate courses of various universities as well as academic interest in TS has been expanding and new scholars began to emerge. In addition, the related academic societies formed, and regular discussions and broad exchanges of TS have been spreading through the numerous academic conferences including international ones.

Considering the brilliant performance of TS, the role of the societies cannot be overlooked. The prominent five TS-related (including interpretation) academic associates – ITRI (Interpreting and Translation Research Institute; established in 1997); KATS (The Korean Association of Translation Studies; 1999); KSITS (Korean Society of Interpretation and Translation Studies; 1999); CLTRI (Children's Literature and Translation Research Institute; 2001); KAITEU (The Korean Association of Interpretation and Translation Education; 2003) – provide venues for diverse academic exchanges and play pivotal roles in the contributing to a strong research climate of Korean TS. These associates regularly publish academic journals since their birth, all of which maintain their own status as a KCI (the Korea Citation Index) journal recognized by the Korea Research Foundation (KRF) as of October 24, 2018. The scholars who carry out practically academic activities (including thesis submission), including key executives, are interrelated with each other and build a structure of mutual growth. The number of translation and interpretation papers published has reached 2,099 (as of October 24, 2018) and has contributed to the spread of the research results to the scholar's of home and abroad, as well as to the strengthening of the status of Korean TS in the world stage. This achievement is tremendous, considering that TS has a short history and a new discipline. This paper outlines the important features of Korean TS, looks at the recent trends in TS with the advent of the Fourth Industrial Revolution, and proposes some ideas for the future direction of Korean TS for the consolidation of translation ecosystem in the era of coexistence of human and machine translation (MT).

## **II. Korean Translation Studies**

### **2.1 Major Academic Organizations and Journals**

It was in late 1990s that the recognition of TS in academic and graduate curriculum, and necessity of the relevant academic societies and publication of journals in Korea were established. In the field of TS (including interpreting), five types of journals are regularly published by five academic institutions as described below and the number of articles published is 2,099 as of October 24, 2018. And they play major roles in establishing academic directions and discourse of TS through regular academic conferences (usually twice a year on average) held by the institutes. They have also held several international conferences and have hosted prominent foreign scholars such as Mona Baker, Ernest August Gutt, Edwin

Gentzler, and Jeremy Munday, and others, and contributed to sharing the research ideas of Korean TS with international society and to extending global network.

Table 1

Major TS-related Journal and Academic Associations of Korea

Name of Journal	Academic Association	Number of Article	IF
	Year of Birth		
The Journal of Interpretation and Translation Education	KAITEU	298	0.34
	2003		
The Journal of Translation Studies	KATS	652	0.85
	1999		
Journal of interpretation & Translation Institute	ITRI	431	0.57
	1997		
Interpretation and Translation	KSITS	387	0.99
	1999		
Children's Literature and Translation <sup>1</sup>	CLTRI	331	0.35
	2001		

The wave of scholarly gigantic change has become more and more powerful in recent years with the advent of the 4th Industrial Revolution. In order to actively respond to various issues, the associations and scholars hold conferences and find solutions focusing on computer-aided Translation, translation technology and MT, not being satisfied with the accomplishments of the past. And they also preemptively create new translation ecosystem suited in the environment of the paradigm shift in translation and TS.

## 2.2 Korea and World Research Trend of TS

The academic framework of TS has been firmly established and mainly composed of translation history, subject, object and strategy, education, criticism, quality evaluation, cultural translation, policy, curriculum, corpus, localization, and the likes – theory and practice oriented one. However, the paradigm of Korean TS has changed drastically with the emergence of keywords related to the Fourth Industrial Revolution. Klaus Schwab, chairman of the World Economic Forum, said that the megatrend of the Fourth Industrial Revolution era has rapidly spread to the world with a catalyst for AI, keywords such as big data, deep learning, AR (augmented reality), and Internet of Things (IOT) at Annual General Meeting of the Davos Forum in January 2016. We already know the fact well and the Korean translation society is also experiencing a period of great change without exceptions. This is because the

<sup>1</sup> The writer suggests that the journal has been excluded from much of the important discussion in the present paper since the direction of scholarship began to be gradually shifted from the early 'translation' center to 'child literature', and since KCI's classification standard also applies to humanities > children's literature.

construction of big data based on AI that will serve as a driving force of the 4th industrial revolution can be embedded in multilingual natural language processing and application technology, and therefore mechanisms of 'translation' and 'interpretation' are important in the AI era and that we should be willing to accept it (Chun 2017: 236). This attitude is reflected on the fact that the translation academy, which is aimed at the study of practicality, has been holding academic conferences and special lectures on a variety of topics such as AI, natural language processing and has established the climate and ecosystem (Chun 2017: 238–240).

Considering previous researches related to Korean translation technology or MT, we can think that they cope with the change very sensitively. They focus mainly on qualitative evaluation of translation results, natural language processing, and technology trend analysis. Especially, in order to examine the trend of the research after the conversion of the MT system embedded the artificial neural network based on the statistics, query for the keyword 'machine translation' (since 2016) in KCI as of October 24, 2018 shows the publication list of 9 concerning MT result evaluation; 4 post-editing experience; 2 post-editing (PE) education; 4 MT technology; 5 natural language processing; 1 cognitive research; 1 industry trend; and 1 user satisfaction. This is not such a humble achievement considering the first stage of AI.

This trend is being made in the same context as international TS. Overseas translation scholars have also started to devote research on MT and translation technology in the last few years. For example, translation-specific publishers including John Benjamins, Routledge, Springer, have published compilations such as *Translation in Transition* (2017) and *Reembedding Translation Process Research* (2016); *The Human Factor in Machine Translation* (2018); *Mapping Memory in Translation* (2016), *The Future of Translation Technology: Towards a World without Babel* (2016), and so on. Since last year, some professional journals have published or been in progress special issues related to MT (e.g. Special Issue of *Machine Translation Journal* on 'Human Factors in Neural Machine Translation'). And the productivity of MT and PE, and the cognitive and social effects of post-editing are major topics. Productivity research of MT and PE is mainly focused on work process analysis. Productivity is analyzed in terms of translation speed, pause, and worker satisfaction, and results are analyzed at the level of error count and consistency. There are also many studies that approach PE in terms of revision ability to reflect the cognitive and social effects of MT in translation education. In addition, the effects of translation technologies and tools on the translation process, presentation of various collaborative models, and research on user, translator, and reviewer's perception are not difficult.

In fact, the subjects of TS that can be combined with AI and MT are very diverse such as 'linguistic qualities', 'natural language processing', 'language technology trend', 'educational use' and so on. And apart from the understanding of language and its transformation at the center of AI technology development, it is necessary to recognize the fact that TS is the divergent disciplines excluded from the development of MT mechanisms and seeks the possibility of natural language

processing and translation language resources. This is because the understanding of translation is not only a core knowledge that can be used in the development of related technology but also a mechanism to look into the rapidly changing society and human's own thinking and identity due to science and technology. Therefore, as the field of academic exchange for TS is expanded, experts from diverse fields can analyze the phenomenon surrounding technology and translation, solve various problems, discuss technological, linguistic and social development directions for strengthening a translation ecosystem available.

### **2.3 Direction of Korean TS Ecosystem in the 21st Century**

According to CSA Research, the size of the language services market has doubled between 2009 and 2017. And the machine translation market, estimated by the CMR (Crystal Market Research), is expected to grow at a CAGR (Compound Annual Growth Rate) of 19.4 per cent between 2012 and 2022 to about \$14.8 trillion. In the 21st century, where physical constraints have disappeared due to the development of technology, there is an exponential increase in the translation demand for information exchange between local and cultural sectors in proportion to massive exchanges of goods, services, and information. In this situation, the global translation industry and related academics are faced with the need to actively cope with the increasing demand for translation and deal with various problems of translation that are derived from MT.

Academic circles need to keep the balance between theory and practice, but still need to consolidate the theoretical foundation for the performance of essential purpose of research activities including the sharing of knowledge, practical and educational applications. From this point of view, translation academics should share the academic knowledge required for AI development, provide a basis for practical application, and make efforts to cultivate professional manpower with knowledge in the field. In addition, it is necessary to discuss the impact of technological development on human identity by exploring the nature of translation and the professional identity of a translator.

In a sense, more and more roles and foresight are urgently needed in the academic world to lead the related theories and actively participate in technological development. Therefore, the writer suggests the following ideas for the direction of Korean translation society in the era of the paradigm shift: First, research on translation results should be planned from a linguistic point of view. Unlike statistical MT, neural machine translation (NMT) does not require learning about language and translation rules. And some claims that machine translation is pure engineering are never true. The neural network of MT algorithm we know today is a very complicated one, like the black box of the translator, which implements the human knowledge processing (Quality is determined regardless of whether the language rules are being studied or not). In addition, AI algorithms require huge amounts of corpus data and computing power (server capability) to produce machine-translated results comparable to humans, which is not easy considering the current computer performance and budget scale. Therefore, constructing parallel corpus as strategic

learning data that can be realistically constructed and constructing various language resources is pointed as the core of MT development. In addition, due to the expansion of AI services, voice and visual recognition technologies are attracting attention. Knowledge data necessary for learning is primarily written in 'text' form. Therefore, translation academics should be more interested in translating between the symbols of experience knowledge expressed in language and approach MT.

Second, it is necessary to study the translation process in depth from the perspective of cognition. AI is a brain science that implements knowledge processing by mathematical algorithms. Therefore, serious research is needed on how humans acquire knowledge, how to store it, and how to process and transform knowledge. From a strict viewpoint (concentrating on language processing occurring in the human unconscious mind), psycholinguistics is interested in vocabulary and syntactic processing. On the other hand, cognitive translation is an area of discipline that is interested in processing and conversion processes by expanding the unit of analysis to the level of sentence, text, and pragmatics. Currently, there are processing algorithms for MT, but we cannot see how the machine actually learns and processes the language. Therefore, the method of improving the quality by reversing the linguistic characteristic revealed in the MT result is taken. In order to see how human and machine are similar or different, there is a need for an in-depth understanding of the human translation process. In addition, in order to understand the linguistic characteristics inherent in the MT result and improve it to a more natural form of speech, it is urgent to study the cognitive translation that can reveal the difference between the machine and the human. Therefore, Korean translation academy should explore the cognitive domain directly or indirectly related to MT.

Third, research on translation technology should be expanded from the industrial and educational perspectives. Recently, Word2Vec-based NMT has become more practicable as it produces more natural results than rules and statistics. So far, the quality of MT, however, has not reached the quality of human translation. In order to improve its usability, so-called 'PE' processes are being spread, in which human translator is actively required to involve. Traditional translation technologies have developed around electronic dictionaries, translation memories (TM), termbases, and data sharing and processing platforms. As MT is included here, the integrated translation service based on the web / cloud becomes possible, and the demand for post editing for the MT result is also increasing rapidly. In the present situation where the boundary between human and machine is collapsing, human intervention in the work process and correcting the result of MT presupposes that the machine translation result can affect the language use of future generations. International quality standards ISO 18587: 2017 also state that only professionals who have a degree in translation (or linguistics) or who are accredited by the National Association of Certified Translators and Interpreters are required to perform PE work. However, there is no special lecture in this field currently available at Korean universities, which means academies has not been able to keep up with the demand of the industry. Therefore,

it is necessary to provide a place for industrial and educational sharing of research and research results on MT post-editing.

Fourth, identity of translation subject should be studied from sociological point of view. Machine development paradoxically raised interest in human thinking processes and identity building. As technology has developed, access to translation has expanded and a platform for sharing translation results has been created that transcends time and space, and translation practices that have been performed by some experts have begun to change. As the subject of translation varies from fan to machine, philosophical and humanistic concerns about the essence of the act of translation are also being concentrated since the provision of paid content related to culture and education through multi-language is based on free crowd-sourcing translation and fan translation, and since MT is based on web contents created by many people. And ethical discussions about who the copyrights belong to are beginning to be centered on the translation community. If experts from various disciplines gather to discuss social phenomena related to translation, a new paradigm of AI will be laid to lay the foundation for human society.

Fifth, the study of translation as human 'snative thinking activity should be expanded from the humanistic perspective. According to ancient philosophers, the translation of human thought into language is a kind of translation. For example, Roman Jakobson has included a range of thoughts ranging from intralingual translation to interlingual translation, and even inter-semiotic translation (Jakobson 1959/2004: 139). From this point of view, it is necessary to be interested in 'translation' as a human thought activity which is freed from technology rather than technology itself. Because such attention can make human beings in the first place. Therefore, it should be accompanied by the ideological research that has been continuously interested in TS, such as the history of various translations from ancient times, translation practices as intercultural transfer, literary translation, translation philosophy, and creative translation.

### **III. Conclusion**

So far, the writer has briefly reviewed the major academic and research journals related to TS in Korea, and research trends and future directions related to the era of paradigm shift in the area. In the implementation of artificial NMT, the human translator is ranked higher than the occupation rank to disappear. But the actual language service provider and the artificial intelligence worker have the opposite view. They argue that there may be a change in the way translation works, but the demand for translation itself will not diminish. In fact, MT has not reached a level that can completely replace human translation, and new services using AI have increased dramatically, and the demand for translation has been steadily increasing. In addition, the need and scope of human intervention to produce 'readable' MT results is increasing. The contradictory claim over translation is that the paradigm of translation is changing drastically. In the era of AI, the importance of translation, which is located at the center of smooth communication with overcome of the language barriers, will be further increased. But contrary to our wish,

TS will face the harsh reality excluded from the technical development process centered on technology and engineering. The higher the realistic barriers, the stronger the leading role of translation academia and the more essential to the creation of a translation ecosystem in the 21st century where human translation (HT) and MT can coexist.

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## ОБЗОР ИССЛЕДОВАНИЙ КОРЕЙСКИХ ПЕРЕВОДОВ И ПОСЛЕДНИХ ИССЛЕДОВАТЕЛЬСКИХ ТЕНДЕНЦИЙ В ЭПОХУ ИСКУССТВЕННОГО ИНТЕЛЛЕКТА

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**Аннотация.** В данной статье кратко излагаются важные особенности исследований корейского перевода и рассматриваются последние тенденции в исследованиях перевода с началом 4-ой промышленной революции. Это означает, что корейские исследования перевода должны претерпеть значительные изменения, сосредоточив внимание на сущности перевода и самих исследованиях перевода. В данном документе обращается внимание на изменения в тематике исследований корейского перевода за последние годы и представлены следующие направления для будущего развития: 1) исследования результатов перевода должны планироваться с лингвистической точки зрения; 2) необходимо глубоко изучить процесс перевода с точки зрения познания; 3) исследования по технологии перевода должны быть расширены с точки зрения промышленности и образования; 4) идентичность предмета перевода должна изучаться с социологической точки зрения; 5) изучение перевода как родной мыслительной деятельности человека должно быть расширено с гуманистической точки зрения. Данные предложения требуют срочной реализации для академических институтов перевода, что создает эффективность для ведущей роли и создания экосистемы перевода в XXI веке, где человеческий и машинный перевод могут сосуществовать. И в настоящее время это является миссией изучения корейского перевода, которая будет применяться в мире исследований перевода без каких-либо исключений в эпоху искусственного интеллекта.

**Ключевые слова:** исследования перевода, Корея, 4-ая промышленная революция, искусственный интеллект, машинный перевод, пост-редактирование.

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