

Abstract 21

Reliability of Google translate in English to Sinhalese Translation

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Translations, throughout the past, have been done by the human translators; but today, along with the technology, keeping a step ahead, the human translators are being replaced by machine translators. Systran's translation programme, and the Papago app from Naver, Google translate are some of the machine translators which the world community use frequently. Among the machine translators, Google translate has become popular throughout the world due to the convenience in its accessibility and its capability to provide translations in almost all the languages, which exist on Earth. It is unarguable that the machine translators are much faster than the human translators. However, the problem arises, as to how far a machine translator translates accurately, without harming the meaning of the original text. Most of the time, the Google Translate could translate simple sentences, but when it comes to subtle expressions, idioms the Human Translators perform better. Thus, this research in particular, attempts to find out how far one can depend on the translations provided by the Google Translate when translating from English to Sinhalese. Necessary data has been collected through translating simple sentences, idioms, proverbs, sentences that contain subtle expressions of emotions and few complex sentences that cover both technical translations and literal translations from English to Sinhalese, using the Google Translate. Meanwhile, the same sentences, phrases and the words too have been translated again manually and the both translations were compared. In addition, a questionnaire was given in order to find out the how far the Google Translate users get a proper translation through it. Unlike the human translators, the Google translate mostly provides the direct translations instead of an accurate translation, which sometimes does not provide any sense. By analysing the data collected, it is evident that 75% of the translations obtained via the Google Translate could not give the exact idea embedded in the original text. In addition, majority has found it difficult to get a proper translation via Google Translate when translating from English to Sinhalese. Thus, though a machine translator always perform its task quicker than the Human Translator, there should be a human touch for almost every translation in order to obtain an accurate translation.

Key words: Translation, Human Translator, Google Translator, Reliability, Accuracy