

# **A Study on how Trainee Translators Tackle the Comma (,) in English Language, when Performing their Translations**

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## **Abstract**

The 'Comma' can be considered as a significant character, as it is the mostly used as well as the misused punctuation mark in written language, when forming meaningful sentences. When compared to other languages, the comma plays a major role in English language. In particular, it is used to denote multiple functions in English grammar. Among those functions, comma is often used to separate phrases and clauses to convey the most accurate meaning. Accordingly, the momentary confusions arise to the trainee translators due to the comma can be identified as the research problem. This present study is to investigate how they tackle the comma in the process of translation. A qualitative method was employed to gather data. In fact, a questionnaire of 25 complex English sentences in which commas are highly used were given to 20 trainee translators in University of Kelaniya, to translate them into Sinhalese. After analysing the data gathered, it was found that a majority of them have mingled the phrases and clauses, and ambiguity has occurred at some instances due to the lack of their comprehension skill. Accordingly, it can be identified that majority of them have encountered various difficulties due to the comma. In order to avoid such difficulties, a simple process can be followed. Firstly, the sentence should be self-comprehend by loud reading, as it helps to clear the complicated areas in the sentence. Then the phrases and clauses should be separately identified and translated. Finally, those phrases and clauses should be re-joined together by paying attention on the comma in particular, in order to make well-formed sentences. In conclusion, understanding the aforementioned function of the comma can be assumed as a key skill that a trainee translator should enhanced in order to avoid errors occurred in the respective translations.

**Key words:** Ambiguity, Comma, Comprehension, Punctuation marks, Trainee Translators

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