

## THE NEED FOR A NEW TRANSLATION CULTURE: AN ANALYSIS OF SOCIAL MEDIA TRANSLATIONS IN SRI LANKA

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Translation, the process of converting words or text from one language into another, can be considered an intimate act of reading. Today, the effortless accessibility of technology allows for rapid and easy translations. However, this has led to deviations from the literal and metaphorical meanings of the original text, resulting in an inevitable shift from ‘straightforward’ translation to broader, sometimes distorted, and inaccurate adaptations. This qualitative study aims to investigate the gaps and problems in short, direct, and inverse translations on Sri Lankan social media platforms. It proposes recommendations for fostering a new translation culture. A sample of public Facebook posts, advertisements, and notices symptomatic of distortion, inaccuracy, and lack of accountability has been selected for analysis. These examples have been examined through theoretical lenses, including those of scholars such as Gayatri Spivak and Susan Bassnett. The analysis reveals that many translations are crude, rigorously distorting the original meaning. In terms of language and idiom, a sense of technicality and flippancy undermines the central idea. This is particularly evident in how idioms, metaphors, and expressions that convey the essence of the original language are translated. Moreover, clear signs of the use of Google Translate and other online translation tools were observed. The study concludes that direct and inverse translations are currently seen as a quick, easy way to communicate on platforms like social media, with little regard for accountability to the original text. Therefore, there is an urgent need for a new translation culture: one that prioritizes intimacy, accuracy, and accountability and that engages deeply with the challenges posed by linguistic and cultural differences, going beyond the established norms of ‘successful translations.’

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