



COVID 19: A STUDY ON THE ROLE OF A TRANSLATOR

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Abstract

The world, including Sri Lanka, has been combating an invisible yet an invincible enemy: The Novel Coronavirus or the COVID-19. Besides the virus itself, every nation is forced to overcome the challenge of proliferation of misinformation and hoax news. Although Sri Lanka has achieved a higher rate of success in curbing the virus compared to that of the most other developed countries, the country is still struggling with streamlining the information flow. In such a context, the present study focuses on the role of the translator at times of a national crisis, as translation aids in conquering communication barriers. The data were garnered by means of a qualitative approach which predominantly comprised of a Focus Group Discussion with ten final year undergraduates reading for Translation Studies degree in University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Furthermore, a content analysis of the internet articles relevant to the study was conducted to augment the outcomes of the study. The group session was coordinated in an attempt to understand the perspectives of the undergraduates regarding the distribution of misinformation in social media and other much preferred platforms. The existing practices to curb the spread of fraud news and the extent of contribution a translator could facilitate to supply authentic information to the general public in their mother tongue were also considered during the session. The content analysis of the discussion suggested of the swift spread of misinformation, the gaps and lapses of the available systems and the magnitude of service a translator could provide with translation of daily news highlights, new updates as well as the medical findings. Publishing and circulating reliable information on social media and other popular platforms in tri languages with affable access could impede misinformation outflow and trepidation, indicated the outcomes of the study.

Keywords: COVID-19, Hoax news, Misinformation, Sri Lanka, Translation