
Sustainability in Humanities by Empowerment of Interdisciplinary Scope in Academia: Focusing on Translation Studies

Young Hee Won
Handong University, South Korea

1. Translator, Translation, and Translation Studies in Future Humanities

Translation is one of the most ancient disciplines in Humanities. Translation Studies in modern academia, however, emerged as one of the youngest disciplines only about forty years ago “at once international and interdisciplinary.” (Venuti, *Translation Studies: Reader*, 2004) Translators and their images have always been problematic. As other disciple, many ‘wannabe’ translators or interpreters, at the beginning, do their tasks under master’s guidance, become journeymen, and then only a few would become masters. Every scholar in various disciplines, at first, explore the collective field and assess those masters’ tasks, outputs, and the process under specific conditions or constraints in order to construct and to theorize them into one specific discipline. Human translation will be continued on whether AI took some part and role in the process, and Translation Studies(TS) is ringing the golden bell every year as one of the new born studies, especially in Korea,[KRF gives us 95 points out of 100 this year again] which concerns much with human communication and now starts studying human and machine talk.

According to Caminade and Pym’s 1997 research, over 250 academic sites are offering a variety of certificates and degrees, undergraduate and graduate, training not only professional translators, but also scholar-teachers of translation. (Caminade and Pym 1995; Harris 1997) And probably the number has been doubled or tripled by now. For it is regarded a newly emerging discipline, we still have to face a sort of prejudice in Academia in Korea like other countries. University administrators including faculties tend to regard Translation and Translation Studies as a minor discipline in Humanities, comparing to so-called “pure” or traditionally major disciplines, for example, Literature, Language, History, and Philosophy, and so on. In early 1971, one great poet, Octavio Paz(1914~1998) says every text is the translation.

“Every text is unique and, at the same time, it is the translation of another text. No text is entirely original because language itself, in its essence, is already a translation.” (1971:9)
And I, as a translator, published 17 translated books, appreciate with this poet’s recognition. As

a professor, teaching translation at the university for almost twenty years, I would like to express my deep respect to all the translators throughout times and places, who have faithfully devoted themselves to their tasks without having much proper acknowledgment including my students, presently many of them are undergoing their journeyship all around the global. Indeed, the status of translator is much problematic as I mentioned above. Without their sacrificial efforts, all global villages might have lost opportunities of her communication with the other beyond the lingual and cultural borders or limits. Many say Humanities faces crisis of its downfall. In most part I do not agree with it, but it is still true in some aspect for our narrowness and prejudice. If Humanities in the disciplinary sites continues to insist her boundary only on the traditional subjects while excluding all kinds of newly emerging disciplines from her bosom, and not want to exchange the ideas, it truly will meet its endangerment sooner. We desperately need interdisciplinary efforts wherever subject field we belong to.

In this presentation, I would share the idea Translation Studies, as one of the newly emerged discipline during last several decades, could develop the discourse/dialogue to gather sustainability in Humanities by interdisciplinary efforts in Academia. Firstly, I am going to diachronically look into translators' role in past and present in order to mirror their future images since this Forum is focusing on human image in Future world possibly living with robots at home and at jobs.

Secondly, I am sharing my aspect of translation in academia as a passage for exchanging various cultures and then would like to predict what contribution TS will give to Humanities, while checking on their positions in the Era of Robotic World. My conclusion will be a summing-up of these aspects and more importantly it will be a celebration remarks for the International Translation Day, which UN declared last year.

2. Images of Translators in Different Times and Places

2.1. In the Beginning

Human image has been shaped in millions of ways with languages starting from the scribbling art eon ago from the prehistoric ages. We could trace back the oldest human images through literary pieces, for example, four among the greatest translations in the world literary history might show the oldest human images and translators as well. In the Bible God created humans to be like himself, that is, in the image of God Himself, while in Greek and Roman mythology gods and goddesses were created by human in the image of human. Even prior to these two western archetypal images, there had been a Sumerian epic which was first written on the tablet in 2100 BC.: *The Epic of Gilgamesh*. Gilgamesh, young and strong, rejects the old goddess Ishtar, teasing “What could I offer the queen of love in return, who lacks nothing at all? / Balm for the body? /The food and drink of the gods? /I have nothing to give to her who lacks nothing at all.....” We, you and I, who might not know the Sumerian language, have just met Young Gilgamesh through an epic written between 2150~1400 BCE and through the serving hands of translators, from Sumerian into

English, possibly the oldest literary piece up until now, even had influenced on Homeros' epic. The speaker here is King of Uruk, the powerful man who has all the skills and wisdom which human can hold. In an instant you love to read this epic more because you understand and comprehend the translated words, English, not even know the original language, the Sumerian.

Ever since the oldest epic was transmitted to the listener, prior to the written form in which the human images were made up in letters. We know the father of Eastern classical literature, Confucius (551~479BC), a Chinese teacher and philosopher:

Chinese	“子曰, 德不孤 必有隣”
Transliterating into Korean	“자왈 덕불고 필유린”
Translating into Korean	“공자가 말씀하길, 덕이 있는 사람은 외롭지 않으며 반드시 이웃이 있다.”
Translating into English	“Master says, a virtuous person is never alone but surely has neighbor.”

His philosophy was able to be transmitted and spread by translators all over the world. These four literatures, the Hebrew Bible, Greek Homeros, Sumerian Gilgamesh, and Chinese Confucius, whether they had been written either on the papyrus, sheepskins, tablets, or a paper, you never know their existence without translators. But sadly you do not pay attention to those unknown translators but only to the author.

In Korea, the first whole HanGeul, Korean alphabet, translation from foreign literary text, is a Christian Bible published in 1911, that is, *Korean Bible*, in Korean, *SungGyungJeonSuh: GooYeok*, and translators are Pastor John Ross, a Scottish, and several Korean translators including Suh, SangYun. Ross met Mr. Suh, a Korean business man, in Manchuria. Mr. Suh got an abdominal colicky pain there and had no medicine. Someone—there is always someone—took him to Pastor Ross, who had been looking for any Koreans who could help him translating the Bible into Korean. And there both translators met the right person. And he might be the first reformed Christian in Korea around the year of 1887. It is really happy to have those translators name. And now this translated Bible into Korean has over 25 million Korean readers.

Looking into further diachronic facts, we must refer to George Steiner, who divides the literature on the history of translation into four periods at the chapter 4 “The Claims of Theory” in his *After the Babel.*: the first, from Cicero and Horace up to the publication of Alexander Fraser Tytler's *Essay on the Principles of Translation* in 1791; the second period, up to the Larbaud's *Sous L'invocation de Saint Jerome* in 1946; the third, from the first papers on the machine translation in the 1940s and is characterized by the introduction of structural linguistics and communication theory into the study of translation through and it lasts for thirty years; and then the fourth period had been slightly overlapped with the third in 1960s, and is characterized by a ‘reversion to hermeneutic, almost metaphysical inquiries into translation and interpretation.(Steiner, 1975/1998,

248-311) I have recited it from the summarization of Susan Bassenett's *Translation Studies*, a famous introductory book on the TS, first published in 1980, and in Korea, it was introduced to Korean academia by a respectful teacher on the literary translation, and a remarkable essayist, late professor Chang, YoungHee of Sogang University. Steiner's division is very much famous and especially he includes, in the third and fourth periods, the hermeneutic approach in translation. This is famous division, but Susan Bassenett complains it is too difficult of studying diachronically which the first period covers almost 1700 years while his last two periods are only thirty years each. And I agree in some degree. (40)

It is, however, marvelous that Professor Steiner had already included the MT(machine translation) in one of his division of the period, 1940s, and his division could lead on screening translators' status in each period more fairly. There have always existed translators in every time and every place. In the earlier period the more scholarly masters did their tasks either as their national demands or their religious desire. The translator's status was naturally higher than common people. They executed, that is, carried out their tasks under many constraints but mostly they had their patriarch spirit for their country in order to improve their mother tongue, that is, their own national language.

There have been hundreds of, thousands of dispute concerning translation in history, but here I would like to introduce one more example in the west, then move on to the east for sharing translator's status.

First, Eusebius Sophronius Hieronimus(390-405 BC), one of the most famous translators in Roman empire, who has been known as Saint Jerome in English, a priest, a translator of the *Vulgate*, the well-known and authorized Latin version of the Holy Bible. He was, however, embroiled in controversy in his translation when he was in the process of retranslating the "Hebrew truth" directly into Latin. The *Vulgate* gradually displaced the Old Latin and eventually became the official Christian version. (Referring from the Kathleen Davis' "Translator's notes," in the Lawrence Venuti's *The TR Reader*, p.30) In the "Letter to Pammachius," a Roman senator, who abandoned his political career to become a monk, Hieronimus wrote about the accusations as the translator Davis wrote as follows:

... Jerome is writing to him about the accusations made by a former friend, Rufinus, with whom he was involved in a dispute concerning the Origenistic heresy. Bishop Epiphanius of Salamis had written a letter to Bishop John of Jerusalem, charging him with preaching the heresy. After Jerome's Latin translation of this letter was published, his enemies, including Rufinus, accused him of inserting deliberate falsifications for the purpose of disparaging John.(30)

In the letter, Hieronimus even stated his accusers were all actors: "All this is not the fault of my accusers, who are like actors playing roles in a tragedy."(29)

Next example is more tragic. He is also a great scholar and an intelligent painter, and a printer of Lyons and certainly a translator of the Bible into French: Étienne Dolet (1509–46). He wrote treatises on French grammar, poems, a short history of Francis I, and works in Latin about Cicero. He even influenced on the French Renaissance through his issuing *Commentarii linguae Latinae* in 1538. In 1540 Dolet published a short outline of translation principles, entitled *La manier de bien traduire d'une langue en autre* (How to Translate Well from one Language into Another) and instruct five principles for the translator (Bassenett, 54):

- (1) The translator must fully understand the sense and meaning of the original author, although he is at liberty to clarify obscurities.
- (2) The translator should have a perfect knowledge of both SL and TL.
- (3) The translator should avoid word-for-word renderings
- (4) The translator should use forms of speech in common use.
- (5) The translator should choose and order words appropriately to produce the correct tone.

These instructions are still proper and pretty much modern in translating. Despite of all his contribution as the writer and the printer, and as the translator of the Bible and of the Greek philosophy, he encountered trouble with the authorities, was arrested, convicted of heresy, strangled and burned with his books. He was sadly executed in the Place Maubert. But now they commemorate him as one great scholar and a translator.



It is true, there is the politics in translation and in any field in human industries as Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak writes:

Democracy changes into the law of force in the case of translation from the Third World and women even more because of their peculiar relationship to whatever you call the public/private divide. A nearly reversible argument would be possible if the particular Third World country had cornered the Industrial Revolution first and embarked on

monopoly imperialist territorial capitalism as one of its consequences, and thus been able to impose a language as international norm. (378)

Professor Spivak continues “If you want to make the translated text accessible, try doing it for the person who wrote it.”(379) It is so meaningful that she does not say “try translating it for the person who read it,” but “who wrote it.” And she emphasizes “the task of the translator is to surrender herself to the linguistic rhetoricity of the original text. It sounds really political. Unless you know another language, at least one, you never have a chance to learn other or others in profundity. You never translate other lingual folks in the global village if not know their language and culture to the depth or the level of translating.

2.2. In Korea

In Korea, translator’s social status remained in the middle class up until the early twentieth century, in 1900s when the western languages entered into. They worked or served as royal subjects in the middle classes of society. And their diplomatic authority wholly depended upon the political situation, that is, they always risked their own life. Their power still became stronger because they could stand right by the highest noble persons including Royal Highness or Emperor’s family, like Mr. Hong Ryuk Kim in Korea, in fact, Chosun, Yi-Dynasty. He is a famous translator who could speak Russian well in 1920s as Charles Alévêque’s photo shows. Later after he made of great money, he was executed. Certainly there was kind-of political reasons behind his death.



http://www.culturecontent.com/contentdata/thumbnailView.do?big_img_path=/UploadFiles/ThumbNail/cp0710/460/&big_img_name=cp0710b20131_001_460.jpg&title=%EC%BB%A4%ED%94%BC%C2%A002_%EA%B9%80%ED%99%8D%EB%A5%99%EC%95%8C%EB%A0%88%EB%B2%A0%ED%81%AC%EC%82%AC%EC%A7%84%EC%97%BD%EC%84%9C

Nearer towards the new millennium, the year of 2000s, Translation Studies is getting more prosperous in Korean Academia. The first doctoral dissertation on Translation Studies, written by Korean scholar in South Korea was published in the spring of 2002, about sixteen years ago, at the

Department of English Language and Literature of SungKyunKwan University in Seoul. The title is “On Translating the English Bible into Korean.” The first Korean Ph.D. holder on Translation Studies is still teaching at the university. [Handong University] She wrote the purpose of the study is “to search for answers to the question: What is a good translation?”(197) Here the translation means only the case of translating English text into Korean. There is one important reason why she chose the English Bible for the original text to be analyzed in various levels: assessing translation quality, and studying over principles, constraints and rules in the process of the Bible translation, the text itself is the most famous among readers. That is, the first translation from the western language into Korean is the Bible. The first complete translation of the Korean Bible is GooYeok (*Korean Bible*, 1911), which means the Oldest Version. It was translated into only vernacular Korean, what it means, translators used only HanGeul, Korean spelling and her alphabet, not using in combination with Chinese letters which had been a common way of writing in the twentieth century Korea—Chosun Dynasty, forcefully annexed by Japan in early 1900s, for 37 years. The first translators from the western language, English, into Korean are John Ross(1842~1915), Scottish Presbyterian Pastor and several Koreans. They completed their translation task at DongKwan Church in ShimYang, China between 1880 through 1911.(*Recent photo of DongKwan Church in ShimYang in PPT)

Since then, 107 years later, now we have several academic association where hundreds of scholars and translators actively research and share information of Translation Studies, while publishing Academic Journals which had been well acknowledged by Korea Research Foundation for a decade or longer in terms both of their quality and of frequency. No mention about the Korean Bible Society, one of the leading group of printing Bible in many languages. And as the President of Korea Association of Translation Studies (KATS), founded in 1999, remark tells, TS grows faster than ever with many scholars’ contribution.

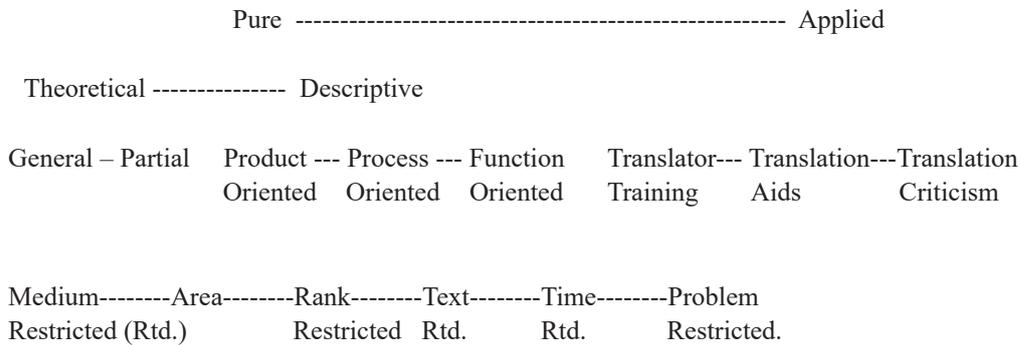
... Now the KATS has grown as one of the top-class academic circles in terms of both quality and quantity in just fifteen years. ... On October 17-18, 2014, we co-hosted an international conference in collaboration with ERITS (Ewha Research Institute for Translation Studies) of Ewha Womans University, one of the leading institutions of higher education in Korea. We invited world-renowned scholars to the conference: Daniel Gile from France, Douglas Robinson from Hong Kong, and Minhua Liu from the U.S.

Many scholars from all over global lands were welcomed by Korean translators and shared various discourses to improve translating and interpreting theory and practice.

2.3. In Academia

James Holms draws the map of TS in his *The Name and Nature of Translation Studies* (1988, 66-80)

Translation Studies



(James Holmes' map of translation studies)

Then, Google presented computer translation program, not machine, but in the system of artificial intelligence, while Papago in Korea started its service. Both are fine in short and insignificant file. It is still very much dangerous to trust. Mike Schuster, a researcher of Translation Machine in Google, confessed that

No matter how advanced the AI technology is, it may not be able to completely replace human translation. Language is more than just a tool. Human conversation is not just transmitting text in communication. It is not easy for AI to learn the meaning of language, human gestures used during communication, and cultural differences.

<http://m.biz.chosun.com/svc/article.html?contid=2017122901772#csidx0779197c1145541a00eacf243c64046>

(* Papago translated these sentences from the article and I revised it.)

This statement I found in the web-news in Korean, and I used it for trial. Unsatisfactory! Still it is helpful in some way as D. Arnold and I. Balkan predicted in their *Machine Translation: An Introductory Guide*, in 1994:

Machine Translation can take over some of the boring, repetitive translation jobs and slow human translation to concentrate on more interesting tasks, where their specialist skills are really needed.(11)

Then what is the reality in academia and institution of teaching translation? While KATS becomes the KRF recognized academic journal in a very short period, students, who had been instructed and practiced on campus still hard to find a good position as a translator. Most of translation teaching institutions belong to the “Special Graduate School” which does not involved in the regular structure of the curriculum. It opens probably for financial profit to the institution because students enter into for degree and the skill. They, these special graduate schools, are not

many though. In many cases, university opens one or two translation courses in other majors, not in an independent translation studies major. It has been freeloading at other relevant departments, for example, in the department of literature, linguistics, comparative literature, or sometimes, cultural studies.

3. Reliability in Translator

Above all translation itself is very interdisciplinary. A translator may manage her tasks whatever subjects the original text focuses on. That is, she needs to change one text into foreign one, or vice versa, whatever the core discussion of the original text is, either in a written way or in oral. This paper focuses more on translation, a written style, than on interpretation, an oral one. And we call it Source Language Text(SLT), into the other, Target Language Text(TLT). And here is another condition. The SLT is English, and the TLT is Korean at this presentation. For her responsibility is translation, she must translate SLT into TLT *properly* whatever the contents of the original document is presenting.: natural science, computer engineering, medical research results, legal papers, business contracts, news, thesis, research papers or a literary piece or even a commercial advertisement which she “abhors” personally. She needs to change one language text into another as long as she accepted the offer. In this way translation has served as the role of bridge between not only east and west but also ancient and modern culturally and politically, and certainly a diachronic bridge between past and now and future. It helped construct the modern grammar for each language and extend the usage of words and make freshly coined words and spread to the public. Image of translator past both in Korea and in the world were extraordinary and very much distinctive for s/he is the first person who could experience foreign cultures for s/he knows two languages: source language (SL) and target language (TL).

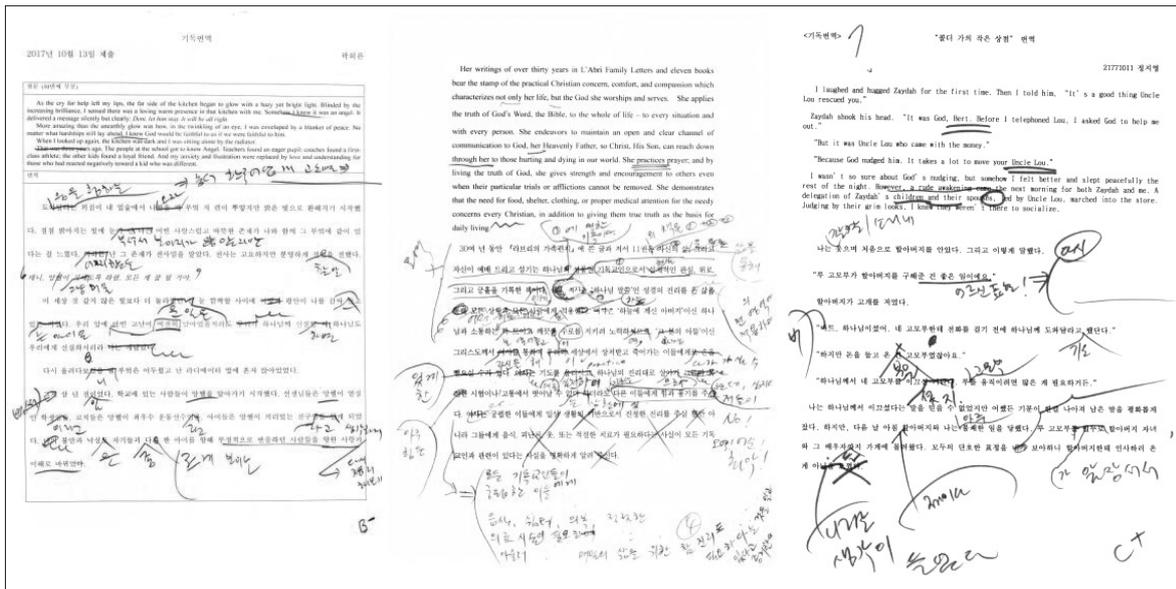
But it is still true that her position as a translator is very weak and fragile under prejudicial social and academic system. Many of my students work as freelancer translator, while seeking permanent position. For the sustainability in one part of Humanities, I am now asking sincerely to the Government which provides with all kinds of certificate, please construct one more system for professional translators in order to test them and to issue them a government authorized certificate like lawyer, Patent Attorney, CPA..... And please hire translators as professional government officers and you will be able to avoid fatal mistakes and errors in translating very important papers or contracts or agreements like FTA.

Douglas Robinson instructs translators in his *Becoming a Translator* (1997) as following demands:

The translator will stay up all night doing a rush job, cancel a pleasant evening outing with a friend, or translate a text reliably that s/he finds morally or politically loathsome. Professional pride in reliability is the main reason we will spend hours hunting down

a single term. What is our pay for that time? Virtually nothing. But it feels enormously important to get just the right word.(29)

“Virtually nothing!” It is necessary under the condition of fair payment for their labor. I taught this way, as many professors in Humanities echoes to their students: material is secondary. Sorry, but I had to follow this norm while I am checking their draft translation to improve their professional spirit as reliable translators:



A translator must know at least two languages. My professor, late Peter Newmark once said at the classroom he taught in London, “A translator is the most intelligent person for she must know more than two languages and cultures.” And I agree with. It is necessary that they need to learn closely two languages, Source Language (SL) and Target Language (TL), and simultaneously two cultures, too, to become the most intelligent professionals.

4. Celebration of UN Recognition of Translation

We have many mirrors to see our Future. And we have over seven times two(7x2) billions of windows for next generations, among which some possibly will show green pastures on the moon. As long as my vision is considerably rational enough that I could consider every human eye is a window which opens towards the world of creative thinking. These windows are given neither just from AI analyses, nor from experimental results at all kinds of science labs only. They would come from our mind, Human mind where a creative, complex, dynamic, mystical, soundless but energetic soul resides which nourishes human aspiration for tomorrow. And most of all we, all human beings, do have various languages and more marvelously millions of literature: fictions, poems, prosaic essays, theatrical dramas, and rhetoric, symbol, irony, and image. And all of these elements are

tasks for translation to revive it life in foreign lands.

Last year the United Nation General Assembly declared the 30th of September as International Translation Day. It was happened in the seventy-first session after they adopted Resolution as the agenda item 125, Multilingualism. They welcome the holding of the annual Saint Jerome Translation Contest to commemorate International Translation Day, and are also happy to have the Secretary-General with the network of universities that signed for language competitive examinations and language services. And the very last month many related events were held around UN in New York and in Geneva, and they decided next year 2019 will be celebrated as the Year of International Indigenous Language. It was one emotional moment as a Humanity major, as a Linguist, as a Translator, and above all as a Human. It also acknowledges the role of multilingualism in the activities of the United Nations and its projection to the world, as a core value of the Organization, and its pursuit as a means of promoting, protecting and preserving diversity of languages and cultures globally.

Then the resolution notes professional translation, including translation proper, **interpretation and terminology**, is indispensable to preserving clarity, a positive climate and productiveness in international public discourse and interpersonal communication, while recalls again the paramount importance of the equality of the six official languages of the United Nations. Eventually it affirms that the professional translation plays an important role, bringing nations together, facilitating dialogue, understanding and cooperation, contributing to development and strengthening world peace and security. Then, UNGA decides to declare 30 September International Translation Day and invites all to observe International Translation Day, in an appropriate manner and in accordance with national priorities, in order to raise awareness of the importance of professional translation, and stresses that the cost of such activities should be met from voluntary contributions. (*Please refer to the following site for more information in detail. <https://undocs.org/A/71/L.68>) Two weeks later, on the 24th of May, 2017, UNGA approved agenda 71/L.68 as the resolution 71/288 at their 82nd plenary meeting. (<http://www.undocs.org/a/res/71/288>)

The first International Translation Day had been celebrated between 26 September and 4 October at the several venues around UN ECA, ESCWA, UNHQ, UN House, and even online on DGACM's social media channels and so on. (*Programs are found in the site "ITD 2018-Program as below: [http://www.un.org/en/events/translationday/assets/pdf/ITD%202018-%20Global%20calendar%20of%20events%20\(as%20of%2026%20Sept.\).pdf](http://www.un.org/en/events/translationday/assets/pdf/ITD%202018-%20Global%20calendar%20of%20events%20(as%20of%2026%20Sept.).pdf)) The declaration of the International Translation Day is one of the most recent and meaningful victories in the Humanities along with the Year of World Indigenous Language.

5. Conclusion:

UN declared next year 2019, the year of Indigenous Language, warning us now we have 7000 languages from lingua franca to tiny indigenous languages, and soon half of them will face to

be distinct. If we are living in the era of losing variety, small, mysterious images of human but insisting on bigger collective image, Humanities is in crisis. According to Jacque Derrida... there is no culture like Korean one, Indonesian One, but youngee won's culture, Derrida's one, Mr. Cho's culture, Tyler's or WangHui's culture. Today we live in the world of diversity in diversity, not diversity in unity. Everybody is looking for their own way, and the Future demand them they need to be their own, and free to be different. Socratic era is probably coming again as our future. If you want to Be, Know thyself. So Human Image is changing everyday and every moment is coming. Difference is more familiar. That is Creative. Similarity is just boring. Do not copy. Understanding this trend you have to learn how to translate and how to interpret others in intimacy. We say translating is the closest reading the source text among readings, that it is the attempt to know others in the most intimate way/level.

Translators will make up all kinds of Human Images for Future in translation, so she again will hunt down a single term to translate before being disappeared half of **7,000** languages from lingua franca to tiny indigenous tongue. Sustainability in Humanities is important, but how to continue to be sustainable is more urgent. Translation Studies will open windows to give fresh winds to Humanities as the cooperative interdisciplinary paradigm in Academia.