

Bridging the language gap

New Sugar AI smartphone can push the translation industry further, making life a lot easier for diplomats, professionals

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Diplomats and translators are bridges that help the world better understand China, while the rise of artificial intelligence (AI) in the translation industry will help diplomats and complement the work of translators, according to Chen Mingming, vice-chairman of the Translators Association of China.

Chen made the statement in Beijing on Nov 17 at an event presented by Sugar AI translation smartphones titled China's 40 Years of Reform and Opening-Up: Salute to Translation Masters Worldwide — A Night of Diplomats and Translators.

AI's development will have a bright future and push the entire translation industry further, Chen told *China Daily*, adding that while AI translation will complement human translators it will also create competition.

"I think that AI translation will replace some basic translation jobs, so the total number of people in the industry may decrease, but AI will not replace humans in the high-end translating functions," Chen said.

Competition in the industry is actually a good thing, he added, as AI can do the low-level tedious work while translators move up to high-end positions.

AI will complement humans by providing basic translations, so that professionals use it to provide high-level, more sophisticated work, said Chen.

He said that against the backdrop of China's 40th anniversary



Sugar AI translation smartphones hosted the event titled China's 40 Years of Reform and Opening-Up: Salute to Translation Masters Worldwide — A Night of Diplomats and Translators, in Beijing on Nov 17. PROVIDED TO CHINA DAILY ASIA WEEKLY

of reform and opening-up as well as the Belt and Road Initiative, the demand for translation has never been greater.

"From what I know from the industry, starting from 2017, the demand to translate Chinese documents to English versions has surpassed the demand of translating English to Chinese, which indicates that more of us are going global, and it certainly requires a higher level of translation work," Chen said.

Antonis Toumazis, Cyprus' ambassador to China, said he is very excited about the progress of AI, particularly in the field of translation, but he stressed that it is very important

the human factor remains.

He added that the translation industry is crucial in cultural integration between countries, as one person cannot learn every language in the world.

"Translators as well as AI translation devices — they eliminate the barrier of language ... When you have official meetings it's good to have a good translator to avoid misunderstandings," said Toumazis.

Miguel Angel Ramirez Ramos, ambassador extraordinary and plenipotentiary of Cuba, said he believes it will take a long time for AI translation devices to substitute a human translator, as a professional

can factor in the scenes, scenarios and real-time emotions.

However, an AI translation handset like the Sugar Smartphone can make a big impact, he said, as it is a smartphone combined with a translation device. The ambassador added that the Sugar AI translation smartphone could be very helpful to him when he goes to the market, for example.

Leonidas Rokanas, ambassador of Greece to China, said that the progress AI has made in recent years, not just in translation, has been astounding.

"A lot has been done, but I don't think that AI can completely or will

completely replace another human person, as humans can express feelings of compassion. How can a machine ever learn to do that?"

Echoing the ambassadors, Joseph R. Luc Morin, second secretary of the Mauritius embassy in Beijing, said that while translation is important, it must be carried out in a proper way.

He has used the Sugar Smartphone in various conversations and found that at least 95 percent of its translations were accurate.

"(The Sugar Smartphone) is very helpful. I have been in China for several years. I tried to learn Chinese, but it is very difficult. This smart device really helped."

Sugar targets outbound Chinese travelers

Smartphone uses AI-based translation function, enables travelers to communicate with ease

By SOPHIE HE

The new Sugar smartphone — the world's first smartphone with an artificial intelligence-based translation capability — taps into the vast market of China's outbound tourists. Its formidable built-in translation function aims to give Chinese tourists the ability to go wherever they want without facing any language barrier.

Sugar, a newly emerged smartphone brand, launched its S20 model in July. Touted as the world's first ever "translation smartphone", the new device offers translation functions that claim to combine the features of translation devices and

translation apps already available on the market.

The original idea of designing the smartphone with AI-based translation features fits perfectly in with China's 40 years of reform and opening-up as well as the country's Belt and Road Initiative, which promotes openness, communication and encourages Chinese people to go out and see the world, Sugar's CEO Chen Jin told *China Daily* on the sidelines of an event in Beijing on Nov 17 titled China's 40 Years of Reform and Opening-Up: Salute to Translation Masters Worldwide — A Night of Diplomats and Translators.

"We want to make a smartphone for global consumers so that when

they get together, they can all communicate with each other without any language barrier," Chen said, adding that the new device is capable of providing word-to-word translation in 104 languages and voice-to-voice interpretation of more than 40 languages.

SUGAR makes travel easy with features including 6.18 inches FHD screen, 60-mega-pixel rear camera, 16-mega-pixel front camera and AI Beauty mode, and AI Voice Assistant which provides useful information such as area codes, emergency numbers, and flight information. It is not just a state-of-the-art smartphone but an outstanding AI translation device.

As powerful as it is, Chen believes the Sugar smartphone or any other AI-based translation device will not replace human translators, at least not within a short period of time.

Chen said that there are many scenarios which require human translations — like when people who travel abroad have to go to a hospital or even a police station — which is why the Sugar smartphone comes with a 24-hour real-time personal interpretation service on demand.

He said that smartphones with built-in AI translation functions will be a major trend, adding that it will replace all AI-based translation devices. In his view, as people now rely heavily on their smartphones,

it will be very convenient for consumers to just carry a mobile phone around instead of multiple devices.

Chen said that currently Sugar Smartphone enjoys a competitive advantage as the first mover in the industry. But the company will not rest on its laurels and, in order to maintain its competitiveness, it will continue to invest in research and development and AI technology, he added.

"Every year, around 140 million Chinese people travel overseas, and they are our potential customers. We will cultivate this target market, work together with tourism bureaus and continue to enhance the influence of our brand," Chen said.