

Translation and Interpretation: Effective Tools for Enhancing National Development in a Multilingual Context

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ABSTRACT

No country can exist without a language either indigenous or foreign. Besides being a major form of identify, language gives expression to the culture and capabilities of its people. It is an important avenue for the full expression of a people's essence and potentials, which are the necessary raw materials for national development. Again, it is through language that the basic need of human interaction at both individual and collective levels is satisfied. Multilingualism constitutes a hindrance to economic, political and sci-tech exchange of ideas. The biblical tower of Babel evokes the inability of members of the same community to refer to the same objects and notions with the same words. In a multilingual context like ours therefore, it is natural that we use and understand many languages and in consequence be able to express ourselves in the reference language to be able to make meaningful development. This predominantly terminological problem constituted an impediment to man's technological advancement symbolized by the babelian tower. Man has come to term that no one is an island and this implies that people have been compelled by nature to interact on a regular basis with one another. Such human interactions are not limited to people with the same linguistic backgrounds and where two people that do not understand each other's language meet something has to be done for such an interaction to be fruitful since they must. This calls for translation and interpretation that would give every citizen a sense of belonging and worth. This will foster peaceful co-existence and peace means more development. This paper presents Translation and Interpretation as effective tools for enhancing national development in a multilingual context.

Keywords:

INTRODUCTION

Translation and interpretation bring about mutual understanding and co-operation. They are distribution agents of culture, be it economic, political, religious, linguistic, material or otherwise. But for the translation into several languages, the message in the bible would not have gone round the world the way it did. Also, but for the translation of the literatures of African and other third world countries, many European and American countries would not have known much about them. Translation and interpretation are kinds of

mobilization strategies to reach the grassroots in a multilingual setting. Mobilization strategy is one sure strategy for national development. This is because the people will help promote patriotism and infuse in them a sense of responsibility. They will feel closely associated with the process of policy formulation, and people will closely identify themselves with the development objectives. They will develop a greater respect for these nation-building targets because they reflect their own will and aspirations.

[1] posits:

"The concept of mobilization describes more or less a socio-political process of harnessing all available human and natural resources of the nation towards the achievement of a clearly defined and social and economic objective or set of objectives. It is a strategy of development".

Again, for mobilization strategy to work, translation and interpretation must play a leading role in bringing government down to the people for greater development. This is because translation and interpretation are forms of social inclusion which will bring about peaceful co-existence and understanding that solve the problems of communication and peace means more development.

A language less society would really be a meaningless and undeveloped society devoid of meaningful existence, a society of disorder, anarchy, hopelessness, helplessness and so on. Such a society will simply be an animal society. Indeed language is one of the major things that distinguish human beings from the lower animals. According to [2], "language distinguishes human beings from the rest of the animal world. A

human being is thought of as a thinking animal because of language". Language is an important means of human communication, a social tool which man uses for very many purposes including development. Language is a vehicle for social change, social mobilization, social reconstruction and national development. Language is the identity of a people. Thus language provides an important medium for understanding of the people. Language permeates every aspect of life and harmony and disharmony in life derives from proper use or misuse of language. That is why language matters above every other thing. Language is the basis of all communications, local or national in the chain of international communication and as [3] says:

"Human language is a daily consumption which has pattern: rules and regulations. It is a phenomenon to the survival of any race without which no man on earth would be in existence and even would not be accepted in any community of the world. In addition; language has been acknowledged world wide as a means of communication".

It is through language that the basic need of human interaction at both individual and collective levels is satisfied. The role of translation and interpretation in ensuring wider-reaching communication among the

various language communities has therefore been recognized. This study attempts to highlight the great importance of translation and interpretation in our ever changing world.

THE CONCEPT OF TRANSLATION AND INTERPRETING

Translation and interpretation are sister professions that people may confuse as one. The two have been erroneously used inter-changeably as

one. Though they share a lot in common, they have fundamental differences and require different aptitudes and competence.

Again, lack of understanding of the nature of challenges in translation and interpretation has made many to erroneously think that translation is an all-comer's affair. It is quite misleading to think that what is required in the act of translation and interpretation is just the ability to read, write and speak in the working languages. On the contrary, it is not everybody that is endowed with high degree of critical intelligence and psychological awareness required for the process of decoding, encoding and transferring a message from a particular source to a target language. Before a person can be a translator or interpreter, he must be experienced in the art of translating/interpreting (language switch). Until this ability to switch ideas freely from one language to another is acquired, the translator

Translation has been defined in various ways by different translators, linguists and language experts.

[5] defines it as "the replacement of textual materials in one language (SL) by equivalent material in another language (TL)".

[6] says "translation is an exercise which consists in the attempt to replace a written message in one language by that same message in another language.

[7], said "translation consists in producing in the receptor's language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message".

According to [8], translation implies: "the rendering of a source language (SL) text to a target language (TL) text so as to ensure that:

- a) the surface meaning of the two will be approximately similar and,
- b) the structure of the SL will be preserved as closely as possible, but not so closely that the TL will be seriously distorted.

[9] quoted George Mounin, a French translation theoretician as having said

cannot function effectively. [4] sees a translation practitioner as "one who has the necessary skills through his training and experience and in fact makes a living in translating". Continuing, [4] quoting Nida says that "translators should know both the source and the receptor (target) language, should be familiar with the subject matter and should have some facility in the receptor language."

From what we have been saying, one can understand that translation and interpretation can be said to be twin professions or activities. By this, one presupposes that they have some elements in common and like un-identical twins, they also have some areas of differences. At this point we consider it pertinent to look at some definitions of translation and interpretation.

TRANSLATION

that "translation involves the passage from one cultural world into another". In his own contribution, Ajunwa defined it as "the rendering in writing of a source language text into the target language, with a view to preserving as much as possible, the source message and style".

[10], translates Darbelnet's french rendition of translation as: "it can be said that translation is an operation which consists in transferring from one language to another all elements of meaning of a passage and only these elements, while ensuring that they retain in the target language their relative importance as well as their relative tonality, and also taking into account the relative difference presented by the culture to which the source language and the target language correspond respectively".

All the above definitions seem to point at two main things:

- a) That translation implies that there has to be the contact of two or more languages in the same person (that gives rise to bilingualism) and,

b) That it usually has to do with a written text.

Again, it is also the general view that in translation, efforts should be made not to tamper with the sense of the

original text. So, simply put one can safely say that translation is the rendering of meaning from the source language to the target language.

IMPORTANCE OF TRANSLATION

[11], in describing the importance of translation says: "translation performs a wide range of useful functions .To start with, it cuts across cultural and linguistic barriers, thereby bringing about, mutual understanding and international cooperation among peoples of the world. Continuing, he highlights the importance of translation as follows:

1. Translation has become a significant instrument for the spreading of materials, linguistic, political, economic, religious and other forms of culture.
2. In a multilingual nation state such as Nigeria or Senegal, translation has come to acquire another role-functioning as an instrument of political consciousness and national unity.
3. Translation has resulted in and continues to bring about the

semantic syntactic enrichment of many languages through the process of loaning and naturalization.

4. It is the instrument for the transmission of great thinking as it was through translation that the ideological, philosophical, economic and political thinking of great minds such as Plato, Aristotle, Voltaire and Montesquieu were made accessible to different peoples of the world today.
5. It is the instrument for the dissemination of scientific and technological information.
6. Pedagogically speaking, translation plays a vital role especially in the teaching of foreign languages [12].

From the above, one can see that translation has a very vital role to play in our world and as [13] Says:

"bridge between cultures.....without translation our world would narrow mercilessly. Like air and sunlight and good growing earth in the natural world, translation is our necessity in the creative world".

THEORIES OF TRANSLATION

Translation practice involves the *appropriate* application of the translation theories for one to produce semantically and syntactically jointed expressions. [14] suggests four stages in practice. These include:

- a. Assimilation - involves the thorough reading and comprehension of the entire text. The aim of this is for the translator to understand the shades of meaning as well as the construction of the text.
- b. Conversion - conversion of the source language text into the target

language and involves the thematic and stylistic analysis of the whole text.

c. Drafting - drafting and conversion go together. They take place simultaneously because drafting involves the initial writing down of the entire source language text in the target language.

d. Checking - this is the final stage and involves three stages that must be thoroughly carried out. The first stage is objective re-reading. This is the comparison of the translation with the

original text, with a view to assessing its degree of closeness to the source text in terms of the message and style. The second stage is the critical re-reading which involves a careful examination with a view to removing all the grammatical errors. The final stage is the re-reading stage which is not done by the translator himself but by a reviser who must be a skilled translator. His job is mainly to proof-read the translation in order to correct and improve on it. In translation practice, a translator should be able to apply the methods or principles of translation appropriately and he should also be able to tackle the

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problem of equivalence. [15] makes a statement about equivalence when he writes, "the central problem of translation practice is that of finding target language equivalents". In translation practice therefore, the translator always aims at producing the exact meaning of the source text in the target language hence the focus is on the message. The importance of translating meaningfully from the source language to the target language is made obvious in the words of Confucius as cited by [16]. According to him, translating in a good language is important and:

"If language is not correct, then what is said is not what is meant, if what is said is not what is meant, then what ought to be done remains undone, morals and acts deteriorate; if morals and acts deteriorate, justice will go astray ;if justice goes astray, the people will go about in helpless confusion. Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said. This matters above everything".

The need for study of techniques of translation is so high then because it has long been established that people who are bilingual do make bad translators or interpreters because such bilinguals or polyglots find themselves unable to perform because among other reasons; they do not possess the technical know-how or the methodological know-how necessary to function effectively on the job.

The earliest translators and interpreters did not have methodological know-how and produced fairly good translations because the texts were not technical texts or specialized texts like sciences, engineering, medicine, etc or economy- taxation, stock exchange, banking, etc. or on legal matters-international agreements, contract agreements, etc.

Today, the need to acquire some methodology skills has arisen as translation has gone beyond the ordinary day-to-day activities to

include texts like novels, plays and poems and technical texts like scientific texts, texts in the area of environment studies like geographical texts, texts on architecture, texts on urban and regional planning, texts in the area of economy like texts on banking and finance etc.

The translation of a text has principles guiding it. One does not translate haphazardly to avoid coming up with a semantically and syntactically disjointed translation. [17] mentioned two techniques of translation: direct and indirect translation. There are three types of direct translation; Literal, Loaning and Calque. The indirect or oblique technique includes: Transposition, Modulation, Equivalence and Adaptation.

Types of Translation

There are three main types of translation:

- 1) Intra-lingual translation: this involves rewording a text or interpretation of a verbal sign

- by means of a verbal sign in the same language. Intra-lingual translation does not involve two languages. Example -translating from Pidgin English into English language or vice versa.
- ii) Inter-lingual Translation: this is the translation of a verbal sign from one language to the other. This

INTERPRETING

Interpreting is a form of translation in the sense that it is, like translation, concerned with the transfer of information or message from one language into another. But the means of vehicling the message differs in the two. Seleskovitch (translated by [18]) sees interpreting this way, "interpreting is essentially the acquisition and the restoration of cognitive contexts". From this very brief and concise definition one can see that the nature of interpreting act differs in various ways from translation. The interpreter cannot and should not insist on rendering the message in the source language (SL) (the language of the orator) using the exact linguistic equivalents or correspondence in the target language. He cannot achieve this as effectively as he can do in translation because of time factor and because of the spontaneity in the interpreting operation. He should therefore detach himself from the linguistic structures (syntax, lexis, etc.) of the source language to focus on the sense or meaning of the message which is more easily grasped by the memory than the linguistic forms. The interpreter draws from the meaning or message retained in the memory to encode the message into the TL (Target Language) using the immediate available linguistic structures which may not be anything close to the linguistic structure used in the Source Language. A mental or cognitive image of what is being said therefore is what is needed. If we approach interpreting from the

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involves two languages. Example, translating from English language into French or Igbo language.

iii) Inter-semiotics (Transmutation): this involves the interpretation or translation of a verbal sign by means of a non verbal sign or vice versa. Example, English language (verbal sign) to Music code or Road sign or vice versa.

mode of its operation, we can define it as the oral transfer into a target language (TL) of an oral message in a source language (SL).

Types of interpreting

There are various forms of interpreting. But there are two major types of interpreting and few forms of interpreting. It is important to know them to be able to cope with the different forms.

Consecutive interpreting

Consecutive interpreting is a type of interpreting whereby the interpreter listens to the orator for an upwards of 15, 20, 30 minutes in a source language before rendering or interpreting the message into a target language. One may consider note taking or what is referred to as "prise de notes" in French because of difficulty in retaining in the memory the message contained in the orator's speech.

Simultaneous interpreting

This is the type of interpreting whereby the interpreter; unlike in consecutive interpreting starts to interpret the orator a few seconds the orator starts speaking. In simultaneous interpreting therefore, there is no time for note-taking.

Relay interpreting

This occurs when a translator who does not understand the language of the orator, depends on the rendition of another interpreter who understands the language of the orator to interpret into a different language altogether.

Orator speaking	Interpreter 1	Interpreter 2
In Spanish	Interprets into French from Spanish	Interprets from French to Russia

Relay interpreting should normally be in simultaneous in order to save time. Chuchotement (Whisper interpreting) This is a type of interpreting that is used in a gathering of a particular nature. In this gathering several speakers of a particular language (A) sit in with members of the audience who understand only language (B) and whisper to their hearing, in language (B), what an orator, speaker or presenter of a program is saying in language (A). Each interpreter may interpret for a group of ten or so. This type may entail a mixture of simultaneous and consecutive interpreting depending on what is being said in language (A) and how it is being said, whether slowly or rapidly. This method of interpreting is through whispering.

Escort Interpreting

This occurs when an interpreter has to move around with say the president of a nation and his foreign visitors who do not understand the official language of the president. An interpreter comes in to bring the gap by ensuring communication between them through interpreting and moves around with them as they visit places and people.

Sight interpreting

This is a form of interpreting that entails reading out an already translated text. This happens when the orator is reading out an address or a speech. The interpreter who has a translation of the speech reads out the translation as the orator reads out his address. The speech and translation are normally marked with bars or strokes to guide the orator and the

interpreter. The orator stops at each bar to give the interpreter the opportunity to read out the corresponding translation.

Areas where interpreting and translation are carried out:

- i). Courts (in Nigeria) - interpreting mainly
- ii). National and State Assemblies- interpreting mainly and translation of documents.
- iii). Churches - interpreting mainly and translation
- iv). Publishing Houses - translation
- v). International Conferences - interpreting mainly and translation
- vi). International Governmental Bodies - translation and interpreting
- vii). (OAU, NATO, OAS, ECOWAS, etc.)
- viii). Non - Governmental Bodies - translation mainly and interpreting
- ix). Electronic News Media Houses-translation and interpreting
- x). Print Media - translation
- x). International Places - interpreting mainly and translation (airports, immigration offices, embassies, etc)

Types of texts

1. Specialized texts:
 - a) Legal texts
 - b) Political texts
 - c) Economic texts
 - d) Sports texts
 - e) Scientific texts ex. Medical texts, space texts,

geographical texts, biological texts, physical texts, chemistry texts etc.

2. General Texts

- a) Print media texts
- b) Electronic media texts
- c) Texts for the general public (this cuts across various domains)

3. Literary Texts

- a) Poetry texts
- b) Prose texts
- c) Drama texts
- d) Scriptural texts

Defining National Development

[1] opines that national development, "Refers to the balanced, comprehensive and progressive growth of a nation in terms of desirable quantitative and qualitative indicators like life expectancy, representing long healthy life, educational attainment-representing knowledge, skills, values, e t c. GDP. (Gross Domestic Product) in purchasing power-representing decent standard of living".

The term national development is very fashionable in the so called developing nations, and all government claims to be working towards, some, as yet undefined ideal of national development. It would however be said that national development means progress, in the sense that a political entity (like a nation state) strive to improve the state or quality of human welfare by gradually moving towards a more optimum condition of living for its citizens. Development depends upon the successful interaction of the material resources of a given geographical area with the human resources available in the area. When development occurs, new materials and products are manufactured while new roles become possible for the individuals of that given area. Development is therefore dynamic in character, involving change or growth. Such a change may require the application of science and technology, research finding, innovative thinking, experimentation and a lot of intellectual efforts and technical know

Development is a concept usually associated with living entities. As a living entity, a nation naturally desires to grow and develop. Development in a nation's economic, political, social, technological and other sectors, all things being equal, would translate to high standard of living for its people. The people's potentials are better harnessed for further development, while such a nation would likely earn a place among respectable comity of nations.

how conceded by the human agents of change in the development process. Therefore, national development is resource demanding, in the sense that there can be no development output without resource input. The resource input to development as opined by [2] consists of;

- Natural resources; that is all non-human commodities (minerals, hydro-electric power, land, forest etc. that can be exploited and used in industries, etc.
- The human resource serving as 'manpower' or agent of change in that it is the manpower that initiates and under takes development project involving the exploitation of natural resource of the transformation of raw material into finished consumable products.

Continuing, Usman and Ossai notes that national development in a nutshell, can be viewed essentially as the nation's human resources acting on its natural resources to produce goods necessary to satisfy the

economic needs of the community. They opined that it is not sufficient to have both human and natural resources for development to take place. The quantity (numbers) and quality (level of education and training) of the human resources are crucial factors in the development since only well motivated and skilled manpower can effectively initiate and

effect action to satisfy the manpower development needs of the nation. Supporting this notion is the 1995 UNDP Human Development Report (1995:13), which states, "The real wealth of a nation is its people both woman and man. And human development is the process of enlarging people's choice not just income". [3] observe that national development;

"should focus on the people's growth in all aspects of a nation's life: its philosophies, its objectives, its educational goals should focus on the people. To achieve this in a multilingual and multicultural society, translation of foreign languages into Nigerian languages should be seen as a major agent of national development".

Thus, development involves the progressive expansion of the individual's ability to choose. This is why freedom is essential to viable and autonomous development.

3. Language, Translation and Development

Over the years men have tried to live harmoniously with other human beings but because of multiplicity of language in the country at times meaningful co-operation becomes impossible. And when people are not living a co-operative life, it becomes difficult for them to come together and plan for meaningful development. National development is not a sole property of an individual, but a group of individuals can converse to formulate strategies for the development of the nation. This formulated national development from a few individual is usually conveyed to the entire populace via linguistic resources. So language provides a tool for the conveyance of national development, In fact any country that wants to develop must work as one, plan things together and speaks with one voice. Perhaps, the biblical story in Genesis 11:1-9 illustrates in clear terms the role that language plays in national

development. The building of the tower went on smoothly because people spoke one language and thus understood each other. However, the anti-climax came when there was confusion in their language, thus leading to the breakdown in communication. The outcome was the abrupt stoppage of work on the monumental project. The message is clear. While people constitute the soul of development in any society or nation, language constitutes the soul of communication among people who execute sustainable development. Thus when people speak with one voice, development is often one of the surest benefits.

Again, translation helps in the promotion of the operations of multinational corporations in a country. This is because multinational corporations, also known as cross border or trans-national business organizations are characterized mainly by the dispersal of their managerial centers across political and linguistic frontiers. Their business transactions involve people with differing tongues, cultures and values. Yet their operation in any country has today become a key index of development of that country. In other

words, national development is enhanced by the healthy by the healthy operation of multinational corporations within a given country. This is achieved through effective and efficient communication through language usage since language is a vehicle of all thoughts and ideas.

Also, it is through the means of translation that the existence of great authors and philosophers and products of the different people of the world (technical, mechanical, medical, etc.) are made known world over by making them available in different languages through the effective means of translation to different societies where they would not have been known. This brings about development because one appreciates what one knows and understands what one has studied. If one could ask, how can one know to understand a culture that is not his and that is not felt in his environment? The possibility lies only in literary translation and interpretation. For example, it is through translation and interpretation that the African novels translated into European languages have showcased the folklore and the oral African tradition to the world. Without translation, the diversity of the human communities cannot be appreciated or understood.

The concept of multilingualism
Multilingualism is a concept that implies a situation where more than two languages are in use in a nation or where so many languages represent so many cultures. The consequence is that one of the languages or even a neutral one is often declared the official language. This phenomenon causes among others, ethnocentrism, marginalization, hatred and fear of domination. Those are not good for the desired level of development in any nation. So efforts should be made to achieve tolerance, linguistic equality and cultural understanding of the beliefs, norms, jokes and dislikes of each language group. Translation

and interpretation have been identified as solutions. These will expose facts, details, norms and images that will explain the world view of the various groups and also improve the interaction among the different language groups while fostering unity and diffusing some myths surrounding the groups. This will definitely bring more development since development can only thrive in a peaceful environment.
Multilingualism: The Nigerian situation
Nigeria has been described as a multilingual, multi-ethnic group wielded together for the benefit of colonial administration. Bamgbose posits that there are over 400 languages spoken in this country and not less than 250 ethnic groups make up the polity. Nigeria is therefore a nation with a conglomeration of cultural and linguistically differing groups. These differing groups have metamorphosed into ethnic groups due to the political unification by her colonizers. This unwholesome marriage of the different groups has led to each of the groups trying to either assert itself or to being marginalized. The quest for ethnic identity has resulted in politics being based on ethnic lines. It is not strange in Nigeria to classify the citizens as Igbo-Nigerian, Yoruba-Nigerian, etc as stated by [5]. "Nigerians now refer to themselves as an Igbo-Nigerian, Yoruba-Nigerian, Hausa-Nigerian, Edo-Nigerian, etc. This feels like ethnicity, one of the consequences of multilingualism in a nation. Because of the differences in culture and language, conflicts arise among the ethnic groups [6]. Those conflicts often degenerate into violent clashes that have claimed human lives and destroyed properties. This situation destabilizes the polity and thus hampers development. The damage ethnicity can do to the polity is astronomical. It can lead to ethnocentrism which is the tendency to look at the world primarily from the perspective of one's own culture, and

to downgrade all other groups outside one's own culture. It can also lead to nepotism which is the bestowal of patronage by reason of ascriptive relationship rather than merit. This can in turn lead to "brain drain", a situation where talented professionals who were denied the opportunity to show-case their talents and help in nation building and development will leave the country to seek employment elsewhere. This has happened and continues to happen.

Ethnicity has also led to a highly biased distribution of state resources. Those who feel marginalized; gather their kith and kin to protest against such marginalization. The protests sometimes become violent and involve destruction of property. Development cannot thrive under such conditions. This raises the issue of security. Many multi-national companies who were based in this country before have relocated because of insecurity. Foreign and local investors who would have helped to develop the economy of this nation are scared away. No sensible individual or group would invest in a country that is crisis-ridden and prone to violence, a country where security of life and property cannot be guaranteed.

The government of the federal republic of Nigeria realizing the importance of language in a multicultural setting decided to make a policy statement encouraging ethnic groups to study at least one other Nigerian language. This is expressed as part of the philosophy of Nigerian

Being that translation and interpreting play a very vital role in the world today because people of different nations cannot do without interacting with each other and knowing that meaningful development can only come when there is peace and understanding, and knowing also that

education in the" National policy on Education" Government also considers it to be an interest of national unity that each child should be encouraged to learn one of the three major languages other than his own mother-tongue. In this line of thought, the government considers the three major languages in Nigeria to be Hausa, Ibo and Yoruba. This declaration sounds good but does not actually solve the problem of multilingualism since it made some ethnic groups feel cheated and the fact that Nigeria has so many languages as [7] states "the number of languages in Nigeria cannot be arrived at with mathematical accuracy due to the multi-ethnic nature of the nation". This make it most difficult as [8] notes while commenting on the idea of deliberately subjecting language to policy making that this is only possible in a situation where there exists two or, at least three languages. Looking at the Nigerian situation, one can easily see that the situation is a bit impossible because all the language groups want to be relevant and therefore assert their importance and resist any effort to impose any other indigenous language on them. Therefore, in order to promote linguistic equality, tolerance and social interaction in a multicultural country like Nigeria, there is need for people to understand one another, and this calls for translation and interpretation to make way for the desired level and quality of development needed in the country.

CONCLUSION

translation and interpreting is the only way out, it is therefore hoped that both government and the training institutions should step up efforts to train more practitioners and making sure that they have the necessary equipment to serve the world better

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