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TRANSLATION AND LINGUISTICS: TOOLS IN ENGLISH AND HAUSA TRANSLATION

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Abstract

In this study, the paper attempts to highlight the basic tools of translation such as guides and stages. The guides include among others mastering of the subject matter, knowledge of the two languages, knowledge of the two cultures, use of dictionary etc., and the stages are; word level, phrasal level, and sentence level stage and the four branches of linguistics – phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics. Library research and special observation were employed as means of data collection. The improper translation process encouraged the writer to write on the topic. The paper adopted Nida E.A., (1975) theory of Componential Analysis. Finally, it is recommended that Mass Communication students should take their subsidiary course from languages and linguistics department; a workshop/symposium should be organized from time to time on translation; there is need for media house to have translation unit just as BBC has etc. It is anticipated that the paper will benefit readers with the basic perceptive knowledge of what translation and linguistics are.

Keywords: Benefit, Language, Linguistics, Translation, Process, Phonology

Introduction

Translation and linguistics are two different words and both mean quite different things. Linguistics is the scientific study of languages whereas, translation and linguistics are concerned with the importance of translation to linguistics. Knowing what phonology helps the translator in making a dynamic and systematic translation not only as a translator but also a bilingual in translating materials. The relationship between translation and linguistics is in terms of translating sounds, which are not relevant in another language. Secondly, the relationship between translation and morphology is that when there is a contact between two or more languages, borrowings and modifications are the two elements that occur, accompanied by deletion and insertion.

“Translation” to a nonprofessional is not more than to transfer meaning from one language to another, with no rules or factors to be considered. However, scholars and researchers have put into consideration some factors that guide the proper, effective and accepted translation process. Such factors as pointed out include linguistic, social, material, ecological and religious factors and less understanding of these factors may lead to poor translation process. For instance, let us consider the translation of the following expressions into Hausa.

- The students took to their hills.
- It rained cats and dogs.
- When pushed to the wall, he let the cat out of the bag.

The statement - *Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah lil da'awati wal jihad* was translated as Boko Haram. The meaning of the expression is not properly conveyed in the forgoing. How do we translate? It is noteworthy that in translation, equivalence may be close or natural as the function of the material is considered. For instance, words such as 'head warmer', 'foot rest', 'arm rest' etc in English are common in other languages too. The names of objects are derived from their functions. However, New mark, (1984) as cited in Yakasai, (2019, p. 139) pointed out that in translation the meaning of a word has to be studied generally (componential analysis) before translating it into another language.

In Hausa, the word *Boko* means 'western education' and *Haram* is an Arabic word came into Hausa via borrowing which means 'prohibited'. Although, Adamu, et-al (2020, p. 59) has this to say:

“The name 'Boko Haram' has its origin in media and public/community coinage. “Boko” in Hausa stands for Western education and “Haram” is a Hausa word taken from Arabic. It means something that is not acceptable in Islam; something forbidden or prohibited. Boko Haram therefore, may be interpreted as meaning that the western education is prohibited in Islam. Although the Islamic sect does not refer themselves as 'Boko Haram', the name was ascribed to them by the community and the media because of their constant usage of the words to express their dislike for western education and culture”

From the above statement, we shall be able to understand that the words 'Boko Haram' has its origin from the media and community because of constant usage of the words by the Islamic sect to show their abhorrence for western education and its culture. In this regard, the expression *Jama'atu Ahlus Sunnah Lidda'awati Wal jihad* may be translated as 'People who follow Prophet Muhammad (SAW) in line with earlier generation of Muslims' and in Hausa may be translated as “Qungiyar 'yan uwa masu jaddada sunna da jihadi”

Likewise, to translate 'The students took to their toes' from English to Hausa

without considering the linguistic and cultural factors may be 'Daliban sun dauki yatsun kafarsu' but, after considering the norms or ethics of translation may be 'Daliban sun ari na kare'. Ko 'Daliban sun gudu' Also, 'It rains cats and dogs' if to be translated into Hausa without any consideration would be 'An yi ruwan kyanwoyi da karnuka' But, after consideration of translation norms would be 'An yi ruwa kamar da bakin kwarya' And lastly, "When pushed to the wall, he let the cat out of the bag" Directly would be translated as 'Da aka tura shi zuwa bango, sai ya cire kyanwar daga cikin buhun' But, after considerations, is translated as 'Da aka matsa masa sai ya fasa qwai' ko 'Da aka matsa masa sai ya fadi gaskiya'

From the above instances, it is quite understandable that translation without rules may lead to poor translation process or ineffective communication. A translator must be bilingual and should know the domain/subject matter of his translation; in doing so, he should know the stages involved. However, scholars and researchers have contributed to defining the word 'translation'. A few among them include Yahaya, et. al (2001, p. 32), who views translation as "The transfer of what has been said written or verbal from one language to another" Whereas Sarbi, (2008:1) opines that "Translation means transferring the meaning of verbal or written expressions from one language to another". Similarly, Malumfashi and Yakasai, (2004), Jacob, (1981), Hornby, (1974) convey the same thought. However, Nida, (1969) viewed it as "The act of transferring meaning from the source language (SL) to the receptor language (RL)" Typically, translation has been used to transfer written or spoken source language text to equivalent written or spoken target language (Efetikhari, 2008). Additionally, Rufa'i, (1982, p. 3) says "Translation involves at least two languages"

Having seen the meaning of the concept 'translation' by scholars and researchers, we may say in one or two lines that translation is the act of transferring meaning or message from the source language to the receptor language. More importantly, for a translation to be more effective, the translator should be able to know the linguistic, social, religious and material factors of the source language and the receiving language as said earlier. The rationale behind giving more attention to translation guides and stages in this study is because of the importance attached to translation. What are the approaches of translation available for one to choose from in doing translation in addition to the theories involved is what this study seeks to answer.

Statement of the Problem

It is normal to the public/community and some media to translate written text or verbal message without knowing the implication of what they translated. For instance, the translation of expression 'Jama'atul Ahlus Sunnah lil da'awati wal jihad' as Boko Haram. This is what encouraged the researcher among others to write on the topic.

Purpose of the paper

The purpose of this paper is to highlight the basic tools of translation between English and Hausa.

Theoretical framework

In this study, the paper adopted *Nida E.A., (1975) Theory of Componential Analysis*.

Methodology

The paper employs special observation and library research as a means of data collection bearing in mind the importance of translation and linguistics.

Discussion

There are several factors and stages that guide proper translation practice. These factors are mastering of the two languages, knowledge of the subject matter, research and use of dictionary. The stages are: world level, phrasal level and sentence level stage.

(I) Mastering of the two languages: As a factor, translation becomes successful if the translator has the knowledge and understanding of the two languages, he is working on i.e. the source language and the receptor language. To master it, he should know the linguistic cultures of both languages in terms of phonological items such as ky, ky, gy, ts, sh, gw, kw etc, auditory, acoustic and articulation of Hausa sound and p, o, v, x, as in English, if the translation work involved Hausa and English. The morphological items include yarinya – yara as in Hausa and boy – boys as in English. Translation involves not only statements, texts, speeches but also figurative expressions. For instance, from Hausa to English.

S/N	Hausa	English
1.	ramatu ta share xaki	Ramatu swept the room
2.	salisu yana barci	Salisu is sleeping
3.	aisha ta tafi kasuwa	Aisha went to market
4.	adamu yana cin abinci	Adamu is eating food
5.	fatima tana dafa abinci	Fatima is cooking food etc.

From the examples, this suggests that translation takes place not only from Hausa to English but also to all languages of the world.

(ii) Mastering of the subject matter: Translation can be appropriate and sound if the translator is able to understand the subject matter or content of the text that is translated, be it literal or technical. However, David, (1992) added that “The translator not only needs to know the source language well, they must also have a thorough understanding of the field of knowledge conveyed by the source text” (p. 344). In every communication, lay-man believes in the meaning being conveyed (semantics). But scholars and researchers are concern not only the semantics but also the syntax, phonology and morphology of the communication.

(iii) Mastering of the cultures: All languages of the world have a culture and lack of understanding the culture of a language may lead to a poor or improper translation system. Nida, (1969, p. 17) suggested five cultures needed for a good translation. They are linguistic, materials, ecological, social and religious cultures. There is no way a translator will be successful in translating a text without the knowledge of the culture of the two languages being translated. Yahaya, et-al (2001, p. 33) added that “it is compulsory for a translator to master the culture of the people's language [that] he is translating. Culture goes with the people; any translation without mastering people's culture would be ineffective”. For example: “Tell to your father to come” – English

If the above statement is to be translated into Hausa without considering the culture of the people, the statement would be “Faxe wa ubanka ya zo” “Ubanka” here in Hausa is abusive. But after considering the culture of the people, the

statement should be “Faxa wa mahaifinka ya zo” Sarbi, (2008) has similar view and added that the connotation in English is positive, but to translate it in Hausa the connotation may be positive or negative depending on the situation. He gave an example as “Extend my regards to your father” (pp. 51-53). It is quite inappropriate to translate it in Hausa as “Ka gayar mani da ubanka”, “Ubanka” here as said earlier in Hausa is abusive. In view of the above, having the knowledge of the two cultures is supreme in translation.

(vi) Research: This is the fourth factor that earns good translation. It is more or less necessary for a translator to go into research in order to have good translation practice. For example, translation that involves religion, science, law and engineering among others. Some words in another language lack equivalence. Take, for example, the word 'radiation' in science which means quite different things in linguistics. In linguistics, it refers to the extension of meaning where a word has more than one sense. Finally, the use of the dictionary: Possession or use of second language teacher in translation is of paramount importance as it helps in finding the meaning of some lexical items. The dictionary should neither be monolingual, bilingual nor multilingual dictionary of the language he is translating. If translation engages two languages, i.e. English and Hausa, then Hausa dictionary (Kamus) is important and the translation becomes easy and successful.

Stages of Translation

There are various stages involved in translation. These stages are:

1. Word level stage: This involves borrowing from a language Hausa language has borrowed many words from Arabic, English, Fulfulde etc. However, different scholars and researchers have also contributed immensely on word borrowing by languages, among them include Rufa'i (1982), Bagari (1985), Yakasai (2012), Yahaya (1988), Abu- Manga (1981), Yalwa (1994), Munkaila (2012), Schurh (2003), Ahmed and Daura (1970) etc. In a nutshell, there is no dispute over borrowings by languages and any language which does not borrow from another is subject to disappearance. Most of the words borrowed are modified and adapted while some are adapted directly. Moreover, for a translation to be sound, the translator may borrow word if he thinks it would not distort meaning.
2. Phrasal level stage: This is the secondary level which sometimes has to be literal (direct). E.g. *daliban sun yi bore kuma sun tafi gida*—Hausa.

The students rioted and have gone home.

3. Sentence level: This is just an expansion of the phrasal stage. In this type, the translator is at full liberty to make any adjustment/modifications provided the message would not be tampered. Below is an example from English to Hausa.

English

- The school turned out to meet the commissioner
- He has gone home to sleep
- The students took to their heels etc.

Hausa

- Xalibai sun je su ga kwamishina.
- Ya tafi gida ya yi barci.
- Xalibai sun ari na kare da sauransu.

Phonology: Phonology, as one of the branches of linguistics is concerned with the ways in which the sounds of a particular language function (fagge, 2004:1). As said earlier, the relationship between translation and linguistics is based on the knowledge of phonology. This helps the translator in making a dynamic translation not only as a translator but also a bilingual in translating materials. This involves translating sounds which are not relevant or common in the target language. It is noted that translation can be done with all languages of the world. Below is an example from Arabic to Hausa.

Arabic	Hausa	Gloss
Al-kalam	alkalami	pen
As-sabun	sabulu	soap
bawasir	basir	pile
kabar	labari	news etc.

Although, there are many examples but few are presented for the purpose of this paper. A language may borrow because it lacks the word thereby improving its vocabulary as pointed out by scholars and researchers.

Morphology: Morphology as the second branch of linguistics is concerned with word formation and inflection (Abubakar 2001 :p. 1).

The relationship between translation and morphology is that the contact between two or more languages results to borrowing and modification. Historically, the contact between the Hausas and the Europeans resulted in the translation of some words such as those below:

English	Hausa
1. table	tebur
2. bench	benci
3. change	canji
4. kerosene	kalanzir
5. computer	kwampita etc.

From the above examples, it is clear that words can be borrowed and adapted through the deletion and insertion process and some are borrowed directly without any modification.

Syntax: As the name implies, it is concerned with the rules governing sentence formation. The syntactic relationship at this level is that a translator is to look at the rules in their language and try to translate the sentence into the receiving language. It is noted that there are some languages which use subject-verb-object (SVO), Hausa, English, and Arabic and some do not observe the structure. A case in point is Kanuri which uses subject-object-verb (SOV).

Semantics: Semantics is concerned with the study of the meaning of a word. It is either the word/statement is literal, technical or figurative, the meaning is apparent. The translator is to study the word/statement if it has different interpretation or not. For example,

“Ramatu tana da ciki”. The word 'ciki' in Hausa has two interpretations. The first interpretation is “ciki na haihuwa” – pregnancy; the second interpretation is “Ramatu has big a stomach”. Another example is 'A ina ta doke shi': *where did she beat him*. The first interpretation is 'Ta doke shi a kasuwa' – she beat him in the market; the second interpretation is 'Ta doke shi a bayansa' – she beat him on his back. Likewise, expressions, the meaning has to be studied from the source to the

receiving language. E.g. Adamu has kicked the bucket. To translate after considerations, Adamu has died, etc.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are made to overcome the problems encountered during translation. They are:

1. There is need for Mass Communication students to take their subsidiary course from the department of languages and linguistics.
2. A diploma/certificate programme on translation should be introduced to those who study courses other than linguistics.
3. Workshops and seminars on translation should be organized from time to time.
4. There is need for the establishment of a translation unit in every media house just as BBC has.

Conclusion

In conclusion, translation as an act of transferring meaning of what has been said written or verbal from the source language to receptor language. Translators in every sector (public or private) should adhere to the translation norms to avoid confusion. Despite the problems encountered during translation such as time consumption, stress and difficulty in the translation process, translation also exposes cultural differences and expands language vocabulary (word borrowing).

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