

X-Raying and Recommending Translatological Content in the Curriculum of Nigerian Christian Theological Institutions

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Abstract. Since the commencement of Christian theological education in Nigeria in the first half of the nineteenth century, as occasioned by the return of ex-slaves of Nigerian origin, translation studies in theological institutions in Nigeria have always been built into the study of Bible languages: Greek and Hebrew. Meanwhile, translation studies are a multidisciplinary, academic and professional field of study that requires divergent competences in its training process. This study aims at highlighting and x-raying the place (importance) of translator training content in the curricular programmes of Christian theological institutions in Nigeria. The study adopts Daniel Gile's two-step sequential model as method whereas Eugene Nida's Principles of Correspondence is used as theoretical framework. The research discovers that absence of translator training content in the curricular programmes of Christian theological institutions in Nigeria has led to poor pragmatic indices in the areas of illocutionary and perlocutionary effects as Nigerian Christian theologians and preachers address their audience the more in English language, the lingua franca, thereby contributing to the poor vitality of some Nigerian languages, like the Igbo language. The paper recommends a basic translation course for theological institutions in Nigeria as a panacea to communication problems between the preacher/theologian and his audience.

Keywords: translation, theology, communication, language endangerment and pragmatic index

Introduction

The history of Christianity in Nigeria dates back to the first half of the 18th century (1841) with the abolition of slave trade by the British parliament in 1834. This event marked the beginning of Christianity in Nigeria, as Christian organizations overseas trained and immersed ex-slaves in the Christian faith and later returned them to Nigeria to propagate Christianity. Such ex-slaves included Samuel Ajayi Crowther and Henry Tugwell. According to Olatoyan and Missin*, theological education started in Nigeria in 1902 at Ogbomosho, in a two story building known as the Baptist Training Institute under the Leadership of Charles Edwin Smith. The institute was later renamed Nigerian Baptist Theological Seminary. According to Olatoyan and Missin, this training was geared towards the production of a theologian of multiple competences:

He could teach school and make bricks and ties; he could make hymn books and set bones, he could write and translate books and cultivate a farm, he could preach the gospel in the vernacular from a buggy of his own construction, indeed there was practically nothing that he could not turn his hand to.

This means that theology is an inter-disciplinary discipline with particular emphasis on translation as a vehicle for the evangelization of a target group.

Christianity which has its parental origin in Judaism also has its translation root, in the translation of *The Talmud* version of the Hebrew five Books of law at about 586 B.C. While in Babylonian captivity where Aramaic was the lingua franca, the Jews had to appoint translators who translated *The Torah* from Hebrew to Aramaic firstly for the benefit of their children born

* www.GlobalMissiology.org

in Babylon who would not speak Hebrew but Aramaic, the language of their immediate environment and secondly for the penetration of Hebrew theology in their new environment. The next famous theological translation was that of *The Septuagint*, the entire Hebrew canon made up of the books of the law, the writings of the prophets. Between 390 and 405 AD, Jerome translated the Latin version of the Bible, *The Vulgate*. This has been followed by the translation of various versions of the Bible in part and in whole in various languages of the world. The concern here is that translation has been at the cradle of the Christian faith through the translation of both the Hebrew canon and *The Bible* and is therefore an indispensable tool of Christian theology which theologians must be conversant with.

Understanding Translation

Translation is concerned with sign in its complex forms within the context of communication. This means that translation is in its totality, a semiotic activity. Signs could be graphical, in the signs of letters that form words with which phrases, clauses, sentences and texts are constructed. In this sense we can say that “a”, “as”, “at”, “table” etc., are signs. In the same way, we can aver that a cross worn on the neck of a Christian, a piece of red cloth held out on a rail line, a sign board with little children drawn on it are all signs. In the chemical sciences, H₂O is a sign. In translation therefore, signs and symbols from their simplest forms to their most complex forms are interpreted, decoded, reformulated or re-expressed within the frame of meaning to the intended audience or recipient of the sign. The foregoing explains translation as first of all, an interlingual activity that re-expresses linguistic signs into the language code of a target audience. This is translation proper. Translation can also take place intralingually, when a communicated linguistic item is re-expressed differently in the same language of its first expression. For example: The boy is suffering from kleptomania→the boy steals for pleasure. This is called transposition. The reformulation of symbols and non-linguistic signs into their literal linguistic meanings is referred to as semiotic translation. This makes Simpson to state as follows:

Translation cannot but be mimesis of what the original creator has expressed if it is to be called translation and not a new autonomous creation. The notion of mimesis is the principle of achieving for another language and/or culture what the original author sought to achieve in the source language.

The term “mimesis” catches up with the idea of theatre. Imagine an actor dramatizing the works of a playwright. What he puts on stage must be a dramatic reproduction of the script of the playwright. So it is with translation. The translator must be careful as well as competent to reproduce in the target language, what the author has written in the original text, without betrayal. This is the concept of faithfulness in translation. Simpson also underscores cultural realities in language usage: how a linguistic community uses language within their culture. For example, an informal expression in a source language should not be replaced with a formal form of the same expression in the target text where the target culture has a provision for such informal equivalent. For example, *ça va?* (French) should be translated as “how now?” or at most “how are you?” it should not be “how are you, Sir?”, this is because in saying *ça va?* (French) the author wants to connote familiarity.

Between Translation and Theology

Translation as Communication

The central role of translation is communication. According to Ochonogo, Njoku and Olise (2009): *Communication is a social interaction between two or more people with the intent of exchanging ideas, opinions, messages or information.* The intent of communication is its message whether idea, opinion or information. Message in this context means subject matter,

theme or communicative goal: what the messenger wants to pass across to the receiver. The communicative role of translation is a product of bilingualism or multilingualism. Since nations are multilingual or bilingual, translation proper becomes an interlingual instrument of communication and integration. Thus, translation calls into play divergent competences to play. According to Akakuru (2003):

Translation is often erroneously reduced to the “product”, that is, to a series of stock definitions (especially those of Vinay et Darbelnet) instead of circumscribing it as “productions”, that is, as a dynamic activity which calls into play diverse but convergent competences.

These diverse but convergent competences would include semantics, linguistics, terminology, pragmatics, stylistics and translation skills.

Theology and Theological Texts

According to Fiorenza (1999): *Theology is the critical delineation, reflection and evaluation of the “rhetoric of God” or how scriptures, traditions and believers in a given religious faith speak about their God.* Texts, whether written or oral, which are derived from scriptures and traditions, culminating into how adherents in a particular religion talk about their God, are theological texts. This underscores the nucleus position of scriptures as the source of both theology and tradition. Scriptures are sacred texts or canonical/canonized texts that form basis of faith, character formation and development, vertical and horizontal relationships, all of which culminate in the hope of life after death. The following text from *Bhagavad Gita* in Prabhavananda and Isherwood (1944) is illustrative to the above claims: *Let the scriptures be your guide therefore, in deciding what you must do and what you must abstain from. First learn the path of action, as the scriptures teach it. Then act accordingly.* This reveals that the sacred text, scripture, is a first order text that lends itself to the production of a second order text, called theological text, through critical delineation, reflection and evaluation. The study of the foregoing, its methods of study, arguments, deductions, theories, concepts and phenomena are in their sum total, referred to and regarded as theology.

The Pedagogy of Translation and Theology

Translator Training

The translator training process, a process of training translators is viewed by experts from two different angles.

The Grammar-Translation Approach

Espousing on this approach to translator training, Akakuru (2003) writes:

Translation for a strategy for language teaching is often referred to as “The Grammar-Translation Approach” or “The Prussian Method” of teaching a language. The aim here is to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development that result from foreign language study.

In this translator training approach, emphasis is placed on Linguistic Parallelism or Transfer Grammar. The aim is to deepen the target language learner’s knowledge of the structure of the target language by utilizing the learner’s knowledge of the structure of first language (L₁) through translation. The (L₁) may be the learner’s maternal language of lingua franca. The following examples illustrate the usefulness of this approach to an English speaker who is learning French.

Sentence (1): Dis lui de me voir dès son retour (tell him to see me as soon as he returns).

The above sentence could be divided into two linguistic units:

- a) Dis lui de me voir (tell him to see me), to teach the imperative “tell him to...” From this, the learner could generate other sentences such as:

- i) Dis lui d'aller au marché (tell him to go the market)
- ii) Dis lui de faire son devoir (tell him to do his assignment)
- iii) Dis lui de voir la directrice (tell him to see the headmistress)
- b) Dès son retour (As soon as he returns or comes back). Other phrases could be generated in class such as:
 - i) Dès son reveil (as soon as he wakes up).
 - ii) Dès son arrivée (as soon as he arrives).
 - iii) Dès son départ (as soon as he leaves).

A third level of this type of classroom exercise could emerge by making the learner to generate compound sentences, using sentence (1) as a model: Example:

- i) Dites lui de voir la directrice dès son arrivée (tell him to see the headmistress as soon as she arrives).
- ii) Dites à Marie d'aller au Marché dès son réveil (tell Mary to go to the market as a soon as she wakes up).
- iii) Revenez chez vous dès son depart (return to your place as soon as he leaves).

This translator training approach is needful for Nigerian theologians in training, most of whom cannot express themselves in good English. It would also serve the same purpose of enhancing both competence and performance among practicing theologians in the country, during in-service trainings, seminars, conferences and workshops, as most of them are also in the same shoes with most trainee-theologians.

Theme and Version Translation

This is a translator training approach whereby the trainee- translator is given a pair of similar texts to translate: one is written in the maternal language of the trainee translator and the other is written in his target language. Writting on this, Bariki and Babatunde (2010) said:

Le thème est un exercice de traduction de la langue maternelle à la langue étrangère. La version est un exercice de traduction d'une. Langue étrangère à la langue maternelle. C'est ainsi que le thème a pour but normalement d'aider dans le processus de fixation de structures et porte en même temps sur l'acquisition du vocabulaire et sur la morphosyntaxe.

Theme is a translation exercise from the maternal language to the foreign language. Version is a translation exercise from a foreign language to the maternal language. Thus, the goal of theme, normally, is to assist in the process of fixing of structures and bears at the same time on the acquisition of vocabulary and on morph syntax. (Our translation) Here, in the translation of "theme and version", the exercise on linguistic parallelism covers two linguistic frontiers: vocabulary and the structure of the two languages in contact, both as the trainee translator works independently and as the translation- instructor provides guides and corrections in class. The two frontiers of the exercise are geared towards deepening and widening the competence and performance of the trainee translator in both languages in contact.

Theological Education

For the purpose of this study, we use the term "theological education" to refer to the entire process of training or educating a theologian, a person who can reliably undertake a discourse on the "rhetoric of God." Our benchmark is the First Degree. Many Christian theological institutions in Nigeria are affiliates of Nigerian universities. We have therefore chosen *Students handbook* (2017) of Trinity Theological college Umuahia, Abia State, affiliated to the University of Nigeria, Nsukka, to show case the presence/ zero presence of translation studies in Christian theological institutions in Nigeria. We consider this as an adequate sample size as it represents the Nigerian Universities Commissions (NUC's)

benchmark for the award of First Degree in Theology and Religious Studies in Nigeria, which every degree awarding Christian theological institution in Nigeria should adopt.

Trinity Theological College, Umuahia – B.A. Four Year Standard Programmes

FIRST YEAR

Table 1. First Semester

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RCS 101	Introduction to study of religions	2
2	RCS 111	Background of the Old Testament	2
3	RCS 121	Biblical Greek 1	2
4	RCS 123	Background of New Testament	2
5	RCS 151	Introduction to A.T.R	2
General Studies Courses			
6	GSP 101	Use of English	2
7	GSP 111	Use of the library & study skills	2
Electives: (choose two of these courses)			
8	PHL 101	Introduction to Philosophy 1	2
9	ECO 101	Principles of Economics 1	2
10	FRE 101	Elementary French 1	2

Table 2. Second Semester

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RCS 102	Field trip and tutorials 1	2
2	RCS 112	Introduction to the study of O.T	2
3	RCS 122	Basic Biblical Greek 11	2
4	RCS 124	Introduction to Traditions of Jesus	2
5	RCS 142	Religion of Human Values	2
6	FRE102	Elementary French 11	2
7	FRE 109	Introduction to Philosophy & Logic	2
General Studies Courses			
8	GSP 102	Use of English	2

SECOND YEAR

Table 3. First Semester

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RCS 211	Biblical Hebrew 1	2
2	RCS 213	The people of O.T. & their history	2
3	RCS 223	Geo- cultural setting of Palestine	2
4	RCS 231	Christian History & Doctrine 1	2
5	RCS 251	African Traditional Religion 1	2
6	RCS 261	Religious Ethics (Christian Ethics)	2
7	RCS 212	Biblical Hebrew 11 (grammar & syntax)	
General Studies Courses			
8	GSP 105	Natural science 1	2
9	GSP 201	Peace and conflict Resolution	2
Electives: (choose two of these courses)			
10	RCS 221	Advance biblical Greek 1	2
11	PHL 251	African philosophy 1	2
12	RCS 201	History of Religion	2

Table 4. Second Semester

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RCCs 204	Field Trip and Tutorials II	2
2	RCS 206	Problems of Religious Belief and History	2
3	RCS 212	Elements of Hebrew brother	2
4	RCS 214	Exilic and Post-Exilic Israel	2
5	RCS 224	Traditions of Jesus	2
6	RCS 272	History of Islam in West Africa	2
7	RCS 208	Introduction to Philosophy of Religion	2
8	RCS 222	Advanced Biblical Greek II	2
General Studies Courses			
9	GSP106	Natural Science II	2
10	GSP202	Peace and conflict Resolution II	2

*THIRD YEAR***Table 5. First Semester**

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RCS 313	Religion of the Old Testament	2
2	RCS 321	Earliest Christianity: The Beginnings	2
3	RCS 323	New Testament Theological Framework	2
4	RCS 331	History of Christianity in West Africa	2
5	RCS 341	Religious Interpretation of Society	2
6	RCS 351	African Traditional Religion II	2
7	RCS 311	Hebrew Grammar and Syntax I	2
Required Ancillary Courses			
8	COS 101	Introduction to Computer Science	2
9	CED 341	Courses on Entrepreneurial Devpt. & Research	2

Table 6. Second Semester

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RCS 314	O.T. Prophets/Prophecy and Messianism in Ancient Israel	2
2	RCS 322	Earliest Christianity; the Life & Work of Paul	2
3	RCS 324	N.T Text/expository Study of the Bible II	2
4	RCS 332	Christian Histories and Doctrine II	2
5	RCS 334	African Church fathers	2
6	RCS 362	Religious Ethics II	2
7	COS 304	Computer Application	2
8	CED342	Courses on Entrepreneurial Development and Research II	2
9	PHL 312	Philosophy of Religion	2

*FOURTH YEAR***Table 7. First Semester**

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RCS 413	Literature of the Old Testament	2
2	RCS421	Close of N.T. Era	2
3	RCS431	Christian History and Doctrine III	2
4	RCS437	Modern African Religious Thoughts	2
5	RCS481	Departmental Seminar	2
6	RCS491	Projects Tutorials	2
7	RCS443	Religion & Culture in Contemporary Society	2

Table 8. Second Semester

S/N	Course No	Title	Units
1	RSC414	Literature of the Old Testaments II	3
2	RSC416	Pseudo-Epigraphic Books of the O.T	2
3	RSC422	New Testament Text II	3
4	RSC444	Theodicy	2
5	RSC492	Project	6

Summary of Courses Offered

A summary look at courses offered for the award of bachelor's Degree in Trinity Theological College, Umuahia, Abia State, Nigeria, in affiliation with the University of Nigeria, Nsukka reveals as follows:

100 level courses. In first semester 100 level courses, a total of ten (10) courses comprising of five (5) religious (RCS) courses, two (2) General courses: use of English (1) and use of the library and study skills are offered. No course of study on translation. In the second semester, of the same 100 level, a total of eight (8) courses are offered: five (5) religious (RCS) courses, one course on Elementary French, one course on Introduction to Philosophy and Use of English 9ii). No course of study on translation.

200 level courses. At the first semester level, seven (7) RCS courses are offered with two General Study courses: natural science and peace and conflict resolution, in addition to three elective courses, two of which are also RCS courses: Advanced Biblical Greek and History of Religion. The third elective course is Principles of Economics (I). No translation course is offered. At the second semester, the students are made to offer eight CRS courses and two General Study courses which include Natural Science 11 and Peace and Conflict Resolution (II) No translation course is offered.

300 level courses. The three hundred level first semester courses include seven RCS courses and two required ancillary courses namely, Introduction to Computer Science and courses on Entrepreneurial Development Research. No course on translation studies. In the second semester, six RCS courses, Computer Application, courses on Entrepreneurial Development and Research (II) and Philosophy of Religion are offered. No course of study on translation studies.

400 level courses. During the four hundred level first and second semesters, only religious (RCS) courses are offered. No study on translation is involved.

Translation in the History of Christianity in Igbo Land**Translation and Evangelization**

In the words of Iwuagwu (2009):

For the first fifty years, the missionary activity in Igboland centered on both sides of the Niger. Evangelism and translation moved along the two narrow strips of population along the banks of River Niger. It extended to Igbo heartland after 1905, when the CMS mission reached Owerri.

The scenario here, is that of the first fifty years of Christianity within the eastern part of Nigeria which was piloted by ex-slaves from Sierra Leone led by the famous Bishop Ajayi crowther, H. Tugwell, J.C Taylor and others. The ex-slaves who were of Igbo origin made translation their evangelism tool as they went into translating *The Bible*, prayer books and hymn books into Igbo language. They also engaged in interpreting, which is the oral aspect of translation, for effective communication of the Gospel.

Interpreter Training for the Evangelization of the Gospel

Curriculum wise, Iwuagwu (2009) stated: *At first the freed slaves of Igbo origin trained at Sierra Leone were the first interpreters and they helped to train others until some of the clever Igbo agents were trained.* Here, it is pertinent to note that translation and translator training implies interpretation and interpreter training because their principles of training are the same. Our concern here is to highlight that in the cradle of Christianity in Nigeria, especially in the Igbo nation, translation, interpreting and their trainings formed the hub of evangelization as interpreting as contained in Iwuagwu (2009) in conjunction with translation is “conference interpreting” which communicated the message of the ex-slaves who had very high level of competence, performance and linguistic pragmatism in English into Igbo. The interpreting here is not biblical hermeneutics and exegesis, which have to do with the interpretation of biblical discourse within a core language.

Theological Translation and the Pragmatic Index

Objectives of Theological Translation

In Christian theological translation, the objectives are to carry across (re-express) in the most appropriate way, the perceptions, reflections and evaluations of the Christian faith from one linguistic and ethno-cultural group into another, whether in written form or in spoken form. *In the most appropriate way*, refers to the absence of betrayal either through over translation, under translation or by betrayal of meaning.

Pragmatic Index

Three issues are involved in the pragmatic index. Firstly, is the locutionary act or what is said by the speaker, the very words that are contained in his or her statement. The second issue is the illocutionary act or the receivers understanding of what is said or the message of the statement. Thirdly, is the perlocutionary act or what the receiver does with the message of the text. The theological text is dominantly a persuasive text that requires a perlocutionary act from the receiver whether to do, to refrain from doing or not to do at all. This will depend on the illocutionary act of the receiver of the message, what he understands from the text or message. This of course would depend firstly on the receiver’s degree of understanding of the language in which the message is communicated, whether at contact level wherein the receiver of the message has a smattering, surface level knowledge of the language in which the message is communicated, or whether he or she has a compound knowledge level of the said language which is deep and beyond surface level knowledge. Our position here is that comprehension of message determines acting it out.

Revitalizing Endangered Nigerian Languages through Theological Translation

Language endangerment is the final stage of the ineffectiveness of such a language before its death which means that the said language has gone into extinction. Language endangerment which may culminate in the ultimate death of the language, if nothing is done to check-mate it, is consequent upon the vitality of the language in question. Language vitality refers to the frequency of usage of a language in the day to day inter-locutions among its native speakers. According to Alamu and Ugwuoke (2010):

In plateau State about twenty languages, including Marna, Rindri, Pyem, Bija, Gwandara, Kantana, Afizere and Bogghom are reported to be seriously endangered. In Borno State, Hausa is gradually encroaching on Kanuri and Fulfulde, while in Benue State, Emai, Iyievwe, Esan, Ivbie, Illuleha and Ora have all become victims of endangerment as the approximately 30 Edo Languages, no one language has been subject of comprehensive linguistic description incorporating grammar, dictionary and texts. The situation is the

same in Delta, Rivers and Bayelsa states where Nigerian Pidgin has seriously encroached on the Indigenous Languages of these areas.

However, the most striking of all endangered Nigerian Languages is the Igbo Language. *Daily sun, Tuesday, August 28, 2012* wrote:

But following the prediction by the United Nation Educational Organization (UNESCO) advisory committee on language pluralism and multi-language education, that Igbo language, and by implication culture, may be heading for extinction, subsumed by other stronger Nigerian Languages by 2025 if nothing is done by its speakers to ensure that it is not only taught in schools, colleges and business circles in the Igbo speaking states: Abia, Ananmbra, Ebonyi, Enugu and Imo.

Apart from the above five mentioned States, Igbo is also the indigenous language of some parts of Rivers, Delta and Edo States of Nigeria. Igbo language is one of the three major languages in Nigeria in the company of Hausa and Yoruba Languages. The revitalization of such a major language of such a vast geographical expanse calls for a joint effort of all domains of language use, not only of the Igbo language but of all endangered languages in Nigeria. In a tabular presentation of domains of language use in Nigeria, Ndimele presents a table of four columns, namely: domain, participants, settings and languages with five rows comprising of: family, friendship, religion, education, business/workplace, as presented below:

Table 9. Domains of Language Use in Nigeria

Domains	Participants	Setting	Languages
Family	Parents, children, helpers, relatives	Home	MT, LIE
Friendship	Peer groups, friends	Neighborhood, streets, sports ground etc.	MT NP
Religion	Priest, Imams, worshippers	Churches, mosques, shrines	MT ENG LAT ARB
Education	Teachers, students	Schools	ENG LIE
Business/ Workplace	Businessmen, workers	Markets, mails, offices	MT NP ENG

Note: LAT = Latin; MT = Mother tongue; NP = Nigerian Pidgin; ENG = English Language; LIE = Language of Immediate Environment; ARB = Arabic

In the above table, the domains of language use are listed in the vertical columns. Our concern is to show how language activities in the church setting, as carried out by priests and worshippers, within the domain of religion/ theology can assist in the maintenance and revitalization of endangered Nigerian Languages, such as the Igbo Language. To this end, it is evident that if the priest who is the key player in the church setting is empowered through translation studies (theories and practice), to reinvent his theological discourses and other discourses of his, within the church setting, in the language of his congregation, that language would go a long way in being maintained. This is deemed so because the product of theological translation is the communication of theological discourses in the language of the target audience.

Suggested Curriculum for Translation Studies in Nigerian Theological Institutions

Translation which is a rational linguistic and communicative operation that calls divergent competences into play is sub-categorized into pedagogical translation and

professional translation. In translator training otherwise known as pedagogical translation, the emphasis is placed on linguistic parallelism, in order to strengthen the learner's knowledge of the structure of the second language. Pedagogical translation adopts the use of theme and version texts as tools for achieving its objective. Theme and version texts are texts of similar subject matter in both languages that are being brought into contact, for example English and Igbo languages. For a student who is learning to translate from English to Igbo language, two texts are made available to him, for example: theme:"

"Love your enemies." Version: *onye bu onye agbataobim?* (who is my neighbor?). The student translator is exposed to the constituents of the two texts, comparatively: first the theme, followed by the version. Contrastively, professional translation is the process of cultural, professional and thematic integration through rational linguistic and communicative operations and divergent competences which professional translator training programs seek to inculcate in translators. Mombe (2018) writes:

En résumé, des compétences que ces programmes de formation universitaire cherche à inculquer chez un traducteur professionnel sont les suivantes :

- Les compétences linguistiques
- Les compétences de transfert
- Les compétences techniques ou instrumentales
- Les compétences comportementales
- Les compétences de relecture et de la révision
- Les compétences thématiques (économies, droit, médecineetc.)
- Les compétences de base en gestion.

A summary of the competences which these university training programmes seek to inculcate in a professional translator are as follows:

- Linguistic competences
- Transfer competences
- Technical and instrumental competences
- Behavioral competences
- Re-read and revision competences
- Thematic competences (economics, law, medicine etc.)
- Basic management competence. (Our translation)

This shows the differences between pedagogical translator training and professional translator training in terms of objectives and curriculum contents, which makes us to recommend the course content of *Translation skills I and II* of Abia state University, Uturu, Department of Foreign Language and Translation studies, *Programme of Study* (2017), in pursuance of a suitable programme for translation studies in Nigerian theological institution as follows.

FLF 393 (FLV 310) Translation Skills I, NO. OF UNITS: 2

COURSE DESCRIPTION

FLF 393 is the first in the series of translation courses. It is aimed at exposing students to the practical problems of translation. The courses include exercises in translation from and into English (L₁) French (L₂) and a Nigerian vernacular language (L₃)

LECTURE PLAN: 2 lectures/week 1ST semester

Week 1- 2 Comprehension exercise

" 3- 4 Translation exercise: L₂-L₁

" 5- 6 Translation exercise:L₁-L₂

" 7- 8 Translation exercise:L₃L₂

" 9- 10 Translation exercise:L₂-L₃

" 11- 12 Translation exercise:L₃-L₂ L₁-L₃

” 13- 14 Revision

The above course as stated is a two-credit unit course shared commonly by the French language village (FLV) of Nigeria, Badagry and Abia State University, Uturu in the first semester. Between the first and second week of the semester the student is introduced to the comprehension of texts written in both English and in Nigerian indigenous languages. (French would not be inclusive). From weeks three to twelve, the student would be exposed to theme and version translation in English and Nigerian indigenous Language to be chosen by the theological institute. Then comes revision.

FLF 394 (FLV 320) Translation Skills II, NO. OF UNITS: 2

COURSE DESCRIPTION

FLF 394 is designed to help students acquire knowledge of the theoretical bases of the different translation techniques in use, as well as provide training in translation. The course covers lexical and morphosyntactic problems involved in translating from and into English (L₁), French (L₂) and a Nigerian language (L₃). The study of these problems as they affect L₁ and L₂ could be based on Vinay and Darbelnet's *Stylistique comparée du français et de l'anglais* (SC) or any other similar manual.

LECTURE PLAN: 2 Lectures/week 2nd semester

Weeks 1-2 Basic notions in translation:(definitions and kinds of translation /interpreting, the notion of non-translatability).

“ 3 Roles and problems of translation/interpreting in Nigeria and West Africa

“ 4- 5 Translation units; levels and techniques; exercises.

“ 6- 7 Translation and lexis; exercises.

“ 8- 10 Translation and syntax; exercise.

“ 11 – 12 General translation exercise

“ 13- 14 Revision

As in FLF 393 (FLV 310), the above course is a two-credit unit second semester course in both Abia State University, Uturu and the Nigeria French Language Village, Badagry. The first 3 weeks introduce the student to three basic theories of Translation: definition and kinds of translation and interpreting, the notion of translatability, roles and problems of translation and interpreting in Nigeria and Africa. All these precede practical translation exercises and revision at last.

Recommendation

This paper recommends two-semester basic courses in translation studies for postulants (theologians in training) in Nigeria as a means of curbing ineffectiveness in communicating the Gospel among Christians and Non-Christians in Nigeria. To adhere effectively to this recommendation, the paper suggests the use of the Course Outlines for FLF 393 (FLV310) and FLF394 (FLN320) respectively, of the Department of Foreign Language and Translation Studies (FLATS) of the Abia State University, Uturu (ABSU), as shared with the Nigerian French Language Village, Badagry, under FLF310 and FLV 320, respectively.

Conclusion

The history of Christianity and Theological education in Nigeria underscores the roles of translation, interpreting, translator training and interpreter training. No wonder Christian converts within the first century of Christianity in the country were able to give their “all,” in favor of the new faith in Christ Jesus and jettisoned the idolatrous religious practices of their fathers because Christianity was effectively communicated to them by the preachers. A departure from the *status quo* of the timeline of history spells doom for Christianity in Nigeria and for Nigeria's indigenous languages, like the Igbo language. In Nigeria today, it is no

gainsaying that educational standards have fallen alongside the understanding of English language, the language of administration and our lingua franca. In the same way, moral standards, ethical standards and Christian values are drastically falling. Generally, Nigeria is a semi-literate society. This is a country where every church meeting, camp meetings and conferences are flooded with English language. The pastors, priests or preachers as they may be called, are essentially men and women who received *quasi* educational trainings, mostly in theological institution, read both English Bibles and theological books written in English and prepare their sermon notes in English with poor competence and performance in English but do not know how to re-express their message in the language of their congregation, which is also theirs. An example is an Igbo preacher, pastor or priest, preaching to an Igbo audience in English, in an Igbo church service without any effort to re-express those English expressions in Igbo for the people to understand, since he has no interpreter. The illocutionary effect is that the congregation understands almost nothing as message and the perlocutionary effect will either be at zero or almost at zero.

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