Chapter 19

A Survey on the Acceptability of Equivalence–Based Translation Into Yorùbá Language in the Domain of Information and Communication Technology

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ABSTRACT

This article contains a descriptive survey on the acceptability of equivalence-based translation of the menu of TECNO Android phones into the Yorùbá language, one of the three major languages in Nigeria. Words translated into Yorùbá were categorized into strategies of borrowing, semantic extension and composition and analysed from equivalence effect. In the follow-up survey, information and communication technology experts and general mobile phone users were carefully chosen and consulted for an assessment of the appropriateness of the translation. The study concluded that equivalence, the key term of linguistic translation theories, is still a viable concept in the translation of information and communication technology and equivalence-based translation into Yorùbá will not only promote the language but also contribute to effective communication in a multilingual global village that the world is fast becoming.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Human beings, irrespective of their tribe or race, employ communication in their daily interactions or activities. In order for every individual in a given community not to be disenfranchised in human endeavour, every effort at achieving effective communication must be researched into and explored.

Crozier &and Dettweiler (2011, p. 18) say: "communication as we are thinking about it is a dynamic process whereby symbolic human behaviour both verbal and nonverbal is perceived and responded to…" It is evident from the definition that communication is an interactive process between an encoder and a decoder. Translation is a process of communication not only across two languages but also between two cultures.

Larson (1984, p. 1) opines that translation consist of studying the lexicon, grammatical structure, communication situation, and cultural context of the source language text. Benett (1998, p. 3) as quoted by J. Munday (2009, p. 74) explains that the fundamental premise of the intercultural communication approach is that, cultures are different in their languages, behaviour patterns and values. So, an attempt to use (mono-cultural) self as predictor of shared assumptions and responses to messages is unlikely to work because the response, in our case to a translation, will be ethnocentric. To conduct a descriptive survey on the readers' response to a translation, therefore, helps overcome cultural bias and guarantee the objectivity of the assessment of a translation. Survey research on translation effect is particularly meaningful if the two languages are representative of two entirely different cultural traditions.

The main purpose of this research is to survey the acceptability of the translation of the menu of TECNO Android Phones from English Language into Yorùbá, one of the three major languages in Nigeria. The translation was made primarily under the principle of equivalence on both linguistic forms and communicative function.

The Yorùbá language belongs to the West Benue-Congo of the Niger-Congo phylum of African languages (Williamson and Blench 2000, p. 31). The language is spoken in the South-Western part of the country namely: Ondo, Èkìtì, Ọsun, Ògùn, Ọyọ́ and Lagos states. It is imperative to research the translation into Yorùbá because of the status of the language.

Fabunmi, F.A. and Salawu, A.S. (2005:392) report that: The effective speakers of the language in the country are about 35% of the country's total population. Yorùbá is used as a language of formal instruction and a curriculum subject in the primary school, secondary school and post-secondary level (including University); it is a curriculum subject and it has a standard orthography. In addition, the Brazilian government has introduced the compulsory study of African History and Yorùbá language into the primary and secondary school curriculums. A critical evaluation of F.A. Fabunmi and A.S. Salawu (2005) vis-à-vis linguistic reality in Nigeria, Yorùbá language is in contact with many other language groups in Nigeria and in some African countries; so it has several exonyms (outside names) like Yáríbà, Yórúbáwá, Nàgó Ànàgó, Lùkúmì, and Akú.

One salient point we have to note considering the reality on the users of the Yorùbá language in line with the users of TECNO cell phone in general is that, there are some speakers of the language who are monolinguals. In order for such people not to be cut off from the latest development on the use of cell phone, translation of the menu of the cell phones is the most credible option. In addition to this, a sizable population of Yorùbá speakers has Yorùbá language as their lingua franca. Although, in our constitution, English has been recognized and allowed as our lingua franca - for instance in the 1999 Constitution of the Federal Republic of Nigeria as amended, it was stipulated that the business of the National Assembly shall be conducted in English, and in Hausa, Igbo and Yorùbá when adequate arrangements have been made therefore-nevertheless, it is obvious that a good number of speakers of Yorùbá language have the language as their lingua franca. In order for such people to benefit from the Information Communication Technology revolution, this research work aims at bridging the communication gap and the limited utility value of mobile telephony to such groups for whom English is unintelligible.

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