

The Effectiveness of Translation Competence in Radio Gotel Yola, Adamawa State, Nigeria.

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Abstract. The study was on effectiveness of translation competence in radio gotel Yola, Adamawa state, Nigeria. The objective of the study was to determine the level of effectiveness of language translation at Gotel Radio station in Yola, Adamawa state, Nigeria. The target population was 134 participants while the sample size was computed to 100 respondents using sloven's formula. The participant included the staff of the Radio Gotel Yola, and listeners of Radio Gotel programs and the main research instrument was questionnaire. The study examined the level of effectiveness of language translation at Gotel radio station in Yola, Adamawa state, that majority of the respondents agreed that translation requires experience and good mastery of the subject matter, that socio-cultural and linguistic background is necessary for good translation. The study concluded that to ensure effective translation, there is need to keep updating the knowledge, skills and competences of the translators. The following recommendations were made: There is need to emphasize proper training and effective training methods for language translators, the Gotel radio should maintain constant interaction and seeking feedback from its listeners in order to gauge whether its program translations meets the expectations of the listeners, lastly the translator should be a native speaker of the language he/she is translating in order to deeply

understand the grammar and vocabulary of the language.

Key words: Effectiveness, Translation, Competence and Radio.

1. Introduction

In the mid (1960s), the concept of translation competence was, admittedly, first tackled by some formal linguists (Chomsky, 1965) whose main interest at that time was to define and classify linguistic competence. In the past two decades, research into translation and interpretation competence theories flourished manifestly. However, some features of this field are still thrust and questionable, for instance, the optimal requisite competence for professional translators and interpreters. Competence in the field of translation and interpretation is crucial, since it mirrors the summation of translators and interpreters' training, experience, as well as their aptitude to embark on this profession. Many theorists have developed various catalogues of translators and interpreters' competences paying attention to the requirement of professional translators and interpreters (Kermis, 2008). This may raise two critical questions; is there a fixed catalogue of professional translators and interpreters' requisite competence? Is translators

and interpreters' competence of a diachronic nature?

Therefore, Translation is now becoming more than a minor subject matter studied in languages and linguistics; it has been mushrooming remarkably over the past decades as a major discipline and interest of different scholars as they realize the significance of this discipline in bridging contacts between nations worldwide. Translation in the general sense is not an easy task; it requires high level of proficiency. This proficiency must base on several types of competence. There is no precise definition of competence, since this issue has been approached in many different trends whose main focus was to define and determine what the translation competences are.

Sebokoya (2010) states that: It is quite difficult to evaluate a concept that was yet neither agreed upon, nor properly defined. Different scholars perceive this construct differently. Even the term itself has several varieties, respective authors call it translation competence (Vienne: 2000) translational competence (Neubert: 2000), translational knowledge (Pym: 1992).

Chomsky (1965) reveals that linguistic competence is the perfect knowledge of an ideal user of the language in a homogeneous speech community. His eminent distinction between competence (the speaker-listener's knowledge of language) and performance (the actual use of language knowledge in real life situations) arouses the interests of many scholars to find out what are the parameters of this perfect knowledge (competence). Meetham and Hudson (1969) define translation as the process of converting information from one language or language variety into another. During the 1970s and 1980s many applied linguists with a primary interest in the theory of language acquisition and the theory of language testing gave their valuable contribution to the further development of the concept of competence (Bagaric and Mihaljevic Djigunovic, 2007).

Communicative competences, the applied linguists Canale and Swain (1980) and Canale (1983) argue, are classified into (1) grammatical competence (e.g. language learner's knowledge

of phonology, syntax, the morphology and so forth), (2) sociolinguistic competence (e.g. discourse competence and pragmatic competence), (3) strategic competence. On the other hand, Bell's holistic view of defining competence is even more illustrative and descriptive. According to Bell (1991), translation competence is defined as "the knowledge and skills the translator must possess in order to carry out a translation." He also signifies that it encompasses text-type knowledge, subject area knowledge, contrastive knowledge, and decoding and encoding process skills summarized as "communicative competence" including grammar, sociolinguistics and discourse.

In contrast, Neubert (1994) offers three main components of competence; language competence, subject competence and transfer competence. Celce-Murcia et al. (1995) (as cited in Celce-Murcia, 2007) propose that action competence (the ability to comprehend and produce all significant speech acts and speech act sets) should also be part of communicative competence. These scholars made two important changes in terminology of the Canale-Swain's model (1980): (1) that sociolinguistic competence be modified into socio cultural competence (the cultural background knowledge needed to interpret and use a language effectively) and (2) that grammatical competence be re-labeled as linguistic competence to explicitly include the sound system and the lexicon, as well as the grammar (e.g. morphology and syntax).

Similarly, some translation scholars provided some definitions of the concept competence from translation perspective. Just to name a few, Hurtado Albir defines it as "the ability of knowing how to translate" (1996). Schaffner and Beverly (2000) conclude that the theory of translation could best be taught, in order to better develop the different skills acquired in one or more foreign languages and cultures, in conjunction with the mother tongue, for the purpose of more effective communication. In line with Schaffner and Beverly, Neubert (2000) on the other hand, elaborates that the practice of translation and, hence, teaching translation

require a single competence that could be deemed to integrate a set of competencies that include, for instance, competence in both the source and the target languages.

Another inclusive view of translation competence is that of PACTE research (2000, 2005, and 2011);

PACTE defines translation competence as “the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate.” Neubert (2000) sums up that the complexity of demands that are made on the cognitive faculties and skills of a translator, the heterogeneity, and the approximate nature of the translators’ knowledge must be taken into consideration before defining translators’ competence. Therefore, Neubert offers the following five parameters for the definition of translation competence:

- (i) **Language competence** – this sub-competence encompasses the grammatical knowledge. Besides, knowledge of repertoires of the languages for special purposes, for instance, terminologies, syntactic and morphological conventions.
- (ii) **Textual competence** – this sub-competence is overlapped in one way or another with the linguistic competence, and characterized by specialized proficiencies in various domains, for instance, technical, legal or literary fields, and so forth.
- (iii) **Subject competence** – it is related to textual competence; it represents the familiarity with what constitutes the overall body of the translation area. This concept covers specialist knowledge; therefore, if the specialist knowledge is of high dimensions, the subject competence will not be at stake.
- (iv) **Cultural competence** – this sub-competence emphasizes the significance for translators to be fully acquainted with cultural shackles as they have to mediate between various cultural backgrounds.
- (v) **Transfer competence** – it is the ability to perform translation as such quickly and efficiently, it dominates all other sub-competences; for instance, it incorporates language, subject, and cultural knowledge with the aim of fulfilling transfer demands (Neubert, 2000).

The PACTE group is markedly active in this issue; their definition of translation competence can be viewed as inclusive. This group defines translation competence as "the underlying system of knowledge and skills needed to be able to translate" (PACTE, 2005) and based on their empirical experimental approach concludes that the translation competence includes the following components; bilingual sub-competence, extra-linguistic sub-competence, knowledge about translation, instrumental sub-competence, strategic sub-competence, and psycho-physiological components.

2. Theoretical Frame Work

Holmes (1972) gave in his tremendous contributions in the translation section of the Third International Congress of Applied Linguistics in Copenhagen. Holmes draws attention to the limitations imposed at the time because translation research, lacking a home of its own, was dispersed across older disciplines (languages, linguistics, etc.). He also stresses the need to forget other communication channels, cutting across the traditional disciplines to reach all scholars working in the field, from whatever background. Crucially, Holmes puts forward an overall framework, describing what translation studies covers. This framework was subsequently presented by the leading Israeli translation scholar Gideon Toury (Toury 1995). In Holmes’s explanations of this framework, the objectives of the areas of research are:

- The description of the phenomena of translation; and
- The establishment of general principles to explain and predict such phenomena (translation theory)

The branch is divided into general and partial theories. By ‘general’, Holmes is referring to

those writings that seek to describe or account for every type of translation and to make generalizations that will be relevant for translation as a whole (one example would be Toly's 'laws' of translation). Theoretical studies are restricted according to these parameters (medium, text-type, etc.). The descriptive branch of 'pure' research in Holmes's map is known as descriptive translation studies (DTS). It may examine: (1) the product; (2) the function; and (3) the process.

3. Statement of Problem

The translator should be able to communicate ideas from one group to another in writing that is clear, accurate, and culturally relevant. Translators do this work by reading the source document to fully understand the messages and meaning and then rewriting the document in another language in a style that is best suited to the target audience. The translator should be familiar with the subject matter of the source document, including program names, common terms and definitions, and vocabulary. He or she must understand the author's intentions, so that the translation will convey the intended messages and ideas (Mildred, 1984).

A good translator has intimate insight into the nuances of both cultures—that of the author and that of the target audience. Ideally, a translator will at some point have lived among the people for whom he or she is translating and, therefore, know the language and culture well. A translator may work alone or as part of a team, with colleagues sharing the duties of translation, proofreading, editing, and project management (Kermis, 2008). Despite the fact that Fulfulde language is the dominant local language in Adamawa State, Nigeria, it is evidence that listeners of local Radio programs prefer those programs presented in Hausa language and more than any local languages. Beside most local programs are presented in Hausa language while other local languages especially Fulfulde which is dominant language, and it's have few programs. Meanwhile it is also observed that majority of the translators of Radio Gotel Yola; do not have local cultural and socio-linguistic background of some local languages in

Adamawa state. It is against this background that this research study is proposed to examine the effectiveness of competent translation in media House found in Adamawa State, Nigeria taking Radio Gotel Yola as case study.

4. Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the reason, why do some translators lack the ability to translate a given language effectively and to propose an approach/paradigm in tackling those deficiencies which surfaces among the translators and listeners in translation filed.

Objective of the study is to determine the level of effectiveness of language translation at Gotel Radio station in Yola, Adamawa state, Nigeria.

5. Literature review

5.1 Competence of language translators

Competence is defined in terms of the requirements of the tasks that constitute a certain job. This is indeed an important distinction, and in the following we will use the term competence to refer to the former meaning, and the term qualification to refer to the latter meaning. More specifically, the term competence will be used to refer to the capacity of an individual (or a collective) to successfully (according to certain formal or informal criteria, set by oneself or by somebody else) handle certain situations or complete a certain task or job (Ellstrom, 1997).

5.2 Effectiveness of language translation

Translation is the conversion of written text from one language into another so that the new, translated text reflects the content of the original text and corresponding cultural perceptions and customs of the target audience. Translation makes communication possible among people who read or write different languages and have different cultural heritages. Translation is *not* the process of finding an equivalent word in the target language for each word in the original document. That's because there may be no equivalent words, or there may be more than one equivalent word and the translator must examine

the context to choose the one that's best. Additionally, the ways in which words are combined to create meaning vary from language to language, and translating words in the order they appear in the original text often will not make sense in another language (Newmark, 1986).

A translator, a person who converts the content (ideas and information) of a document written in one language (the *source*) into another language (the *target*), thereby linking two groups of people from two different cultures who read two different languages. The translator should be able to communicate ideas from one group to another in writing that is clear, accurate, and culturally relevant. Translators do this work by reading the source document to fully understand the messages and meaning and then rewriting the document in another language in a style that is best suited to the target audience. The translator should be familiar with the subject matter of the source document, including program names, common terms and definitions, and vocabulary. He or she must understand the author's intentions, so that the translation will convey the intended messages and ideas. A good translator has intimate insight into the nuances of both cultures—that of the author and that of the target audience. Ideally, a translator will at some point have lived among the people for whom he or she is translating and, therefore, know the language and culture well.

A translator may work alone or as part of a team, with colleagues sharing the duties of translation, proofreading, editing, and project management (Newmark, 1986).

6. Methodology

Regarding the age categories of respondents, the respondents were aged 16 – 24 years old, 30% of the respondents were aged 25 – 34 years old, 22% of the respondents were aged 35 – 44 years old, 10% of the respondents were aged 45 – 54 years old, 14% of the respondents were aged 55 – 64 years old and 4% of the respondents were aged 65 years and above. This implies that respondents were sourced from various categories of people living and working within the study area of Adamawa state Nigeria

Research Design

The study used descriptive design to understand a research problem being studied.

Research Population

The Target Population of this study was 134 people, consisting of 34 staff of the Radio Gotel Yola, who are mainly translators working in the radio station and 100 listeners of Radio Gotel programs.

Sample Size

The sample size of the study was 100 respondents.

Sampling Technique

The simple random sampling technique was used to select the respondents of the study.

Research Instrument

The main instrument of the data collection was closed-ended questionnaire.

Data Analysis

Frequency and percentage table, mean and standard deviation were used to examine the level of effectiveness of translation.

Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

This section presents the background information about the respondents, including gender, age, education levels and years of experience.

Table 1. showing frequency and percentages of respondent's age

| Category | Frequency | Percentages |
|------------|-----------|-------------|
| 16 -24 | 20 | 20 |
| 25 -34 | 30 | 30 |
| 35 -44 | 22 | 22 |
| 45 – 54 | 10 | 10 |
| 55 - 64 | 14 | 14 |
| 65 - above | 4 | 4 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Table 2. Showing frequency and percentages of respondents educational level

| Category | Frequency | Percentages |
|-----------------|-----------|-------------|
| Ph.D | 2 | 2 |
| Master's degree | 21 | 21 |
| Bachelor degree | 36 | 36 |
| Diploma | 27 | 27 |
| Certificates | 8 | 8 |
| O level | 6 | 6 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Source: Field data, 2017

Information on the education levels of respondents indicate that 2% of the respondents were Ph. D

holders, 21% of the respondents were Master’s degree holders, 36% of the respondents were Bachelor’s degree holders, 27% of the respondents were Diploma/NCE holders, 8% of the respondents were Certificate holders and 6% of the respondents were categorized as others. These included junior secondary and primary school dropouts and those that do not have any formal education at all. This implied that respondents were from the various educational backgrounds, which helped to expand the pool of information collected, from the learned perspective to the layman’s perspective.

The information about the length of stay/employment and/or listenership of Gotel radio in the area of study indicates that 16.7% of the respondents had been living/working in the area for 1 – 3 years, while 27.5% of the respondents had been living/working in the area for 3 – 5 years. Also, 19.2% of the respondents had been living/working in the area for 5 – 8 years, 26.7% of them had been living/working in the area for over 8 – 10 years, and only 10% had been living/working in the area for more than 10 years. This implies that the majority of the respondents had spent an average 8 years and above living and/or working in Yola Local Government Area, so they are in position to comment authoritatively about the linguistics and language translation and how it affects radio communication in local communities.

Table 3. Length of employment

| Category | Frequency | Percentages |
|--------------|------------|-------------|
| 1 - 3 | 3 | 3 |
| 3 - 5 | 10 | 10 |
| 5 - 8 | 36 | 36 |
| 8 - 10 | 32 | 32 |
| 10 & above | 19 | 19 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

Level of Effectiveness of Language Translation

Table 4: Showing responses on the effectiveness of Language Translation

| Statements on effectiveness of language translation | Percentage responses (%) | | | | | Mean | Std. | Interpretation |
|---|--------------------------|-----------|-----------|----------|----------|-------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| | SA | A | U | D | SD | | | |
| Translation requires experience and good mastery of the subject matter | 37 | 35 | 12 | 14 | 2 | 3.91 | 1.130 | Satisfactory |
| Socio-cultural and linguistic background is necessary for good translation | 40 | 41 | 7 | 7 | 5 | 4.05 | 1.090 | Satisfactory |
| Sound educational background and professionalism improves translation competence | 37 | 37 | 15 | 9 | 2 | 3.98 | 1.058 | Satisfactory |
| On the job training and workshop boost translation competence | 28 | 40 | 16 | 2 | 14 | 3.65 | 1.307 | Satisfactory |
| Creativity in language and style enhance translation competence | 56 | 26 | 9 | 7 | 2 | 4.26 | 1.049 | Very satisfactory |
| Vast knowledge of language grammar and richness in vocabulary can increase competence translation | 28 | 46 | 14 | 7 | 5 | 3.86 | 1.060 | Satisfactory |
| Grand mean | 37 | 38 | 12 | 8 | 5 | 3.95 | 1.116 | Satisfactory |

KEY:

- SA - Strongly Agree
- A - Agree
- U - Undecided
- D - Disagree
- SD - Strongly Disagree

Source: *Field data, 2017*

The specific objective in the study was to examine the level of effectiveness of language translation on Gotel radio programming. To achieve this objective, respondents were asked for their opinion on a number of aspects about the effectiveness of language translation in the radio programming of Gotel radio. The results on the effectiveness of translation as presented in table 4 above showed 37% of the respondents

Strongly agree that translation requires experience and good mastery of the subject matter, 35% of the respondents were agree, 12% of the respondents were neutral while 14% of them disagreed, 2% of them were strongly disagree and all were respondent agreed and interpreted satisfactory with mean and standard deviation were 3.91, 1.130. In addition, on the fact that socio-cultural and linguistic background

is necessary for good translation were respondent agree and interpreted satisfactory with corresponding mean = 4.05, std. = 1.090. 40% of the respondents strongly agreed, 41% of the respondents were agreed, 7% of them were neutral while 7% of them disagreed and 5% of the respondents were strongly disagree. On the assertion that sound educational background and professionalism improves translation competence, 37% of the respondents strongly agreed, 37% of the respondents were also agree, 15% of them were neutral while 9% of them disagreed and only 2% of them were strongly disagree. Also, on the assertion that on the job training and workshop boost translation competence, 28% of the respondents strongly agreed, 40% of them were agreed, 16% of them were neutral and 2% of them disagreed and therefore, 14% of the respondents were strongly disagreed and generally their responses were agreed and interpreted satisfactory with mean = 3.98, std. = 1.058. Furthermore, on the fact that creativity in language and style enhance translation competence were all respondent agree and interpreted satisfactory with a mean = 3.65 and standard deviation of 1.307. 56% of the respondents strongly agreed, 26% of the respondents agreed, 9% of them were neutral, and 7% of them disagreed and the last from this indicators were only 2% respond mode were strongly disagree. Further still, on the assertion that vast knowledge of language grammar and richness in vocabulary can increase competence translation were generally had a mean and standard deviation of 4.26 and 1.049 respondent strongly agree and interpreted very satisfactory. 28% of the respondents strongly agreed, 46% were agreed, 14% of them were neutral, while 7% of them disagreed and 5% were strongly disagreed. This implied that grand mean of effectiveness of language translation were respondent agree and interpreted satisfactory. This signified that there is widespread awareness among both the staff/translators and the listeners about the importance of effective language translation in the programming schedule of Gotel radio station.

7. Summary of the Findings

Level of Effectiveness of language translation

The study examined the level of effectiveness of language translation at Gotel radio station in Yola, Adamawa state, Nigeria. The results on this showed that majority of the respondents agreed that translation requires experience and good mastery of the subject matter, that socio-cultural and linguistic background is necessary for good translation, that sound educational background and professionalism improves translation competence, that on the job training and workshop boost translation competence, that creativity in language and style enhance translation competence, and that vast knowledge of language grammar and richness in vocabulary can increase competence translation. Many of the respondents involved in the study also agreed that they are in multi-lingual, implying that they spoke other languages other than their indigenous mother tongue. The responses also attested to the fact that they listen to radio, and that they preferred to listen to programs presented in their indigenous language, though they also admitted to listening to translated language programs. This implied that overall; there is widespread awareness among both the staff/translators and the listeners about the importance of effective language translation in the programming schedule of Gotel radio station.

These findings are echoed by HurtadoAlbir and Alves (2009) who stated that translation makes communication possible among people who read or write different languages and have different cultural heritages. Translation is *not* the process of finding an equivalent word in the target language for each word in the original document. That's because there may be no equivalent words, or there may be more than one equivalent word and the translator must examine the context to choose the one that's best. Additionally, the ways in which words are combined to create meaning vary from language to language, and translating words in the order they appear in the original text often will not make sense in another language. Lorscher (1991) also added that the translator should be able to communicate ideas from one group to another in writing that is clear, accurate, and culturally relevant. Translators do this work by reading the source document to fully understand

the messages and meaning and then rewriting the document in another language in a style that is best suited to the target audience. The translator should be familiar with the subject matter of the source document, including program names, common terms and definitions, and vocabulary. He or she must understand the author's intentions, so that the translation will convey the intended messages and ideas. A good translator has intimate insight into the nuances of both cultures—that of the author and that of the target audience. Ideally, a translator will at some point have lived among the people for whom he or she is translating and, therefore, know the language and culture well.

8. Conclusion

From the above findings, the study concluded that the level of effectiveness of language translation at Gotel Radio station in Yola, Adamawa state, Nigeria respondent agrees and interpreted satisfactory. In general the basic requirements for effective translation involved the translators having the competence to translate properly. The core of effective translation lies in the ability of the translator to understand and put into consideration the capacity of the audience to deduce his/her translations, thus the socio-cultural, linguistic background and educational abilities of the audience have to be considered. Therefore, in order to ensure effective translation, there is needed to keep updating the knowledge, skills and competences of the translators.

9. Recommendations

From the findings of the study and the conclusion presented above, the study made the following recommendations:

- There is need to emphasize proper training and effective training methods for language translators. The organization and other institutions should clearly and systematically teach and stress the importance of core competences in language translation. They should also emphasize the importance of understanding the key concepts of language translation, such as

socio-cultural, linguistics and awareness of the audience. Language translators should be trained and regularly updated on their skills and knowledge of the changing attitudes and perceptions of society in order to ensure that the translation is and remains effective.

- There is need for the organization (Gotel radio) to maintain constant interaction and seeking feedback from its listeners in order to gauge whether its program translations meets the expectations of the listeners. Given the fact that radio is in the business of disseminating information, translation is important in reaching those sections of the population whose dialect differs from the indigenous. However, in a bid to reach these sections of the population, care should be taken to ensure that the listeners get the correct meaning of the communication being translated.

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