

Promoting Human Right and Social Justice in Africa Through Translation; A Case Study Of Mass Media Translation

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ABSTRACT: *It can be assumed that every individual has a fundamental right to what is judged essential information. And since this information is considered necessary for the socio-economic well-being of a given population, the information should not only be assembled and made accessible, it should also be presented in a palatable and irresistible form to the majority of the target population so as to mobilize it for mass socio-technological advancement bearing in mind that to be hindered in any of these aspects of communication is to be culturally deprived and alienated since everyone has the right to know everything about anything and express opinion on any subject in any form. Translation develops an individual intellectually, skillfully and morally. It educates, entertains, informs and influences, thus creating awareness of all types of local, national and international events. Translation unites nations politically, culturally, technologically and scientifically. It practically develops a nation. This is because translation from one language into another of research reports and findings in science and technology has immensely assisted communities to be abreast of the latest development in the area of scientific and technological discoveries and inventions. This paper has the aim of presenting translation as promoting human right and social justice in Africa. We will look at some of the major roles of translation especially in a multifarious society.*

Keywords: *Communication, Human Right, Mass Media, Social Justice, Translation*

Date of Submission: 10-12-2019

Date of acceptance: 22-12-2019

I. INTRODUCTION

The world has changed dramatically in the last three to four decades. The driver for this phenomenon has been the advent of technology such as the internet, fax machines, satellite TV and mobile phones. Globalization has brought together many disparate cultures, which to date, may never have had any degree of cross cultural interaction. This is because regional and international interactions bring into contact many languages with different structures. In these present days, no nation can stand and survive alone without interacting in one way or the other with other nations. Issues of social security, healthcare and ethnic conflicts are shared by many countries of the world. The commonalities of these issues undercut the tendency to view them as peculiarly African, American, Asian problems. Since many of these transcend national boundaries, the trends and processes of operation are supranational. These processes and trends that transcend national economies and boundaries underlie the concept of globalization and language which captures the emerging issues and acquires global significance. Because of globalization many languages are in contact and as [1] says “.....in its widest sense globalization refers to the multiplicity of linkages and interconnections that transcend the nation states which make up the modern world system”. Because of the interconnections, decisions in one state or country produce consequences for citizens of many other states or countries. As [2] puts it: interdependence erodes the traditional boundaries between states, encouraging an expansion in the functions and responsibilities of the state, while denying its effective national control over policy formulation and policy outcome.

Communication is an essential part of globalization if continental unity will be achieved. This level of unity is a channel to: Conflict resolution, peace building, deepening of democratic governance, public accountability, eradication of poverty, illiteracy and disease. Communication involves the inter-change of thoughts and ideas. It is necessary for human relations and development to exist. It has its vehicle and channels. An indispensable vehicle of communication is language. Language is not only an instrument for communication. Language is an important means of human communication, a social tool which man uses for very many purposes including development. Language defines that path of socio-economic construction in the new order of things. But with new opportunities and a changing global environment there is often confusion and difficulty in communication and comprehension between social groups, resulting in a lack of productivity, effectiveness, and in some cases a negative effect on proper health care and safety issues. Language is used as time and place filler

designed to sustain some social interaction. Language, like the people who use it has much to emit (conceive and express) to its environment. Language in its nature and function is all embracing in life.

As such, its resources can be manipulated to serve as a veritable weapon of offence or defence. It is often said that language serves as an instrument of phatic communion without any power of offence. There are many barriers that impede the transmission of exact meaning which makes communication effective. These barriers can be linguistic, sociological, psychological or physical. They interfere with the planning, organization, transmission and understanding. The earlier these barriers are removed, the better because a changed, distorted or misunderstood message cannot provide the required co-operation and response from the receiver. This is because human beings have basic needs. Everyone needs to be recognized as an individual with personal identity. Again, man is a social being. He interacts with one another socially; people and individuals are supposed to enjoy themselves and feel happy both in body and soul. It is when one is free from worries that he enjoys life. If there are no disturbances, humiliation, fear, frustration, discrimination, denials, inequality and unrest, people will live with smiles, hope and appreciation. On the other hand, when people suffer undue denials and provocative abuses, there is bound to be tension and uncommon behaviors. Also, ignorance of another's language breeds suspicion and where there is suspicion there is no trust. Any move by another may be misconstrued and this leads to conflict. In such situations one is tempted to say that conflict of some sort is inherent in the social process. This goes also to say that any circumstance that warrants dissatisfaction, confusion, mistrust, fear, frustration, exploitation, embezzlement of public fund, insensitivity, intolerance, dishonesty, intimidation, incompatibility and insecurity amounts to social instability. This fall or change in socio-cultural and economic conditions can make people feel unhappy and when people are not happy, they protest, agitate, complain, petition, riot, demonstrate or show aggression and discontentment in negative ways. Conflict is then part of a social process by which people, groups and states adjust their different and changing interests, capabilities and wills. It is both a manifestation of a breakdown in social expectations and a means by which new expectations can be formed.

Language barriers can take different forms, from the multiplicity of the languages involved to their usage. Multiplicity of languages calls for translation. Ultimately, translation is important because it facilitates multilingual communication and allows people from around the world to better understand one another culturally, economically and socially. Translation represents a pragmatic framework for continental unity and development. Translation plays a very important role in globalization in the sense that it facilitates communication between nations. It opens new horizons for the people living in the country and awakens the consciousness of the nations. Since the world has become a global village with internet facilitating more and more the communication system, the role of translation has been increased above our expectations. In a multilingual and multicultural country, translation is a means for the exchange of ideas and the reflections between people that belong to different regions or have different cultures and languages. Translation is a kind of communication that transcends the natural frontiers of humanity. Many nations therefore use translation as a tool, be it to create or reinforce national cultures through literatures. It is so interesting to know that language barriers and cultural understanding can be overcome and can change the way business, government and non profits manage and how they attract the right kind of interest through this powerful tool of translation. Human right and social justice can thus be rightly promoted through the powerful tool of translation.

II. LANGUAGE AND TRANSLATION

Linguists have long acknowledged that language is one single trait that distinguishes humans from other species. Humans owe their social, political, economic and technological advances to language. [3], quoting extensively notes that 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 [4] 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.

Language remains a unique human gift and every speech community exploits its resources to characterize what [5] calls incremental innovations for peace and for war. When we study language, we deal with what [6] calls human essence, the distinctive quality that is unique to man. The faculty of language therefore stands at the center of our conception of man. In a key note address in Ahmadu Bello University, Zaria in 2006, the Nobel laureate, Prof. Wole Soyinka adds a fresh insight into the literature when he says that "language is memory which cannot be dispensed with or else, that collective recollection is silted up". To him, language is a tool of insurgence and that strong weapon of identity assertion. Emphasizing on this, we want to acknowledge that language as a social phenomenon exploits the context of its use to project the expected

message. [7] makes it clear that interpersonal relations are based on power demonstrated through language and speech art. [8] states:

A language is a system of conventional signs all aspects of whose structure....exists ultimately to serve the sovereign function of conveying meaning....language is unique in being able to express virtually anything that is conceivable.

Affirming this [9] notes that every conceivable human activity revolves around language. According to her; we use language to express love, hatred, anger, happiness, praise, satisfaction and dissatisfaction, to comment on the political, social, educational or economic situations in the country; to confirm or express religious beliefs, to comment on the weather and even to fill a vacuum when there is nothing else to do especially in the exchange of pleasantries. Human beings, therefore, are naturally endowed with the tendency to always talk, to use words, to employ language for a mutual social relationship with their fellow individuals and for the achievement of their daily objectives for their well-being and for the well-being of their community. People get on well when their communication flows. The same way, if there is no proper communication, activities in a given community would definitely crumble. Language is thus accepted as a major instrument for breaking linguistic barriers. One wonders what the world would have been without language.

Again, the world today is in the age of rapid transition and of all the important elements of socio-cultural change, [10] wants us to understand that language appears to be the most efficient means of measuring the quality of an age, especially the psychological disposition of a people and language remains a strong cord that sustains the global information chain. Language defines the path of socio-economic construction in the new order of things. The socio-economic structure of development may be determined by external forces but language holds a universal power of pronouncement. It is actually the force of satisfactory mutual relations that underlines the crucial place of language in the global market place. Presenting the views of [11] emphasizes that "Language indexes power, expresses power and is involved where there is contention over power and where power is challenged". Unchecked and unresolved, the issue of language can lead to the fracture of social groups.

On the other hand, translation as [12] puts it, is "a means of communication born out of cultural contacts between speakers of different languages". This can be clearly seen in the contacts between people within such international and regional organizations as UN, AU, ECOWAS, etc. [13] posits that "translation consists of producing in the target language the closest natural equivalent of the source language message, firstly with respect to meaning and secondly with respect to style". According to [14] translation serves as an instrument for the cross-fertilization of languages. This assertion goes to explain the fact that language is dynamic. Also, in their everyday lives, people have to criss-cross the globe for political, diplomatic, scientific, economic, sporting, religious and other reasons. All these situations require the use of language. Since no one can ever boast of being able to speak all the languages in the world, the need to translate concepts, notions, ideas and words from one language to the other is clear. Translation develops an individual all round: intellectually, skillfully, morally, and opens more horizons. It educates, entertains informs and influences. It liberates the mind and helps to create awareness of all types of local, national and international events. Above all, translation unites.

The proper integration of language and translation into our daily activities will help to reduce the illiteracy level and thus the often dangerous dichotomy between the elite and the masses, the educated and uneducated. Language has a central and rather crucial role to play in the mobilization of the population for specific national development programs example agriculture, timber exploitation, fishing etc. This is because the people need to understand government policies to be calm and avoid conflicts. Language and translation can make useful contributions in providing the information needed for the transformation and development projects as well as other aspects of life in a modern society in the following areas; health, education, family planning, child welfare, home craft, literacy, road safety, alcoholism, drugs, etc. Everything considered, it is clear that this level of information (aimed at the total mobilization of the communities) can best be achieved not only by the use of language, but by the combination of the powerful tools of language and translation which makes it easy for the various languages to be understood. So, like good education the proper use of language and translation provides the knowledge, skills and values necessary for man to become an effective agent of change.

THE MASS MEDIA

Mass media is the primary means of communication used to reach the vast majority of the general public. The most common platforms for mass media are newspapers, magazines, radio, television, and the internet. Media is at the core of today's interconnected and globalized world. It thrives on our need to share, communicate, entertain, experience, and create, and it has unrestrained potential for further growth in both global and local contexts. Communicating to the masses is not an easy thing; you have to become the best communicator to spread out your word. Modern media comes in many different formats, including print media (books, magazines, and newspapers), television, movies, video games, music, cell phones, various kinds of software, and the internet.

MEDIA TRANSLATION

Media translation encompasses various modes of communication, such as the textual, verbal, visual, interactive, and multimodal across all possible content types and platforms. The possibilities are infinite and ever expanding, from the translation of news, speeches, reports, symposiums, brochures, advertisements, website content, interviews, and conference proceedings, to the subtitling of movies and TV programs, all the way to intra- company documentation and interactive, educational content. Unlike translation in other industries, media translation does not depend solely on existing equivalences between two languages.

HUMAN RIGHTS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, MASS MEDIA AND TRANSLATION

Different people have different definitions and approaches in mind when they use the terms “human rights” and “social justice, but despite the diversity in definitions and approaches, at its core, the idea of human rights represents the claim that all people, based on universally shared qualities, deserve a certain threshold of equitable treatment that upholds their human dignity. The issue of human rights in the world today has reached the level of creed, thus becoming a plum with which to measure a government’s treatments of its citizenry. This results from consensus that nations must be judged in lieu of international moral codes conferring on individuals certain advantages simply because they are humans. Consequently, many nations and their leaders are assessed based on their denial, abuse or enhancement of these rights. In the debates in an essay volume of Strategic Studies [15], “human rights” can variously refer to the international laws and norms arising from the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, or the myriad local struggles those communities around the world wage for their livelihoods. Although local efforts may not be explicitly connected to national and international laws and norms, it is clear that in some sense, “human rights” refers to all these things. Human beings have fundamental rights that should be met to maintain a balance in the society. Efforts should be made to meet these rights for peace building. [16] defined peace building as “efforts to transform potentially violent social relations into sustainable peaceful relations and outcomes”. [17] affirms what Lederach says by saying that peace building efforts attack the root causes of conflict. Also, [18], [19], [20]; all assert that peace building is an act of addressing the root causes of conflict. Peace, on the other hand, as posited by Ibeanu “.....increases and decreases depending on objective socio-economic and political conditions. It is also reversible, that is, it is possible to move from higher levels of peace to lower levels;.....”

On the other hand, as a global health advocate, [3] explains, “people who work for social justice, regardless of their own station in life, tend to see the world as deeply flawed. They see the conditions of the poor not only as unacceptable but as the result of structural violence that is human-made”. Thus, social justice work involves addressing economic inequality and social marginalization as if they were in some sense human rights violations, rather than unfortunate or inevitable consequences of history. We note here that liberals seek to achieve social justice by having marginalized groups gain access to the institutions that have excluded or discriminated against them (eg, corporations, the military, governments, etc) while radical or Marxist activists seek to remedy social inequalities by overturning or revolutionizing those very institutions that they deem unjust.

Now, man being a social animal has always sought cooperative and interdependent relationships in order to communicate, connect and stay connected with each other especially across distances. These attempts have resulted in the media of communication. From letters, which happen to be the earliest method of communication, through the telegraph in 1792, the pneumatic post in 1865, the radio in 1881, the telephone in 1890 to the social media in the 20th century, the super computers in 1940 and the subsequent creation of networks between computers that has resulted in the development of the internet, the rich diversity of the human community can now be seen as a global village. In the new setup that is the global village, understanding is a strong binding force and can cement peoples of a nation and the world at large with love for greater achievements. The biblical story of the disarray at the site of the Tower of Babel goes a very long way in showcasing the importance of understanding among the people of the world through translation, a common mode of communication for all forms of collective effort. [7], adds a more interesting aspect of language by emphasizing the communication as well as the unifying nature of language:

In Babel, as in our day, the role of language as a powerful
Weapon in the hands of man for cohesion has by no
Means diminished. Man has continued to use it as an
Important tool for forging unity (2)

Indeed, conflicts of all kinds most frequently arise when people feel threatened regardless of whether the threat is real or not. Injustice is collaborated by inequities and unfair treatment among equal citizens. Inequities abound in all spheres of our national life (economic, social, political and cultural). In Nigeria today, might is right as mediocrity and favoritism have replaced meritocracy, Justice and fair play. The Ginni index is highly skewed. Few are in affluence and the majority poor. Those who are strong cheat and humiliate the weak. The scenario has produced a society where what you have is a direct outcome of whom you know, where you

come from, the language you speak, the faith you profess as against abilities and credentials. Author Nwankwo Captured the distress this way:

In the larger society we are amazed by various forms of social injustice. Our national economy until recently was utterly dysfunctional and tottered as it were to a predictable catastrophe. The democratic process has been arrested by a combination of sustained junta syndrome, civilian collaboration and primordial cleavages. Social infrastructure has decayed beyond recognition, a testimony to the inner national rot" (Nwankwo 1995)

It is generally accepted that translation is a means of communication necessitated by cultural contacts and interactions between speakers of different languages. It is necessary for human relations and development to exist.

III. CONCLUSION

Over the years men have tried to live harmoniously with other human beings but because of the multiplicity of language 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. Language is then presented as an important means of human communication, a social tool which man uses for very many purposes in order to properly inform, educate, incite, influence and conscientize the community, state and the larger society for development purposes.

In light of the foregoing this paper posits that the peace and development of any nation, continent or the world at large depends upon the successful interaction of the material resources of a given geographical area with the human resources available in the area. This, the paper posits can be achieved by trying to meet up with the fundamental human rights and social justice of getting the people to be able to access the right information through media translation to remove the inequalities that could be created when people feel they are not carried along in getting them to understand the basic things happening around them. When development occurs, new materials and products are manufactured while new roles become possible for the individuals of that given area.

Today, with the rising enthusiasm in human beings to acquire knowledge, there is a great need for translation in the domain of education, science and technology, the media, commerce, business, literature, religion, tourism, etc. it is the only means through which knowledge can be made available and passed from one generation to the other. It is accepted as one of the ways of reconciling the interests of different groups. It helps people to appreciate others and respect their ways of thinking and culture. Translation is becoming more and more important in the diffusion of information and it helps to promote mutual understanding between different ethnic groups and contributes thus to the national integration. The fundamental objective of translation consists therefore, increasing understanding and communication between the people.

Translation is one of the most effective means of communication in the globalised era. It helps in filling the gap between nations and erases language barriers by translating texts from one language to the other. In a multilingual and multicultural country, translation is a vehicle for the exchange of ideas and the reflections between people that have different cultures, languages and belong to different regions. Translation is a kind of communication that transcends the natural frontiers of humanity. It is crucial in the amelioration of communication and mutual understanding between nations and helps augment world unity.

Translation is considered as an important aspect and a component of the learning of languages. At the national level, translation contributes to the national integration and at the international level translation contributes to the growth of good bilateral relations between neighbouring countries. In a multilingual and multicultural country like Nigeria, translation holds a primordial importance for the exchange of ideas and the reflexions between people that have different cultures, languages and belong to different regions. Translation helps to surmount language barrier in the process of communication as it is the process of social exchange and a tool for communication between two languages. Its target is to promote the political, economic and cultural growth and it has the mission of sharing the achievements of different civilizations. A good translation contributes in making the message of the communicator to be understood by the world thereby erasing all suspicion and lack of trust.

The importance of translation in our daily life is very widespread and multidimensional. Translation plays a major role in the knowledge and comprehension of literature. This shows that it is through translation that we have access to the literature of many languages and the different events that take place in the world. Again, translation helps us to acquire new knowledge or to discover what was unknown. These days not only countries and societies should co-operate closely between themselves, but also people need to be in contact with people from other communities. In order to respond to the increased need, translation has become an important activity at the social and national level. As an act of international communication translation helps to establish communication between people from different linguistic and cultural backgrounds. When we understand ourselves, peace will rule our country and the world. Things get done and many conflicts are resolved and also for the better understanding of the many languages as [12], puts it;

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; if this remains undone, morals and arts deteriorate; if morals and arts deteriorate, justice will go astray; if justice goes astray, the people will go about in hopeless confusion. Hence there must be no arbitrariness in what is said. This matters above everything else

Language has a central and rather crucial role to play in the mobilization of the rural population for specific national development programs eg. Agriculture, timber exploitation, fishing, etc. Language can make useful contributions in providing the skills needed for rural development projects as well as other aspects of life in a modern society in the following areas: health, education, family planning, child welfare, home craft, literacy, road safety, alcoholism, drugs, etc. Everything considered, it is clear that when the appropriate language is used, the people will naturally be drawn into being totally involved in government policies and once the community members are captured, the states and the nations will benefit and societal ills will be corrected thereby achieving a high rate of development. Today, governmental action takes place on a global level, where responsibilities such as the welfare of citizens and economic growth, are acted upon by an international political body. In the globalised world, translation is an indispensable tool.

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Agwu Patience Uzoma "Promoting Human Right and Social Justice in Africa Through Translation; A Case Study Of Mass Media Translation" International Journal of Humanities and Social Science Invention (IJHSSI), vol. 08, no. 12, 2019, pp. 58-63