

Term Creation: The Translation of Some Optical Terms into Igbo Language

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ABSTRACT: *The need to fill some terminological gaps has often led to term creation which has been an integral part of the translator's job. This work therefore seeks to examine the processes involved in term creation with emphasis on the creation of some optical terms into Igbo language. We did extensive review of existing literature. It was however discovered, in the course of this work, that borrowing with some measure of adaptation is the most appropriate technique for rendering the highly technical terms in this domain into Igbo language. Most of the terms were phonologically and morphologically modified to reflect the features of the new language. It was therefore recommended that similar technique should be adopted in translating other terms in other domains for the purpose of enriching the language.*

Keywords: *term creation, loan translation, borrowing, adaptation, optical terms, Igbo language*

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I. INTRODUCTION:

Translation has been defined as “a dynamic process which involves the manipulation of textual substance in one language to create textual substance in another language” [1]. In his effort to successfully create a textual substance from the source text, the translator encounters quite a number of problems. In a preface to Georges Mounin's *Problèmes théoriques de la traduction*, [2] highlighted some of these problems to include “problem of linguistic structures, problem of vocabulary and problem of civilization” (our translation). In the course of exercising his professional duties, the translator is confronted with these problems. His success or otherwise largely depends on his ability to take the right decisions each time he encounters any of these obstacles. Every translation is a reflection of the quality of decisions taken by the translator in resolving the problems encountered in the course of his work.

Term creation therefore becomes an option whenever a translator observes a terminological gap that needs to be filled. [3], [4]. There is no doubt that as people evolve, their languages also evolve. This accounts for the disparities in the level of development of different languages of the world since the rate of development can hardly be the same with any two communities. In the context of this study, the two languages involved are English and Igbo. English is one of the European languages while Igbo is one of the African languages. In terms of development, European countries are highly advanced educationally, scientifically, technologically and industrially. As they advance in these different sectors, their languages also evolve at the same speed. Any translator who has a European language and an African language as his working languages will surely encounter problems as he translates from any of the European languages to any of the African languages. This is because the European language, being highly advanced, will surely contain terms that are non-existent in the African language. We discovered this as we examined the translation of some optical terms into Igbo language in a work we published earlier entitled “Terminology Research in the Digital Era: Implications for the translation of some optical terms into Igbo language”. In this work, we highlighted that almost all the optical terms examined had no Igbo equivalents. It was this realization that led to the conception of the present work where we intend to highlight some term creation processes and propose Igbo equivalents of the optical terms we examined in the previous work.

In this work, therefore, we intend to examine the concept of term, criteria for the selection of a term as well as types of term formation. We shall also propose some Igbo equivalents of the optical terms highlighted in our previous work. There will also be a discussion on the technique adopted in coining the Igbo equivalents before the conclusion.

The Concept of Term

In view of the fact that this work is centred on term creation, it is pertinent to clarify the concept of term as it applies to this study. Dictionary.com defines it as:

A word or group of words designating something, especially in a particular field, as atom in physics, quietism in theology, adze in carpentry, or distinct leader in politics.

The Chambers 21st Century Dictionary also defines it as “a word or expression, especially one used with a precise meaning in a specialized field”. In spite of the slight differences in the choice of words, the two dictionaries cited above did not fail to highlight that the sense of any term is determined by the domain in which it appears. This is very true as the meanings of some terms vary as their contexts change. It might also be necessary to review the additional information provided by Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia which defines terms as:

Words and compound words or multi-word expressions that in specific contexts are given specific meanings-these may deviate from the meanings the same words have in other contexts and in everyday language.

There is yet a more detailed definition provided by [5] in which a term is defined as:

A label for one specific concept in a specialized field
A term can contain a single word (simple term) or many Words (complex term). A term can also be a symbol (C), (R), or a fomular (H₂O). Terms can be similar to words in general language. However, what makes terms different to words in general language is the specific and detailed meaning which they have in their context or specialized field.

The last two definitions also stressed the fact that it is the context that gives the term its meaning. This implies that it is inappropriate to isolate any term from its context as the change in context could lead to a change in meaning. The last two definitions also hinted that a term could be simple or complex while Cymraeg added an interesting twist by stating that a term could appear as a symbol. It is obvious from the definitions given above that a term is different from a word used in the general sense. From the foregoing, it becomes clear that there is nothing general about a term because specificity is its main attribute-specificity in context and specificity in meaning. For a term to qualify as one, its context must be known because it is the context that gives it its meaning. Outside the known context, the term could acquire a different meaning. This perhaps explains why ambiguity is out of the question whenever a term is in contention.

There is another aspect of this concept that deserves our attention. Most of the dictionaries reviewed stressed the fact that the meaning of a term can only be determined in the “specialized field” in which it occurs. In one of its entries, Chambers 21st Century Dictionary defines specialized as “highly specific, understood only by an expert in the field”. The above implies that when a specialized field is involved, a specialised knowledge is equally involved. This explains why the meanings of the terms are usually not known to the uninitiated. This equally explains why most of what medical doctors write in their prescriptions can hardly be deciphered by their patients. Understanding the meanings of terms, therefore, especially by translators implies delving into the relatively unknown domains to unravel the bits of knowledge hitherto known only to the experts in the domain in question. This sometimes takes the form of consulting the experts or the specialized documents in the field of specialization in question. In this digital era, however, accessing these bits of knowledge has become relatively easy except where the terms in question do not exist in the language under study as it is the case with optical terms in Igbo language. To conclude this segment, therefore, we can state that a term refers to a word or group of words or a symbol that has specific meaning in a specialized field of study. In the next segment, we will examine the criteria for the selection of a term.

Criteria for Term Selection

There is no doubt that certain criteria are considered in the selection of terms [6], [7]. [8] highlighted what they called “fundamental criteria for terms” which include:

- A term should be linguistically correct.
- It should reflect as far as possible the characteristics of the concept which it represents
- It should be concise
- There should only be one term for a single concept.

[9] also quoted the guidelines given by the International Organisation for Standardization (ISO) as follows:

Terms should consistently reflect some key features of the concepts they are linked to in order to facilitate precise reference. At the same time, they should be as economical as possible without giving rise to homonymy. Terms should be lexically systematic and should conform to the phonological and morphological rules of the language. Terms must conform to the general rules of word-formation of the language, that is they should allow composition and derivation where appropriate.

The meaning of a term should be recognizable independently of any specific context.

Sager in an article entitled “Terminology Standardization” summarized the criteria for term selection as follows:

Economy: one of the competing terms may be noticeably shorter and easier to write and remember correctly. Precision: one term may be more transparent and less ambiguous in its reference than another. Appropriateness: for example, one term may be more widely used than, and therefore generally preferred to, another term.

It can be observed that Cymraeg stressed that a term should be linguistically correct. This is similar to the guideline given by the International Organisation for Standardization that a term should “conform to the phonological and morphological rules of the language. It is obvious, from the foregoing, that the following criteria should be considered in the selection of terms;

1. A good term should be economical. This implies that it should be as brief as possible.
2. A term should be transparent. This means that the term should be concise. It should not be ambiguous.
3. It should reflect the features of the concept it represents
4. Every term should conform to the lexical, morphological and phonological rules of the language
5. It should be widely acceptable to the experts in the domain in question

What is Term Creation?

The word “creation” is derived from the word “create” which the Chambers 21st Century Dictionary defines as “to bring into existence, to introduce”. Term creation, therefore, is the act of introducing new terms in a given field of activity. It can also be referred to as the practice of coining or introducing neologisms (new words or expressions). Experts have identified two forms of term creation-primary term creation and secondary term creation.

Forms of Term Creation

There are two forms of term creation-primary term formation and secondary term formation [10]. Sager adds that:

Primary term formation occurs when a newly created concept has to be named. Translators and terminologists distinguish between provisionally named terms, usually associated with stipulative definition, as they occur in scientific position papers or theses and the definitive establishment of a new term-concept pair. The latter has to be accompanied by a full definition which links the new term to existing ones in a given knowledge structure.

There is no doubt that researches are on-going in all the higher institutions around the world. These researches especially in the area of science and technology often lead to the discovery of new concepts and the extension of knowledge about existing ones. These new concepts as well as the additional information about existing ones often lead to the naming and renaming of the concepts. In the pharmaceutical industry, there is a drug known as **Panadol**. When the strength of this drug was enhanced by experts in the industry, it was renamed **Panadol Extra**. Just as it happens often in the pharmaceutical industry, so it also happens in other areas of human endeavour. As new concepts evolve, new terms emerge. This gives rise to primary term formation. [11] also adds:

Secondary term formation occurs as a result of the monolingual revision of a given terminology, for example for the purpose of producing a standard document or a transfer of knowledge to another linguistic community, a process which requires the creation of new terms in the target language.

From the above, the distinction between primary and secondary term formation becomes more obvious. If two or more terms exist for one concept, which often happens as a result of multiple researches by different experts on the same subject, a consensus is often reached by a body charged with the responsibility for a more acceptable term for the purpose of standardization. In this case, it is a case of secondary term formation. This may also be in the form of recreating a term that exists in one language in another language using any of the known methods of term creation. The two forms just described are good examples of secondary term formation. It may be pertinent to note, at this point, that the major difference between primary term formation and secondary term formation according to [12] is;

The fact that in primary term formation there is no linguistic precedent, though there may be more or less strict rules for forming appropriate terms. In secondary term formation, by contrast, there is always the precedent of an existing term, with

its own motivation, in another language.

It is clear, from the above, that while “no linguistic precedent” exists in the case of primary term formation, the concept having just been discovered, such precedent exists in the case of secondary term formation. Perhaps, it might be appropriate to state that the effort to create optical terms in Igbo language in this work is a very good example of secondary term formation in view of the fact that the terms being adapted into Igbo language already exist in English.

[13] also highlights the different methods of secondary term formation as follows:

Several methods of secondary interlingual term formation co-exist; they include borrowing, loan translation, paraphrase, parallel translation, adaptation and complete new creation. These methods may be used simultaneously or sequentially and often give rise to several alternative or competing new terms.

From the foregoing, the different methods new terms are introduced into another language become more obvious. Where outright borrowing and loan translation could not be used, paraphrase, parallel translation or adaptation could be very useful. Where none of these methods works, the creation of a completely new term becomes the only option left. We are going to briefly examine each of these methods below:

Borrowing: This is the process whereby words from one language are introduced into another language. [14], [15]. The vocabularies of different languages of the world get enriched through this process. Outright borrowing is very possible among the indo- European languages such as English and French. Many French words have long become part of the English vocabulary. (see Chambers 21st Century Dictionary, p.530). In the same way, “bye” and many other English words have long become popular among French speakers [16]. However, this kind of borrowing is not easy from European languages into most African languages especially Igbo language. This is because the new term must undergo some phonological and morphological modification before being absorbed into the new language. What is very peculiar and more interesting about the Igbo language is that these modifications come automatically and naturally among genuine Igbo speakers. The highly educated Igbo speakers might practice what they learnt at school by pronouncing the two words, “church” and “cup” like English people but the not-too-educated and illiterate members of the community, who are in the majority, have the Igbo versions of the same words as follows:

English	Igbo
Church	choochi
Cup	koopu

The two English words above have long been absorbed into the Igbo language but it is the Igbo versions that are most commonly used. The absorption of these two words into Igbo language implies that borrowing of words from one language to another could occur due to exigencies of the time such as cultural contacts, and not necessarily due to the absence of equivalents in the target language. This point is being made because the two words in question (church and cup) already have their equivalents in Igbo language as follows:

English	Igbo
Church	uka
Cup	iko

Loan Translation: Merriam- Webster Online Dictionary defines Loan translation as “a compound, derivative or phrase that is introduced into a language through translation of the constituents of a term in another language”. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia also defines it as “a calque or loan translation is a word or phrase borrowed from another language by literal, word- for –word (latin, “verbum pro verbo”) translation. Finally, Your Dictionary.com also defines it as:

A form of borrowing from one language to another whereby the semantic components of a given term are literally translated into their equivalents in the borrowing language, also called calque.

From the above, we understand that loan translation is synonymous with calque which involves word-for-word translation of the linguistic components of a term into the equivalent forms in the target language. [17] give some examples as follows:

English	Igbo	Meaning of Igbo Version
Work and study	aru agu	work, study
Audiovisual	nurulere	hear, see
High blood pressure	Obaramgbalielu	blood rising up

Paraphrase: Collins Dictionary.com defines paraphrase as “an expression of a statement or text in other words especially in order to clarify”, Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia also defines it as “a restatement of the meaning of a text or passage using other words. A paraphrase typically explains or clarifies the text that is being paraphrased”. It is clear, from the above, that where paraphrase is used as a technique of secondary term formation, it usually involves using more and simpler words to clarify a difficult term in the source text. This

technique was extensively used by Chinua Achebe to communicate difficult Igbo terms in *Things Fall Apart* to his English readers as the following examples will illustrate.

Igbo Expression

Ezeani
 Agadi-nwanyi
 Ezigbo
 Ilo
 Efulufu
 Chi

Achebe's Paraphrase

the priest of the earth goddess. P21 line 35
 old woman p9 line 2
 the good one p30 line 4
 the village playground p 30 line 21
 worthless empty man p101 line 9
 personal god p13 line 15

Adaptation: A translator resorts to this method when he perceives a cultural gap in the course of exercising his professional duties. When such gap becomes very obvious, the translator modifies the form of the source language term to make it more adaptable to the new cultural environment. [18], [19]. Wiktionary Online defines adaptation as the “ modification of something or its parts that makes it more fit for existence under the conditions of its current environment”. [6] also defines it in the following words:

Adaptation is a very important technique. It is necessary when something specific to one language culture is expressed in a totally different way that is familiar or appropriate to another language culture. It is a shift in cultural environment. It involves changing the cultural reference when a situation in the source culture does not exist in the target.

Culture is the totality of a people's way of life. Elements of culture differ from one community to another. It is these differences that account for the disparities in the way people greet, pray, work, eat, dress and even relate to one another. Just as cultural elements differ from one community to another so also linguistic resources differ from one linguistic community to another. Differences in the cultural environments are more perceptible to translators who operate across cultural lines. When cultural differences impede the operational efficiency of a translator, he devises a strategy to communicate the necessary ideas to his target audience. This often leads to the adoption of adaptation as a strategy. Traditionally, the words “air conditioner” and “aero - plane” do not exist in Igbo culture. However, the ideas expressed by these two terms could be communicated to the Igbo speaking community with the words “ igwentuoyi” and “ugbo- elu” respectively. In this work, we intend to translate some highly technical optical terms into Igbo language. It might be pertinent to state, at this point, that adaptation is the main strategy we will adopt in carrying out this assignment. Perhaps, it might be appropriate to equally state that adaptation could take the form of using the linguistic resources of the target culture to communicate the idea expressed by the term in the source text as we did with the translation of “air conditioner” and “aero plane” above. It could also take the form of modifying the source text term morphologically and phonologically to make the new term agree with the grammatical rules of the target language. This is what we will do with most of the optical terms we are going to translate into Igbo language. If we have not stressed parallel translation which is one of the methods of term creation highlighted by Sager, it is because we do not feel that parallel translation has much to contribute in term creation. Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia defines parallel text (parallel translation) in the following words:

A parallel text is a text placed alongside its translation or translations. Reference Bibles may contain the original languages and a translation, or several translations by themselves, for ease of comparison and study.

As the definition above highlighted; parallel translation may be more appropriate in evaluating different translations of a given source text rather than in creating new terms. This explains why very little space is given to its discussion in this work that is centred on term creation. Having clarified this point, we will now proceed to give the proposed Igbo versions of the optical terms highlighted in this work.

Term in English	New Term in Igbo	Remarks
Eye	anya	Normal Igbo word
Eyelid	nkuchianya	Calque
Eyelashes	ibubere anya	Version from one of Igbo dialects
Lens	lensi	Modified to conform to Igbo Phonological system
Iris	airisi	MCIPS
Pupil	pupili	MCIPS
Conjunctiva	konjonktiva	MCIPS
Cornea	konia	MCIPS
Cataract	katarakt	MCIPS

Glaucoma	glokoma	MCIPS
Conjunctivitis	konjonktivaitisi	MCIPS
Myopia	mayopia	MCIPS
Chalazion	chalazionu	MCIPS
Strabismus	strabisimusu	MCIPS
Presbyopia	presibaopia	MCIPS
Pinguecula	pinguwekula	MCIPS
Keratitis	keratitis	BORROWING
Blepharitis	blefaritis	MCIPS
Amblyopia	amblyopia	MCIPS
Ptosis	tosis or pitosis	MCIPS
Hyperopia	haiparopia	MCIPS

NOTE: MCIPS means modified to conform to Igbo phonological system.

II. DISCUSSION ON FINDINGS:

In our previous article entitled “Terminology Research in the Digital Era: Implications for the Translation of some Optical Terms into Igbo Language”, we pointed out that of all the twenty one terms highlighted in the work; only two had equivalents in Igbo language. In the current work, we have succeeded in proposing Igbo equivalents for the remaining nineteen terms. We observed, in the course of the work, that only “eye” had a natural Igbo equivalent which is “anya”. “Nkuchianya” that is proposed as the equivalent of “eyelid” is not our original idea. The term already exists in the online database that is accessible to Google Translators. There is, however, nothing wrong with retaining “nkuchianya” as the Igbo equivalent of “eyelid”. We, however, observed that loan translation or calque was the method used in arriving at the Igbo equivalent since the term was derived from a word-for-word translation of “eye”(anya) and “lid”(nkuchi), that is, something that covers something. “Ibubereanya” that we are proposing here as the Igbo equivalent of “eyelashes” is derived from the Owerre dialect of Igbo language.

All the other new Igbo terms from numbers 4-21 were derived from the English versions of the terms. However, to be usable and acceptable in the target language, their forms were morphologically and phonologically modified except in the case of “keratitis” which was completely borrowed because the term harmonized perfectly with the Igbo phonological system. While stressing that borrowing from other languages could be a way of enriching the target language, [8] made it clear that “the words borrowed are usually adapted to the sound system and grammar of the language. [13] also stressed the need for guidelines in secondary term formation adding that “it is the proper concern of terminologists to provide such guidelines; on the basis of pattern of term and word formation which are already prevalent in the subject field and natural language in question”. There is no doubt that borrowing is a major process of “lexical expansion” for all languages, what is, however, pertinent is that in the process of borrowing, the uniqueness of every language must be respected. The new terms should be adapted to the target language phonologically and morphologically. This makes the process of absorption into the receptor language very easy. That is exactly what we have done with the optical terms we examined in this work.

III. CONCLUSION

In this work, we examined Term Creation and the translation of some Optical Terms into Igbo Language. It was highlighted that term creation involves the introduction of new terms in a particular field of human endeavour. We also identified the basic methods of term creation to include: borrowing, loan translation, paraphrase, adaptation and complete new creation. Each of the above methods was explained and examples were given where necessary. Finally, we proposed the Igbo versions of the optical terms examined in this work. The work revealed the dearth of technical terms in Igbo language especially in the field studied. It is therefore suggested that research effort of this nature should regularly be carried out as a way of ensuring the rapid development of Igbo language in all the domains of human activity.

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