

Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) of Food and Drugs: The Role of Student Translator in National Development

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Abstract: *The role of language in facilitating national development can never be over-emphasised because the national understanding and cohesion that run on the wheels of language create opportunities for sustainable development. An integral aspect of language that typifies this is Translation which serves as a key contributing force towards the consolidation of understanding while creating opportunities for personal, group and national development. The study and practice of French Translation now increasingly offer more opportunities for creative and constructive engagement of Nigerian youth as student translators empowered to meet French Translation/Interpretation needs in canned/preserved food and drug sectors of the country. Suffice it to add, these initiatives carry the prospects of reducing Nigeria's double-digit unemployment rate, curb youth restiveness, banditry and militancy, provide credible alternatives to crime, prostitution and illegal migration, thereby contributing to national development in quantum leaps and bounds. This paper aspires to initiate ways in which the teaching of French Translation in*

Nigeria Universities can include Translation Quality Assessment (TQA) with a view to unleashing the productive capacity of Nigerian translation students as well as channel their energies towards worthy ventures in sustainable growth and national development through TQA of the French Translation in canned/preserved foods and drugs. The paper provides fresh insights into how Nigerian universities can increase their contributions to national development by maximally leveraging on TQA of French Translations of canned/preserved foods and drugs to access funding for initiatives that fall under current donor mappings.

Keywords: Translation Quality Assessment, French Translation, Student translator, National development, Food and Drugs.

1. Introduction

National development is the ability of a country to improve the social welfare of the people by providing social amenities like quality education, potable water, transportation infrastructure, medical care, etc. Across the globe, governments draw up national development plans and policies based on the perceived needs of their citizens. One of the two broad objectives of the Nigerian Vision 2020 was to efficiently use human and natural resources to achieve rapid economic growth (Commonwealth Governance for development, n.d). This paper intends to look at the proposed role of the student translator as a human resource in national development and the possibility of translation assessment of the French translations of canned/preserved food and drug items in the country.

Certain key questions cannot but emerge. Who is the student translator? What is national development? Why should food and drug items in Nigeria be translated into French? Could there be errors in existing translations of canned/preserved food and drug items in Nigeria? What body has been responsible for ensuring a proper translation of these items in Nigeria? The exploration below provides adequate answers to the lingering question. Therefore, this paper emphasises a new initiative in the role of the student translator in contributing to constructively engaging youths, generate funds for their universities while at the same time improving the French Translation of canned/preserved food and drug items through TQA.

2. From the French Language to Translation Studies

The importance of the French language as a tool for meeting the transformation agenda in Nigeria cannot be overemphasised. According to Ajiboye (2002), the French language and the

contemporary Nigerian society are inseparable as the modern world sees it as one of the languages upon which civilisation depends. Ajiboye (2002) further argued that speaking French in the 18th and 19th century was considered a symbol of intellectual soundness, lucidity, nobility of mind, grace and culture. I share in this thought that the prestigious nature of the French language is no doubt evident today in this age. Therefore, the importance of the French language cannot but be neglected, only at the peril of any country.

It is one of the six official languages of the United Nations (www.humanrightscareers.com) in which even a Universities Outreach Program has been launched. Since the European Union (EU) decisions affect directly or indirectly developing countries like Nigeria, it is simply common sense for the French language to be taught extensively in the country. It is evident that French-speaking countries surround Nigeria. Nigeria is bounded in the East by the Cameroon republic, in the West by the Republic of Benin. In the North, it is bordered by Niger and Chad republics, respectively and in the South by the Atlantic Ocean. Apart from the geographical location of Nigeria around Francophone countries, it is one of the official languages of most international organisations. Organisations such as the United Nations (UN), European Union (EU), African Union (AU), and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), whose headquarters is in Abuja, Nigeria, all recognise the French language as a working language. Based on this, the knowledge of French language offers educational opportunities and international exposure, especially now that the world has become a global village.

Subsumed in the concept of the French language for national development is the indisputable and undeniable aspect of translation studies for national development. Iloh (2019) postulates that Translation has always been an integral part of French language acquisition either formally or informally. If we agree that Nigeria must maintain a cordial relationship with its francophone neighbours and remain relevant in the larger international bodies like the African Union (AU) and the EU, etc., then the subject of translation studies for national development is, to say the least, timely.

Iloh (2019) explains that part of the history of translation studies in Nigeria can be traced back to the period translation was introduced as a course at Advanced Level French of West African Examinations Council (W.A.E.C) and the National Certificate in Education (N.C.E) in the acquisition of a foreign language. Iloh (2019) also mentioned that the establishment of translation training courses became paramount in language departments all over the nation when Nigeria began to attend meetings of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), African Union (AU), United Nations (UN) and other related international organisations. Translation is at the heart of communication between states, economies and cultures. Nigeria should see herself in the eyes of an economically and politically motivated state for development and begin to see herself through the silent, subtle eyes of French Translation in her bid to improve bilateral relations with French-speaking communities and improve economic development.

2.1 From Translation Studies to TQA

This section is treated with a myriad of questions about and on the teaching of TQA in universities in Nigeria. Moorkens, Castilho, Gaspari and Doherty (2018) explain that there is already the argument about teaching, training and education in translation quality assessment (TQA) being neglected. Moorkens et al. (2018) went on to say that even in academia, there seems to be a lack of adequate training opportunities to equip translation students with the knowledge and skills required to use TQA. The discussion about youth employment is not complete without the discussion about youth employability. The Nigerian Translation student cannot also be excluded in the talks about youth employability in his translation study. According to Moorkens et al. (2018) TQA skill has immediate effects on their employability and long-term effects on professional practice. I pose the following questions based on recent documentation by Moorkens et al. (2018) as follow:

- Are our educators and their students sufficiently familiarised with TQA models and tools that are now commonplace in the industry?
- Are our academic translation training programmes still focused only on theoretical frameworks?

- Is there in place the teaching of state-of-the-art quality evaluation metrics and tools that graduates are likely to encounter when they enter the translation marketplace?

2.2 Cultural Specificity in Translation of food and drugs

As a nation located in a continent immersed in deep cultural and traditional activities, how can we talk about national development without looking in the direction of Translation of locally produced and packaged food and drugs into the French language? Who will translate and push to the international market, food and drugs produced by our locals if not the Ibo, Yoruba, Hausa, Urhobo, Ijaw, Efik citizens, some of who are also translation students in various universities? I believe and advocate that the Nigerian translation student firmly takes his place, while still in training, to voluntarily bring the hard work and the handwork of people to the limelight through the translation and translation evaluation of the finished products of food and drugs into French.

According to Newmark's (1988) taxonomy of cultural specificity in Translation, food and drugs fall in the group of material culture and strategies that the translation student can employ in the Translation of food and drugs. Some of these strategies are paraphrased, componential analysis, naturalisation, cultural equivalent, transference, neutralisation, literal Translation, etc. Horbačauskienė, Kasperaviciene and Petroniene (2016) have indicated in their research that not every culture-specific items are rendered into the target language, and this is a significant factor in TQA. This is, therefore, one of the bases on which I encourage the student translator, as well, on trying their hands on TQA of food and drugs in Nigeria. The translation student does not have to wait for the government or the lecturers to put everything in perfect shape before he proves his worth in the field of Translation.

3. Translation of Food and Drug

It is assumed that almost every home in Nigeria consumes, either daily or weekly, canned/preserved foods and drugs in Nigeria like Gino Magic Pepper & Onion, Curry Powder, Dried Thyme, Mayonnaise, Jollof Rice Spice, Wama Wonder pepper soup spice, A & Shine Garlic Honey, Piriton syrup, Paracetamol tablets, Penicillin Ophthalmic ointment, Vitamins C, A, B and K tablets to mention but a few.

Some of these canned/preserved foods and drugs like Bama Mayonnaise, manufactured outside the country, are imported into the country with the corresponding French Translation; some others manufactured outside the country like Peptang Pili Pili Garlic sauce, Spice Supreme Curry Powder, Dried Thyme, etc. do not have a French translation. Also, some canned/preserved foods and drugs manufactured in the country, like Hollandia Soya Milk, do not have a French translation. Some locally produced preserved foods like Gino Magic Pepper & Onion Tomato seasoning mix do have a French translation, and this is impressive, but this is not to say there are no failed translations on canned food and drugs. A few examples of failed translations curled from reiteration by Adedimeji (2020) on consumed foods are:

- Pepsi's slogan "Pepsi Brings You Back to Life" was debuted in China as "Pepsi Brings You Back from the Grave."
- The American Dairy Association replicated its "Got Milk?" campaign in Spanish-speaking countries where it was translated into "Are You Lactating?"
- KFC made Chinese consumers a bit apprehensive when "finger-licking good" was translated as "eat your fingers off."

3.1 Matters Arising on Canned/Preserved Foods and Drugs in Nigeria

Certain propositions indeed come to mind just taking a few samples of canned/preserved foods in the country. With the proximity of francophone countries to Nigeria, Niger in North East, Cameroun in the South West, Benin Republic in the West and some French expatriates and nationals in our midst, this paper proposes that:

- a. All canned/preserved food and drugs, especially those manufactured in the country, be translated into French.
- b. Producers of canned/preserved food and drugs not manufactured in the country be asked to pay a proposed "Translation fee" for the Translation of their products into French.

The government should fund established translation associations and translation departments in the tertiary institutions to work with the student translators to evaluate the French translations of the canned/ preserved food and drug items; this will significantly improve bilateral relations between Nigeria and her Francophone neighbours and France at large. This is possible if the right policies are put in place to achieve this, keeping in mind that the "Nigeria canned food market is projected to reach US\$126.825 million by 2024" (Research and markets, 2019).

3.2 Policies on the Translation of canned/ Preserved Foods Labels

"By knowing the product identity, quantity and qualities, consumers decide if the price is satisfactory according to their needs and desires" (Food and Agricultural Organisation [FAO], 2016). This is called "information asymmetry" (FAO, 2016). I, therefore, propose that the Translation of canned foods be part of this "information asymmetry". "The internationally accepted definition of a food label is any tag, brand, mark, pictorial or other descriptive matter, written, printed, stencilled, marked, embossed or impressed on, or attached to, a container of food or food product. This information, which includes ingredients, quality and nutritional value, can accompany the food or be displayed near the food to promote its sale" (FAO, 2016). The following information should appear on the label of pre-packaged foods as applicable to the food being labelled, which could be different in each country depending on their national food control system and the existing legislation. They are:

- The Name of the food
- List of ingredients
- Net contents and drained weight
- Name and address
- Country of origin
- Lot identification
- Date marking and storage instructions
- Instructions for use

The above is pertinent because "Pre-packaged food shall not be described or presented on any label or in any labelling in a manner that is false, misleading or deceptive" (www.isdi.org). In considering the importance of food labelling for international trade, World Health Organisation (WHO), in collaboration with Food and Agricultural Organisation (FAO) has ensured a publication of the Codex Alimentarius Commission, which has made general and commodity standards and recommendations concerning food labelling (FAO, 2016). Label declaration on packaged food is very vital in determining the ingredients and nutritional value. It, therefore, means that Translation of canned/ preserved food should encompass all these. As part of the Regulations contained in the National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control (NAFDAC) Act, food and drug producers must take adequate steps to inform consumers of their products and the ingredients contained in bottled water, beverages and pre-packaged foods and other health care products (Akpotaire 2013). While some of the provisions are mandatory to ensure that food and drug products stay within the boundaries of Nigerian laws, a number of them are voluntary.

Presently, there are no extant laws and policies on translating information on canned/ preserved foods in Nigeria into the French language.

4. The Student Translator

Translators and interpreters are born, not made (Nida, 2001). While Toury (2012) is of the opinion that the translators' competence is based on the nature of the task, he is called upon to undertake. The student translator is one who is currently undergoing the task of study and training in the art of translation. He is learning about the problems of translating from theme to version and vice versa. He is learning the techniques of criticising a translation while at the same time acquiring the best methods of translating. According to Toury (2012), the emerging translator, who in this case is the student translator, is also undergoing socialisation, socio-culturally speaking.

4.1 The Student Translator and National Development

While learning the art of translation, the student translator can be appropriately guided to understand, see and assume the technical role of all forms of education he/she is acquiring. This paper proposes that the student translators can begin to take responsibility for their fellow citizens' wellbeing, the French/Francophone nationals around him and ultimately the development of the nation by just being orientated by his teachers. The student translator must be taught right from the onset of acquiring the skills and art of Translation, the importance of the French language for positive change and not only for the mere acquisition of a certificate or degree.

The Federal Republic of Nigeria in the National Policy on Education (NPE) (2004) describes education as a dynamic and most important instrument of change because no fundamental change in the intellectual and social domain of any society can be achieved without education. I could just paraphrase the above policy as French translation education is a dynamic and most important instrument of change because a fundamental shift in youth development and empowerment in the social domain of any society can be achieved within it. This paper suggests that the art of acquiring the skills of TQA by the student translator is one of the novel tools for meeting the sustainable development agenda.

4.2 On y va!

The role of the student translator is a proposed vital initiative in the development of the nation. While the student translator is still learning all the arts and skills and twists and turns of translation, this paper proposes that the student translator puts all hands-on deck to contribute his quota to national development by

- a. Leisurely, purposely and decidedly taking extra care to read all the labels on the canned/preserved foods and drugs he buys or that are used in his home or hostel;
- b. Getting a notebook to document his findings on labelling like grammatical and spelling errors in English. He could title the notebook "My Food Labels and Translation";
- c. Indicating his feelings about the labels, still in the book: "satisfactory" or "not satisfactory.";
- d. Leisurely or purposely checking for canned/preserved foods without labels translated into French. He will also make a note of these;
- e. Evaluating the French Translation of the labels of canned/preserved foods.

After about a month of such conscientious work, the student translator would have already started personally developing his sense of translation criticism and TQA, although aimed at improving canned/preserved food labels and drugs Translation. He would have also improved his French vocabulary and knowledge of Translation in the whole process. Thereafter, he could have a class or group discussion with his comrades and translation professors, lecturers, and teachers.

4.3 The Student Translator, the Universities and National Development

Currently, the international community, especially the European Union, have plunged headlong into supporting initiatives in Africa that will reduce and curb youth restlessness, cut down youth joblessness and ultimately dissuade youths from migration. This is in the form of more comprehensive support funding available from the EU for defined priorities (Bartels, 2019). With the right policies and implementation strategies in place, this paper intends to show that with the activities of the student translator, more youth can be employed, kept engaged for nation-building and development. Looking at Nigeria as a whole, this paper proposes that translation students all over the country replicate the initial steps that have been presented in section 3.2. The student translator could involve friends, family members or other less busy youth to note and document canned/preserved foods and drugs without French translations while engaging in the TQA of canned/preserved foods and drugs that have French translations.

Implementation strategy should be centred on creating Translation Evaluation Centres for Food and Drugs in choice universities in the six (6) geopolitical zones where all TQAs and observations about canned/preserved foods and drugs will be submitted. The chosen universities and or translation associations become veritable centres to receive, document and evaluate observations about French translations of canned/ preserved foods and drugs. This paper proposes that the centres become affiliated to the foreign languages or French language departments of the chosen

universities in each of the country's six (6) geopolitical zones. The centres will work with the student translators who will engage other youth in the society to check and submit to the centres canned/ preserved foods and drugs without French translations and or French translations with errors.

NITI is to the Nigerian Translators and Interpreters as Nigeria Bar Association (NBA) is to Nigerian Lawyers, an offshoot of the Nigerian Association of Translators and Interpreters (NATI). In the course of their work, NITI not only stands up for the rights of translators and interpreters but also contribute to national integration and national development. The Association of Translation Studies of Nigeria (ATSN) at this point is highly recommended as a body to our budding translators. They can access seasoned professors who, as members, will greatly encourage the student translator in this nouvelle initiative. The seasoned professors may also provide intellectual advisory services to the government and other apex bodies in setting up Translation Assessment Centres for canned foods and drugs in Nigeria. One way of making the Translation Assessment Centres to be internationally attractive is to:

- a. Ensure workers of the Translation Assessment Centres are student/apprentice translators, French undergraduates while temporary or volunteer workers are interested youths in the community or the English or other interested undergraduate students,
- b. Ensure that a small fee is solicited from the producing company of canned/preserved foods and drugs without French translations or with errors in French translations; this can be stated in letters of introduction and subsequent solicitations,
- c. Make sure that over time, the Translation Assessment Centres, having gathered and compiled enough materials, documented observations about translations of canned/preserved foods and drugs and documentation about the activities of the apprentice translators and youths in this regard, can write a detailed proposal to the European Union for funding,
- d. Ensure that Translation Assessment Centres will, through relevant bodies like NAFDAC (National Agency for Food and Drug Administration and Control) sensitise producers of locally produced canned/preserved foods and drugs in the country to ensure a French-language translation of their products for the social/health comfort of the French nationals in the country
- e. Mandate or make policy that all translations of such canned/preserved foods and drugs be conducted at the Translation assessment Centres. These translations and or corrections of French translations will be supervised by professors, lecturers and teachers of French in the universities
- f. Show that African, Nigerian universities can contribute their quota in not only teaching and training the youths but can also generate funds as they set to supervise the works of the student/ apprentice translators and other youths that will be involved.

If the European Commission can adopt the Youth Employment Support Programme for young people into work through vocational training and apprenticeships (Lloyd & Gauret, 2021). In that case, Nigeria is encouraged to do the same as this is one way of ultimately killing the drive for migration. A motivation for reducing migration among youth is the risk it poses to their lives in the desperate and dangerous bid to migrate. Africa is often seen as a continent of mass displacement and migration caused by poverty and violent conflict (Flahaux & De Haas, 2016), and any nation that hopes to become economically empowered in the years ahead eventually is a nation that will go all out to invest in programs, initiatives and activities that will keep its youths constructively engaged thereby indirectly teaming with the European Union to salvage and preserve the next generation of leaders, the youth.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

The youth of any nation significantly impact national development as they grow up and replace the previous generation with new leadership. It is important to encourage civic responsibility among the youth so that they feel rooted in the activities that induce national development. This initiative to allow student translators to improve the labels of canned/preserved foods and drugs will get youths to be conscientious about civic responsibility, leading to national development involvement. It will keep them engaged while studying and earning a stipend, thereby indirectly

and practically imbibing the ideals of education (Translation) even for personal development. Based on the above, the following recommendations are made:

- That Nigeria conducts a review of French programmes in her educational institutions so that such programmes become more valuable to her needs. This paper believes that Nigeria needs more technical and practical aspects of the French language. We need utilitarian French to enable the Nigerian French graduate to keep himself constructively engaged, employ other youths, and ultimately be involved in national development.
- That practical steps should be taken to reposition the status and quality of French language in our educational institutions in order to provide the kind of French needed for human capacity development because, after all, the advancement of an individual, community and the larger society is eventually predicated on education and for this paper, French translation education, TQA education. The different French translation departments should continue to consecrate a good part of their teaching to the perfecting of linguistics in order to better empower the future professional translators, the present student translators. Moorkens et al. (2018) advocate the importance of making room for the teaching of state-of-the-art quality evaluation metrics and tools that graduates are likely to encounter when they enter the translation marketplace.
- That advanced courses in French linguistics should aim firstly at students understanding, while at the same time not forgetting to brush up student's precision of the first language. Even after attaining the goal of "communication", Lederer (1994) encourages French students and student translators to personally perfect their linguistic knowledge because so many times, the student translator does understand the source text but lacks sufficient and adequate vocabulary for a good re-expression. Lederer (1994) counsels that for every one hour of learning from the translation professor or lecturer, the apprentice translator must study for three hours.
- That advanced courses in interpretation should be practical. Student translators should be scheduled to interpret in schools or university conferences and programs, church or mosque activities either for continuous assessments or part of their examinations.

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