

LEVERAGING TRANSLATION FOR NATIONAL DEVELOPMENT IN THE 21ST CENTURY: STRATEGIES, CHALLENGES AND PROSPECTS

By

Prof. 'Raheem Adebayo LAWAL

*Department of Arts Education,
University of Ilorin, Ilorin, Nigeria
bayolawal58@unilorin.edu.ng
adebayolawal58@gmail.com*

Abstract

Translation has become a strategic instrument for national development in multilingual societies of the twenty-first century. This paper examines translation and interpretation as applied-linguistic practices that mediate education, governance, healthcare, agriculture, commerce, and religion. Drawing on pragmatic models of language analysis, the study conceptualises translation along a continuum ranging from literal, form-based rendering to idiomatic and creative message-based translation. The paper analyses three major constraints in translation practice—mistranslation, distranslation, and untranslatability—and illustrates their implications with examples from literary and scriptural texts. It further demonstrates how translation facilitates the Sustainable Development Goals through inclusive communication, cultural preservation, and knowledge transfer. The paper concludes that professional training, ethical standards, and context-sensitive deployment of technology are essential for leveraging translation for sustainable national development.

Keywords: translation, national development, applied linguistics, untranslatability, multilingualism, Nigeria

Introduction

Translation as a Sub-Branch of Applied Linguistics

I have subsumed interpretation within translation because the skills of translation are the foundation for those of interpretation which, however, is additionally bound by the constraints of time and situation as the interpreter converts meaning from one language to another in real-time. Both translation and interpretation, nonetheless, rely heavily on certain basic competencies across the languages of concern, including, in particular, grammatical, semantic, pragmatic and stylistic proficiencies.

The translator requires, in addition, excellent writing skills and possible recourse to such background resources as dictionaries, thesauruses and encyclopedias. In lieu of these complementary skills and facilities, the interpreter must possess strong presence of mind (i.e. attentive capacity), capacity for quick thinking, ability to make spontaneous communicative decisions and a strong memory.

Therefore, the core issues common to both translation and interpretation are essentially applied-linguistic in nature as they pertain to lexical and grammatical competencies as well as contextual (pragmatic and stylistic) sensitivities required to convert texts from the source language (SL) to the target or receptor language (TL/RL). This explains why machine translation would always have its drawbacks in spite of its speed, spontaneity, high scalability for large volumes across many languages and cheap financial and temporal costs.

Human translation continues to be superior in accuracy, especially in terms of stylistic and pragmatic nuances, higher in quality than machine translation when handling complex and sensitive materials, and more flexible in terms of sensitivity to varieties of discourse. Machine translation would thus often require human post-editing to enhance the quality of the output so as to achieve a more consistent and idiomatic translation.

Relying heavily on Lawal's (1997, 2025) model of hierarchical contexts and competencies in pragmatic proficiency and Lawal's (2021) 3Ms model of language analysis, we can conceptualise a continuum of translation, with literal, form-based translation at the lowest beginning, free message-based translation at the highest end and other purpose-based targets as intermediate points, with idiomatic or meaning-based translation as the centre or norm. This is schematically illustrated in **Figure 1**

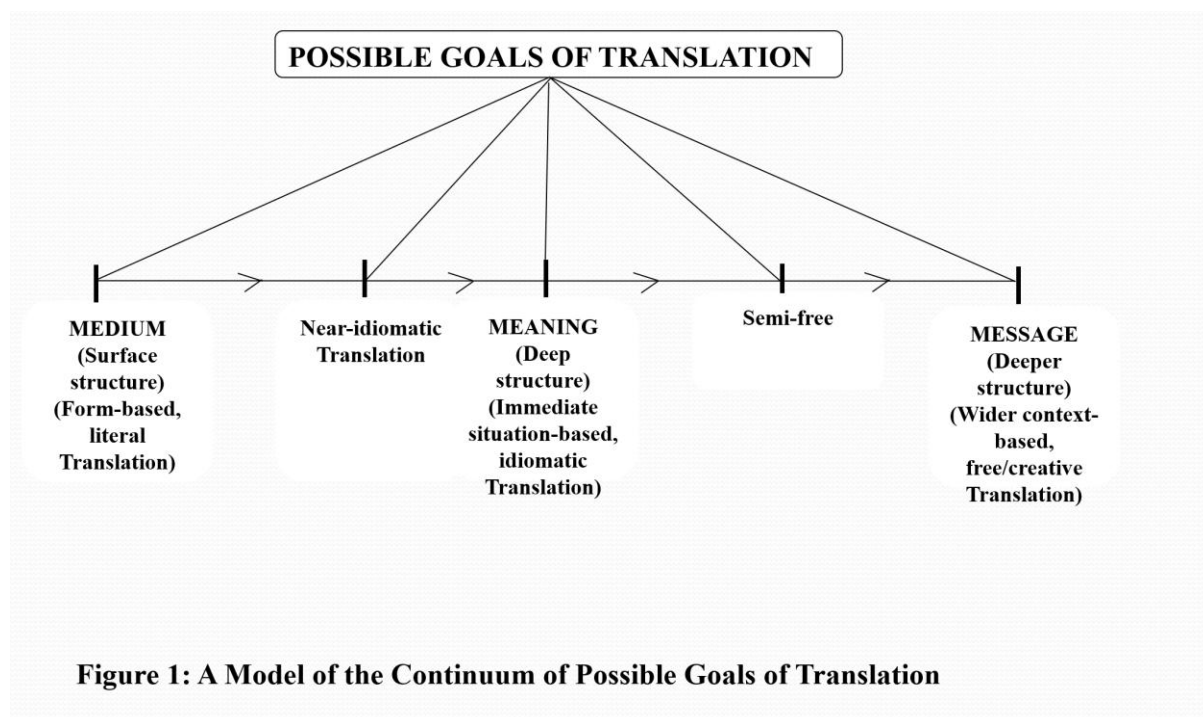


Figure 1: A Model of the Continuum of Possible Goals of Translation

Possible Goals of Translation

Picture

The translation task basically involves changing the form of the source language to an appropriate one in the receptor or target language (Larson, 1998; Simpson, 2007; Bowker, 2023 & Lambert, 2023). The form or “medium” of a language refers to the actual words, phrases, clauses, sentences, paragraphs, which are spoken or written respectively. It is the surface structure of a language in either oral or graphic form which pertains mainly to grammar. Form-based or literal translation is word-for-word or form-for-form translation which fails to dig into the deeper semantic structure to identify the equivalent meaning as expressed in an appropriate form in the receptor language. Second and foreign language errors, un-edited machine translations and harmless humour often manifest features of form-based translation, as illustrated with the following examples in **Table 1**.

Source language	Receptor language
<u>French</u> : (i) J'ai faim. (ii) J'ai soif.	<u>English</u> : (i) <i>I have hunger.</i> (I am hungry). (ii) <i>I have thirst.</i> (I am thirsty.)
<u>Yorùbá</u> : (i) Ebi n pa mí.	<u>English</u> : (i) <i>Hunger is killing/hitting me.</i> (I am hungry).
<u>Spanish</u> : (i) Como se illama? (ii) Tengo sueno.	<u>English</u> : (i) <i>How yourself you-call?</i> (What is your name?) <u>English</u> : (ii) <i>I have sleep.</i> (I feel sleepy).
<u>English</u> : (i) Bola has a running nose.	<u>Yorùbá</u> : (i) <i>Bólá nímú tó n sáré.</i> (Imú Bólá n da ikun).
<u>Hausa</u> : (i) Musa ya zo.	<u>English</u> : (i) <i>Musa he came.</i> (Musa came. or Musa has come).

The major source of the inaccuracies in form-based translation, as just illustrated, is the asymmetry or mis-alignment between language forms and meanings. One lexical form (e.g. “bank”) or a grammatical form (e.g. “Prefects are told to stop demonstration on the campus.”) can express more than one meaning, indicating lexical ambiguity and syntactic ambiguity respectively.

Furthermore, the statement “The police are coming.” contains pragmatic ambiguity as the meaning is context-dependent. Conversely, a single meaning may be expressed in a variety of forms in certain contexts (e.g. “learner”/”student”/”pupil”; “bachelor”/”unmarried man”; “Run!”/”Hurry up!”/”Be quick!” etc.). The problem

becomes compounded when expressing the same meaning across languages with different grammatical structures, semantic systems and pragmatic mappings.

To achieve effective translation as professionally required, the translator must discover the meaning of the source language forms and use the receptor language forms which express the natural meaning. This is the goal of all meaning-based or idiomatic translation which employs both linguistic and sociolinguistic competencies to delve into the deep semantic, psychological and social contexts of the source language forms to unravel the natural meaning to be re-coded appropriately in the receptor language.

A higher-order translation goal involves going beyond the meaning to convey the source-language “message” via the progressively deeper, sociolinguistic, cultural and cosmological sub-structures of the receptor language, especially when dealing with such figurative/creative materials as proverbs, Poetry and other forms of artistic expression. The medium-meaning asymmetry is replicated in greater dimension at the higher level of meaning-message mis-alignment.

In free or creative translation, attempt is made to delve into the wider and deeper cultural and cosmological contexts of both the language forms and their meanings so as to unravel the real intention or message to be translated appropriately from the source language into the receptor language.

The challenge becomes exacerbated when the two languages in question differ markedly in linguistic structures, cultural practices and cosmological perspectives. This implies that, while the situational, psychological and social dimensions of “meaning” may be translatable, certain cultural and cosmological aspects of the “message” may prove untranslatable with no other choice but recourse to creative or free translation as feasible and appropriate.

The following examples indicate the difficulty and, sometimes, the impossibility of capturing the “message” even in the unduly free or creative type of translation.

Table 2: Meaning and Message in the Figurative Language

Source Language	Receptor Language	Receptor Language
Figurative language <u>Yorùbá:</u> (i) <u>Ọmọ tí yóo bá je Àsàmu</u> <u>láti kékeré ní ti í senu sàmúsámu.</u>	Meaning <u>English:</u> (i) Morning shows the day as childhood shows the man.	Message (i) Àsàmu-sàmúsámu phonotactics in the message is lost in the translated meaning.
<u>English:</u> (i) The child is the father of the man.	<u>Yorùbá:</u> (i) Eyin ló ñ di àkùkò.	(i) Child-father-man triadic link in the message is lost in the translated meaning.

<u>Yorùbá:</u> (i) Yéèpà!	<u>English:</u> (i) Wow! What!	(i) Nuance of tragedy/ Calamity in the message is lost.
(ii) Yéèpàrìpà	(ii) Meaning is untranslatable	(ii) Message is also untranslatable.
<u>Yorùbá:</u> (i) <u>Ọba ilú kò ní mí ní?</u>	<u>English:</u> (i) Am I not the king of the town?	(i) Message: “Prostrate for me!” (Pragmatic import is lost).
<u>Yorùbá:</u> (i) <u>Àkùkò baba mi láíláí,</u> <u>Àkùkò baba mi làìlài.</u>	<u>English:</u> (i) Cock of my Everlasting Father, Cock of my Everlasting Father.	(i) Phonotactic and semantic nuances in láíláí/làìlài in the message are lost.
<u>Yorùbá:</u> (i) <u>Wà á gbó bí</u> <u>Olúyèyèntuyé;</u> <u>Wà á gbó bí</u> <u>Olúyèyèntuyè.</u>	<u>English:</u> (i) You will live long like Methuselah/Noah. (Biblical/Qur’anic allusion).	(i) The pun on Olúyèyèntuyé and Olúyèyèntuyè and the cultural import of the message is lost. Also, non-christians and non- muslims not familiar with the allusions may miss the message.

The following short poem, originally written in the medium of Yoruba, and then translated into English, further serves to underpin the indispensability of free or creative translation when dealing with untranslatable ideas and expressions in artistic communication.

Abiyamọ

(Fún Àláké)

Láti ọwọ R. Adébáyò Lawal

Abiyamọ ni iyá gidi,

Ònwonì tí o ju ònbíni lọ

Ìyá tí ó n jẹ ìyà nítorí ọmọ,
Ìyá tí ó n fí ewé iyá ro ẹfọ,
Kí ọmọ ó lè rí ẹ̀kọ̀yọ̀kọ̀tò jẹ.
Abiyamọ kọ ni iyá tí ọmọ tí ara rẹ wá,
Ìyá gidi ni iyá tí ọmọ tí ara rẹ lọ,
Tí ọmọ wá lọ, lọ, lọ...
Tí ọmọ wá ga, ga, ga...
Tí ó ga ju ibi tí ó ti jade wá lọ.

True Mothers

(For Àlàké)

By

R. Adebayo Lawal

They are not mothers

Just because through them

Children had come;

They are mothers and moulders,

Models and mentors

Because through them

Children go very far,

Farther than they had come.

These illustrative examples lead us logically to the challenges of mistranslation, "distranslation" and untranslatability in the pragmatics of translation as a communicative art.

Mistranslation, Distranslation and Untranslatability

Mistranslation: From our fore-going exploration of the different goals and types of translation, it is now evident that form-based or literal translation is a principal source of mistranslation as illustrated in **Table 1**. However, this is not exclusively so as evidence in scriptural interpretation or exegesis has indicated that texts may be mistranslated when the meaning of the text is not within the cognitive capacity of the translators even when they possess required knowledge in the linguistics and sociolinguistics of both the source and receptor languages. This would necessitate our recall of the distinction we earlier made between the "meaning" and the "message" being translated.

In respect of scriptural mistranslation, two canonical examples would suffice from selected translations of The Glorious Qur'an. In the 25th verse of chapter 57 titled "Iron" (Surah Al-Hadeed) Allah (SWT) states that He sent down Messengers with clear signs and "We also sent down (i.e., "anzalna") the Balance (of Justice) and "We also sent down (i.e., "anzalna") iron", wherein there is awesome power and many benefits for mankind." The critical conceptual problem for some translators is how

Allah (SWT) “sent down” iron from the sky. Therefore, Al-Hilali and Khan, both of Islamic University of Medina, have translated thus: “And we brought forth iron” instead of “We sent down” in the original Arabic text, with the wrong assumption that iron originated from inside the earth.

Modern science, however, has explained how iron originated on Earth through the process of “stellar nucleosynthesis”, where elements are created within the cores of stars. Massive stars exploded as supernovae, scattering elements including iron into space. In the formation of the solar system, the iron-rich material was incorporated or “sent down”, into the evolving Earth, accumulating in its core. Therefore “sent down” and not “brought up” is the correct meaning which is also consistent with the original Arabic text.

The second example of scriptural mistranslation due to limited knowledge of textual meaning has to do with Quran’s Chapter 51, verse 47 (Surah Adh-Dhariyat), where Allah (SWT) claims emphatically that the universe is not fixed but continuously expanding:

*“We constructed the Heaven with strength,
and we are (its) Expander.”*

This means idiomatically “We are expanding it”. Again, unable to come to terms with the notion of an expanding universe, now a scientifically affirmed fact, Al-Hilali and Khan have translated as follows:

*“With power did We construct the heaven.
Verily We are able to extend the vastness (of space) thereof.”*

In grappling with the meaning of this difficult verse, Yusuf Ali on his own part has mistranslated (with the benefit of our current scientific knowledge) as follows:

*“With power and skill did We construct the firmament.
For it is We Who create the vastness of Space.”*

In sum, mistranslation in scriptural interpretation represents a genuine attempt to translate textual meaning based on the translator’s limited conceptual and factual knowledge, which proves inadequate for the translation task.

Distranslation: I have deliberately coined this term to distinguish it from “mistranslation”, a product of inadvertent error. “Distranslation”, on the other hand, is a deliberate distortion of meaning in the process of translation due to the understandable need to protect and preserve vested interests. A classic example of this phenomenon is evident in various translations of Isaiah 29:12 across several versions of The Holy Bible, some representative ones of which are presented below:

I. English Standard Version

“And when they give the book to one who cannot read, saying, “Read this, he says,” I cannot read”.

II. King James Version

“And the book is delivered to him that is not learned, saying, read this, I pray thee; and he saith, I am not learned”.

III. The Message Bible.

“And if you give it to someone who can't read and tell him, “Read this, he'll say “I can't read”

IV. New King James Version

“Then the book is delivered to one who is illiterate, saying, “Read this, please” And he says, “I am not literate”.

V. New Living Translation

“When you give it to those who cannot read, they say,” We don't know how to read”

VI. New American Standard Bible

“And the book will be given to the one who is illiterate, saying “Please read this And he will say, “I cannot read”

VII. Wycliffe

“And the book shall be given to him who cannot read, and it shall be said to him “Read thou: and he shall answer, “I do not know how to read”.

(Underlinings are mine, to indicate the critical points in the distranslations)

VIII. The Latin Vulgate

Et dabitur liber nescienti literas diceturgue ei lege et respondebit nescio litteras.

The wycliffe translation, which employs "shall", is the closest to the Latin version which relates Isaiah's prophecy about the coming of an illiterate prophet. The New American Standard Bible version uses “will” and is the next in faithfulness to the meaning and message of the Latin version. The other versions employ either hypothetical clauses or refer to a generic “one” as if the prophecy was general to all illiterates and not specific to a future illiterate Prophet and Messenger of God.

Interestingly, the first revelation given to Prophet Muhammad (SAW) through the Archangel Gabriel was "Read", and the prophet replied "I cannot read". When further pressured to read, the Archangel Gabriel directed the prophet (SAW) to: “Read in the Name of your Lord Who created (all that exists)”. This first revelation received by the Prophet is contained in Qur'an 96:1 (Surah Al-Alaq) and this may explain the reason for the various distranslations in majority of the Bible versions.

Untranslatability: This is the greatest constraint in translation and it refers to the condition of words, phrases, clauses and sentences not being able to have their meanings expressed in another language. An untranslatable word or expression, such as àmàlà, gbégìrì, àkàrà, yéèpàrìpà, òjòjò, mọ́ínmọ́ín, ọ̀lẹ̀lẹ̀, dàńsíkí, abetiajá, agbádá,

èkuru, àbíkú, etc in Yorùbá, for instance, creates a lacuna or lexical gap. Yoruba is famously prolific in verbal salutation as there is hardly any human condition without its appropriate greeting, with the most productive greeting-stem “É kú...” proving untranslatable into many languages, English in particular.

Apart from lending credence in part to the Sapir-Whorf linguistic relativity hypothesis, untranslatability suggests that each language is intrinsic to its socio-cultural identity, in addition to conveying sacred notions not shared by any other language, and this Baer (2015) has rightly posited as proof of the national genius inherent in every language. Furthermore, untranslatability enhances interdependence among languages through mutual loaning, adaptation and domestication of foreign words, thus strengthening a universal linguistic bond among diverse ethnic and racial groups.

However, names, especially proper names, are a conceptual domain that often poses a great challenge to translators and interpreters alike.

Names are not easily translatable as they are deeply rooted in the cultural and cosmological genius of a people. For instance, my middle name, “Adébáyò,” is not “One who came to meet joy” as literally translated, nor “One who was born into a joyous situation”, as an idiomatic translation. Both translations are equally tortuous and inelegant. The pragmatic Fabian option, often, is linguistic domestication, a process of adapting the name in the source language to suit the morphological and phonological structures of the receptor language

Nonetheless, apart from the challenge of loss of meaning and message, cultural loyalty and linguistic pride often lead to resistance against, and rejection of domesticated names. In addition, linguistic domestication as necessitated by untranslatability could manifest errors of mistranslation or “distranslation”, depending on the intention of the translator or interpreter.

The best solution, I think, is to preserve the linguistic and cultural identity of names and render them in the receptor language as they are in the source language. Table 4 presents some domesticated names across languages, indicating the inherent loss of meaning and message.

Table 4: Loss of Meaning and Message in Some Domesticated Names

Source Language Form	Receptor Language Meaning	Receptor Language Message
(i) <u>Marathi</u> : Mumbai	(i) <u>English</u> : Bombay The meaning, “mother,” is lost	(i) Mother-city that cherishes, nurtures and protects all; this message is also lost.
(ii) <u>Italian</u> : Roma	(ii) <u>English</u> : Rome The etymological meaning, “strength” from Greek and Latin, is blurred.	(ii) Message “city of strength and power” as message is lost.
(iii) <u>Arabic</u> : Muhammad	(iii) <u>Yorùbá</u> : Mòmódù, Mòmòn (Mahama) The meaning-“praiseworthy”; “highly-praised- is lost”.	(iii) The significance and timelessness of the prophet’s message is lost.
(iv) <u>Hebrew</u> : Yehoshua/Yeshua	(iva) <u>English</u> : Jesus (ivb) <u>Yorùbá</u> : Jésù The meaning- “Yahweh saves”-is lost.	(iva&b) The message of Yahweh as Saviour is lost.
(v) <u>Hebrew</u> : Yohanan	(v) <u>English</u> : John The meaning-“Yahweh has been gracious”-is lost.	(v) Graciousness as a core attribute of God, deriving from His non-discriminatory Love, is lost.
(vi) <u>Hebrew</u> : Shelomoh	(via) <u>English</u> : Solomon; a peaceful person. “Shalom” (i.e. peace), the root of the name, is lost. (vib) <u>Yorùbá</u> : Sulemana, from Arabic “Sulaiman” Sulemana is further clipped as “Sùlè,” leading to further semantic disruption.	(via) The affinity between “peacefulness” and “wisdom” is lost as the ultimate message. (vib) Message as stated in (via) above is also lost.

Role of Translation in National Development

We can take off here on a global note, with reference to the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) adopted by all United Nations member states in 2015 to drive change towards the achievement of UN’s 2030 Agenda. Due to its pervasive and high-surrender value, Quality Education, which is Goal 4, is

critical and central to the attainment of the other 16 SDGs, with literacy in turn being a sine qua non in the educational process. Indeed, the literacy level among citizens is a significant index of national development. However, the literacy levels in most developing nations continue to ebb due to little or no inclusion of indigenous languages in the drive for mass literacy and popular education.

In the quest for multilingual literacy and universal basic education as instruments for galvanising development in all critical sectors of the economy such as Education, Health, Agriculture, Governance, Law, Business, Mass Communication, Religion, etc., translation as both knowledge and skill is clearly indispensable.

Translation thus plays a significant role in national development by promoting cultural understanding and cooperation; enhancing and expanding educational opportunities; supporting economic growth through trade, tourism and business collaboration; facilitating governance through effective mass communication and social inclusivity; and preserving cultural heritage by making historical and literary texts accessible to a wider audience. We can now proceed to examine more closely the strategies, challenges and prospects of translation in fast-tracking development in selected sectors of the economy.

Translation in Education: Ample evidence, both theoretical and empirical, exists now on the beneficial roles of the mother-tongue in education, not only as a medium of instruction but also as a subject deserving serious academic attention (Lawal, 2015a, 2015b). Translation across exogenous and endogenous languages serves to increase educational access, enrolment, retention and success, in addition to facilitating comprehension and academic performance beyond rote learning, preserving cultural heritage and promoting multicultural education.

Translation is particularly of great benefit in multilingual classrooms as found in several urban centres in Nigeria, through the facilitation of access to historical and literary materials of various ethnic groups. Through this, efforts should be geared towards the promotion and preservation of endangered languages.

In addition, interpretation can ensure educational inclusivity and access for people living with hearing challenges. In this respect, University of Ilorin, through the Centre for Supportive Services for the Deaf, deserves great commendation for facilitating access to quality education for scores of hearing-challenged students who have graduated from different programmes in the university over the last three decades.

However, certain pedagogical and logistic challenges limit the benefits and values of translation and interpretation in the education sector. Teachers and interpreters would need continuous training and re-training on effective use of translation and interpretation in classroom teaching and assessment. Resource constraints also exist in most developing countries as regards availability of quality personnel, materials and other resources including digital platforms and tools for translation.

To surmount some of these challenges, educational authorities should employ high-quality translations that are accurate, culturally relevant and appropriate to the target learners, while also deploying technology strategically based on pedagogical needs, professional capacity and logistic support.

Translation in Governance: Translation plays a key role in governance by enhancing citizen engagement and encouraging civic participation in the democratic process through information dissemination in several local languages in print, electronic and digital media. By so doing, it does not only foster inclusivity, but also promotes transparency and accountability on the part of government and, as well, improves service delivery by ensuring that government services are accessible to all citizens.

To achieve these laudable governance goals through translation, Government can develop policies on language rights in public services to ensure equal access to information and services. The strategies in this direction would include developing clear policy guidelines, provision of training for both government and professional (translation and interpretation) staff, leveraging technology with professional caution, collaboration with language communities, socio-cultural organisations and professional linguists, as well as regular and efficient monitoring and evaluation with constant and appropriate feedback. These strategies would go a long way in surmounting some of the challenges of limited human and non-human resources, multilingualism with multidialectalism, quality control and technological constraints.

Translation in the Healthcare: Translation plays a significant role in health services especially in the areas of patient-provider communication improvement, enhancing patients' understanding of medical information in their native languages, breaking language barrier to increase access to care, reducing medical errors pertaining to wrong diagnoses and incorrect treatment, and promotion mother-tongue medium health literacy. These benefits often lead to better health-related behaviour and practices, increased patient satisfaction and increased access to healthcare information and services across diverse populations.

The major challenges to translation in healthcare include how to ensure accurate communication across languages, cultural diversity and religious constraints in health practices, ensuring availability and accessibility of qualified interpreters, and circumventing technological limitations in translation. Employing trained interpreters, cultural competency training for healthcare providers, using reliable translation software and application, provision of written materials and signage in multiple languages, and community outreach for promoting healthcare services are some of the strategies for tackling these challenges.

Translation in Agriculture: The benefits of translation in agriculture are far-reaching in terms of poverty alleviation, rural development food security and general health and wellness. Translation supports agriculture in improving knowledge sharing among local farmers as regards information on best practices and modern

technologies. This enhances agricultural extension services through effective communication and provision of technical support to farmers. It also facilitates continuous training and re-training of farmers to promote sustainable environment-friendly practices and agricultural innovation.

Just like those of the other sectors previously discussed, the challenges here also include limited quality human and non-human resources, including translated materials and interpreters, and how to ensure cultural appropriateness and quality control of the translations. To surmount these problems, translated materials such as manuals, guides and training resources would have to be disseminated in relevant local languages. Other redressive strategies include professional capacity building for translators, agricultural extension workers and farmers, promotion of community engagement to identify and address local needs and preferences, ensuring regular quality control, collaboration with local agricultural experts, translators, linguists, NGOs and private sector organisations, and deploying technology appropriately.

Translation in Trade, Commerce and Banking: Trade, commerce and banking are core economic activities in which translation plays a significant role both intranationally and internationally by enabling businesses to communicate effectively with local, national and international partners, clients and customers, gaining access to new markets, ensuring accurate translation of business documents and financial translations as well as promoting intranational and international cooperation and collaboration. In general terms, therefore, translation can boost both intranational and international trade, attract foreign investment and enhance economic development, including the creation of new job opportunities in such services as localisation, interpretation and translation.

The challenges include limited logistics and personnel, language barriers, cultural diversity, quality control demands and technological constraints. Development of translation infrastructure, investment in language training and capacity building and promoting multilingualism in business and government (e.g. in banking, lowest legislation and judiciary levels) are key strategies for overcoming most of these drawbacks.

Translation in Religion: Perhaps, no social institution has benefited from translation and interpretation better than the religious institution with The Holy Bible alone translated into hundreds of languages and The Glorious Qur'an into scores of languages across all the continents of the world.

All over the world translation has played a crucial role in religion by spreading spiritual teachings across languages and cultures, facilitating the worship of God, promoting deeper understanding and interpretation of spiritual concepts, supporting evangelical work and preserving cultural heritage. Through these significant benefits, translation further serves to promote inter-faith understanding, break barriers, share perspectives, build bridges and encourage tolerance and acceptance.

The major challenges of translation, as earlier indicated, revolve round mistranslation, (inadvertent misrepresentation of meaning), “distranslation”, (deliberate, self-serving misrepresentation of meaning) and untranslatability of certain concepts and terms across faiths. To surmount these challenges, we need to seize the opportunities in collaborative translation involving religious leaders, scholars and community members. Cultural and religious sensitivity as well as continuous dialogue are additional ameliorative strategies.

Concluding Remarks

We have attempted to explore the nature, purview, process and functions of translation and interpretation as both knowledge and skills located within the sub-discipline of Applied Linguistics. We have identified the goal of most professional translation task as idiomatic or meaning-based, although creative or tree translation may be an occasional necessity, especially when working with figurative and artistic materials such as proverbs and poetry. Form-based or literal translation is a major characteristic of amateur translation, a product of poor knowledge of the grammatical and semantic structures of the source and receptor languages, although it may sometimes be used to produce inoffensive humour by an otherwise competent translator.

We further pinpointed mistranslation, “distranslation” and untranslatability as three key challenges in the translation enterprise, analysed their sources and drew implications for translation practices and language development as a whole. We then proceeded to x-ray, the indispensable role of translation in national development in the context of the centrality of “Quality Education” (Goal 4) within the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goal (SDGs). This led finally to the discussion of the strategies, constraints and opportunities for leveraging translation for national development across the sectors of education, governance, healthcare, agriculture, trade, commerce and banking. Undoubtedly, translation and interpretation would continue to play indispensable roles in the growth and development of several sectors of the economy, especially in multilingual developing countries, including Nigeria.

References

- Al-Hilali, M. T. Khan, M.M. (undated). *Translation of the meanings of the Noble Qur'an in the English Language*, King Fahd Complex for the Printing of the Holy Qur'an
- Ali, Abdullahi Yusuf (undated). *The Holy Qur'an: Translation and commentary*, Islamic Propagation Centre International.
- Baer, B.J. (2015) *Translation and the making of modern Russian literature in Literature, Culture, Translation*, Bloomsbury Publishing

- Bowker, Lynne (2023). *De-mystifying Translation: Introducing Translation to Non-translators*. Taylor & Francis.
- Lambert, Joseph (2023). *Translation Ethics: Introduction to Translation and Interpreting*. Routledge.
- Larson, Mildred (1998). *Meaning-based translation: A guide to cross- language equivalence*, University Press of America
- Lawal, R. A. in Lawal, R. A., Y. A. Ajayi & Raji (1997). A Pragmatic Study of Selected Pairs of Yoruba Proverbs. *Journal of Pragmatics*, 27, 635-652.
- Lawal, R. A. (2015a) The Mother-tongue in the Education and Development of the Nigerian Child, in Doris Fafunwa and P. U. Akumabor (eds.) *Fafunwa Educational Foundation Annual Lecture Series (16th, 17th and 18th Annual Lectures)*. Lagos; FEF, 75-104.
- Lawal, R. A.(2015b) Indigenous Knowledge as Foundation for Sustainable Development in Nigeria. *Yoruba: Journal of Yoruba Studies Association of Nigeria*, 8, 1, 1-17.
- Lawal, R.A. (2019). Northern Hegemonic Metapragmatics over-feeding global Pragmatics: Wither the Metapragmatics of the Southern Periphery? *Research in Pragmatics* 1,1, 47 - 60.
- Lawal, R.A. (2021). The 3Ms Model of Language Analysis: Deconstructing the Communicative Continuum of texts-in-use. Unpublished Seminar Paper, Department of Arts Education, University of Ilorin, Nigeria.
- Lawal, R.A. (2025). It's words that beget words: Cross-cultural Metapragmatic imagination as Foundation for a Theory of Verbal Continuity *Research in Pragmatics*(forth-coming)
- Lawal, R. A. *What the Cock Crows to His Creator (Ohun tí Àkùkọ ń kọ sí Èlédàà rẹ): An Experiment in Bilingual Poetry*. (In Progress).
- Simpson, E. (2007). *Translation: Principles and Application*. Interlingua Limited www.biblestudytools.com