

**TEACHING AND TRAINING OF TRANSLATORS AND  
INTERPRETERS: THE INTRICACIES OF ORTHOGRAPHY,  
ENGLISH-HAUSA AND HAUSA-ENGLISH EXPERIENCES**

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**Abstract**

This paper discusses Teaching and Training of Translators and Interpreters and the intricacies of orthography with regard to English-Hausa and Hausa-English translation. The aim of the article is to draw the attention of trainees on the intricacies with reference to English-Hausa and Hausa-English experience. The study presents and discusses some comparative texts as evidence of the orthographic bungle. Two methods are used in collecting the data. The first one is observation. The research listens to the utterances of bilinguals and radio programmes to detect the use and conveyance of orthographic blunder and mismatches that would negatively affect the semantic quality of the information disseminated. The second method is the use of intensive and extensive readings in which print materials are scrutinized to sample out some equivalent versions that provide ground for comparison to discover the effect of orthographic mismatches in both the source and receptor languages. The paper discovered that, sometimes, the intricacies originate from the author of the source language text. Here, an effective translator is bound to understand the text differently from the intended meaning of the message, and translate along the line. In some other times, the original text is orthographically effective but, along the way, the translator conveys the version of the receptor language with orthographic blunder(s) to distinguish the receptor from the source languages. The conclusion is that, in both cases, translation is ineffective.

**Keywords:** Teaching, Training, Translators, Interpreters, Orthographic Intricacies, Hausa-English/English-Hausa Experiences

## **Introduction**

Translation, as a cross-cultural and bilingual activity plays crucial role in the integration and development of any nation. Many countries worldwide have been enjoying great bliss along the line and of course other lines. For instance, as a dynamic phenomenon, science and science education as well as other human arts such as literature have a cross-cultural experience in the most dynamic form. They have always been developed freely by some peoples and the idea borrowed by others through translation. However, despite the significance of translation in the development of all aspects of human life and the integration of every nation, it always faces one problem or the other, ranging from lack of equivalents among languages to lack of linguistic competence among various source language authors and translators.

Concomitant of intricacies of orthography, the paper examines the issue along the line of phonology, morphology, syntax and the study of orthography (Grammar) itself in other words, the paper investigates the blunder related to punctuation, phonemes, word mergers and splits, as well as spelling. The same words in different sentences are merged or separated according to warranted semantic demand. Wherever and whenever words are merged or separated wrongly, definitely, it leads to semantic failure. In translation, this type of failure may emanate from the original text, as the original writer has no orthography competence of the source language or, for one reason or the other, fails to adhere to it. In this case, the quality of translation is affected as a competent translator is bound to render what is written instead of what is intended to be written.

On the other hand, the original writer may write well, fully observing all the orthographic rules of the source language and the text may be understood correctly by a translator, but in the course of conveying the message into the receptor language, he fails to adhere to the orthography of the language or is not, even, conversant with it and therefore, mismatches issues to arrive at, partially or completely, different meaning to that of the source language text. To crown it all, words can be merged or separated, in a sentence or passage, to awkwardness or wrong conception of semantic reality depending on the words and the type of linguistic structures constructed. In this paper, examples are sampled out from English and Hausa to illustrate the negative effect of orthographic problem of word merger and split, spelling and punctuation as well as phonemic replacement in translation from English to Hausa and vice versa.

## **Background to the Study**

Language is the gateway through which human activities are carried out. It is a tool for development and all forms of awareness as well as national integration. The contact of two languages that results into bilingualism gives way for the exchange of ideas and basic knowledge. The linguistic, religious, socio-political, economic, scientific and technological as well as many other developmental benefits that one people gets out of the other pipe ways for the need of translation so that people across the globe can benefit greatly from various developments of one another. In fact, the role of language (translation factor) in the development of all aspects of human life is paramount. It is through language, by means of translation that people borrow ideas, improve them and subsequently initiate new ideas for various inventions. Moreover, language and translation serve their important functions if efficiently used. However, in a situation where orthographic blunder is made in the source or receptor languages, one discovers that translation becomes useless as the receptor text cannot serve the purpose for which it is attained.

## **Punctuation**

According to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1999) (Third Edition), punctuations are special marks that you add to writing to separate phrases and sentences, to show that something is a question, statement, etc. and punctuation mark *is* "a symbol used in punctuation" such as "Full stops/Periods, commas, semicolons, question marks and brackets are all different types of punctuation marks". For example, looking at the punctuation blunder alone one discovers the intricacies of orthography as follows:

1. Audu ya komo. With Full Stop indicates simple statement meaning: Audu has come back

Audu ya komo? With Question Mark indicates interrogative statement meaning: Has Audu come back?

Audu ya komo! With Exclamation Mark indicates surprise, fear or doubt meaning: Wonderful! Audu has come back! (Sar6i, 2010, p.5)

Likewise misuse of Apostrophe causes semantic difference between the two versions such as:

2. **Rai** without intervocalic apostrophe means **soul** while

**Ra'i** with intervocalic Apostrophe means **theory**; again

**Ba a** without intervocalic apostrophe, as two words means **Not allowed**; while

**Ba'a** with intervocalic apostrophe means **mockery statement**

**Ai** without an apostrophe, is a **compliment** while

**A'i** with an apostrophe, is a **proper name of person/feminine**

**Yau** without apostrophe means **today** while

**Ya'u** with an apostrophe is a **proper name of a person/masculine**

Examining the three sentences written the same (with exactly the same spelling) in example 1, they are supra-segmental, as they denote distinctive meanings. Therefore, using one punctuation mark in the linguistic environment of others leads to lack of semantic equivalence between the source and receptor texts. So, the punctuation marks and their application, especially in their ability to distinguish between/among sentences written the same, should be taken care of for translation effectiveness. Likewise in example 2, two words written the same become distinctive by use of intervocalic apostrophe in one. Each of the three minimal pairs shows semantic difference between the pairs. Example 2 discloses similar case.

Examining the intricacies of orthography, which according to Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary, is "the accepted way of spelling and writing words", along phonological line, one discovers another translation inaccuracy. Before then, let us have the definition of phonology:

### **Phonology**

Phonology is a branch of linguistics that deals with the sound system of a language. Roach (2004) asserted that "when we study the abstract side of the sounds of a language, we are studying a related but different (from phonetics) subject that we call phonology". Furthermore, Sani (1989) has explicated that:

Phonology is a branch of linguistics which deals with the ways in which the sounds of a language work in that particular language... and that every language of the world has an independent phonological system reflecting the different sorts of sounds that it has. The various possible combinations of those sounds to form a word and the likely changes that may take place therein under such circumstances

Having understood what phonology is, at a cursory glance, one may see and easily agree that the phonological system of one language cannot, in all respect, be the same as that of another. Therefore, it should be made a point that many languages have special characters in addition to their basic letters. Failure to use the characters correctly could lead to a distortion or change of meaning completely and which must not be intended in translation. For instance, considering the working languages of the paper, if one takes a look at English and Hausa, certainly, they differ in their sound systems. There are some sounds in English which cannot be found in Hausa as a result of which a native speaker of Hausa finds it difficult pronouncing them. Among the sounds are:

/f/ (f) as in the word /faɪnd/ that is (find)

/v/ (v) as in the word /veɪg/ that is (vague)

/x/ ('eks) as in the word /'eks.reɪ/ that is (x-ray)

/θ/ (th) as in the word /θred / that is (thread) etc.

In some cases, in English writings, these segments are replaced with other independent English sounds technically called phonemes and, which, seriously affects the translation quality. This is because the sounds are not free variants to allow semantic maintenance between the invariant words. For example, in place of /f/ as in full which means filled, complete or occupied etc.), /p/ as in pull which means drag, draw or heave, is used. Now, replacing /f/ with /p/ or /p/ with /f/ causes translation havoc or even loss of semantic quality as the two sounds are highly phonemic. Therefore, no phonemic sounds of a language should be replaced with another sound of the language as a result of lexicological incapacity or spelling mistake, either as a source or receptor language, otherwise there should be a change in terms of semantic reality of the two texts and which is not and should not be the intention of a translator. Moreover, in some writings one might have seen /Fool/ in place of /pool/; /found/ in place of /pound/; /fine/ in place of /pine/; and vice versa etc.

So also in Hausa, there are some sounds which do not exist in English and that hardly can English native speaker pronounce them hitch-free. Some of the sounds include the following:

/ɓ/ (ɓ) as in the word /ɓàrnáá (distractio)

/ɗ/ (ɗ) as in the word /ɗááćí (bitterness)

/k/ (k) as in the word /kààró (bring more)

/kj/ (ky) as in the word /kyááyà (lice)

/kw/ (kw) as in the word /kwáryáá (calabash)

/s'/ (ts) as in the word /tsàróó (defence)

In most cases, in Hausa writings, these segments are replaced with other independent Hausa sounds (phonemes) and, which, seriously affects the translation quality. This is because the sounds are not free variants to allow semantic maintenance between the invariant words. For example, in place of /k/ velar/ejective/voiceless as in *kari* (káárì) which means addition, /k/ velar/plosive/voiceless as in *kari* (káárì) attachment, is used. The two phonemes are detached through the manner of articulation as, while the former an Ejective sound, the later is Plosive. Therefore, replacing /k/ with /k/ or /k/ with /k/ causes translation havoc or even loss of semantic quality as the two sounds are highly phonemic.

In essence, no supra-segmental sound of a language should be replaced with another sound of the language, either as a source or receptor language, otherwise there should be a change in the semantic reality of the two texts and which is not and should not be the intention of a translator. In another example and lexicological as well, /b/ bilabial/implosive/voiced as in *ǵárgóó* which means *bone marrow* is sometimes replaced with /b/ bilabial/plosive/voiced as in *bàrgóó* which means *blanket*. Here, the two phonemes are detached by manner of articulation. Therefore, the use of one in phonological environment of the other is a great mistake that causes translation mismatch. Examine, further, the following contrastive pairs: Note that the Hausa writing system does not entail tone-marking.

*ǵàré* (peel (it) & *bàré* (stranger/not a member)

*ǵàgà* (raise) & *dàgà* (from)

*ǵàrà* (to be a little more than) & *dàrà* (board game)

*ǵákà* (indoor) & *dákà* (to pound/beat)

*ǵàsà* (down earth) & *kàsà* (distribute)

*ǵáfà* (leg) & *káfà* (stake)

ƙùùràá ta taso (dust blows) & ƙúúràá ta taso (a hyena comes,) (towards the speaker)

tsàýáá(stop) & sàýáá (buying)

### **Morphosyntax**

Morphosyntactic Orthography: words should be written correctly by merger or split: morpho-syntax. The Cambridge Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1999), defines morphology as: "the scientific study of the structure and form of either animals and plants or words and phrases" and "Syntax describes the rules by which words can be combined into sentences, thus syntactic implication of sentence structures and Morphological implication of words structures, as Morpho-syntactic Orthography altogether. In brief, this section examines where and how words are merged or split. For instance, *Káámààwáá*(catching) and *Káámàà wáà*(catching for (somebody), have the same spellings even though different meanings by morpho-syntactic implication. The first is a verbal noun but the second contains two words, thus verb and dative. So also itace (fire wood/noun) and ita ce (She is/Personal pronoun/femn/sing + continuous.) Etc. Let us examine the following examples by Syllables-Words merger and split:

### **Morphosyntax**

3. a) Rubutawa Sani yake yi (it is writing Sani is doing)
- b) Rubuta wa Sani yake yi (he is writing to/for Sani)
- c) Rubutawa saniya ke yi (it is writing a cow is doing)

The three sentences have the same spelling but different meanings altogether. Indeed, the same problem affects the following sets:

4. a) Ma je ma karanta gobe (we may go and read tomorrow)
- b) Ma je makaranta gobe (we may go to school tomorrow)
- c) Ma jema, karanta gobe (we may endeavour, just read tomorrow)
5. a) Ma ga takarda a ƙasa (We may see a paper on ground)
- b) Magatakarda a ƙasa (Secretary on ground)
- c) Maga, takarda a ƙasa (Maga, name of person, calling attention, a paper on ground.)

6. a) Haukacewa Sani ba kyau/to be mad, Sani, is not good  
b) Hau ka ce wa Sani ba kyau/climb and tell Sani is not good  
c) Haukace wa Sani ba kyau/Becoming mad for Sani is not good
7. a) Ada ya fi kyau (Ada is better/Ada is more handsome)  
b) A da ya fi kyau (previously, he was better)  
c) A da yafi kyau (previously, nursery production was good)  
d) Ada, yafi kyau (Ada, name of a person/masc/sing, nursery production is good)
8. a) Aku ya tafi kasuwa (parrot has gone to market (present perfect)  
b) Akuya tafi kasuwa (goat, go to market) (command)  
c) Akuya ta fi kasuwa (a goat is better than market /comparative)  
d) Akuyata fi kasuwa (my goat, be better than market/possessive/command)
9. a) Kare ne shi (he is a dog)  
b) Ka rene shi (you brought him up)
10. a) Ma gaji ya zo aiki (we may get tied; he may come to work (relative future))  
b) Magaji ya zo aiki (Magaji, name/masc/sing) has come to work (perfect tense)  
c) Magajiya, zo aiki (Magajiya, name/fem/sing), come to work (command)

In fact, the same thing applies to English as a source or receptor language. Examine the following:

- 11.a) On stage: As two words means- to become an actor, e.g. At the age of ten, he decided that he wanted to go on stage. (Cambridge A. L. D. 1999)  
b) Onstage: As one word means- to acquaint the audience with the main issues/fundamentals of a play before the actual performance (Muhammad 2007:3); (on to or on a stage for a performance) (Cambridge A. L. D. 1999).
12. a) All together: As two words means- jointly/as one/mutually/in concert/collectively



b) Altogether: As one word- is an adverb which means “completely or in total/all in all”

That will be N250,000.00 altogether, please (Lawal 2004). For example:

a) They studied less and less often, and eventually they stopped all together.

(The frequency of their study continued to decline and at the end, all of them stopped)

b) They studied less and less often, and eventually they stopped altogether.

(The frequency of their study continued to decline and at the end they completely stopped)

13. a) Forward: (adverb) onward, ahead, frontward, advanced promote, further etc.

b) Foreword: prelude, preamble, introduction etc. “a short piece of writing at the beginning of a book, sometimes praise by a famous person or someone who is not the writer” (Cambridge Advanced Learner’s Dictionary 1999). For example:

He forwarded the book to the customers. (He handed over the book to the customers)

He foreword the book to the customers. (He wrote to introduce the book to the customers)

In a cursory glance, one can easily judge that using a) in the linguistic environment of b) and vice versa leads to orthographic intricacy that will subsequently affect the quality of translation.

### **Data Presentation and Discussion**

Here, the paper scrutinizes some print materials to detect such orthographic mistakes that lead to translation difficulty or awkwardness between the two versions as exemplified in the background.

14. a) English: 1945 – A strike by 100,000 African miners closes many mines. The strike is broken by armed police: at least 12 miners are killed, 1,200 injured and many trade unionists arrested. (Malkin 1992:47)

b) Hausa: 1945 – Yajin aiki da leburori 100, 000 yan kasa suka yi. Dalilin sa rufe mahakar ma'adinai da yawa. An karya yajin aikin ta hanyar amfani da 'yansandan da karfin soja: An kashe a kalla mutane 12 an jima 1,200 rauni an kuma kama da yawa. (Alhassan, 1992, p.47) 'yansandan da karfin soja for armed police/semantic extension; and trade unionists declined)

Here, the general observation is that a) (the English version) and b) (the Hausa version) are not equivalents. The first sentence supposed to be a subordinate clause that should not carry a Full Stop as in **Yajin aiki da leburori 100,000 yan kasa suka yi**. is incomplete therefore, incomprehensive and the following sentence, which supposed to be the main clause of the preceding one such as **Dalilin sa rufe mahakar ma'adinai da yawa**. is completely meaningless. therefore, the two clauses that make the sentence acceptable should be:

**Yajin aiki da leburori 100,000 'yan kasa suka yiya sa rufe mahakar ma'adinai da yawa.**

The second sentence in the two versions are not equivalents. But, contextually, the highlighted n in 'yansandan is vehemently not there otherwise it brings another difference between the two versions. So also, the merger of the two monosyllabic words **jima** (int. v. delayed) which need split as **ji ma** (verb + dative) such as: 1,200 injured.

So also the Phoneme [j] in yan which is palatal – approximant – voiced cannot substitute [ʔ] in 'yan which is: Palatalized Glottal Stop – Plosive . Therefore, using them as invariants causes different meanings.

15. a) English: Many United Nations bodies and specialized agencies such as UNESCO and the international labour Organization have played an important part in the campaign against apartheid. The commission on human rights has kept apartheid under close review and oversees the implementation of the conventions against racial discrimination and apartheid. The United Nations Centre on Transnational Corporations has focused on the role of foreign investment, trade and loans through the transnational corporations in sustaining apartheid. (Malkin 1992 p42)

b) Hausa: Bangarori da yawa na majalisar dinkin duniya sun **badagudummawar su** ta fannoni da yawa a lokatai dabam-daban. Wadannan bangarorin sun hada da UNESCO, ILO, da sauran su. Shi ma kwamitin musamman na yakar wariya ya tsaya kwaf da kwaf don karya tsarin wariya. Ita kuma cibiyar kamfunna da masana'antu (UNCTC) ta dukufa **akan** saka hannun **jari**, kasuwanci da **badaba shi**. (Alhassan, 1992, p.42)

All the highlighted portion have orthographic problems. For example, the first one **bada** (meaningless) is **bayar da** (gave so, so). The second one **gudummawar su**(contribution they), which is a merger but changed to split, the right is the possessive word **gudummawarsu** (their contribution) moreover, in Hausa, comma is not used to enumerate, rather **da** is used and the two are not used together as in UNESCO, ILO, **da** sauran su. in addition, **akan** is an Indefinite Habitual Tense in Hausa which must not be intended by the translator, otherwise the versions are different. Therefore, the translator ought to write **a kan** as adverbial phrase of place, meaning **on a** (say table). So also, in “saka hannun **jari**, kasuwanci”, the word **jari**, should be referential to **Kasuwanci** by marking the referential element –n as suffix to arrive at **jarin Kasuwanci** (Capital for Business)

In the phrase: **badaba shi**, there is other orthographic mismatches such as **bada** which is meaningless as single word and which is supposed to be **bayar da** (giving so, so) while in: **ba shi**, disyllabic word **bashi** (loan) turns to split **ba shi**. (give him) is not intended in the source version.

16. a. English: “The group of ten included eight dancers under the leadership of the company’s founder and artistic director Ronold K. Brown” (Onyukwu, 2010, p.11)

b. Hausa: Kungiyar mai ‘yan rawa takwas, a farkashin jagorancin wanda ya **bullo** da kamfanin kuma darektan harkokin gargajiya, Ronald K. Brown (Muhammed, 2010, p.11)

The whole text in the receptor version is awkward and meaningless because is incomplete. The word initial sound in the highlighted word **[b]** is a Bilabial – Plosive – Voiced used in the linguistic environment of **[6]** which is a Bilabial – Implosive – Voiced. Therefore, the two sounds are phonemic thus:

Wanda ya bullo da kamfanin (who dug out the company from the ground) and

Wanda ya bullo da kamfanin (who initiated the company)

17. a. English: Ice Block here. (Bill board advertisement)

b. Hausa: Kankara

Here, **kankara** in the Hausa version means **scratching/peeling** while the intended meaning, going by the source version, is **kankara**. So, the analysis here is phonological as it entails contrast between **[k]** which is a Velar – Plosive – Voiceless and **[k̰]** which is a Velar – Ejective – Voiceless. in

essence, the two sounds are phonemic, therefore, non-contrastive. Here, instead of **Ice block** as in the source text, the Hausa text denotes **scratching**.

18. a English: Cards of various colours and thickness.

b Hausa: Kati masu launuka da kauri daban-daban (SMOE)

In b., there is lack of concord between **Kati** (noun/singular) and **masu** (Quantifier pronoun/plural).

In essence, the moment there is any type of orthographic mistakes it consequently leads to intricacies in translating the text or really understanding the translated version, in all cases, the purpose of translating is violated.

19. a English: It's Work

b. Hausa: Aikin maganin (Fadimatu)

In the English version, **it's** with apostrophe is not possessive as presupposed intention of the original writer, but Present continues tense. So, the two versions are different.

20. English: It cures cold that **cause** rheumatism – instead of **causes**

Hausa: Yana maganin sanyin **kashi** (Stool) instead of **kashi** (bone)

English: It cures cold that **dicrease** pennis – instead of decreases

Hausa: Yana maganin sanyi **maisakankancewar** gaba (**Cobra**) instead of **mai sa (which causes)**

English: It cures cold that **cause** rashes – instead of **causes**

Hausa: Yana maganin sanyi **maisakaikayin** gaba (**Cobra**) instead of **mai sa(which causes)**

English: It cures any type of cold

Hausa: Yana maganin sanyi **ko wane** iri – instea of **kowane** (Sahaba 747)

21. English: The medicine cures the following illness:

**Desentery** instead of **Dysentery**

**Gives man power** – imagine how **gives man power becomes an illness**

Swollen stomach

Backache (Three in One)

## **Conclusion**

Translation involves the use of two languages. Therefore, a translator must be bilingual and must possess a good command of the two languages. The linguistic competence in both source and receptor languages provides a translator with the ability to exploit the resources of the receptor language in order to provide the needed impact on, and achieve the desired responses from the receptor language audience. Indeed, the need for proficiency in both the source and receptor languages, sometimes faces intricacies, because text writers and translators alike make orthographic mistakes convergent to phonology (phonemic), syntax and punctuation (grammatical). The paper, therefore, tries to investigate the orthographic blunders in English-Hausa and Hausa-English translation. The results show that the orthographic mistakes of any kind leads to lack of equivalent or loss of relative meaning between the two texts.

It is recommended that trainees, trainers and translation practitioners alike should take care of lexical, phrasal, sentential and textual wrong equivalents through orthography otherwise the objective of translation, such as securing the closest natural equivalents between the source and receptor languages and the maximization of public welfare become unattainable.

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