

UNTRANSLATABILITY FALLACY OF URHOB0 KOLANUT PRESENTATION RITUAL POWER SYMBOLS+

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ABSTRACT

A strong untranslatability claim exists in the Urhobo public consensus that English as a communication medium is incapable of recapturing and retransmitting the meanings conceptualized in Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols. In line with the Urhobo public consensus, heterogeneous sociocultural gatherings within the Urhobo homeland, which involve kola-nut presentation often depict disregard for the multi-lingual and –ethnic nature of the get-togethers. The problematic of the disregard, which is apparent at the inception stage, is the exclusion of participants who have neither competence nor performance in the language from contributing and benefiting from the discourse, because the presentation must happen in Urhobo. This engenders social disharmony. Twenty seven (27) heterogeneous sociocultural gatherings wherein kola-nut presentation occurred were attended within the Urhobo homeland. Five (5) select recurrent clichés were sieved out and subjected to descriptive analysis using translational resemblance as *tertium comparationis* and the Hallidayan systemic functional grammar as a linguistic model. Findings indicate that English could be bent to carry the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols. The notion of untranslatability of the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols is fallacious. It spontaneously emerged out of appeal to tradition and patriotism which link to the prejudice of the Urhobo public consensus.

Keywords: Kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols, participants' exclusion, select recurrent clichés, translational resemblance and untranslatability fallacy.

INTRODUCTION

For translation to occur there must be different sets of linguistic items with dissimilar sociocultural distributions. Then, there must be the desire or will to be consciously aware of the meanings in the two different sociocultures and languages. It is the desire for conscious awareness of the meanings of linguistic events in dissimilar sociocultures, which serves as the motivating factor that ultimately triggers off translatorial actions. The factor of desirability latently and relatively harbours the issue of text significance in relation to humanity. In other words, a given source language (SL) text must relatively process a measure of human essentiality to cause the desire for it to be translated into a target language (TL) to arise. This is because man is ever in the quest to know more and more about his environment and how to make maximal use of every available opportunity. Once a text is adjudged rich in human significance, it will manifest in the desirability for its translation. This accounts for why certain texts are translated into numerous languages irrespective of linguistic affinities or otherwise as opposed to some others. For examples, Chinua Achebe's *Things Fall Apart* (1958) has been translated into more than thirty languages of the world including French and German. The Holy Bible has been translated from Hebrew into many Germanic, Romance, Sino-Tibetan, Slavonic, African tone languages etc. Sequel to that, linguistic and by logical inclusion, sociocultural affinities are of marginal considerations in translation, once the human significance factor is adequately fulfilled.

In Urhobo socioculture, kola-nut presentation (usually treated in association with its ritual breaking), the act of offering kola-nut fruits to a visitor(s), stranger(s), friend(s) and foe(s) upon arrival at a host's place is full of human significance. Kola-nut presentation in Urhobo socioculture indicates an inclination to social harmony and spirituality. This is usually evident in the great deal of decorum and sense of serenity with which the kola-nut is presented. Ideologically, presentation of kola-nut in many Nigerian ethnic groups like the Igbo, Urhobo, Efik, Ibibio and Ijo suggests the invitation of the Supreme Deity, i.e. God to take charge in the affairs of man. The kola-nut, upon which prayers of goodwill can be made, is equally conceptualized in the Urhobo as something beneficial to the interlocutor(s), visitor(s) and the host(s). Money is often used in place of the kola-nut fruits, if a host cannot readily get any in the event of visitation or ceremony. Kola-nut presentation marks the basis as well as the onset of discourses in virtually every sociocultural gathering within the Urhobo socioculture. However, it suffices to mention that sometimes people consume the kola-nut fruit for personal or group reasons in which case, its presentation ritual is omitted. The prayer made on kola-nut is usually for long-life and prosperity generally. The belief is that, the prayers made on the kola-nut are actualised in the lives of its consumers, acceptors and presenters (cf. Ifesieh 2014:362). However, in the Urhobo socioculture, the kola-nut presentation is accompanied by a peculiar performance, wagging of kola-nut. It is a strong belief among the Urhobo people that the presented kola-nut might roll away, if not wagged with money. Therefore, whenever it is presented, it is supported with some money, even if it is a little amount. Subsequently, kola-nut presentation in the Urhobo socioculture involves prayers and monetary gifts. These are valuable aspects of human culture. The peculiarity of the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ought to enrich other Nigerian sociocultures via translation into English, the number one Nigerian official language.

The problem

One of the most popular clichés in the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols is ‘*evwe nyo oyibo*’: ‘kola does not understand English’. In the phrase, kola-nut is metaphorized via personification. The metaphorization of kola-nut via personification (cf. Budaev 2007) anchors to the Urhobo ideological conception that God acts on all things, even on the kola-nut in order to bring to actuality the pronouncements made in His name on the kola-nut in the lives of its consumers, acceptors and presenters. However, the import of the cliché, which consists of ritual power symbols, does not stop at the belief in its physical and spiritual benefits. The pronouncements or prayers to be made on the kola-nuts must happen in Urhobo. There is a strong untranslatability claim by the Urhobo public consensus that English is incapable of recapturing and retransmitting the meanings conceptualized in the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols. But, practicing the belief is problematic because the Urhobo people, who interact with other sociocultures in Nigeria at various institutional levels such as marriage, business, industry, sport, religion, art, science, medicine and music, would be isolating other sociocultures from the foundational level of the discourses, which involve kola-nut presentation ritual. The isolation often leads to apathy and frustration on the people at the receiving end in contributing to mutuality, compromise and hybridized discourse. Sequel to that, not only that inter-sociocultural suspicion is engendered; cross-fertilization of ideas is thereby fettered.

Therefore, the aim of this write-up is to demonstrate the untranslatability fallacy of the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A fallacy is indicative of error in the reasoning process. According to logicians, two types of fallacies exist: inductive and deductive fallacies. While inductive fallacy results from wrong use of evidence, deductive one occurs due to a failure to follow the logic of a series of statements (cf. Popkin and Stroll 1993: 259; Rottenberg and Winchell 2006: 285). In the Urhobo kola-nut ritual power symbols, the notion of untranslatability is re-invoked. The re-invocation brings to memory the age long debate that emerged in the 19th century with the emergence of linguistics. Prior to the linguistics emergence, there appeared to exist, a tacit consensus on the interchangeability of linguistic codes. But the emergence of linguistic science opened the vista for influx of theories of language use, description and historical reconstruction. Thus, two broad approaches to translation emerged, the Universalist (principles) or formal approach which suggests that the existence of linguistic universals ensures translatability and the Monadist (parameters) which suggests that each speech community interprets reality in its own peculiar way; this jeopardizes translatability. Subsequently, while the Universalist approach postulates that equivalence is achievable inter-linguistically, the Monadist suggests the contrary. These views are in consonance with the different definitions of translation: Nida (1959); Newmark (1984); Koller (1983); Toury (1995); House (1973); Boase-Beier and Michael (1999) are some traditional translation exponents. Their translation definitions show that interlingual transfer of texts may involve skewing or loss of meanings in pursuit of natural equivalence. That is, they approach the translatorial action communicatively. For example, Nida (1959: 19) suggests that translation is 'producing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent to the message in the source language, first in meaning secondly in style'. Linguistically, Catford (1965), Bassnett (1996), Ajunwa (1991) see translation as operation involving exchanging functionally equivalent texts of the SL with the ones of the TL. For example, Catford (1965: 20) demonstrates translation as 'operation performed on languages: a process of substituting a text in one language, (SL) for a text in another, (TL)'. The operation may sometimes involve addition of information in the effort to recapture nuances of meanings in the SL at the TL end. Two things are clear from, the two approaches; one, both the linguistically and traditionally oriented definition of translation are equivalent based; two, sense may be tampered with once translation takes place. The sense distortion takes place in one or more of these levels: syntactic, phonological, lexical, morphological and contextual levels. On account of various loop holes found with reference to translation, some have clearly and categorically concluded that translation was an impossible task. Nevertheless, although both the traditionalists and linguists in the business of translation supply avalanche of evidence and arguments to support their premises, they fail to prove beyond reasonable doubt that meaning has not been sufficiently transferred to enhance intercultural co-operation and comprehension, which are the ultimate objectives of translation. Therefore, to that extent, the argument as regards impossibility of translation remains fallacious. In his historical overview of text translatability, de Pedro (1999) suggests that it would be better to speak of translation difficulty instead of untranslatability:

What seems undeniable is that some texts are more easily translatable than others. In general, it can be asserted that a text with an aesthetic function will contain elements which will make its reproduction in a different language difficult, whereas a text with a merely informative function will be easier to translate. The use of language with an aesthetic function is more self-conscious and will presuppose a greater degree of

elaboration than language with a merely communicative function, pp. 552-553.

In the quotation, it can be noticed that de Pedro speaks of translation difficulty rather than untranslatability. Propagating the untranslatability view would further entrench the idea that certain natural languages are ill equipped for expressing certain aspects of human experiences and imaginations which is linguistically nonfactual and by implication fallacious.

However, the radicalization of translation practice ushered in by the deconstructionists such as Vermeer (1978; 1998) Kenny (1998); Schäffner 1998; Eco and Nergaard (1998); Lambert (1998) jettisoned the notion of equivalence, describing it as unnecessary and damaging to translation. In the view of the deconstructionists, translation is primarily a process of intercultural communication which end product is a text capable of functioning appropriately in a specific situation and context of use. The problem of equivalence is solved by defining it not in terms of equivalence i.e. abstract semantic sameness, but in terms of contextually sufficient similarity of content between source and target languages with equal-in-value structural elements being pursued as far as feasible (cf. Vermeer 1998: 61). In the same vein, Xiumei and Qinyan (2012: 412) consider that individuals cognitively construct different representations of the same phenomenon due to variations in their physical environments and cognitive abilities. Cruse (2000: 156) corroborates that view thus, “absolute synonyms are vanishingly rare, and (they) do not form a significant feature of natural vocabularies”. Therefore, equivalent senses may not really be tenable. Sequel to that, argument on what does not exist is tantamount to nullity or at best, it might be termed academic gymnastics.

Xiumei and Qinyan propose “resemblance” in line with the relevance theory of Speber and Wilson (1995: 229). Wong (2006: 124-132) tows a similar line of argument. He writes on degree of ease in translatability. With the aid of avalanche of examples, he demonstrates that translation between the major European languages, such as English, French, German, Italian, Spanish, Latin and Greek are easier than translating between Chinese and any of the languages. He cites syntactic differences as one of the most decisive factors that determines, whether a language translates more readily or less readily into another language. In other words, one can really talk about degrees of translatability, and not untranslatability. Untranslatability would deny the possibility of meaning transfer in relation to any case in question. Besides, untranslatability would connote the denial of universality of human nature. All human beings perceive the world in more or less the same way because all humans have the same sense organs. Therefore, they have the same basic idea about it. The complex ideas which may vary regionally are built from the basic ideas derived from experience (Goddard 1998: 8). That is also one of the reasons why the issues of security, human right violation, terrorism corruption and drug abuse are frowned at the world over. Sequel to that, ethical laws of cause and effect are more or less constant and unchangeable. Thus, there is a worldwide declaration of human rights. This is because human rights incorporate moral ideals such as freedom, equality, justice and security. These moral ideals are fixed notions which have been accepted and entrenched in different national constitutions across the world (cf. Dzurgba 2008:20).

The point under pursuit is that the use of the word untranslatability in its strict sense in relation to translation practice is untenable. Translation is ultimately concerned with transfer of meanings. Forms may change in the translatorial action process, but the meaning remains more or less invariant. For example, those who accept the untranslatability doctrine can say

that the following phatic communion expressions in the different languages are untranslatable into English:

1. French: Comment allez vous?
Gloss: How go you?
2. German: Wie geht es dir?
Gloss: How goes it to you?
3. Igbo: Kedu ka i mèrè?
Gloss: How that you did?
4. Urhobo: Mavọọ?
Gloss: How?
5. Yoruba: Bawo ni?
Gloss: How it?

Notice that the operational verb in the statement 1. and 2. above is the verb 'to go'. In statement 3., it is the verb 'to be' but in the past tense. Sentences 4. and 5. in the languages involved did not require any verbal process to actualize the phatic communion. Nevertheless, once the phrase structure rules of English are empathically and correctly applied, a pragmatically and semantically equivalent structure of the phatic communion will be realized at the TL end –English: 'How are you?'

One of the major difficulties translators face in the translatorial action process is achieving the resemblance of the SL message in the TL text. To a many, most especially the proponents of untranslatability, translation equivalence is synonymous with abstract and absolute semantic sameness. Sequel to that, the translator who is more or less a contrastivist should equate pairs of SL texts and TL texts, which have the same sense. This is the bane of interchangeability of meanings, because abstract and absolute semantic sameness is virtually nonexistent in the natural tongue. Sequel to that, to arrive at a dispassionate basis for arriving at a generally acceptable resemblance, there must be a common comparison criterion for both the SL and the TL, i.e the tertium comparationis. Attempt to use the surface structure as tertium comparationis fail, because it leads to interlingual equations that are superficial and insignificant (James 1980: 171) as can be noticed in the examples of the phatic communion above. An attempt to use the deep structure for the same matter usually fails too, because the deep structure is language specific. Secondly, the fact that sentences of the same or different languages have a common deep structure does not necessarily equate having equivalent communicative function; even though the origin of two such sentences is demonstrable:

German: Der Mann hat das Fenster geöffnet.

Semantic Translation: 1. The man has opened the window. , 2. The window was opened by the man.

A reader will be misled, if the two sentences are equated to him/her as having the same communicative potentials. The context where the first is applied in German is different from where the second is used in English. The deep structure is only concerned with the ideational meaning that single isolated sentences convey (James 1980:171). There are at least two other kinds of meanings contained in sentences: interpersonal and textual meanings. For two texts from different languages to be translationally similar, they must convey similar ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings, but the deep structure takes care of only the ideational meanings.

Subsequently, there are two levels of translation: the pragmatic and the semantic. For the purpose of comparison and contrast, the SL and TL forms ought to be exchanged in such a

way that no matter how far they diverge superficially, resemble semantically and pragmatically. In this manner, the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings of the SL text will be recaptured in the TL text. Conclusively, translation similitude of this rather rigorously defined sort, which entails all round resemblance, is the best available tertium comparationis for evaluating translation (cf. Ifesieh 2013a: 120). This entails that translation is a Janus-headed enterprise, which must employ the two broad approaches to translation (Newmark 1984; 1998; Ifesieh 2013b; Oyetade and Ifesieh 2013)

Method

Twenty seven sociocultural gatherings of heterogeneous nature were attended within the Urhobo homeland where the people made kola-nut presentations. Attending the sociocultural get-together spanned twenty five months. Literate informants who were competent in Urhobo were used to select recurrent ritual power symbols (clichés) applied in the Urhobo kola-nut presentation. Although a great preponderance of clichés were noticed in use in the kola-nut presentation, only a few very recurrent ones that happened up to seven times altogether at different sociocultural occasions were selected. Their frequent recurrence gave a commonsensical convincing impression that they were well habitualized in the socioculture. Five (5) of such frequently recurrent clichés were sieved out and subjected to descriptive analysis using translational resemblance as tertium comparationis. The Hallidayan systemic functional grammar was used as a linguistic framework (Halliday 1985; 2004).

Presentation of Data and Analysis

1. Urhobo cliché: *Ẹ̀wwe nyo oyíboo.*
Gloss: Kola-nut understand English not.

Translation: Kola-nut does not understand English.

The cliché is said by the *Ọ́tota* (Spokesman) who presents kola-nut to the eldest person in an Urhobo sociocultural gathering. It is usually said during the kola-nut breaking.

The word ‘*ẹ̀wwe*’: ‘kola-nut’ is used ideologically; it commonsensically connotes cordiality, good wishes and acceptance among the givers and receiver(s). Although kola-nut denotes a characteristic bitter fruit produced by a kola tree, the meaning of the kola-nut transcends its denotative meaning in the context of use. Kola is personified in the context of use. Kola-nut as a fruit type does not qualify as a rational being capable of cognitive events; yet it is given that attribute in the context. Kola is said not to understand English, but it understands Urhobo. Kola-nut functions as Senser in the clause. Within the clause, it uses the mental process of COGNITION: ‘*nyo*’: ‘understand’, which has a Phenomenon: ‘*oyibo*’: ‘English’. In the translatum, the Senser, kola-nut performs clausal functions similar to the ones it does in the original clause. Therefore, it can be said that the translatum resembles the original text. In the target language and socioculture, the ideologically used word, kola-nut has a conceptual meaning similar to the one it has in the original. However, the contextual use differs sometimes in the two sociocultures. Nevertheless, the differential applications of the word could not lead to semantic dislocation because the accompanying actions and processes in the source socioculture lead to everyday cognitive and practical events that are commonplace happenings at the TL end, e.g. prayer of goodwill, eating, drinking and monetary gift. Therefore, the target Nigerian English audience can readily understand the text.

2. Urhobo cliché: *Ohwo ọ̀vo da yan usun ka ghwe ichiyin royen.*

Gloss: person one if walk alone is pack footprint his.

Translation: If a man walks alone on the path-way, his footprints are packed.

In the Urhobo socioculture, the eldest man present in the family presents the kola-nut via the *Qtota*. The cliché speaks for solidarity, because it is considered an unfortunate situation, if the eldest man's family members fail to support his kola-nut presentation with money. The cliché is a type of clarion by the *Qtota* to the kola presenter's family members, friends and associates to demonstrate their oneness with, love of and loyalty to their elder. More so, in the Urhobo traditional society, 'a chief's kola-nut does not roll': 'ẹvwẹ olorogun goriee'. Once kola-nut is presented, it must be supported with money; otherwise, it rolls off the plate and falls to the ground. This tradition has a strong adherence in the Urhobo socioculture. Therefore, it is unheard of that kola-nut is not supported (with money) after its presentation. In the socioculture, with regard to the context, everyman who is old enough to be entertained with kola-nut is a chief.

The lexical items, 'ohwo ọvo': 'person' understood as a man and 'ichiyin': 'footprint' are used ideologically in the cliché. Commonsensically, if an individual does a thing solo, it has a relatively little effect as opposed to when many people team up to do the same thing. Nevertheless, to pack a lone walker's, footprint connotes quite a serious situation, which is often diabolic. If many people walk in a group along a footpath, it would be difficult to identify the individual footprints of the membership. Consequently, it would be pretty difficult to single out a member for diabolism. In other words, the footprints of a lone walker can easily be identified and determined. Such a person is either at the mercy of his opponent or enemy. In the Urhobo cliché, which is a clause complex, the dependent clause has 'ohwo ọvo': 'one person' as the Actor which in turn has a material action, process 'yan': 'walk' and a Circumstantial element of quality 'usun': 'alone'. The matrix clause, 'kaghwe ichiyin royen' is more of topicalization than a passive construction and it is similar to the English matrix clause: 'his footprints are packed'. In both the Urhobo cliché and its English synonyms, the Agent who packs the footprints is obfuscated. The concepts used in the two instances are also commonsensically common place. Although the packing of footprint can be seen peculiarly as ideological, a bit of reflection can unravel its pragmatic and semantic implications. This is so, because issues of diabolism are usually shrouded in secrecy in virtually all sociocultures.

3. Urhobo cliché: A rhonvwe ovwa nu a ke rhonvwe emu ovwa vwọ ke avwanre.

Gloss: We accept you finish we before accept food you offer before us.

Translation: We accepted you completely before we received the food you offered us.

The Urhobo cliché above is a recurrent clause complex used by the *Qtota* at the receiving end to show gratitude to the kola-nut presenters. In the clause complex, 'A': 'we' constitute the Actor, who via the material action process, 'rhonvwe': 'accept' acts on the Goal, 'ovwa': 'you'. The 'nu': 'finish' is a Circumstantial element of quality showing how the receivers accepted the kola-nut presenters. Those lexical items make up the matrix clause. The acceptance was total: the presenter was accepted with both his imperfections and goodness. Implicitly, accepting the presenter in his entirety has a strong ideological inclination: the family members of the kola-nut presenter and all that belong to them are not excluded in the acceptance. This further suggests that the kola-nut presenter is more important than the present. In the second clause, which is the subordinate clause, words similar to the ones used in the matrix clause are also used. The only exceptions are 'emu': 'food', 'vwọ': 'offer', 'avwanre': 'us' and 'ke': 'before'. It is clear that a competent Nigerian English audience from some other ethnic groups such as Igbo, Iteskiri, Ijo, Efik and Ibibio and many more would neither be semantically nor pragmatically dislocated by the Nigerian English translation. This is so, because all the lexemes in use denote commonplace concepts within the sociocultures. Even with parametric differential usages in different sociocultures, the universality of human

nature contributes a great deal in helping one to come to grips with the meanings of the lexemes within the context of use.

4.Urhobo cliché: Eje erhuvwu nene uwe dia; eje ohwo ọ tare nẹ ọ dia etioyee,

Gloss: May goodness follow you live; may person she/he say that it live should not,

Cont. uyovwi kẹ ọyen ọ vwo yan.

head that is she/he which walk.

Translation: May goodness with be you; may the person who says it should not be so walk with his/her head.

The Urhobo cliché above consists of a clause and a clause complex. In the clause, the *Qotota* thematizes the expressive modality, 'Eje': 'may' to foreground the probability of the reality he wishes the Carrier, 'uwe': 'you' of the Attribute, 'erhuvwu': 'goodness' via the relational process 'nẹ odia': 'follow... live'. In the subsequent clause complex, 'eje': 'may' is thematized again to concretize the essence of the preceding utterance. In the clause complex, there is a verbal process, 'tare': 'say' with a Sayer, 'ohwo': 'person' and Verbiage, 'ọ dia etioyee': 'it live should not', i.e., it should not be so, that such a fellow should suffer calamity: 'uyovwi kẹ ọyen o vwo yan': 'head that is he/she what walk' i.e., 'walk with his/her head'. It is evident here that there is use variation between the Urhobo and Nigerian English as shown, in the translation. The words 'what', 'that' and 'is' in the gloss are not realized in the translation. However, sufficient lexical similarity exists between the translatum and the Urhobo cliché, because the translatorial action process observed the phrase structure rules of English while being empathetic to the original text. Nevertheless, the meaning of the Urhobo cliché is adequately realized at the target language end in such a way that a competent Nigerian English speaker would comprehend the import of the cliché.

5.Urhobo cliché: Eje emọ vẹ igbo nene uwe dia; eje otovwe ufuoma kẹ ọyen uwe

Gloss: May child and money with you live; may longevity peace that is you

Cont. vwo rie ayen.

what eat them.

Translation: May children and money live with you; may you enjoy them in peace and longevity.

The Urhobo cliché above is a prayer offered to the kola-nut presenter. The ideological use of the lexical item 'igbo': 'money' is reflected in the relational process, 'dia': 'live' as used in the cliché. Money is said to live as though it breathes like a living organism. This reminds one of the Holy Bible scripture that says "... for riches certainly make themselves wing. They fly away towards heaven" (cf. proverbs 23:5). The first clause is actually a double sentence in which 'emọ': 'children' and 'igbo': 'money' are treated as valuable assets in human existence. In the clause, 'emọ': 'children' and 'igbo': 'money' function as the Identified elements in the structure with 'dia': 'live' as the relational process which has 'uwe': 'you' as the Identifier. The *Qotota* thematizes the expressive modality, 'eje': 'may' in representing the probability of the reality he wishes the kola-nut presenter. In the subsequent clause, the *Qotota* again thematizes the expressive modality 'eje': 'may' in order to represent further the probability of the reality he wishes the Identifier, 'Uwe': 'You', the kola-nut presenter. However, in the second clause, 'uwe': 'you' seizes to perform the Identifier function; it rather functions as an Actor participant within the clause, whose Goal is 'ayen': 'them', (i.e. children and money, viewed anaphorically). The Actor, 'uwe': 'you' through a material action process 'rie': 'eat'/'enjoy' with the Circumstantial element of Quality, 'ufuoma': 'peace' and 'otovwe': 'longevity' would experience the ideational import of the *Qotota*'s utterance.

It is clear from the translation that the target Nigerian English audience would have little, if any difficulty in coming to grips with the meaning of the Urhobo cliché. This is because, all the lexical items used within the clausal structure relate to everyday events and they all relate to commonsense experiences within the target socioculture. More so, sufficient lexical similarities exist between the SL and the TL texts.

DISCUSSION

It is noticeable from the clausal elements in the Urhobo clichés and their glosses, the word-for-word translation, that there is no one to one equivalent between the Urhobo clichés and their English clausal patterns otherwise the glosses would always have been meaningful in relation to the source text production conditions. The translations, which are mainly semantic in approach, show a great deal of empathy to the original text. This claim is supported by the fact that the translatorial actions exploit the syntactic possibilities of the source language texts; in terms of thought processes, imagery, tonality and sociocultural conditions of text production, the translatus resemble the source texts. However, there are clear incidences of use variations between the Urhobo clichés and the target English texts. In the example 2. above, ‘kaghwe ichiyin royen’ is a typical case of topicalization and not passivization as in English. Yet the meaning projected by the Urhobo cliché via the Nigerian English medium remains sacrosanct. Although translation exponents {like House (1973)} set limits of translatability, they fail to relate their argument to the stages involved in translation and the ultimate aim of the translatorial action. To House and her likes as evident in the Urhobo cliché; ‘evwe nyo oyiboo’: ‘kola-nut does not understand English’, because every language is autonomous in value. Therefore, the forms, signifier(S) of language *x* cannot be exchanged for the signifiers(S) of language *y* although they conceptually express the same signified or reference. In other words, $S_x \neq S_y$. Nevertheless, the claims of House and those that share her views like the *Qotota* in Urhobo are ingenuously illuminating. They contribute a great deal in aiding the comprehension of natural language, culture and development of general principles of grammar. However, the claims of untranslatability and its accompanying arguments remain inadequate to nullify the exquisite functionality of any product of a translatorial action that adequately resembles the ideational, interpersonal and textual meanings of the source text irrespective of superficial divergence of the source and target text forms. Translatorial action is a human event, which can sometimes be machine aided. All the same the event happens in phases: the comprehension phase, which involves description, interpretation and explanation of the SL and the reconstruction phrase which involves the reproduction of the content and style of the SL in such a way that an optimal semantic and pragmatic resemblance of the SL text is attained at the TL end.

The untranslatability claim of the Urhobo in the kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols is an appeal to tradition. This is so because, Urhobo has a homeland, where it functions as a communication norm. The major idea here is that, the language has been in existence since time immemorial within the geographical setting and has therefore become a tradition, which must not be tampered with; otherwise the primitive purity of the normative usage will be lost. But such an argument is inadequate to sustain the claim of untranslatability of the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols noticed in the clichés. Many factors contribute to determine a people’s linguistic choices. One of the factors is shifting to a language that offers the people maximal upwards sociopolitical, economic, technological and scientific mobility. Subsequently, the appeal to tradition connects to the prejudice of the Urhobo public, with the assumption that the claim can be defended adequately without satisfactory sociocultural and linguistic evidence, once a belief in the communicative efficacy of the language is

emphasized. This invariably links to an appeal to patriotism, which may allow the Urhobo cliché users to omit evidence, which the audience needs for strict evaluation of the claim. However, the claim of untranslatability vis-à-vis the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbols is tantamount to false dilemma, because it reflects a simplification of a complex problem. In whatever degree or manner, translation is a craft; it is a complex issue. Therefore, its practice must not be an either or situation. It is not a task that is either possible or impossible as seen in translatability versus untranslatability claims. Sometimes inadequate know-how, mental set, mental laziness or fatigue contribute in diverting attention from the actual explanation (to translation difficulties), which the proponents of the untranslatability jettison for doubtful reasons.

CONCLUSION

The untranslatability claim of the Urhobo kola-nut presentation ritual power symbol defies adequately convincing substantiation. Therefore, it cannot be sustained. For any claim of untranslatability to hold a considerable sway, it must take proper account of the skopos of the translational action in both practical and theoretical terms. In spite of everything, translatorial action is a part of applied linguistics, which is clearly pragmatic in outlook. In this regard, the arguers or claimants of untranslatability must adequately demonstrate how the translational action process eroded the original meaning(s) of the text (be it linguistic or sociocultural) to the extent that the target text, i.e. the translatum totally lacks the resemblance of the original text and that the target audience would likely be misinformed. The translatus of the Urhobo clichés have shown that the claim of untranslatability can only be taken with a pinch of salt. In the translation of sociocultural text, connotations and use variations are bound to happen, because such texts offer opportunities for the re-enactment, re-conceptualization and contestation of ideologies. More often than not, such texts bear translation difficulties which can only be balanced out conditionally. Once the translator's know how: Members Resources (Fairclough 1995), sociocultural and cognitive baggage of the languages in contact are sound and the translator properly applies the know-how for pursuit of the skopos of the translation and adequately realizes the ideational, interpersonal and textual functions of the original text at the target end, then the goal of the translatorial action is achieved. Therefore, any claim of untranslatability in that regard remains a fallacy.

+ Power symbol is used as a re-conceptualization of the term, symbol, cf. Ifesieh, E. C. 2015. Challenges of semantic extensions of jihad power symbols vis-à-vis Boko Haram. *European Journal of Language Studies*. Vol. 2, No. 1. pp. 42-55.

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