TRANSLATION AS A CATALYST FOR TECHNOSCIENTIFIC, SECURITY AND SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT IN 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

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ABSTRACT
In the 21st century, translation has emerged as a pivotal tool in shaping the trajectory of technoscientific advancement, national security strategies, and socio-economic development-particularly in multilingual and multicultural nations like Nigeria. "Harnessing multilingualism and translation can help Nigeria promote national unity, effective communication, and socio-economic growth".(Akindele, 2019). As globalization deepens, the demand for accurate and culturally sensitive translation in fields such as medicine, engineering, ICT, and security intelligence has increased significantly. This study appraises the role of translation in facilitating knowledge transfer, policy implementation, and international collaboration in Nigeria. It highlights how the absence or inadequacy of quality translation in the technoscientific and security sectors may hinder innovation, foster miscommunication, and escalate conflicts. Furthermore, it explores the socio-economic implications of translation, including its capacity to boost education, commerce, and inclusive governance through effective language meditation. Drawing on case studies, literature review, and theoretical reflections, this paper argues that translation is not merely a linguistic act but a strategic enabler of national development. It concludes with recommendations for strengthening translation frameworks to optimize Nigeria's participation in the global knowledge economy.
Keywords: Translation, Technoscience, National Security, Socio-economic Development, Nigeria, Development Catalysts

INTRODUCTION: BACKGROUND TO THE STUDY
In an increasingly interconnected world, the 21st century has witnessed unprecedented advancements in science, technology and communication. These developments have redefined the global landscape, influencing national security protocols, socio-economic policies, and the dissemination of scientific knowledge. At the heart of this transformation lies the often-overlooked yet indispensable role of translation. More than a linguistic exercise, translation serves as a bridge across languages, disciplines, and cultures-facilitating access to critical information, innovation, and international cooperation.

In Nigeria, a country marked by linguistic diversity-with over 500 languages and English as the official language, the role of translation becomes even more vital. Nigeria's development goals in technoscience, security, and economic progress require effective communication between stakeholders at the local, national, and international levels. However, the lack of deliberate investment in translation infrastructure and policy has led to gaps in knowledge dissemination, misinterpretation of technical data, and barriers to participation in global scientific and security conversations.

Technoscientific texts, such as manuals, research papers, patents, and health information, often originate in dominant global languages like English, French, Chinese, or German. Without proper translation into local Nigerian languages or accessible English variants, such knowledge remains alien to the majority of the population, especially in rural and underserved communities. Similarly, security operations and peace-building efforts can be undermined by poor or delayed translation of intelligence reports, legal texts, and diplomatic communications.

Furthermore, as Nigeria seeks to strengthen its economy through industrialization, digital technology, and education, the translation of socio-economic materials becomes central to inclusive growth. For example, development initiatives that fail to consider linguistic inclusion may widen inequality gaps and foster mistrust among citizens.

This study, therefore, seeks to appraise the impact of translation in the fields of technoscience, security, and socio-economic development within the Nigerian context. It investigates how translation practices affect knowledge accessibility, national security, and economic empowerment in Nigeria. By understanding and promoting the strategic role of translation, Nigeria can better position itself in the global knowledge economy while fostering national unity and sustainable development.

Statement of the Problem

Despite the growing recognition of translation as a vital component in knowledge transfer, communication, and development, Nigeria continues to underexploit its potential across critical sectors such as technoscience, security, and socio-economic development. The country's multilingual reality presents both opportunities and challenges, yet there remains a conspicuous lack of structured translation policies and trained professionals to effectively mediate the exchange of knowledge and information across languages. This gap has far-reaching consequences for national development.

In the technoscientific domain, for instance, a significant amount of scientific research and technological innovation is documented in languages inaccessible to many Nigerians. According to Adekoya and Adekola (2016), the lack of technical translation into indeginous languages has contributed to the limited adoption of agricultural and health innovations in rural communities. Similarly, Edewor (2019) points out that the dominance of English in scientific communication excludes a large segment of the Nigerian population, thereby reinforcing educational and technological disparities.

In the security sector, lapses in translation and interpretation can compromise intelligence operations and legal process. Okafor and Chikere (2021) emphasize that poor translation of security documents, international agreements, and surveillance reports has in some instances, led to miscommunication and operational setbacks in Nigeria's fight against insurgency and terrorism. The absence of professional translators in security-related decision making forums weakens Nigeria's capacity to respond effectively to both internal and cross-border threats.

Furthermore, from a socio-economic perspective, inadequate translation services hinder access to public information, finincial literacy materials, health campaigns, and civic education, especially among non-English speaking populations. A study by Ayoola (2020) shows that translation of public health materials into local languages during the COVID-19 pandemic significantly improved public understanding and compliance in some Nigerian communities. However, the efforts were isolated and not institutionalized.

What emerged from these observations is a synthetic neglect of translation as a tool for inclusive development and strategic governance. Despite the abundance of linguistic resources and the demand for local engagement, translation is still percieved as secondary in national policy planning and implementation. Without a deliberate framework to integrate translation into Nigeria's development agenda, the country risks widening the knowledge gap, weakening security networks, and stalling socio-economic progress.

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework for this study is anchored on the interdisciplinary intersection between translation studies, technoscience communication, security linguistics, and development communication theory. It highlights how translation functions not merely as a linguistic operation, but as a strategic enabler in the processes of scientific knowledge dissemination, national security enhancement, and inclusive socio-economic development.

1. Translation as a Communicative Act and Cultural Mediator

Translation is viewed in this study as a form of intercultural communication that facilitates understanding between speakers of different languages and users of different knowledge systems. According to Hatim and Mason (1997), translation is "a communicative process which takes place within a social context." This view aligns with Nigeria's linguistic complexity, where translation bridges the gap between official information and local understanding.

As posited by Bassnett (2014), translation mediates both linguistic and cultural codes, making it a powerful instrument for knowledge accessibility in multicultural and multilingual societies. In Nigeria, this role is especially significant in conveying technical, scientific, and policy-related information to non-English-speaking citizens.

2. Technoscientific Translation and Knowledge Dissemination

Scientific and technical translation is a specialized domain that ensures complex knowledge—particularly in fields such as medicine, engineering, agriculture, and ICT—is conveyed accurately across linguistic and cultural boundaries. Pinch and Bijker's (1984) theory of the social construction of technology (SCOT) underscores that technology is not neutral but shaped by the society that uses it. Therefore, translating technoscientific knowledge into languages accessible to Nigerian users enhances both understanding and utility.

Oloyede (2018) asserts that without translation, many technological innovations imported into Nigeria remain underutilized or misunderstood, thus creating a bottleneck in the process of knowledge transfer and local adaptation.

3. Security Linguistics and Peace Linguistics

Translation plays a critical role in the interpretation of intelligence, the drafting of legal and diplomatic documents, and the communication of crisis messages. According to Schäffner (2004), in conflict or post-conflict societies, translators act as "invisible agents of peace or war," depending on how they mediate the discourse. Linguistic misinterpretation, or lack of translation altogether, can escalate tensions or impede peace-building efforts.

Malmkjær (2011) further introduces the notion of "peace linguistics," where translation serves as a non-violent instrument for mitigating conflict and promoting understanding. This is highly relevant in Nigeria's conflict zones where local languages dominate but government policies and interventions are communicated in English.

4. Development Communication and Linguistic Inclusion

The framework also draws from development communication theory, which advocates for participatory and inclusive approaches to development. Melkote and Steeves (2001) stress that development is only meaningful when communication takes place in the language of the people. Translation ensures that citizens have equitable access to socio-economic programs, legal rights, and public services.

A study by Olaoye (2020) emphasizes the need for translation in Nigeria's development planning, noting that the exclusion of indigenous languages in national communication strategies has led to misinformation, low public participation, and policy failure.

Purpose / Objectives of the Study

The primary purpose of this study is to critically appraise the role and impact of translation in advancing technoscience, enhancing national security, and fostering socio-economic development in 21st-century Nigeria. It aims to underscore translation not just as a linguistic tool, but as a strategic vehicle for national transformation in a multilingual and globalized world.

The specific objectives of the study are to:

1. Examine the role of translation in the dissemination and localization of technoscientific knowledge in Nigeria, especially in the fields of medicine, engineering, agriculture, and ICT.

2. Assess how translation contributes to national security efforts, including intelligence gathering, conflict resolution, and peace-building through linguistic mediation.

3. Evaluate the socio-economic benefits of translation in Nigeria, particularly in terms of access to public services, civic participation, financial inclusion, and education.

4. Identify the challenges hindering the effective use of translation in these sectors, including institutional neglect, lack of trained professionals, and absence of national language policy frameworks.

5. Recommend strategies for mainstreaming translation into Nigeria's national development agenda to promote inclusive growth, scientific advancement, and peacebuilding.

By addressing these objectives, the study aims to reposition translation as a central component of Nigeria's development discourse and to advocate for the establishment of sustainable translation policies and practices.

Scope of the Study

This study focuses on appraising the impact of translation in three critical areas of national interest in 21st-century Nigeria: technoscience, security, and socio-economic development. It examines how translation facilitates or hinders the dissemination of scientific and technical knowledge, the effectiveness of security operations and peacebuilding efforts, and the accessibility of socio-economic initiatives to diverse linguistic populations.

Geographically, the study is limited to Nigeria but considers global trends and practices in translation to provide a comparative perspective. It draws examples and case studies from relevant Nigerian sectors—such as public health, agriculture, education, ICT, national security, and economic empowerment programs—where translation has played a role, whether effective or deficient.

The study does not focus on literary translation or purely academic translation practices. Instead, it emphasizes practical, applied translation in public communication, technoscientific innovation, policy implementation, legal interpretation, and development messaging. It also explores the institutional and policy frameworks supporting or limiting translation practices in Nigeria.

The study's time frame is the 21st century, with particular attention to the last two decades, when globalization, digital transformation, and security challenges have heightened the need for effective translation in national development. The research relies on a multidisciplinary approach, combining insights from translation studies, development studies, linguistics, communication, and security studies.

Thus, while the study is specific to Nigeria, its findings and recommendations are designed to contribute to broader discourses on translation as a tool for sustainable development in multilingual, postcolonial societies.

Theoretical Framework

This study is anchored on three complementary theories that provide a multidimensional lens for understanding the role of translation in technoscience, security, and socio-economic development: Skopos Theory, Development Communication Theory, and Peace Linguistics. Together, these theories offer insight into the functional, developmental, and peacebuilding potentials of translation in the Nigerian context.

1. Skopos Theory (Hans Vermeer, 1978)

 Skopos Theory is a foundational concept in functionalist translation studies, emphasizing that the purpose (or skopos) of a translation should determine the translation strategies employed. According to Vermeer, the primary goal of translation is not to achieve word-for-word fidelity, but to fulfill the communicative function of the text in the target culture.

In the context of Nigeria's technoscientific and socio-economic development, Skopos Theory validates the adaptation of technical, health, and scientific texts to suit the linguistic and cultural realities of diverse Nigerian audiences. For example, translating a medical leaflet into Hausa or Yoruba should prioritize clarity and comprehension over literal equivalence. This approach enhances the usability of translated content in real-life developmental contexts.

2. Development Communication Theory (Melkote & Steeves, 2001)

Development Communication Theory advocates for the use of communication tools—including language and translation—to promote social change and development. It emphasizes participatory, inclusive, and culturally appropriate communication strategies for effective implementation of policies and programs.

In Nigeria's multilingual society, where many citizens are excluded from national discourse due to language barriers, translation becomes a central tool in achieving the goals of development communication. Translating public health advisories, agricultural innovations, and economic policies into local languages aligns with this theory's call for empowerment through inclusive communication.

3. Peace Linguistics (Francisco Gomes de Matos, 2002)

Peace Linguistics proposes that language and translation can be harnessed to foster peace, mutual understanding, and conflict resolution. It promotes the use of respectful, nonviolent, and inclusive language in both oral and written communication, especially in conflict-prone societies.

In the Nigerian security landscape, where ethnic and religious tensions often escalate due to provocative or misunderstood communication, translation plays a key role in mediating conflict and ensuring accurate interpretation of legal and diplomatic discourse. Peace Linguistics supports the use of translation to de-escalate tensions and promote peaceful coexistence through thoughtful and culturally sensitive language use.

Summary

These three theories collectively support the central thesis of this study: that translation, when purpose-driven (Skopos), development-oriented (Development Communication), and peace-focused (Peace Linguistics), becomes an indispensable tool for advancing technoscience, strengthening security, and achieving inclusive socio-economic development in Nigeria. They also emphasize the need for policy frameworks and institutional investment in translation practices to ensure national progress in a multilingual society.

Methodology

This study adopts a qualitative research methodology designed to explore and appraise the impact of translation in technoscience, security, and socio-economic development from the Nigerian perspective. The qualitative approach is suitable for this research due to its focus on interpreting meaning, understanding context, and drawing insights from real-world practices rather than testing numerical hypotheses.

1. Research Design
The study employs a descriptive and interpretive research design, combining documentary analysis, case study method, and expert interviews. This multi-method approach ensures a rich, context-sensitive understanding of how translation operates across critical sectors in Nigeria.

2. Data Collection Methods

a. Documentary Analysis

Relevant documents such as government policy briefs, translated public health materials, scientific and technical manuals, NGO reports, and international development communications are examined. The aim is to assess the presence, quality, and functional relevance of translated materials in real-world applications.

Examples include:

Translations of COVID-19 guidelines by the Nigerian Centre for Disease Control (NCDC), Bilingual security policy documents from ECOWAS, Instruction manuals for medical and agricultural technologies used in rural Nigeria.

b. Case Studies

Selected case studies highlight specific instances where translation (or lack thereof) has significantly influenced outcomes in the following sectors:

Technoscience: Adoption of scientific farming techniques in northern Nigeria, Security: Interpretation in legal proceedings involving non-English-speaking defendants, Socio-economic development: Translated public health campaigns in indigenous languages during the COVID-19 pandemic.

c. Key Informant Interviews

Semi-structured interviews are conducted with professionals including: Translators and interpreters in government or NGOs, Security officials involved in intelligence and communication, Scientists or medical personnel using translation to disseminate research, Development communication experts and linguists.

These interviews aim to provide insider perspectives on the role and effectiveness of translation in their respective fields.

3. Data Analysis

Data collected are subjected to thematic analysis. Key themes will be identified and coded according to the study's objectives, such as:

Accessibility of technoscientific knowledge, Communication barriers in security operations, Impact of translation on public participation in development programs.

Patterns and contradictions are explored to draw conclusions and make policy recommendations.

4. Scope of Participants and Locations

While the study focuses nationally on Nigeria, particular attention is given to linguistically diverse states, such as Kaduna, Lagos, Enugu, and Borno, to capture the dynamics of translation across different regions and cultural settings.

5. Ethical Considerations

Informed consent are obtained from interviewees. Data are used strictly for academic purposes. Anonymity of participants is respected where requested.

6. Limitations of the Methodology

Limited access to classified or sensitive security documents affect the depth of analysis in that sector. Time and resource constraints limit the number of interviews conducted.

This methodology ensures that the research captures both institutional practices and grassroots realities surrounding translation in Nigeria, providing a comprehensive appraisal of its developmental impact.

TRANSLATION AS AN INSTRUMENT FOR THE DISSEMINATION OF SCIENTIFIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL INFORMATION

In the 21st century, the production of scientific and technological knowledge is global, but its accessibility remains largely language-dependent. Most cutting-edge research is published in dominant global languages—particularly English, French, Chinese, and German—limiting comprehension and application in multilingual and non-dominant language societies like Nigeria. Translation thus emerges as an indispensable tool for the localization, democratization, and application of scientific knowledge across diverse linguistic communities.

1. Bridging the Language Barrier in Scientific Communication

Translation plays a vital role in ensuring that scientific and technical knowledge is not restricted to elite language users. In Nigeria, where a significant portion of the population is not proficient in English (the official language), the unavailability of translated scientific and technological materials limits the uptake of innovations in agriculture, medicine, engineering, and ICT.

Oloyede (2018) emphasizes that without deliberate translation efforts, many imported technologies and research findings remain underutilized or misapplied because they are not communicated in accessible languages. Similarly, Unuabonah and Ogunrotifa (2019) argue that local language translation is necessary for effective science education and knowledge transfer, especially in underserved communities.

2. Technical Translation and Localization

Technical translation involves rendering complex scientific terms and processes into other languages without loss of precision. This includes the translation of manuals, health protocols, product labels, and user guides. In Nigeria, localization of such documents into Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, and other local languages helps promote technology adoption in rural communities.

Gambier (2006) highlights the increasing importance of localization—adapting content to the linguistic, cultural, and technical expectations of a target audience—as a core function of technical translation in the digital era.

3. Translation in Health and Scientific Crises

During health crises such as the COVID-19 pandemic, translation became a frontline tool for disseminating life-saving scientific information. In Nigeria, materials translated into local languages helped promote public understanding of safety measures, symptoms, and vaccination procedures.

Ayoola (2020) notes that where translations were promptly and accurately done, communities showed better health outcomes and compliance. This underscores translation as an enabler of public scientific literacy.

4. Translation in Science Education and Curriculum Development

 Translation also plays a key role in science education by making materials accessible in students' mother tongues. This enhances comprehension, retention, and creativity, particularly in STEM fields.

Edewor (2019) advocates for mother-tongue science instruction in primary and secondary schools in Nigeria, supported by translations of science textbooks and learning aids.

5. Challenges Limiting the Impact of Translation

Despite its benefits, the effectiveness of translation in scientific and technological dissemination is constrained by: Lack of trained technical translators in Nigeria,Poor funding for translation initiatives, Absence of national language and translation policies, Inadequate terminology development in indigenous languages.

As Adekoya and Adekola (2016) point out, meaningful translation must be supported by terminological innovation, translator training, and institutional recognition.

Translation is a transformative instrument for the dissemination of scientific and technological information in Nigeria. It not only enhances access and comprehension but also drives innovation and inclusive development. For Nigeria to fully harness scientific knowledge and participate in the global knowledge economy, translation must be institutionalized as a core component of science communication and national development strategy.

TRANSLATION AS A TOOL FOR NATIONAL SECURITY

In the complex landscape of 21st-century security, where threats transcend borders and are often entangled in linguistic and cultural dimensions, translation has become a vital tool for national and international security management. In a linguistically diverse country like Nigeria, where multiple ethnic groups, regional conflicts, and insurgencies coexist, the role of translation in ensuring effective communication, intelligence gathering, and conflict resolution cannot be overstated.

1. Translation in Intelligence and Security Operations

Effective intelligence gathering often involves accessing and interpreting information in different languages—whether from intercepted communications, diplomatic documents, or local informants in conflict zones. In Nigeria's struggle with insurgent groups like Boko Haram, which operate across linguistically diverse regions (Hausa, Kanuri, Arabic, Fulfulde), the absence of trained translators and interpreters has often weakened operational efficiency.

Okafor and Chikere (2021) stress that poor translation of surveillance reports and security documents has contributed to misinterpretation of threats and missed intelligence cues, thereby delaying critical responses.

2. Legal Translation and Human Rights in Security Contexts:

In security operations involving arrests, investigations, or trials of non-English-speaking suspects, the role of translation is crucial to ensure due process, fair hearing, and the protection of human rights. Misinterpretation during interrogation or trial may result in wrongful convictions or violations of international human rights obligations.

Akinwotu (2018) highlights how the lack of professional legal translators in Nigerian courts—especially in terrorism-related cases—has led to delays in justice and legal miscarriages. This creates a credibility gap between the state and local communities.

3. Translation in Peacekeeping and Conflict Mediation:
Translation also plays a pivotal role in conflict prevention, resolution, and peacebuilding. In multilingual conflict zones, peace negotiators, military officers, and humanitarian agencies rely on translators to communicate effectively with local populations and rebel groups. The success or failure of negotiations often depends on the accuracy and neutrality of the translation process.

Drawing on the theory of peace linguistics, Malmkjær (2011) argues that translators in conflict situations are not just passive conduits but active participants in shaping peace discourse. In Nigeria, where ethnic militancy and herder-farmer conflicts are often inflamed by miscommunication, translation can serve as a non-violent conflict management tool.

4. Translation in Multinational Military and Intelligence Collaboration

Nigeria is involved in several regional and international security collaborations, such as the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against Boko Haram. These involve countries with different official languages (English, French, Arabic). Accurate and timely translation of intelligence, operational protocols, and diplomatic correspondence is crucial to the success of joint missions.

Adegbite and Balogun (2020) note that translation gaps have sometimes caused operational friction between French- and English-speaking officers, leading to delayed action and misaligned strategies in the Lake Chad Basin region.

5. Challenges Facing Translation in Nigeria's Security Architecture:

Despite its importance, translation remains marginalized in Nigeria's national security architecture due to:Lack of trained linguists in indigenous and foreign languages, Absence of translation policy within the military and intelligence agencies, Poor integration of translation technology in surveillance and communication, Minimal investment in linguistic research for security purposes.

Oyetade (2015) warns that without institutional recognition of translation's role in national security, Nigeria will continue to face avoidable setbacks in intelligence and conflict resolution.

Translation is not just a linguistic necessity in national security; it is a strategic enabler of intelligence effectiveness, legal fairness, international cooperation, and peacebuilding. In Nigeria, recognizing and investing in translation as a security tool will improve crisis response, conflict management, and citizen trust in state institutions. To achieve this, professional training, policy integration, and multilingual security frameworks must be prioritized.

TRANSLATION AS AN INSTRUMENT OF SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In multilingual and multicultural societies like Nigeria, translation is a powerful but underutilized instrument for achieving inclusive socio-economic development. As a tool for enabling access to information, education, healthcare, financial services, and civic participation, translation bridges communication gaps between governments, institutions, and citizens. It ensures that national development initiatives are understood, accepted, and supported by diverse populations—regardless of linguistic background.

1. Translation and Inclusive Public Communication

Translation facilitates effective dissemination of development-related information such as public health campaigns, voter education, financial literacy, and social welfare programs. In Nigeria, where English is the official language but many citizens communicate primarily in indigenous languages (e.g., Hausa, Yoruba, Igbo, Fulfulde, Kanuri), the failure to translate key information has contributed to public misinformation, apathy, and exclusion.

Ayoola (2020) observes that translation of COVID-19 health guidelines into Nigerian languages significantly improved public understanding and behavioral compliance in rural communities. The study showed that language accessibility boosts trust in government communication and enhances program implementation.

2. Translation and Financial/Economic Empowerment
Access to financial services and entrepreneurship opportunities is a key pillar of socio-economic development. However, complex financial documents, terms and conditions, and digital banking services are often inaccessible to non-English speakers in Nigeria.

Ogunyemi and Afolabi (2017) argue that translating microfinance documents, loan agreements, and SME support materials into indigenous languages can significantly empower local entrepreneurs and women in rural communities. Without translation, such populations remain financially excluded or vulnerable to exploitation due to misunderstanding of contractual obligations.

3. Translation in Education and Skills Development

Translation enhances socio-economic development by democratizing access to education and vocational training. Educational materials and curricula translated into mother tongues promote literacy and lifelong learning, especially at the foundational level.

Edewor (2019) emphasizes the need for translating science, technology, and civic education content into indigenous languages to support Nigeria's human capital development. This approach is particularly crucial for Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) programs targeting youths and artisans with limited English proficiency.

4. Translation and Civic Participation

Translation ensures broader participation in democratic governance and social decision-making by making legal, electoral, and civic information understandable to all citizens. Voter education materials, constitutional provisions, and public service announcements often fail to reach marginalized populations when delivered exclusively in English.

Ibrahim (2016) notes that poor translation practices in Nigerian elections contribute to low voter turnout in linguistically marginalized regions. He recommends the institutionalization of multilingual electoral communication to promote inclusive democracy and national unity.

5. Translation in Digital and Economic Globalization

In an increasingly digital and globalized economy, translation enables Nigerian businesses to engage in international trade, attract foreign investments, and communicate across borders. Localization of websites, mobile apps, and e-commerce platforms into indigenous and foreign languages boosts economic participation.

Essien (2020) highlights how Nigerian fintech companies and online education platforms that offer multilingual interfaces have experienced greater user engagement and customer retention, both locally and internationally.

Translation is a strategic instrument for fostering inclusive socio-economic growth in Nigeria. It promotes equitable access to public services, enhances education, empowers small-scale entrepreneurs, and deepens civic engagement. However, its full potential remains untapped due to the lack of institutional frameworks, policy integration, and investment in translator training and language infrastructure.

To optimize translation's role in socio-economic development, Nigeria must:
Institutionalize multilingual communication policies,support the creation of development-focused translation bureaus, train professional translators in both indigenous and global languages, and localize critical development resources across all sectors.

TRANSLATION AND THE CHALLENGES OF 21ST CENTURY NIGERIA

As Nigeria navigates the challenges of the 21st century-ranging from technological disruption and digital globalization to persistent insecurity and socio-economic disparities—translation emerges as a vital but often overlooked strategic tool. Far beyond a linguistic activity, translation facilitates access to global knowledge,

security cooperation, and inclusive development, especially in a country with immense ethnic and linguistic diversity.

To move Nigeria toward a safer, more technologically advanced, and economically inclusive society, it is essential to appraise and institutionalize translation as a cross-sectoral enabler.

1. Translation for National Development: A Holistic Enabler:
Translation cuts across critical sectors such as education, health, security, technology, governance, and finance. When properly applied, it enhances public participation, improves the uptake of innovation, promotes intercultural dialogue, and supports inclusive governance.

According to Oyetade (2015), language and translation are indispensable to national development because they shape citizens' access to information, resources, and power. Nigeria's failure to integrate translation into its development agenda has created communication gaps, particularly in rural communities and conflict zones.

2. Translation and Technoscientific Advancement:
To achieve technological and scientific advancement, Nigeria must ensure that the fruits of innovation are accessible to both the elite and grassroots populations. Scientific research, ICT developments, healthcare innovations, and agricultural technologies are often inaccessible due to language barriers.

Unuabonah and Ogunrotifa (2019) argue that for Nigeria to industrialize sustainably, there must be a deliberate translation of scientific content—from technical manuals to STEM curricula—into indigenous languages. This fosters local innovation and enhances scientific literacy.

3. Translation and Security Sector Reforms:
Insecurity—ranging from terrorism and insurgency to ethnic violence and cybercrime—remains a major obstacle to national development. Translation supports security reforms through accurate intelligence interpretation, legal justice, and peacebuilding mediation.

Okafor and Chikere (2021) highlight that Nigeria's counterterrorism efforts suffer from linguistic inefficiencies, particularly in intelligence communication across Hausa, Kanuri, Arabic, and Fulfulde-speaking regions. Translation not only facilitates local and regional security cooperation but also prevents misinformation, propaganda, and operational breakdowns.

4. Translation and Socio-economic Inclusion:
For Nigeria to grow socio-economically, development must be inclusive. Translation enables inclusion by bridging the gap between policy formulation and policy comprehension, particularly in the implementation of social interventions, economic reforms, and public education campaigns.

Ayoola (2020) demonstrates that during the COVID-19 pandemic, multilingual translation of health advisories improved compliance and understanding in local communities. This case affirms the need for consistent multilingual policy communication in addressing poverty, education, and healthcare challenges.

5. Policy Gaps and the Need for Institutionalization:
Despite its relevance, translation remains largely unstructured in Nigeria's development policy. There are no national translation policies, few accredited training institutions for translators, and minimal funding for language services across government agencies.

Edewor (2019) emphasizes the need for a national language and translation policy that integrates translation into all sectors—education, health, science, security, economy, and governance—to drive transformation and equity.

For Nigeria to achieve a safer, socio-economically inclusive, and technologically forward future, it must recognize and harness translation as a strategic instrument of national development. Translation fosters equity, enables knowledge diffusion, supports peace, and promotes inclusive growth across Nigeria's diverse population.

Moving forward requires:
The formulation of a national translation policy;Investment in training and deploying professional translators; Institutional support for multilingual communication across sectors, and The use of translation to enhance citizen participation in development.

Incorporating translation into Nigeria's development blueprint will not only democratize access to information but also help secure its place in the global knowledge-driven economy.

CONCLUSION

Translation, often relegated to the background of national planning, has emerged in this study as a pivotal driver of technoscientific progress, national security, and socio-economic development in 21st-century Nigeria. In a linguistically diverse country where access to information remains a challenge for many, translation serves as the bridge between innovation and implementation, policy and people, safety and understanding.

The appraisal of translation across key sectors—technoscience, security, and economic development—reveals that its absence or misapplication leads to missed opportunities, operational inefficiencies, social exclusion, and underdevelopment. From the translation of scientific research and technical manuals to the accurate interpretation of intelligence reports and public health campaigns, translation proves essential to making national development inclusive and sustainable.

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