

2017 INTERNATIONAL TRANSLATION DAY

The Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters Celebrates 2017 ITD

Theme: Translation and Diversity

Date: 27th October 2017

Prof. Hafizu Miko Yakasai¹

National President

Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters

yakasaih@yahoo.com

Introduction

Let me begin by stressing that the unanimous resolution of the 71st session of the United Nations General Assembly recognizing the role of professional translation in connecting nations and fostering peace, understanding and development 2017 marks an historical milestone for all professional translators, interpreters and terminologists. In the same resolution, the United Nations General Assembly declared 30 September, 2017 to be the UN International Translation Day to be celebrated across the entire UN network.

This resolution emphasizes the significance of professional translation in international human endeavours. It highlights the critical need for training the next generation of professional translators, interpreters and terminologists to meet this ever-increasing demand, as international interaction, cooperation and collaboration continue to grow.

Indeed, it is important to remind us that the European Commission and the wider European Union will be observing and celebrating the ITD for the first time in conjunction with European Day of Languages (EDL).

The theme for 2017 ITD is “Translation and Diversity”.

2017 ITD: Translation and Diversity

Today we have come together to appreciate the work of translators and interpreters for their great contribution to diversity as we celebrate ITD 2017. It is, indeed, pertinent to say that today is an opportunity to pay tribute to the work of translators and interpreters who endeavor to make the world a slightly smaller place by breaking down language barriers.

The International Federation of Translators (FIT) presents the theme of this year’s ITD as follows:

“In our digital world, a product or service is often marketed in many countries, and information appears to flow instantly across most national boundaries. Yet we don’t want other societies to impose their way of thinking on us. How does translation relate to the desire to access everything while retaining diversity?”

Cultural diversity is closely tied to linguistic diversity. Losing your language means losing a part of your cultural identity. Translation is important both to maintain and learn from a culture.

¹ **Prof. Hafizu Miko Yakasai** is the Deputy Director (Nigerian Languages and Translation) at the Centre for Research in Nigerian Languages, Translation and Folklore, Bayero University Kano. He teaches in the Department of Linguistics and Foreign Languages, Bayero University, Kano.

Globalization brings greater international cooperation, but the downside of that can be cultural homogenization, which in turn threatens diversity. In an effort to access global markets effectively, products and services are often translated with sensitivity to the target culture, rather than imposing the culture of the source content. This type of translation, called localisation, thus supports diversity.

Language transcends physical barriers of distance, borders and time. Translation of literature and other culture-specific material, such as foreign film through subtitling and dubbing, is different from localisation. In contrast to localisation, this type of translation typically aims to open a window to the source culture, and thus helps to share local insights and alternative views of the world, giving the experience of another culture through one's own language.

Both localisation and source-culture-specific translation are challenging intellectual tasks that involve much more than mechanically matching up the words and phrases of two languages. Only skilled human translators are able to perform these creative types of translation, which help us maintain our own culture and learn from other cultures, respectively.

Each culture in the world should be in control of its destiny. By promoting the diversity of cultures and languages, we can hope to create a bright and colourful world full of possibilities for learning, growing and sharing a peaceful vision for humanity based on mutual respect”.

The NITI thank translators and interpreters for their contribution to diversity as we celebrate International Translation Day 2017 in Abuja.

What then should 2017 ITD promote to the world and Nigeria in particular?

- The role of translation and interpretation in human development.
- Translation in multiple directions and the significance of language and culture.
- Translation: a driving force for globalization.

The 2017 ITD has further emphasized that translators and interpreters are drivers of development. Translators have for long been in the centre of all development issues. The world belongs to all and should be shared by all. Translation provides an avenue for the realization of this desire.

Successes and Challenges

- NITI Bill

NITI in 2016 made a submission of its bill to the National Assembly for processing with a view to enactment. NITI is currently pushing hard at the present government to pass the NITI Bill into Law.

When the bill is passed and becomes law, it will make the practice of translation and interpretation regulated in such a way that it would be an offence for those not authorized to claim to be members of the profession to practice, exactly like in other professions (accountancy, law, medicine, engineering, etc.).

- NITI Certificate to Deserving Members

NITI will very soon start giving certificate of full membership to deserving members.

- Admission of New Members / NITI Exam

- NITI Journal of Translation and Interpretation

Conclusion

The Nigerian Institute of Translators and Interpreters is willing to collaborate with any member institution, branch of NITI or media establishment. Call on all translators and interpreters, universities and colleges and print and electronic media to have proper registration with the NITI and be attending NITI Conference/Congress organized annually. In Nigeria, today what has not been stressed is the link between translation and development. In this connection, it has been observed that all technologically advanced countries develop their scientific and technological motivations using their respective languages. It is the belief of many linguists and translators that if our indigenous languages are to be used as languages of science and technology, our economic potentials will be greatly enhanced. The need for translation into Nigerian languages is very vital in the services of national development. The ability to plan sustainable development, promote effective citizen empowerment and encourage dialogue between people is in large measure dependent on language policies. The more we use our indigenous languages, the more we enhance the chances of our economic development coming to the limelight. There shall be an expression of government political will on the promotion of teaching and learning of Nigeria's indigenous languages and implementing a language policy that is good for improving and sustaining our economic development.

Thank you for listening