

Review of: "African languages and COVID-19: Translations and interpretations of COVID-19 information in rural communities in Igbo land, Nigeria"

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The three-year-long (2020-2022) COVID-19 pandemic has produced tremendous effects on all aspects of human life, and substantially changed the developmental direction of human history. The COVID-19 virus has recently developed into a new variant called "Omicron" whose infectivity gets stronger and virulence weaker, something like a flu. The source of the virus and the working mechanisms of its variants have so far remained almost unknown, even though a high number of researchers have been studying them across the globe for a long time. Also, many scholars have studied the effects of the pandemic in various fields.

It is interesting to read the paper "African languages and COVID-19: Translations and interpretations of COVID-19 information in rural communities in Igbo land, Nigeria" by Chimaobi Onwukwe, Godwin I. N. Emezue and Chinwe Nwizu. It explores the methods used in Igbo translations of COVID-19 information such as use of metaphor, coinage, and semantic extension of existing expressions. As a matter of fact, the WHO's COVID-19 terminologies were "localized" via translation from English to other languages such as Chinese. Therefore, this kind of terminological or linguistic "localization" offers fertile ground to study the pandemic-related translation and interpreting from a socio-cultural perspective.

The quality of the paper under review can be improved if the following weaknesses can be avoided.

1. Theoretical framework

Lack of a theoretical basis weakens the theoretical depth of the paper. It is suggested that some cultural translation theory can be used, such as that formulated by Bassnett & Lefevere (2001), or Even-Zohar (2008).

2. Literature review

In the past three years, many papers on the COVID-19 have been published in the fields of social sciences and humanities, including Translation Studies. The paper ignores some important articles such as "COVID-19-Combating English with Chinese Characteristics in the CAT's Translations" by Ping Li and Chuanmao Tian (*Sage Open*, 2022). An adequate literature review can provide a comparative perspective and increase the depth and breadth of discussion.

3. Viewpoints

The authors claim that the virus “was first discovered in Wuhan, China before spreading to other parts of the world” (section 3, paragraph 5). The source of the virus has so far remained unknown. Just as Li and Tian (2022: 1) point out, “Although the origin of COVID-19 has not yet been confirmed, the virus caused by SARS-CoV-2 instead of viral escape from a laboratory ‘most likely arose in bats, and then spread to humans via an as-yet unidentified intermediary animal,” according to the World Health Organization (WHO).”

4. Language and style

(1) “Zohar” in “Zohar and Toury (1995)” (section 2, paragraph 3) should be “Even-Zohar”. Itamar Even-Zohar is a famous Israeli scholar, first formulating Polysystem Theory.

(2) Special attention should be given to such words or terms as “interpretation” and “interpreter” used in the paper. In Translation Studies as an academic discipline, an “interpreter” refers to an oral translator instead of a translator in general. But the authors claim that “A person who translates one language into another is called an interpreter” (section 2, paragraph 2). Therefore, “interpretation” can mean oral translation or paraphrase in the discipline. It is suggested that some terms such as “translation”, “interpretation”, “coinage”, “neologism”, “analogy”, and so on be clearly defined and explained. For instance, what is the difference between “translation” and “interpretation”? What is the relationship between “coinage” and “neologism”, as well as “coinage” and “new use of existing words”?

(3) “Individuals behavioural change” (section 1, paragraph 1) should be “Individuals’ behavioural change”; “Other neologisms whose literary meaning are extended...” (section 3, paragraph 14) should be “Other neologisms whose literary meaning is extended...”; “COVID-19 virus is found more and infects more of White people” (section 4, paragraph 5) might be “more White people have been infected with the COVID-19 virus”; “...affects only the wealthy or that...” should be “...affects only the wealthy or that...”.