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BRIDGING THE SACRED WORD: EVALUATING THE ROLE OF BIBLICAL GREEK PROFICIENCY IN TRANSLATING THE NEW TESTAMENT INTO URHOBO LANGUAGE

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Abstract

The engagement of translators lacking specialized knowledge of New Testament Greek in rendering Biblical content into Urhobo raises concerns. Often, English serves as the intermediary between the Greek text and the Urhobo version, relying on other translations. This study evaluates translators' proficiency in Biblical Greek, examines the rationale for using English versions as source texts, and underscores why the Greek original should remain primary. Employing descriptive and phenomenological methods, it argues that knowledge of Biblical Greek is essential for Christian spiritual development and highlights its necessity for Urhobo translators as part of decolonizing tertiary education in Africa. The research concludes that some translations are produced by armchair theologians who reinforce Western hegemony by subordinating indigenous perspectives. It recommends that organizations committed to Bible translation sponsor language teams, enabling them to serve on translation panels as qualified Biblical translators, thereby safeguarding scriptural integrity and advancing cultural autonomy.

Key Words: Translation, Greek Proficiency Western Hegemony and decolonisation

Introduction

The task of biblical translation is the primary responsibility of the Bible Society of Nigeria (BSN) whose responsibility it is to make available the Bible not only in English but also in local indigenous languages of the gospel recipients. This responsibility has made it possible for the Bible to be available in different languages in Nigeria. However, the task has not been an easy one as there is a dearth of manpower from one language to the other.

It becomes laughable and highly disturbing to see that only those with linguistic mastery skills in Urhobo language are saddled with the task and not inclusive of New Testament biblical scholars in translating the New Testament Bible into indigenous local languages of the people. Adamo (1998) argued for an insider in the task of biblical translation in Africa. To a broad extent, he had the possession of the prerequisite knowledge of the original languages in mind. This phenomenon has witnessed the emancipation of certain persons who moved themselves in armchair theological interpretation of the scriptures through preaching without formal theological training or education. On the other hand, some professing the Christian faith with shallow understanding and applications of the New Testament texts also delve into the translation of the New Testament into Urhobo language. This could be based on the premise that anyone can interpret the Bible message

The temptation to exclude biblical scholars in Bible translations is not only dangerous but it could result in haplography, error in translations and dependent on exiting translations, contemporary Greek-English dictionary for meaning of certain word as against the original Koine Greek language dictionary (Soulen and Soulen, 2011). The naive hypothesis that anyone can possibly be engaged provided the technical know-how of expressing the message and meaning in the new language is there. In the process of digging out the original meaning and intentions of the New Testament, the translator without Greek proficiency depends on English versions. This allows much influence for the previous translators culturally, socio -linguistically, and every other aspect of social life into the African view (Isiorhovoja, 2023) .

The functions of biblical studies scholars have been hijacked by many areas of studies in Nigeria. Ejenobo (2021) lamented that in Delta State University, Religious Studies is becoming irrelevant and less important to society because we have allowed sister disciplines to take over our roles. They delve into New Testament translation and produce half-done works to discredit the discipline. If African Universities must be relevant and decolonized, relevant Courses that will make graduates feel and function as experts should be taught.

Statement of the Problem

The need to bridge the Sacred Word calls for a rethink of the roles of the translators in having proficiency in Biblical Greek. The engagement of pure linguists in the process of achieving Urhobo Bible translation becomes worrisome as they seek to bring the Bible messages, narratives and contents in Urhobo language. Without interacting with the original Greek Bible, they utlise already translated versions as primary source (s) in actualising this dream. Hence the continuous hegemony of Africa and Africans in biblical studies and translations into various local languages, void of African socio-cultural thoughts as expressed among the Urhobo people.

Objectives

The paper has the general objective of bridging the sacred Word: Evaluating the Role of Biblical Greek Proficiency in Translating the New Testament into Urhobo language. It seeks to know the level the translators ' proficiency in Biblical Greek as a way of decolonizing New Testament translation through direct interaction with the original language and its translation into Urhobo language. The specific objectives include:

1) To assess translators' proficiency in biblical Greek before translating

2) To ascertain the reasons for using English Version(s) as Source text for translation into Urhobo language.

(3) To identify reasons why New Testament Greek version should be used as source

Methodology

The study adopts the descriptive and phenomenological methods. The instrument used for collection of data is questionnaire designed and administered by the researchers. The sampled population includes 20 biblical scholars with proficiency in New Testament Greek comprising postgraduate students, lecturers and theologians and 20 theologians cum pastors without proficiency in Greek but are linguists (Urhobo Language). The questionnaire is divided into two sections: Section A contains the bio-data while Section B contains 4 Likert scale questions of : Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Disagree (D), and strongly disagree (SD). Simple percentage (%) is used to analyze the information collected for the study and the basis for discussion. Certainly! Here's a more academically refined version of your paragraph for smoother reading:The instrument comprises 15 items, with five questions allocated to each research objective and corresponding hypothesis or research question. For analytical purposes, responses marked as "strongly agree" and "agree" are aggregated to represent positive responses, whereas "strongly disagree" and "disagree" are combined to indicate negative responses.

Literature Review

Religious Context of Decolonization

The notion of decolonization in Africa emphasizes the pursuit of self-definition, identity, and fulfillment for the continent. Across education, culture, and society, deliberate efforts have been made to dismantle colonial legacies and restore indigenous knowledge systems (Brefo, 2025). This movement gained significant momentum during the 1960s, when independence struggles sought to affirm African dignity, pride, and global recognition (Kaptein, 2025). Decolonization can therefore be understood as the systematic reversal of colonial structures and practices embedded in social institutions (Burton, 2020). Much of what is considered Western within African societies was introduced through colonization, and without intentional strategies, the enduring effects of colonial domination continue to shape nearly all aspects of African life (Brefo, 2025; Burton, 2020).

For adequate development of African society, every aspect of living and practices need decolonizing. Megbelayin, (2004) posits that any attempt at decolonizing exegesis of the

biblical text requires exploration of methodological options, for what the biblical text means is, to some extent, a function of the method the interpreter adepts. Adamo (2000, Enuwosa and Idamarhare 2012) and Isiorhovoja (2024), recommend Africentric reading of the Bible :

When engaging with a biblical passage from either the Old or New Testament, it is important to interpret the text in ways that resonate with African communities and their lived realities. This involves connecting scripture to African historical, social, economic, and religious experiences so that the Bible speaks meaningfully within African contexts (Mbiti, 1991). Scholars are encouraged to critically examine interpretations that have been shaped by Western biases, which often impose foreign perspectives on African readers (Adamo, 2010). Such interpretations should be revised or removed, allowing for new readings that reflect African cultural values and universal human concerns (Ukpong, 1995). Finally, it is essential to ensure that Africentric interpretations of scripture affirm African identity without disparaging Western traditions, since the goal of African biblical hermeneutics is cultural affirmation rather than cultural denigration (Maluleke, 2000).

This submission describes ideal decolonization with its process that must respect other peoples' views and contribution to education for example that are still working out well in African Universities education. Thorough investigations into every area of education at tertiary level must be ethically examined as to know which educational style and system are relevant to African tertiary education.

In the field of biblical translation, relying on English versions as the basis for rendering scripture into Urhobo reflects a continued dependence on Western dominance (Sanneh, 2009). When examining Urhobo healing narratives within their cultural framework, Enuwosa and Isiorhovoja (2017) caution that it is both unnecessary and risky to interpret every action of Jesus in the Gospel of Mark through local traditions. They argue that the New Testament is inherently transnational, trans-historical, and trans-cultural, making its message universally accessible. Therefore, translations of the New Testament into Urhobo, as with other African languages, can be undertaken directly without the need for mediation through English, provided the appropriate linguistic and cultural resources are available (Walls, 1996).

The Urhobo people and Language

The Urhobo are the largest ethnic group in Delta State, Nigeria, and among the most populous in the country (Otite, 2003). They speak the Urhobo language, which belongs to the Niger-Congo family (Britannica, 2025). The term “Urhobo” designates a people rather than a specific territory (Otite, 2003). Their population is estimated at about six to seven million (Wikipedia, 2025). Urhobo communities are located in Delta and Bayelsa States, within the Niger Delta region (Britannica, 2025). They share boundaries with the Isoko, Itsekiri, Ijaw, Bini, and Ukwuani ethnic groups (Wikipedia, 2025).

Purpose of Bible Translation

The motivation for Bible translation is often shaped by the intended audience. Translators must consider the social and intellectual background of recipients when deciding on the appropriate translation approach (Collins, 2005). Collins distinguishes Bible versions by their function rather than audience, identifying translations for church use, family or personal study, and outreach to non-Christians. Church-oriented translations are heavily

influenced by doctrinal, cultural, theological, historical, and linguistic factors, with church leadership playing a decisive role in shaping interpretive content and language. These varied contexts suggest that different translation philosophies may be necessary. Yet, in practice, many Christians, particularly in Nigeria, often rely on whichever Bible translation is most accessible and affordable, without considering audience-specific distinctions (Ejenobo, 2017).

Translations intended for personal or family use, as well as outreach, often employ informal language and neutral theological tones. When addressing younger audiences, translators must adopt contemporary vocabulary to ensure relevance. Since language and socio-cultural dynamics evolve across generations, translators strive to bridge linguistic gaps while maintaining fidelity to the text (Nida & Taber, 1982). Nida and Taber argue that societies with established literary traditions require three types of translations: one for liturgical use, another in modern literary language for educated readers, and a third in popular language for common use. Each version differs in theology, diction, and sentence construction, making it difficult for ordinary believers to access all three simultaneously.

Collins (2005) further emphasizes that ecclesiastical translations should be intelligible, ecumenical, rhythmic, preachable, poetic, and dignified. Restricting a Bible version to a specific audience or location undermines its broader purpose, as translations inevitably cross cultural boundaries over time. Historically, the original biblical writings did not reflect social or intellectual stratification, yet translation into diverse languages has introduced such complexities. Ejenobo (2017) highlights the proliferation of Greek New Testament manuscripts, noting that variations in language, logic, and cultural input account for their differences. Ritchie (2003) critiques the idea of tailoring Bible versions to different audiences, arguing that theological integrity should not be compromised by socio-linguistic distinctions.

Ultimately, every translation requires interpretation, and interpreters must be familiar with multiple versions to grasp cultural, theological, and linguistic nuances. Contextualization begins with understanding the plain meaning of the text, and despite linguistic complications, translators aim to make the message clear at first reading (Nida & Taber, 1982).

Approaches to Translation

In today's globalized world, translation plays a central role in human communication, enabling inter-linguistic relationships that would otherwise be impossible (Nida & Taber, 1982). From a literary perspective, translation seeks to convey the meaning of the original text clearly while preserving its artistic style. Igbeaku (2020) notes that the literary approach emphasizes aesthetics, emotional resonance, and entertainment, while also accounting for linguistic and cultural differences between source and target languages. This method is particularly relevant to biblical texts, which encompass diverse literary genres. Strategies such as adaptation, borrowing, calque, compensation, amplification, modulation, and transposition are employed to address the challenges of literary translation in modern contexts (Ivworin, 2021).

The socio-linguistic approach, often associated with dynamic equivalence, focuses on matching sense, culture, and meaning across languages. Okafor (2018) identifies intralingual, interlingual, and intersemiotic translation as key categories, stressing that both

languages must be living and written. Wright (2015) highlights the interpretative nature of sense-to-sense translation, which considers textual structures and potential meanings at multiple levels. Baker (1992) adds pragmatic dimensions, including coherence, presumption, and implication, which shape how audiences understand translated texts. These insights underscore the importance of functional and structural linguistic approaches in modern translation, especially for scripture.

Semiotic approaches extend translation beyond words to include signs, symbols, and paralinguistic elements. Igbeaku (2016) explains that semiotics involves interpreting and manipulating signs while maintaining the inherent meaning of the original text. Signs may include words, images, or signals, all of which must be perceptible and translatable (Gorkée, 2014). Toury (1986) emphasizes that both verbal and non-verbal signs generate meaning, requiring translators to achieve equivalence in the target text. Torop (2008) situates semiotics within culture, viewing translation as a cultural mechanism. Eco and Nergaard (2000) describe translation as an intertextual and intercultural drift, while Eco (2003) highlights temporal and spatial differences that shape meaning. Semiotic analysis thus equips translators to navigate complex intercultural communication, treating texts as cultural artifacts. Noth (1990) concludes that semiotics provides essential theoretical tools for analyzing signs and communication processes, making it indispensable for translating religious, cultural, and political texts.

Necessity of Proficiency Biblical Greek for Christians

The study of religion and biblical scholarship requires competence in both Hebrew and Greek, the original languages of the Old and New Testaments. Seminaries and universities emphasize these languages because the central aim of theological education is to read, interpret, and translate scripture faithfully into modern languages. Translation serves multiple purposes, but ultimately it seeks to make the meaning and intention of the biblical text accessible to diverse linguistic communities (Sanneh, 2009). Yet, paradoxically, many students abandon Greek after graduation, leaving ordinary believers without access to the richness of the New Testament in its original form (Ian, 2020).

A critical question arises: is Greek proficiency reserved only for academics? Scholars argue that it should not be. Christians and readers of the New Testament benefit from at least a basic competence in Greek, which allows deeper engagement with scripture. Baker (1992) stresses that learning biblical languages requires attention to grammar and comparison with one's native tongue, making the process intellectually demanding but rewarding. Unfortunately, many perceive Greek as irrelevant to pastoral ministry, leading them to rely solely on translations and commentaries. This avoidance often stems from the difficulty of acquiring a new language, which is influenced by one's proficiency in their first language (Ward, 2018).

Motivations for studying Greek vary. Ward (2018) cautions against learning it merely to expose errors in translations or impress others. Instead, the goal should be to know God more intimately, engage critically with commentators, and expand interpretive possibilities. Those who excel in biblical languages often do so because of personal conviction and motivation. Without such purpose, achieving mastery is difficult.

Greek proficiency magnifies the theological depth of scripture. Even small grammatical elements, such as definite articles, can alter meaning and spark theological debates. Leasby (2016) notes that ministers who read the New Testament in Greek gain authority, conviction, and psychological balance, as well as deeper spiritual insight. Yet, many pastors depend heavily on commentators, lacking the ability to substantiate their own interpretations. This dependence weakens their theological authority.

Interestingly, non-Christians increasingly study New Testament Greek to speak authoritatively on matters of faith, history, linguistics, and culture. Their engagement highlights the broader relevance of biblical languages beyond theology. Since much of human knowledge intersects with the biblical world, direct study of ancient documents is indispensable. When Christians fail to engage critically with these texts, their responses to scholarly debates risk being shallow and unconvincing (Plummer, 2023).

The credibility of Christian teaching is undermined when leaders neglect biblical languages. Modern linguistic theories and translation tools provide valuable insights, but they cannot replace mastery of the original texts. A balanced translator must possess proficiency in Greek to navigate evolving scholarly approaches and ensure faithful interpretation. As Nelson (2015) argues, Hebrew and Greek are the languages chosen for divine revelation, and their study remains vital for sustaining theological integrity.

Presentation of Data and Discussion

Research question 1 states: what is the level of translators' proficiency in biblical New Testament Greek before translating?

Table 1: Distribution of information on proficiency in biblical Greek for respondents with Greek proficiency.

Items	No of positive Response	No of negative response	% of positive response
1	20	00	100
2	11	09	55
3	08	12	40
4	17	05	75
5	06	14	30
	64	36	64

Source: Researchers fieldwork, 2025

Table 2: Distribution of information on proficiency in biblical Greek for respondents with no Greek proficiency.

Items	No of positive Response	No of negative response	% of positive response
1	20	00	100
2	10	10	50
3	20	00	100
4	12	08	60
5	08	12	40
	70	30	70

Source: Researchers fieldwork, 2025

Survey responses reveal a strong consensus that proficiency in biblical Greek entails the ability to independently read, understand, and analyze the grammatical structure and meaning of words, phrases, clauses, and sentences. This understanding highlights the importance of Greek proficiency in uncovering the original meaning of texts for translation purposes. Data from Tables 1 and 2 show that 55% and 50% of respondents respectively affirm the necessity of Greek proficiency for interpreting biblical texts and translating the New Testament. However, the equal split between positive and negative responses in Table 2 suggests that individuals without Greek knowledge remain undecided about its importance.

Item 3 of the questionnaire explored whether internet resources could substitute for Greek proficiency. While 40% in Table 1 and 100% in Table 2 agreed, respondents with Greek knowledge emphasized that online grammatical tools cannot replace personal expertise in translation. Reliance on internet-based word analysis reflects dependence on third-party interpretations rather than direct engagement with the text. Thus, the limited positive responses likely indicate acknowledgment of available resources rather than acceptance of substitution.

Item 4 addressed whether Greek proficiency benefits translators. A majority—75% in Table 1 and 60% in Table 2—agreed that knowledge of Greek provides a significant advantage in grasping and conveying the original meaning of biblical passages. Translators lacking proficiency often depend on exegetical and theological analyses by others or rely on English versions, which limits their interpretive authority.

Item 5 examined whether universities and seminaries adequately train students in Greek at the undergraduate level. With only 30% and 40% agreement in Tables 1 and 2, the statement was largely rejected. Respondents accredited Nigerian universities and seminaries with the capacity to train students effectively, noting that seminaries in particular prioritize biblical Greek due to their responsibility for preparing graduates to interpret scripture.

Despite this, actual proficiency among Urhobo translators remains low. Many capable Greek scholars are excluded from translation projects due to several factors: sponsors' lack of awareness of the importance of language experts, the high costs associated with translation, and the perception that source-language expertise is unnecessary for local or denominational translations. Consequently, Urhobo New Testament translations are often intended only for family or church use, undermining the role of Greek specialists. Furthermore, the reliance on English versions and unscreened internet analyses perpetuates

the misconception that these tools are sufficient, thereby diminishing the added value of proficient interpreters (Ryken, 2005).

Research Question 2 therefore asks: what are the underlying notions behind using English versions as source texts in translating the Bible into Urhobo? Table 3 provides data on these perceptions among respondents with Greek proficiency, highlighting the tension between convenience and accuracy in translation practices.

Items	No of positive Response	No of negative response	% of positive response
6	07	13	35
7	01	19	05
8	00	20	00
9	02	18	10
10	00	20	00
	10	90	10

Source: Researchers fieldwork, 2025

Table 4: Distribution of information on the notions behind using English versions as Source text in Bible translation into Urhobo language for respondents without Greek proficiency

Items	No of positive Response	No of negative response	% of positive response
6	16	04	80
7	12	08	60
8	15	05	75
9	12	08	60
10	14	06	70
	69	31	69

Source: Researchers fieldwork, 2025

Item 6 of the questionnaire states that the many English versions of the New Testament make translation into local languages easier. Table 3 shows only 35% agreement, while Table 4 records 80%. This suggests that translators with little or no proficiency in biblical Greek rely on English versions to bypass the rigors of exegesis. Although not all accept this practice, it is rapidly gaining ground. Those yet to adopt it may eventually strive to learn Greek.

Item 7 asserts that using only English versions as source texts is good for translation. Agreement was minimal in Table 3 (5%) but higher in Table 4 (60%). While some find it convenient, this does not make it the best approach compared to working directly with Greek. The 5% who agreed were not given room to explain their reasoning. For those proficient in Greek, the claim is erroneous, since exclusive reliance on English versions risks losing important details.

Item 8 (on cultural reflection) shows no agreement in Table 3, but 75% agreement in Table 4. The claim that English versions lack Western cultural influence is debatable. While

respondents may sincerely hold this view, it is arguably pretentious, since cultural elements inevitably shape translation. Evangelists wrote to audiences who needed theological clarity, and translators today must acknowledge cultural mediation in biblical texts.

Item 9 states that translating into Urhobo using only English versions has no disadvantage. Table 3 shows 10% agreement, Table 4 shows 60%, averaging 35%. Though generally dismissed, those who agreed feel comfortable with the practice. Yet, they also acknowledge the advantage of Greek knowledge, creating a contradiction. Likely, they achieve their goals with English versions and perceive disadvantages as negligible.

Item 10 claims that reading several English versions yields perfect understanding of original meaning. Respondents diverged: those with Greek proficiency disagreed, while 70% of others agreed. This highlights the tension between convenience and accuracy. Ultimately, translation reflects the translator's decision. As Collins (2005) notes, what is written becomes authoritative for the target language. Poythress (2005) adds that divine meaning is complex, and translators mediate between God's intent and human readers. Their assumptions about language shape word meanings, exegesis, and translation quality. A narrow view of language leads to a narrow view of Scripture. Hence, while multiple English versions aid translation, they cannot replace rigorous exegesis. Reference to versions and commentaries is essential, but reliance on them alone risks superficial or distorted translation. True fidelity requires grappling with original languages and cultural contexts.

Research question 3 states: are there important theological reasons why the New Testament Greek version should be used as source Text instead of English versions.

Table 5 has distributions on important theological reasons why the New Testament Greek version should be used as source Text instead of English versions among respondents with Greek proficiency.

Items	No of positive Response	No of negative response	% of positive response
11	20	00	100
12	19	01	95
13	20	00	100
14	12	08	60
15	20	00	100
	91	09	91

Source: Researchers fieldwork, 2025

Table 6 has distributions on important theological reasons why the New Testament Greek version should be used as source Text instead of English versions among respondents without Greek proficiency.

Items	No of positive Response	No of negative response	% of positive response
11	20	00	100
12	17	03	85
13	18	02	90
14	20	00	100
15	10	10	75
	85	15	85

Source: Researchers fieldwork, 2025

From Table 6, Item 11 shows 100% agreement that the New Testament's original language is Greek (specifically Koine Greek). Item 12 records 95% and 85% agreement that Greek culture is reflected in the text. Interestingly, respondents affirm Greek cultural influence but deny English cultural elements in English versions, a contradiction that may stem from defending translation practices.

Item 13 states that using Greek text directly for translation into Urhobo is advantageous. Agreement was 100% among proficient translators and 90% among non-proficient, showing broad acceptance. While English versions cannot be totally avoided in exegesis, reliance on them alone is discouraged. Translators who attempt direct Greek work are commended for their contributions to meaning and interpretation.

Item 14 highlights the difficulty of acquiring and using Greek proficiency: 60% of proficient respondents and 100% of non-proficient agreed. This reflects the challenge of mastering Greek, often treated as a graduation requirement rather than lifelong study. Limited practice opportunities further hinder proficiency, and pastors like Idoro Emmanuel (2020) lament that exegesis has become "old fashioned" in preaching. Yet, the difficulty does not diminish its value, and modern avenues such as blogs or digital platforms could encourage practice.

Finally, Item 15 states that using a good New Testament Greek Bible helps translations bypass Western cultural inputs. Here, 100% of proficient respondents agreed, while 50% of non-proficient did. Cultural influences in English versions remain subtle but problematic, as Collins notes, since translators must wrestle with ideological and cultural equivalence in target languages.

Implications of Biblical Greek Proficiency and Usage for Changing African Universities

For African universities to become truly indigenous and decolonized, there must be a conscious reduction in dependence on Western prescriptions and materials for scholarship. One practical approach is the teaching of biblical Greek in African tertiary institutions, enabling direct translation of the New Testament into African languages. This reduces Western cultural influence in translated texts. Yet, it must be acknowledged that translators

already proficient in English inevitably carry Western cultural inputs into their thinking, thereby doubling the cultural dominance when English versions are used as intermediaries.

A second implication is the possibility of direct correlation between African socio-cultural ideas and biblical concepts. Translation from Greek into African languages allows comparison without first filtering through English. When English versions serve as the medium between the original text and languages such as Urhobo, elements of hegemony and domination are introduced, reinforcing Western authority over African theological understanding.

Third, such translation practices promote the development of African languages. Language is inseparable from culture, and translating the New Testament into indigenous tongues draws attention to their study and preservation. Historically, European missionaries studied African languages to facilitate Bible translation. African universities can now seize this opportunity to advance indigenous language development and prioritize local content.

Fourth, this study reveals a method of translation that helps Africans overcome colonial challenges in education, lifestyle, and scholarship. Though difficult, reliance on Greek rather than English versions prevents Africa from perpetuating dependence on colonial frameworks. Continued reliance on English translations risks slowing educational and cultural development, keeping African scholarship tethered to foreign paradigms.

Fifth, it is true that English translations are produced by experts highly proficient in Greek, making them reliable. However, African reliance on these versions subjects theological understanding to English cultural frameworks. This raises the question of whether Africans can achieve authentic comprehension of biblical truth while depending so heavily on English translations. Such dependence risks creating a defective background for African theological discourse.

Sixth, criticism of translations must be contextual. As Ejenobo (2022) observes, modern critical commentaries—both English and African—are essential for exegesis, providing comparative grounds for understanding the original meaning of biblical texts. They allow translators to evaluate language usage and theological findings. Nevertheless, personal opinion inevitably shapes interpretation, regardless of the number of translations consulted.

Seventh, because culture is embedded in language, African universities have a duty to uphold African cultural practices alongside or above foreign ones. During Christianization, African worldviews were neglected and heritage was marginalized. Decolonization of these socio-cultural heritages can best be achieved in the learning environment, particularly within universities, which serve as centers for preservation and propagation before cultural values return to the family sphere.

Finally, given the importance of translation in the globalization of knowledge, African universities should harness all humanities departments connected to translation. Curricula should be designed to translate ancient materials into both English and African languages, with the aim of meeting African needs and safeguarding African cultural heritage. Translation thus becomes not only a linguistic exercise but also a tool for cultural reclamation and intellectual independence.

Conclusion

Bible translation is complex because no single version can fully capture the original meaning. Many rely only on English translations, but this often leads to misunderstandings since the depth of thought, culture, and theology in the original Hebrew and Greek cannot be perfectly conveyed. The translation world is divided between those who depend on English versions and those who work directly with the original texts. Committees that lack trained exegetes often produce translations shaped by Western influence rather than authentic biblical context. As scholars note, every translation involves some loss of meaning, but knowledge of the original languages helps reduce this gap. Therefore, supporting language experts and involving them in translation panels is essential for producing more faithful and balanced versions of the Bible.

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