

Attitude of Congregants Regarding Consecutive Interpretation of Church Sermons in the Pentecostal Churches in Nakuru Town

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Abstract: Previous studies have shown that congregants may create either a positive attitude or a negative attitude towards consecutive interpretation. The purpose of this study was to determine the attitude of congregants regarding consecutive interpretation of church sermons in Pentecostal churches in Nakuru town. Using the interpretive theory of translation, the study employed a descriptive survey research design. With a sample size of ten Pentecostal churches randomly selected from a list of 50 Pentecostal churches, questionnaires, interview schedules and observation schedule were used to collect data. The findings of this study show that most congregants have a positive attitude towards consecutive interpretation, they enjoy when it is being used in church, it leads to spiritual growth, and they understand messages better and find it a modernized way of preaching. On the contrary, they find consecutive interpretation time wasting and somehow find it boring. The study recommends that the church administration should psycho-educate the congregants on the importance of consecutive interpretation and the underlying reasons for its adoption in church.

Keywords: Attitude, consecutive interpretation, interpreters, Pentecostal churches

I. INTRODUCTION

Background

Interpretation is an ancient practice that served as a form of communication in an interlingual society. In the ancient days, interpretation was used among traders and mighty rulers to negotiate between two or more parties in trade and get messages to their various subjects in multilingual subjects (Iser, 2000). In an increasingly globalized world our need for inter-lingual communication has increased as it is used in many places in modern society. With the continued rise in human migration, more and more churches are responding to their multilingual and multicultural environments by providing some form of spoken or signed language interpreting. In most urban churches, the congregants have different education and ethnic backgrounds.

Interpretation is a communication phenomenon in many urban and peri-urban churches and more so in Pentecostal churches (Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010). In most African countries Pentecostal and charismatic christianity has encroached most urban centres where people come from different ethnic

backgrounds. Pentecostalism commands a massive following of faithfuls (Anderson, 2005).

Pentecostalism is a form of Christianity that emphasizes on the work of the Holy Spirit and the direct experience of the presence of God by the believer. Pentecostal churches form the Pentecostal movement within protestant Christianity. This movement comprises many churches that use aspects of Pentecostalism (Livingstone, 2002). A distinctive feature of Pentecostalism has been a vibrant and kinetic worship style characterized by clapping, waving, and raising hands; dancing, marching and shouting; a verbal call-and-response form of preaching and a general sense of spontaneity (Macchia, 2006). The call-and-response type of preaching is a challenge when the sermon is to be interpreted. This is due to shouting from the congregants that are conversant with the source language.

The basic principle outlined in interpreting is the importance of language proficiency. This is because interpreting is more than simply transferring words from one language to another. It involves understanding the meaning, the sense of what is being said before redelivering it into the targeted language. This means that in order to concentrate on the message, the interpreter has to be well acquainted with the topic at hand and integrate it in the communicative setting, to exploit not only the verbal information but also all other information implicit in the event. Hymes (1964) highlights that, most interpreters lack the necessary background with respect to language proficiency and world knowledge. Since interpreting is a means of communication, it involves the transfer of meaning from one language (the source) to another (the target) language. This transference of meaning is identified as one of the major difficulties in interpreting.

The transfer of meaning involves relaying on lexical meaning, grammatical meaning and rhetorical meaning, including implied or inferable meaning (Hatim & Mason, 2005). The question that therefore arises in the context of this study is how the interpreter is able to cope with the challenge of transferring meaning from one language to another.

Firth (1995) proposes phonological, grammatical, collocation and situational levels of meaning. Each of these levels has its

own contribution to make in the communication process and confronts the interpreter with particular problems. This study recognizes that it is within these levels of meaning that limits of interpreting sermons from English to any Kenyan language such as Kiswahili, Kikamba or Gikuyu are to be found. The study looks at these levels as some of the problems that the interpreter is faced with during performance. For example at the phonological level, wrong pronunciation from the source language speaker may lead to a wrong production in the targeted language.

Lyons (1979), in a discussion on translation, indicates that there may be semantic distinctions drawn by one language system that either cannot be translated at all or can only be roughly and inadequately translated in terms of some other language system. From this point of view, this study will seek to explore on the validity of interpreting through evaluating the strategies the interpreter uses in church sermons.

Further, communication is seen as a form of social interaction. It involves a high degree of unpredictability and creativity in form and message, and takes place in discourse and social cultural contexts (Breen and Candlin, 1980). This raises questions on whether interpretation involves creativity and how the interpreter copes with it without interfering with the meaning or the content of the message.

According to Riccardi (1998), interpreting is considered as problem solving activity where the source text becomes the problem and the target text a solution to the problem. In relation to this, Riccardi argues then that interpretation is then deemed as a creative process with limited cues that progressively unfold, with no interruption or few seconds to think. In doing so, the interpreter is not simply repeating something said by somebody else but also engaging in a creative or productive process (Riccardi, 1998).

There are different forms of interpretation which are: simultaneous, whisper, consecutive, liaison and relay interpretation (Lionbridge, 2012). Lionbridge outlines that simultaneous interpretation is similar to a situation where the interpreter sits in a booth, listens to the spoken content through headphones, and speaks the translated words into a microphone to the target audience almost simultaneously. The delegate in the meeting room selects the relevant channel to hear the interpretation in the language of his/her choice.

Lionbridge (2012) further explains that whispered interpretation is whereby the interpreter sits or stands next to a small target-language audience and whispers a simultaneous interpretation. This method is generally used only when a few audience members do not speak the source language.

Relay interpretation involves a source-language interpreter expressing the message to a group of interpreters who have a language in common and each speaks another language as well. In turn, these interpreters convey the message to their respective target audiences. For example, a German speech is first interpreted in English to a group of interpreters, and is

then interpreted by each into French, Japanese, Spanish, and Italian. In liaison an interpreter translates into and out of the source and target languages as a conversation takes place. This is typically used for small, informal situations such as meetings (Lionbridge, 2012).

Consecutive interpretation is the form of interpretation in which the speaker first speaks from a source language followed by an interpreter who translates the same message to a target language. It is the oral translating of a speaker's words into another language when the speaker has finished speaking or paused for interpreting. This is the most common type of interpreting, requiring no specialist equipment or technical support (Lionbridge, 2012).

Jones (2002) defines three stages of a consecutive interpreter's work as: 1. Understanding the speaker's original message and concept, 2. Analysis of its content to identify the main ideas, 3. Re-expression of the same content in another language. This study focuses on this type of interpretation as the speaker stops frequently like every one to three minutes to allow the interpreter to render what was said into the target language. While waiting, the interpreter sits or stands beside the speaker, listening and taking notes as the speaker progresses through the message. Consecutive interpreting is preferred at high level political talks, welcoming addresses, press conferences, speeches delivered on different occasions and court interpreting (Mousavi, 2017).

II. METHODS

Research Design

The study took a qualitative approach and it employed a descriptive survey research design. Descriptive survey research design is used to describe facts and characteristics concerning an individual, group or situation (Orodho, 2004). The design also identifies and predicts relationships in and between the variables of the study. This design seeks to find out factors associated with certain occurrences, outcomes, and conditions of behavior (Best & Khan, 1993). This study was appropriate for the study location, the population and fitted into the limitations of time and financial resources of the study.

The study was largely qualitative as it was done in a natural setting, analyzed feelings and insights which are considered important in the study. It used quantitative approach in collecting and analyzing the numerical data from the respondents. Descriptive survey research design attempts to collect data from members of a population in order to determine the current trend of that population in respect to one or more variables in question.

Locale of the study

The study was conducted in selected Pentecostal churches within Nakuru town. The town has over two hundred Pentecostal churches. Nakuru town is within Nakuru West and Nakuru East sub counties. It covers an area of 262 square

kilometers. It has an approximate population of 270,000. The town has over 200 Pentecostal churches (Parsitau & Mwaura, 2010). The sub county is cosmopolitan with economic activities ranging from trade, farming and mining. It also has tourist attraction facilities such as the Lake Nakuru National Park. The sub county harbors the county headquarters. Information available at the county office indicates that, the population of the sub county rose from approximately 200,000 to the present 270,000 due to the in-migration of people from other counties after the Post-Election Violence (PEV) of 2007. Ironically, this sub-county was among the most affected by the PEV. The sub county has a warm and wet climate thus ideal for farming.

Population of the study

The target population for the study was all the congregants, pastors/preachers, interpreters of the Pentecostal churches that use interpretation during church sermons. Data available at the Nakuru County office indicated that there are about 205 Pentecostal churches within the sub county. About 50 of these churches use interpretation regularly during the church sermons on Sundays.

Description of the Sample and Sampling Technique

Stratified sampling was used in selecting ten churches out of the 50 churches that use interpreters during church sermons. This was in line with the number of each of the Pentecostal churches in town, the number of congregants and the location of the churches. The researcher grouped the location of the sampled churches into four regions: A, B, C and D. This was because the churches were evenly distributed within the area of study. A simple random sampling method was then employed in selecting 10 pastors, 10 interpreters and 50 congregants. Simple random sampling is highly representative if all subjects participate. Purposive sampling ensures balance of group sizes when multiple groups are to be selected.

Table 1: Sample frame for the sample churches

Population characteristics	Target population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Region A	10	2 (20%)	Simple random sampling
Region B	15	3(20%)	Simple random sampling
Region C Region D	10 15	2 (20%) 3 (20 %)	Simple random sampling Simple random sampling
Total	50	10 (20%)	

Source: field data (2016)

Out of the 50 Pentecostal churches that practice consecutive interpretation during church sermons, 10 churches were chosen as a sample size as illustrated in the table above. The 10 churches represented 20% of the total number of churches.

These churches included: region A; Kings Outreach, Winners chapel, region B; World Overcomers, deliverance ministry, Kenya Assemblies of God, region C; World Harvest, Jesus Winners and region D; Happy church, Christian Outreach church and City Harvest, International Vision Centre.

Table 2: Sample frame for the selection of respondents (Congregants)

Population characteristics	Target population	Sample size	Sampling technique
Region A	200	10 (5%)	Simple random sampling
Region B	300	15 (5%)	Simple random sampling
Region C Region D	200 300	10 (5%) 15 (5%)	Simple random sampling Simple random sampling
Total	1000	50 (5%)	

Because of the large population of congregants, only those congregants of more than five years membership were considered as the target population. There are about 1000 congregants in the 50 Pentecostal churches that offer interpretation during sermons within Nakuru town. In each sampled church, questionnaires were administered to the 5 church congregants. From each of the 10 sampled churches, 1 pastor and 1 interpreter participated in the study giving a total of ten interpreters and 10 pastors. Therefore the total number of respondents was 70.

Description of Data Collection Instruments

Questionnaires were used to collect information from the sampled population. In addition to the questionnaires, interview schedules, tape recorders and participant observation schedule were used. Interviews were held for the pastors, interpreters and congregants. Observation was used on the pastors, interpreters and congregants. Audio recording was done the entire sermon period.

Regarding the interviews, the researcher with the help of the church pastors, identified the interviewees and briefed them about the data she intended to collect. Given that most of the interviewees were on formal employment, the researcher scheduled meetings with them individually as per their availability in the churches’ offices. Using the information on the schedule, the researcher facilitated the sessions to get the information required.

The researcher personally attended church services in all the sampled churches. During sermon session, the researcher recorded the live sermons and had a chance to conduct observation being by the observation schedules prepared.

Data Analysis Procedures

After collecting data, analysis was done. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 22.0 for Windows was used in analyzing both the qualitative and quantitative data. The audio taped sermons were uploaded into the computer for

storage after which transcription was done. Transcription of the source and target messages was done verbatim in an attempt to analyse the qualitative data. After transcribing the sermons, the researcher was able to deduce and identify the errors that were made. Quantitative data was analyzed using descriptive statistics such as percentages, pie charts and frequencies. The theory that guided the study constituted the framework on which data was analyzed in order to draw some valid inferences.

III. RESULTS

The respondents were asked on their opinion of how they regarded consecutive interpretation during sermons by indicating how strongly they agreed or disagreed to the items. On the item of “ I like consecutive interpretation, ” the majority (80%) strongly agreed and agreed, on the item “I enjoy when consecutive interpretation is used on sermons ” (73%), strongly agreed and agreed, on the item “ I understand the message better when sermons are preached to a different language” (59%), strongly agreed and agreed while on the item “consecutive interpretation during church sermons is boring” (50%), strongly disagreed and disagreed as shown in table 6 below.

Table 8: attitude of congregants towards interpretation

Items	SA	A	D	SD	NR	Total
I like consecutive interpretation	51	29	3	16	0	100
I enjoy when consecutive interpretation is used during church sermons	43	30	14	15	0	100
I understand the message better when sermons are interpreted to a different language	39	20	24	17	0	100
Consecutive interpretation during sermons is boring	24	26	20	30	0	100
Consecutive interpretation during sermons is time wasting	35	24	14	27	0	100
Consecutive interpretation does not lead to spiritual growth	5	24	30	41	0	100
Consecutive interpretation is a modernized way of preaching	24	41	19	16	0	100

Source: Primary data

From the table 6 above, it is clear that most congregants have a positive attitude towards consecutive interpretation, they enjoy when it is being used in church, it leads to spiritual growth, and they understand messages better and find it a modernized way of preaching. The congregants also understand messages better when sermons are interpreted into a target language. On the contrary, they find consecutive interpretation time wasting and somehow find it boring.

The above results are line with Errico’s and Morelli’s (2013) findings who asserted that there is a balance between positive and negative perspectives and these depends on the interpreter one refers to

IV. DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

Majority of the respondents agreed that they liked consecutive interpretation. This in a way shows that they preferred sermons in which consecutive interpretation was used probably due to the neatness of such sermons (Motta 2006). According to Motta, good interpreters ensure that they have a deliberate practice of interpreting sermons. Information obtained from the interview with the pastors showed that the interpreters and pastors practically rehearsed the sermons before actualizing it to the congregation. Due to the possible high quality of the sermon message, the congregants embraced it well and this had a positive impact on the attitude of the congregants.

In regards to the understanding of the sermons, most congregants find it easier to understand the sermons in Kiswahili therefore boosting it in English is most likely to give the congregants an added advantage of conceptualizing the sermon better. This is supported by the fact majority of the respondents in this study reported that they enjoyed consecutive interpretation.

Despite the fact that majority of the respondents has a positive attitude towards consecutive interpretation, there were other congregants who felt that consecutive interpretation either had positive and negative perspectives and these depended on the interpreter one refers to. It was also noted that some interpreters are preferred because they are more professional, standard pronunciation, while others feel that the interpreters tend to omit a lot of information from the source language (Errico and Morelli, 2012).

Taking double the time taken for preaching, boredom, confusion and failure to deliver the message as expected are the most likely reasons of having a negative attitude regarding consecutive interpretation (Downie, 2015). While some congregants love the art of interpretation, others are always busy listening and correcting the mistakes that are made by the interpreters in the process and thereby missing the message intended to them and this plunges these congregants into forming negative attitude towards interpretation.

V. CONCLUSION

Communication is the main reason of integrating consecutive interpretation in churches in order to reach the entire congregation. However, communication does not reach the audience due to misinterpretations that come about between the preacher and the interpreter. This has led to congregants having a negative attitude towards the art of consecutive interpretation. At the same time, most congregants prefer consecutive interpretation as they are able to understand messages better. This therefore is a call for pastors, interpreters and congregants to harmoniously embrace the art and ensure that any foreseen mistakes on the practice are dealt with so that all can have good spiritual nourishment.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The congregants should at all times maintain orderliness especially during the call and response form of preaching to avoid interfering with the process of interpretation. The church administration should create awareness for its members on the importance of consecutive interpretation so as to bring those who have a negative attitude on board.

The interpreters should all be trained in interpretation for them to execute their duties properly. In this regard, learning institutions should come up with courses on interpretation specifically for pastors to boost their skills. Besides these, the church interpreters should have a theology background.

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