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NKỌRỌỌ PROVERBS IN URHOBO TRANSLATION

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Abstract
Proverbs are representative of the world view of the native speakers of a language. In most African communities, the elders are well versed in the use of proverbs and are seen as the custodians of their culture. This implies that African proverbs are an indication of orality. Nkọrọọ and Urhobo are two minor languages spoken respectively in Rivers and Delta states of Nigeria, both located in the Niger delta region of the country. As a result of the creation of more states in Nigeria, Urhobo has assumed a dominant status as the major language spoken in Delta state but it is still considered a language of limited diffusion in global communication. This paper discusses the translation of proverbs from Nkọrọọ into Urhobo, taking into cognizance the fact that Nkọrọọ is an Ijoid language with a Subject-Object-Verb word order while Urhobo is an Edoid language with a Subject-Verb-Object word order. It examines the differences that occur in terms of sentence structure, phonological and morphological processes, cultural contexts, as well as sociolinguistic variations. Using the linguistic approach to translation, the paper highlights the processes involved in translating from a minor language into a language of limited diffusion, thus establishing the fact that translation between both languages is possible. Dynamic equivalence is adopted where proverbs of the Source Language (SL) are not identical with those of the Target Language (TL) due to contextual differences. The study uses five (5) selected SL proverbs to illustrate intercultural transfer in the translation process.

Key words: Proverb, Nkọrọọ, Urhobo, minor language, major language, language of limited diffusion, translation equivalence

1. Background of the Study

Oral tradition is prevalent in African communities. Many aspects of the cultural and linguistic practices of the people are transmitted orally. African proverbs are one of such indications of orality. They are fixed adages that reflect the world view of a people. As such, proverbs differ from one speech community to another. However, through translation, the transfer of cultural and linguistic practices from one language to another can be realized. A linguistic approach to translation may in different circumstances imply descriptive analysis (Nida, 1964), a contrastive analysis or a comparative analysis (Vinay & Darbelnet, 1995). For Vinay & Darbelnet (1995), different languages express same concepts in different ways. They explain that while in French, a 'clerk' refers to a lawyer's assistant or an assistant to an ecclesiastic; in British English, the meaning of 'clerk' is extended to include anyone who deals with paper work. In American English, in addition to the French and British meanings, the function of selling is also implied, for example, 'shoe clerk' (Vinay & Darbelnet 1996:20). They explain further the units that translators work with, the various levels of language at which the units operate, as well as the strategies that allow transfer from Source Language (SL) to Target Language (TL). The translation strategies operate at the level of lexis and grammar and they include: borrowing, equivalence, modulation, literal translation, etc. They conclude that the word on its own is unsuitable for consideration as the basis for a unit of translation. In all, Vinay & Darbelnet's linguistic approach to translation is summed up by Fawcett (2003):

> Firstly, they use the apparatus of Saussurean Linguistics of language/signified, the structuring of language at the level of grammar, lexis and what they call the 'message', the textual and

> situational level. Secondly, they make use of the notion that each language has its own 'spirit' which systematically compels it to express itself in one way rather than another (Fawcett 2003: 34).

Another linguistic approach to translation is Catford's (1965) textual equivalence which views translation as "a process of substituting a text in one language for a text in another" (Catford 1965:1). His approach to translation is based on functional linguistics and remains relevant in translation studies. He is of the opinion that any theory of translation should draw on a theory of language (i.e. a general linguistic theory) and views language as "a type of patterned human behaviour" that relates with the human social contexts of its operation (Catford 1965:49). He posits that items within a source text (ST) and a target text (TT) can interchange in the translation process given the situation. In this case, expressing a phenomenon in the languages of translation can produce the same patterns of language. What this implies is that translation can produce identical language patterns depending on the interchangeability of items in a text, resulting in textual equivalence. According to him, textual equivalence occurs when an item or a text in the SL shares the same features with and are relatable to an item or text in the TL (Catford 1965:50). The related items can then be interchanged when translating. The following example is a pointer to his conceptualization of language relatedness:

> A Burushan is talking about his brother … (he) … frequently uses the item a-cho. The interpreter translates this as my brother. The Burushan is now replaced by his sister. She too talks about the same person … she says a-yas. The interpreter translates as before: my brother (Catford 1965:39).

He explains further that though the situational context of the terms a-cho and a-yas can interchange, "unless a-cho and a-yas are free variants, they cannot 'mean the same' as each other …." (Catford 1965:39-40). There is no transference of meaning here; only replacement of Burushaki items by English related items. He concludes that 'brother' is considered an equivalent of cho and yas because they "function in the same situation" (49). Going by Catford's textual equivalence, SL and TL with common features would readily interchange and produce successful translations. This means that failure to find a TL equivalent is due entirely to differences between the source language and the target language, a situation that can produce "linguistic untranslatability" (De Pedro, 1999:551).

Further discussion on equivalence in translation theory centres on Nida's twofold concept of 'formal equivalence' and 'dynamic equivalence'. Dynamic equivalence is TL oriented where "the relationship between receptor and message should be substantially the same as that which existed between the original receptors and the message" (Nida 1964:159). In this case, the linguistic and cultural demands of the target language become the focus when translating; a situation that leads to a rendition of the message in its TL natural form. This is why dynamic equivalence is "the closest natural equivalent to the source language message" (Nida & Taber 1969:12).

It is apparent that there is a divide as to how concepts are expressed by different languages. No doubt from the human social factor of language, there are indications that not all concepts are expressed by all languages. This is easily noticeable when translating between languages of wider diffusion and those of limited diffusion and between major and minor languages. Again, lexical items may allow or disallow translation between minor languages and languages of limited diffusion. In employing a linguistic approach to translating five proverbial sayings from Nkọrọọ, a minor language and the SL into Urhobo, a language of limited diffusion and the TL, dynamic equivalence is adopted where proverbs in Nkọrọọ (SL) are not identical in Urhobo (TL) due to contextual and lexical differences. Dynamic equivalence entails 'reproducing in the receptor language the closest natural equivalent of the source-

language message, first in terms of meaning and secondly in terms of style' (Nida & Tabor 1969:12).

This is so because the TL reader should have an immediate understanding of the translated source message. The lexical items inherent in both the Nkọrọọ and Urhobo proverbs are described within their given contexts to create an understanding of their natural equivalents. Dynamic equivalent enables translatability between both languages. Translation of the proverbs no doubt meets some specific functions. When minor languages are translated, it aids for instance to describe their linguistic features and as such helps to develop and preserve them and to tackle '[possible] displacement by the corresponding majority languages' (Blanchadell 2011:98). Nkọrọọ and Urhobo are languages which by the provisions contained in the Nigerian Language Policy are required to be taught as languages of their natural environment in the face of English, the official language of instruction in the country.

2. An overview of the Nkọrọọ and Urhobo people and their languages

The name 'Nkọrọọ' is the official name of the people and their language but the Nkọrọọ people call themselves and their language Kirika, which is the name of their ancestor. The present location of the Nkọrọọ people is in Opobo/Nkọrọọ local government area of Rivers state, Nigeria. It is a riverine community and so the traditional occupation of the people is fishing. They also engage in petty trading, basket weaving, thatch making, net making and subsistence farming. The Nkọrọọ people are surrounded by speakers of minor languages namely; Obolo, Kana, Okrika (Kirikẹ), Ịbanị and Ibibio. Nkọrọọ is also a minor language and it has no official orthography. The orthographic representations used here are proposed by Obikudo (2013). The Nkọrọọ people are mostly bilingual, speaking varying combinations of Nkọrọọ, Nigerian pidgin, and Opobo Igbo. Other languages spoken in the community are English, Obolo, Okrika, Kalaḅarị, Nembe and Kana. Contact with these language groups is mostly due to geographical proximity and intertribal marriages. The vehicular languages used for everyday interaction and social gatherings are Nkọrọọ and Nigerian pidgin.

Urhobo is the name used to refer to the people and the language they speak. It is spoken in nine local government areas of Delta state, Nigeria. Although a minor language in the country, with the creation of new states, Urhobo has assumed a dominant status as a major language in Delta state due to the large population of its speakers (which is reported to be well over two million). However, it is still a language of limited diffusion in global communication. The Urhobo people are surrounded by the Itsekiri, Bini, Ịzọn and Ukwuani speakers. The language consists of seventeen dialects. The standard dialect that serves as the basis of the Urhobo orthography is the Agbarho dialect, which is the dialect used in this study.

Although Nkọrọọ and Urhobo are spoken within the same geographical area – the Niger delta region in southern Nigeria, West Africa – Nkọrọọ is situated within the delta as seen in the map below (cf. fig. 1). Nkọrọọ is an Eastern Ijoid language (Jenewari 1989, Williamson and Blench 2000) while Urhobo is a South Western Edoid language (Elugbe 1986). Both Ijoid and Edoid language families belong to the Niger Congo phylum. The Ijoid group is "very distinct from all other Niger-Congo families" (Williamson and Blench 2000:22) possessing certain linguistic features such as gender that are not commonly found within Niger-Congo. Both languages operate open syllable structures. However, Nkọrọọ has syllabic nasals while Urhobo does not. Urhobo allows initial consonant clusters while Nkọrọọ prohibits them. Below is a language map showing the languages spoken in the Niger delta region of Nigeria, including Nkọrọọ and Urhobo. Ijoid languages are indicated in blue and Edoid languages are indicated in yellow.

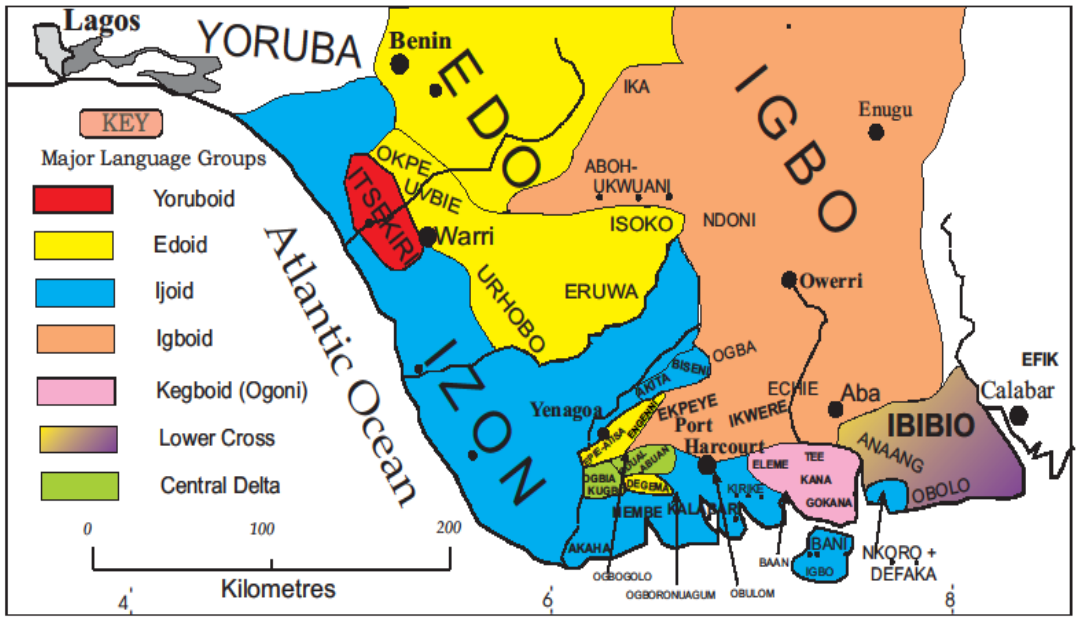

Fig. 1: Niger delta colour language map (Culled from the Roger Blench website available at http://www.rogerblench.info/Language/Niger-Congo/Ijoid/General/Ijoid%20colour.pdf).

2.1 Linguistic features of the Nkọrọọ language

There is no official orthography approved for writing Nkọrọọ. Obikudo (2013) proposes a writing system that was reviewed with minor amendments at a participatory community workshop held at Nkọrọọ on November 27, 2017. This is the orthography adopted for use in this paper and it reflects the decisions agreed on by the speakers at the workshop.

The vowel system of Nkọrọọ consists of seven oral vowels /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/ that have corresponding nasal vowels /ĩ ẽ ɛ̃ ã ɔ̃ õ ũ/ (Harry 1987, Obikudo 2008). The oral vowels are written as i, e, ẹ, a, ọ, o and u respectively while the nasal vowels are written with the letter 'n' after the vowels: in, en, ẹn, an, ọn, on and un respectively. There are twenty seven consonant phonemes in Nkọrọọ consisting of:

(a) Ten plosives: /p b t d k g kp gb kʷ gʷ/ written as p, b, t, d, k, g, kp, gb, kw and gw respectively.
(b) One implosive: /ɓ/ written as ḅ
(c) Five nasals: /m n ɲ ŋm ŋʷ/ represented orthographically with the letters m, n, ny, nm and nw respectively.
(d) One affricate: /dʒ/written as j.
(e) Six fricatives: /f v s z ɣ h/ written as f, v, s, z, gh and h respectively.
(f) Three central approximants: /ɹ j w/ written as r, y and w respectively.
(g) One lateral approximant: /l/ written as l.

The basic syllable types are vowel only, (V) consonant followed by a vowel (CV) and syllabic nasals (N). The peak of the syllable is always occupied by either a vowel or a syllabic nasal, both tone bearing units. Nkọrọọ is a register tone language with two basic tones, high and low plus a down stepped high tone. Phonetically, the high tone is marked with an acute accent [́], the low tone with a grave accent [̀] and the down stepped high with a downward arrow [̗]. Orthographically, the high tone is marked, the low tone is left unmarked while the down stepped high tone is marked with a macron (̄). Phonological processes include; consonant and vowel deletion, vowel assimilation, vowel lengthening, intervocalic consonant weakening (mostly spirantization and rhotacization), labialization and coalescence. Tonal processes include tone spreading or assimilation, tone dissimilation, tone deletion and tone replacement.

Word formation strategies in Nkọrọọ include suffixation, compounding, reduplication, borrowing and coinage. In terms of word order, Nkọrọọ operates a Subject-Object-Verb (SOV) order. As is characteristic of SOV languages, Nkọrọọ makes use of postpositions rather than prepositions. It also employs the exclusive use of suffixes. Nominal modifiers usually precede the noun in the noun phrase except for the definite article **ḿ/mú** 'the' and the numerals 'twenty' and above which follow the noun. This means that the noun phrase is head-last excluding the exceptions specified. The noun phrase structure is the same as in other Ijoid lects such as Kalaḅarị and Ịḅanị (Jenewari 1977, Benamaisia 1997, Harry 2004).

2.2 Linguistic features of the Urhobo language

Like Nkọrọọ, Urhobo operates a seven vowel system consisting of seven oral vowels which have seven corresponding nasal counterparts. The oral vowels /i e ɛ a ɔ o u/ are written as i, e, ẹ, a, ọ, o and u respectively. The nasal counterparts are also written with the letter 'n' following the vowel symbols viz; in, en, ẹn, an, ọn, on and un. The Urhobo consonant system consists of twenty eight phonemes (Aziza & Mebitaghan 2014) comprising;

(a) Ten plosives: /p b t d c ɟ k ɡ kp ɡb/ represented orthographically as p, b, t, d, ch, dj, k, g, kp and gb respectively.
(b) Four nasals: /m n ɲ ŋm/ represented orthographically as m, n, ny and mw respectively.
(c) One trill: /r/ represented with 'rh' in the orthography.
(d) One tap: /ɾ/ represented with 'r' in the orthography.
(e) Nine fricatives: /ɸ f v s z ʃ ʒ ɣ h/ represented orthographically as ph, f, v, s, z, sh, j, gh and h respectively.
(f) Three central approximants: /ʋ j w/ represented orthographically as vw, y and w respectively.

The basic syllable types in Urhobo are vowel only (V), consonant followed by a vowel (CV) and an initial consonant cluster comprising two consonants followed by a vowel (CCV). There are no syllabic nasals, thus only vowels bear tones. The tone system is similar to Nkọrọọ consisting of two level tones; high and low plus a down stepped high tone. However, Urhobo also has two contour tones; high-low and low-high that are a combination of the level tones. Both high and low tones are marked in the orthography with acute and grave accents respectively while the down stepped high tone is left unmarked. Phonological processes such as vowel assimilation, vowel deletion, vowel lengthening, nasalization and glide formation are evident in Urhobo.

Word formation strategies in Urhobo include, compounding, reduplication, borrowing, coinage and affixation. Affixation processes include prefixation, circumfixation, infixation and suffixation. A number of nouns are derived from verbs via prefixation but suffixation is not very productive in the language. Tonal morphemes which are tones that attach themselves to vowels in order to express certain grammatical meanings are employed in Urhobo to derive negation, aspect and yes/no questions (Aziza 2007).

Urhobo operates a Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) word order and makes use of prepositions. It has a reduced noun class system seen in the use of prefixes to indicate number on certain nouns. The noun phrase is head-initial, meaning the noun is always followed by its modifiers.

3. Linguistic analyses of selected proverbs

In this section, we present five Nkọrọọ proverbs and translate them into Urhobo using the notion of dynamic equivalence. Dynamic equivalence is a translation principle aimed at reproducing a TL text that has the same effect on the TL audience as the SL text would have on the SL audience (Nida 1964). This means that each Nkọrọọ proverb is translated into an Urhobo proverb that has a similar meaning or significance, serves a similar purpose, shares a similar judgment, and is thus of

equal relevance in the cultural and sociolinguistic settings of both language communities. Each Nkọrọọ proverb is followed by the Urhobo translation. The linguistic features employed in the construction of the proverbs in both SL and TL are then discussed. It is observed that although both languages have similar phonological and morphological processes, it is not the case that the same process or structure employed in the Nkọrọọ text is replicated in the Urhobo equivalent. For instance, a grammatically equivalent translation of the following Nkọrọọ proverb in example (1a) will yield an ungrammatical sentence in Urhobo as seen in the example (1b) below.

1a)	**ofúńguru**	**tọ́ru**	**múnọ̄**	**ḅeri**	**múnọ = ka**
	rat	eye	sleep	ear	sleep=NCL

'(Though) the rat's eye sleeps, its ear does not sleep'

b)	***erauwevwin**	**ẹ́rò**	**phẹ̀rẹ̀**	**èrhọ**	**phẹ̀rẹ̀-ẹ́**
	rat	eye	sleep	ear	sleep-NEG

The illustration above is an attempt to force the TL into the structure of the SL thus yielding an unnatural and ungrammatical equivalent of the TL. This implies that grammatical equivalence is inadequate in providing a descriptive analysis of the relationship between the corresponding proverbs in both SL and TL. A grammatical translation in the TL is rendered in example (2). However, this translation would have no meaning within the socio-cultural context of the Urhobo people.

2)	**ọ́dádíánẹ̀**	**èràùwèvwìn**	**rẹ́**	**ẹ́rò**	**phẹ̀rẹ̀rọ́yèé**		**èrọ̀**
	CONJ	rat	AM	eye	sleep	POSS	ear
	phẹ̀rẹ̀-ẹ́						
	sleep-NEG						

'Though the rat's eye sleeps, its ear does not sleep'

3.1 Data Presentation

The proverbs are presented using some markers adopted from the Field Linguist's Toolbox software made and distributed by SIL International, and available online at www.sil.org. Toolbox is a data management and analysis tool that is essentially useful for annotating lexical data, and for parsing and interlinearizing text. Recently, Toolbox is being replaced by the Fieldworks Language Explorer (FLEx) software. Notwithstanding, it has a wide user community and is still available for download on the SIL website as at the time of writing this paper. Toolbox employs the use of markers that make for easy annotation and analysis of lexical entries and interlinearization of texts. The markers adopted are explained below.

3) Markers

\ref = reference number. This is preceded by the ISO code of the language; Nkx for Nkọrọọ and Urh for Urhobo. A pair of equivalent proverbs bears the same reference number.

\ph = phonetic transcription (which is how the utterance is realized in actual speech).

\tx = text in the orthography of the language.

\mb = morpheme break which specifies a morpheme by morpheme annotation of the data.

\ps = part of speech

\ge = English gloss

\ft = free translation

4)

\ref	**Nkx 001**
\ph	**ɔ̀fúŋ́gùrù tɔ́rù mú‼nɔ́ ɓèrì múnɔ̀ = ɣà**
\tx	**ofúńguru tọ́ru múnọ̄ ḅeri múnọka**

\mb	**ofúńguru**	**tọ́ru**	**múnọ̄**	**ḅeri**	**múnọ = ka**
\ps	n	n	v	n	v=NCL
\ge	rat	eye	sleep	ear	sleep=not
\ft	(Though) the rat's eye sleeps, its ear does not sleep				

5)

\ref	**Urh 001**
\ph	**ɔ́gbá hɛ̀rɛ̀ òfòvì ɔ́ ké gbà ìgbèlè-é**
\tx	**ọ́gbá hẹ̀rẹ̀ òfòvwì ọ́ ké gbà ìgbèlèé**

\mb	**ọ́gbá**	**hẹ̀rẹ̀**	**òfòvwì**	**ọ́**	**ké**	**gbà**	**ìgbèlè-é**
\ps	n	v	n	3Sg	Adv	v	n-NEG
\ge	warrior	wait	war	his	before	tie	charm-not
\ft	A warrior does not wait for war before putting on his charms						

In Nkx 001, we observe intervocalic consonant weakening where the initial plosive [k] in the negative clitic **=ka** is weakened to a fricative [ɣ] in the phonetic transcription. The verb **múnọ** 'sleep' whose action is being negated hosts the negative clitic while in the Urhobo data, the negative marker is sentence-final suggesting that the negative marker in Urhobo has a wider scope or domain than in Nkọrọọ. The sentence structure for Nkx 001 is verb-final (that is, SOV) while Urh 001 is noun or object-final (that is, SVO). The possessor noun in Nkx 001, **ofúńguru** 'rat' immediately precedes the noun it possesses (that is, **tọ́ru** 'eye'), while in Urhobo the possessor noun follows the noun it possesses and is immediately preceded by an associative marker as seen in Urh 002 (**ásá rẹ̀ ótù** 'place of mates') below.

6)

\ref	**Nkx 002**
\ph	**kɜ̃ɜ̃ ókúrú ɓèènì = ɣà à ɓɔ̀ì-ní**
\tx	**kaan ókúrú ḅeenika a ḅọiní**

\mb	**kaan**	**ókúrú**	**ḅeeni = ka**	**a**	**ḅọi-ní**
\ps	v	n	v=NCL	3NSG	v-MOD
\ge	tear	cloth	admit to a wrong=not	it	hide-MOD
\ft	Torn clothes can never be hidden				

7)

\ref	**Urh 002**
\ph	**úmíó‼vó óɸɛ́rɛ̀ míóvó óɸɛ̀rɛ̀ vɛ̀ ásá ɾótù**
\tx	**úmíóvwo óphérẹ̀ míóvwó óphẹ̀rẹ̀ vwẹ̀ ásá rẹ̀ ótù**

\mb	**ú-míóvwo**	**ó-phérẹ̀**	**míóvwó**	**ó-phẹ̀rẹ̀**	**vwẹ̀**	**ásá**	**rẹ̀**
\ps	n	n	v	n	Prep	n	
	AM						
\ge	bad.habit	act.of.sleeping	spoil	act.of.sleeping	at	place	of
\mb	**ótù**						

\ps n
\ge mates
\ft A careless sleeper sleeps carelessly in a public place

In Nkx 002, the modifying verb **kaan** ‘tear’ precedes the noun **ókúrú** ‘cloth’ making the noun phrase ‘torn clothes’ head-last. An equivalent grammatical structure is not used in the Urhobo translation. Prefixation is employed in Urh 002 to derive nouns from the verbs **míóvwó** ‘spoil’ and **phẹ̀rẹ̀** ‘sleep’. Nkọrọọ does not employ prefixation, so an equivalent structure cannot be derived. We also observe phonological processes occurring in both proverbs. In Nkx 002, the consonant in the negative clitic is weakened to a fricative while in Urh 002, the vowel of the associative marker **rẹ̀** is deleted along with its low tone in fast speech (as shown in the phonetic transcription).

8)
\ref Nkx 003
\ph **àkpɔ̀kùrù fúlɔ́ lɔ́ɣì-ḿ**
\tx **akpọkuru fúlọ́ lọ́kiḿ (lọ́ghiḿ)**
\mb **akpọkuru fúlọ́ lọ́ki-ḿ**
\ps n n v-FUT
\ge fufu soup look.for-future.time.marker
\ft Fufu will look for soup

9)
\ref Urh 003
\ph **èrā́kò vè àkàbà ɣʷɾɛ́ ʋè àɣʷá-ă**
\tx **èránkò vẹ̀ àkàbà ghwrẹ́ vwẹ̀ àghwáă**
\mb **èránkòvẹ̀ vẹ̀ àkàbà ghwrẹ́ vwẹ̀ àghwá-ă**
\ps n Conj n v Prep n-NEG
\ge dog with miniature.bell lost in bush-not
\ft A dog with a miniature bell does not get lost in the bush

In the parallel pair above, Nkọrọọ employs the use of future time indicated on the verb by a suffix **–ḿ** while Urhobo employs present time that is not overtly marked. The plosive [k] in the second syllable of the verb **lọ́ki** ‘look for’ in the SL is weakened to a fricative [ɣ] in actual speech.

10)
\ref Nkx 004
\ph **ákányí sìè jé gbɛ́ⁿ̋ḯ**
\tx **ákányí sieyé gbẹ́īn**
\mb **ákányí sie yé gbẹ́īn**
\ps n v n v
\ge thatch be.bad thing cover
\ft Thatch covers bad things

11)
\ref Urh 004
\ph **àŋmá ɾùɾù émú**
\tx **àmwá rùrù émú**
\mb **àmwá rùrù émú**
\ps n v n
\ge cloth cover thing
\ft Cloth covers things

The sentence structures as seen in the texts above clearly reveal SOV for Nkọrọọ (**ákányí** ‘thatch’, **sieyé** ‘bad thing’, **gbẹ́īn** ‘cover’) and SVO (**àmwá** ‘cloth’, **rùrù** ‘cover’, **émú** ‘thing’) for Urhobo. No phonological or morphological processes can be observed in Urh 004 but for Nkx 004, we identify the morphological process of compounding where the verb **sie** ‘be bad’ combines with the noun **yé** ‘thing’ to form a noun compound **sieyé** meaning ‘bad thing’.

12)

\ref	**Nkx 005**
\ph	**kúrú ɓéè gbɛ̃́ĩ́jè dùɓà-sì nìŋgì nɛ̀ŋgì nɛ́ŋgí = ɣá**
\tx	**kúrú ḅée gbẹínye duḅasi ningi nẹngi nẹ́ngíká**
\mb	**kúrú ḅée gbẹín ye duḅa-si ningi nẹngi**
\ps	n n v n v-INT n v
\ge	storage.basket mouth cover thing be.big-very mother surpass
\mb	**nẹ́ngí = ká**
\ps	v=NCL
\ge	surpass=not
\ft	The cover of a basket is not bigger than the basket itself

13)

\ref	**Urh 005**
\ph	**ɔ́mɔ́ ròdò rùà nòdò-ó**
\tx	**ọ́mọ́ rẹ̀ òdò rhùà nẹ̀ òdòó**
\mb	**ọ́mọ rẹ̀ òdò rhùà nẹ̀ òdò-ó**
\ps	n AM n Adj v n-NEG
\ge	child of mortar big surpass mortar-not
\ft	The pestle is not bigger than the mortar

In the data above, we observe the phonological processes of consonant weakening in Nkọrọọ versus vowel and tone deletion in Urhobo. The voiced velar plosive [k] in Nkọrọọ negative clitic is weakened to a fricative [ɣ] while in Urhobo, the vowels of the associative marker **rẹ̀** and the verb **nẹ̀** ‘surpass’ are deleted along with their tones at morpheme boundary. Compounding is employed in Nkọrọọ to derive the noun **gbẹínye** ‘cover’ from the verb **gbẹín** ‘cover’ and the noun **yé** ‘thing’. The verbs **duḅa** ‘be big’ and **nẹ́ngí** ‘surpass’ in Nkx 005 are replaced with their lexical equivalents **rhùà** ‘big’ and **nẹ̀** ‘surpass’ in Urh 005. Negation is also employed in both SL and TL texts.

4. Translation issues

Language can give an indication of cultural differences but cultures expressed in language equally have common ground features. The culture inherent in a language continues to be relevant to members of that speech community and creates a sense of collective identity. The question then is to what extent is linguistic equivalence attainable between languages and “if [a] language is so specific to the circumstances of its emergence, how can it be carried over into another context”? (Simon 2012:436). To Simon, centrally embedded forms of language do require specific forms of translation and “in some cases, successful versions will be “lateral”, that is, from one vernacular to another” (Simon 2012:437). A vernacular language is usually a native language or the mother tongue of a speech community. The translation of oral elements such as proverbs between minor languages takes cognizance of inherent cultural elements and images used in their construction. Discussing Akan proverbs, Appiah (2012) refers to them as “utterances [that] are the products of actions, which

like all actions are undertaken for reasons" and their translation as 'thick translation' (Appiah 2012: 331). As a first step, he sets out to prepare a manuscript that reduces the sayings to writing that "glosses them into English which in the end offers a literal translation". Similarly the Nkọrọọ and Urhobo proverbs 'thick' in cultural oral traditions are utterances that stem from the daily actions of the people. Let us for instance consider the Nkọrọọ proverb: **ofúńguru tọ́ru múnọ̄ ḅeri múnọka** meaning 'Though the rat's eye sleeps, its ear does not sleep'. This is an utterance that plays on the images of the 'rat', the 'eye' and the 'ear' and engages in the metaphorical use of 'sleep', which is a state of reduced consciousness, to express a state of being alert at all times. The reason for the utterance stems from the desire to warn someone over certain unpleasant events. In another context, such an utterance may be expressed differently using images that the conventions of that language associate with it. That is why it could be said that when this occurs, the translation is an equivalent translation. The situation referred to by the proverb above is identifiable and expressed by a play on the hunter's image in Urhobo language where it is expressed as: **ọ́gbá hẹ̀rẹ̀ òfòvwì ọ́ ké gbà ìgbèlèé** meaning 'A warrior does not wait for war before putting on his charms (amulets)'. The nature of alertness in the Urhobo translation is represented by the warring prowess of the people. On the other hand, the Nkọrọọ do not have a history of warfare and so this feature is represented by a creature found in most households – the rat. Both proverbs are used in the same context to warn against unpleasant events by urging one to be alert at all times and thus can be said to be natural equivalents.

Drawing on Vinay and Darbelnet's position (1995), equivalence is defined "as the translation of idioms when two languages refer to the same situation in totally different ways" (Fawcett 2003:38). Fawcett argues however that equivalence could be problematic especially in "literature and advertising when the idiom is motivated and has no correspondence in the target language"; a case that may lead to literal translation. Nevertheless, the equivalence described by him may suffice when translating between minor/major languages.

From the sample proverbs presented in section 3, the Nkọrọọ proverbs find natural equivalences in Urhobo; "naturalness" being a key requirement for attaining equivalence in translations. This is achieved through adaptations of grammar, of lexicon and of cultural references (Nida 1964:42). Proverbs in both SL and TL are drawn from the fauna and flora of the socio- cultural environment of the speakers. That is why for a parallel pair, though the source and target proverbs are natural equivalents, lexical items are substituted accordingly in the translations. For instance, the image of **kaan ókúrú** 'torn clothes' in the Nkọrọọ proverb **kaan ókúrú ḅeenika a ḅọiní** meaning 'Torn clothes can never be hidden' is rendered by the image of **úmíóvwo óphérẹ̀**'a careless sleeper' in the Urhobo proverb **úmíóvwo óphérẹ̀ míóvwó óphẹ̀rẹ̀ vwẹ̀ ásá rẹ̀ ótù** meaning 'A careless sleeper sleeps carelessly in a public place'. In both SL and TL renditions, the proverbs are used to express the fact that what is within a person can never be hidden. They are utterances pronounced when a person displays his/her bad character in public. In like manner, another Nkọrọọ proverb draws from the food resources of the people: **akpọkuru fúlọ́ lọ́kiḿ** meaning 'Fufu will look for soup'. Here, the food items **akpọkuru** 'fufu' (a local dish made from cassava) and **fúlọ́** 'soup' are used to express family values. Both lexical items constitute a complete Nkọrọọ meal that complement each other and are not usually consumed in isolation. In other words, **akpọkuru** (fufu) cannot stand alone as a meal without **fúlọ́** (soup). The Urhobo equivalent of the proverb: **èránkò vẹ̀ àkàbà ghwŕẹ́ vwẹ̀ àghwáă** meaning 'A dog with the miniature bell does not get lost in the bush' draws on the image of the dog (**èránkò)** and the miniature bell (**àkàbà**). The proverb underlies the fact that a dog with a miniature bell tied around its neck cannot get lost in the bush, because as it moves along, the sound produced by the bell will render the dog traceable by its owner. Seemingly, both proverbs express a complimentary state and are used in both societies to give advice against neglect of one's relatives. They both portray the values the Nkọrọọ and the Urhobo have for family and the need to care for them in both cultures. It

is believed that a child who neglects his/her parents will one day have need for them just as fufu needs soup to be consumed and the dog needs the miniature bell in order not to get lost.

Another parallel pair is found in the SL proverb: **ákányí sieyé gbẹ́in** meaning 'Thatch covers bad things' and the TL proverb: **àmwá rùrù émú** 'Cloth covers things'. The images of thatch (**ákányí**) and cloth (**àmwá)** represent covering; thatch for the roof of a house and cloth for the body. The preference for the use of thatch by the Nkọrọọ may not be unconnected to the fact that thatch-making is a vocation among them and a source of income, hence the importance given to thatch as opposed to clothes.

The last set of parallel pairs draws on the image of the basket (**kúrú**) in the SL proverb: **kúrú bée gbẹínye dubasi ningi nẹngi néngíká** 'The cover of a basket is not bigger than the basket itself'; and the pestle and mortar (**ọ́mọ́ rẹ̀ òdò and òdò**) in the TL equivalent: **ọ́mọ́ rẹ̀ òdò rhùà nẹ̀ òdòó** 'The pestle is not bigger than the mortar'. The proverbs are used to reinforce authority and asymmetrical relations between humans: parent/child, employer/employee, teacher/student, husband/wife, etc. Accordingly, a child is expected to respect his parents at all times; irrespective of his social status or attainment, he should never be disrespectful. Again just like the pestle **(ọ́mọ́ rẹ̀ òdò** 'child of mortar') is subject to the mortar, the cover of the basket figuratively cannot be bigger than the basket. It implies that decisions of a higher authority supersede those of the subordinate. By and large, it is evident that proverb translations between Nkọrọọ and Urhobo are recreations between the two languages where images from the natural environment are interchanged to express the same cultural norm.

5. Conclusion

Proverbs are culture specific utterances and are context dependent in translation. Beneath the lexical items inherent in them lie thick connotations that in turn require "thick translation" (Appiah 2012:331). The linguistic approach to translation allows proverb translation between Nkọrọọ and Urhobo possible in spite of different cultural nuances they convey. Although the SL and TL belong to different language families with different grammatical structures, they share some linguistic features. Both languages operate open syllable structures, a seven vowel system consisting of similar vowels, two level tones – high and low plus a down stepped high tone. Phonological processes common to both languages include vowel assimilation, vowel deletion, vowel lengthening, and tone deletion. Both languages employ morphological processes such as compounding, reduplication, affixation, borrowing and coinage in building up their vocabulary. Despite the linguistic similarities, the processes observed in the SL are not necessarily employed in order to derive the equivalent in the TL. Rather in translating from Nkọrọọ to Urhobo, the notion of equivalence was adopted. Specifically, Nida's (1964) dynamic equivalence served as a strategy for the proverb translation. A proverb in the SL was translated into a proverb in the TL that carries the same import, serves the same function and is used in similar cultural and sociolinguistic contexts. The translations also corroborate House's (1997) translation model as cited in Panou (2013) which adopts pragmatic theories of language and requires that translations be equivalent in function. In other words, the textual profile and function of the text in the TL should match that of the SL. The grammatical structure of the texts may be different but they must be pragmatically equivalent. Striving to achieve grammatical equivalence by replacing each grammatical category in the SL with its equivalent in the TL would only yield an unnatural translation that would be unacceptable to TL speakers. In a final analysis, the translation equivalents of the Nkọrọọ proverbs in Urhobo are endeared towards "domestication", a translation strategy that "refers to the adaptation of cultural context or of culture specific terms" (Paloposki 2010:41). These strategies put together demonstrate the possibility to translate between minor/major languages and languages of limited diffusion.

Symbols and Abbreviations

*	Ungrammaticality
3NSG	3rd person singular neuter pronoun
3SG	3rd person singular pronoun
Adj	Adjective
Adv	Adverb
AM	Associative Marker
Conj	Conjunction
FUT	Future tense marker
INT	Intensifier
MOD	Modal marker
n	noun
NCL	Negative Clitic
Neg	Negation marker
Prep	Preposition
Prf	Prefix
v	verb

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