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TRANSLATION STUDIES IN GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE (GFL) IN AFRICA (NIGERIA): A TOOL AGAINST “WAITING ROOM DANGERS”

ABSTRACT

The importance of translation in Additional Language Learning (ALL) cannot be overemphasized, as there exist of late various studies in support of this fact. Extant studies on this issue have dealt with various aspects of translation in language learning in Europe, Canada, Australia and in the United States, although studies in this regard are not limited to these geographical boundaries. Moreover, these studies do not only focus on the impact of translation on ALL but also on various other issues like plurilingualism as it relates to translation in ALL. However, research in this regard are relatively scarce in the African context. As such, many studies done in Africa, particularly in Nigeria, are limited in scope when it comes to the relevance of translation in learning German as a Foreign Language (GFL). This study therefore seeks to shed more light on how translation studies in GFL lessons in Nigeria could be useful as a tool against “waiting room dangers”. In this sense, I mean the (in) security issues encountered in places of temporary localisations.

1. INTRODUCTION

The rapid advancement in science and technology in today’s world has not only served to benefit communication but also the mobility of people. Countries that have played a major role in the rise of these technologies and mobilities are found predominantly in the West, of which Germany is a relevant example. Learning German in Third-World countries, therefore, often implies temporary movement or short-term travel to Germany. Against this background, a learner or teacher of German as a Foreign Language (GFL) in Nigeria occasionally finds themselves in the dangers of the “waiting room”. According to the Call for Papers (CFP) for the 4th conference of the Association of German Studies in Southern Africa and the Association of Germanists in Sub-Saharan Africa held at the University of the Free State in South Africa in April 2019, “waiting rooms” refer to temporary locations like commuter traffic, automobile expressways or highways, train stations and airports. It can also refer to abstract locations like temporary job



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contracts, temporary employment, or official positions. The concept of a “waiting room” is considered in this article in relation to the temporary relocation of a student or a teacher of GFL in Nigeria while engaging in academic activities. This is different from the kind of “waiting room” in which people find themselves when migrating, which is relocating permanently to a different geographical area. In most cases, learning German as a Foreign Language in Nigeria involves movement, i.e. travelling. For example, the only German language school in Nigeria (Goethe Institut) is based in Lagos, which is where the professional examinations for German are taken. Therefore, travelling to Lagos from different parts of Nigeria either to learn German or to write professional examinations in German results in encountering “dangers of the waiting rooms”. In addition, it could also happen that a learner of German in Nigeria has to travel to Germany, for the first time. In such travelling situations, he/she occasionally faces “dangers of the waiting room” when one considers the linguistic and cultural differences of different geographical areas. A learner of GFL unavoidably comes across places of transition in temporary examination contracts, in commuter traffic, on the highways and at the airports. When travelling to Germany, such persons experience transitions in offices, academic institutions and railway stations. Such “waiting rooms”, temporary locations or places of transitions are not without their dangers.

The dangers referred to here are problems posed by the insecurity that emanate from insufficient and/or inadequate linguistic and cultural competences in the course of temporary migration.¹ Therefore, in this paper, I intend to argue that it is possible to use translation courses (translating from German into English and vice versa) in the learning/teaching of GFL to solve the problems or dangers encountered while in transit or while experiencing temporary appointments and engagements in the course of travelling. As such, the study intends to answer the question of how practical translation exercises could be included in the course curriculum of universities teaching German as a Foreign Language (GFL) in Nigeria. The aim would be to groom a student of German in Nigeria to develop practical knowledge on how to deal with problematic issues relating to their movement or temporary residence in different locations in the course of learning German or afterwards. The theoretical framework followed is that of Translation for other Learning Contexts (TOLC) (González Davies 2014). In this paper, I argue that such a development in GFL lessons could be beneficial towards addressing/overcoming “waiting room dangers”. In this sense, therefore, I aim to argue that learning about these “waiting room dangers” in translation classes of GFL lessons and relating such challenges to a student’s local context, i.e. Nigeria, could help in preventing unpleasant experiences while a student of German as a Foreign Language (GFL) travels to Germany during or after their studies.

2. WHAT ARE “WAITING ROOM DANGERS?”

Language and cultural issues are entwined to such a degree that a learner of GFL in Nigeria is faced with both challenges at the same time, although either of the two aspects can pose a major challenge in any situation. In view of this fact, this study addresses language and cultural challenges encountered at home and abroad. Mobility at a train station in Germany, for instance, poses language challenges. This could include the challenge of communicating your destination or what to do when you need to alight. Cultural problems could also arise because the means of transportation by train is not a common phenomenon in Nigeria. In the context of the workplace or higher institution of learning in a cosmopolitan country such

1 I use the term “temporary migration” here to refer to travelling.

as Germany, a student might be faced with cultural challenges related to differences among colleagues. Misunderstandings that are not linguistic in nature may arise. These “dangers” could be overcome or at least minimized through the skills acquired from translation studies in Additional Language Learning (ALL) (González Davies 2015; Wilson & González Davies 2016). The translation courses in the course curriculum of GFL in Nigerian Universities would typically address this kind of issue. Against this background, one can also assume that the translation courses proposed in this study can help in learning about the foreign culture (German), and this would prepare a Nigerian student of German for dealing with such “dangers”. Furthermore, in this study, the approach of Translation for Other Learning Contexts (TOLC) is advanced (González Davies 2014, 2018) by showing a practical way of developing a curriculum that would involve translation exercises explicating challenges of being in an unfamiliar environment or being faced with insecurities that exist in precarious situations. Against this background, it would be postulated that TOLC learnt in GFL lessons in Nigeria aids not only in the acquisition of linguistic and cultural competence in foreign language learning but also supports students’ intercultural competence, which could enable them to overcome the challenges of the “waiting room” in temporary migration conditions. As an illustration, I provide examples of how GFL occasions travelling and/or temporary localization, which involve some “waiting room dangers”.

3. THE “WAITING ROOMS”

From the foregoing, it is reasonable to expect that Nigerian students will experience “waiting room dangers” during the course of their study of German as a Foreign Language, particularly the ones studying German at the undergraduate level. These dangers can be faced either within or outside the borders of Nigeria. Consequently, the following subsections elucidate the programmes that occasion the “waiting room dangers” for the students.

3.1 Equivalent Year Abroad Programme (EYAP)

German studies in Nigeria requires that undergraduate students should spend the third year of their studies outside their university of learning. This is to enable them to undertake intensive training in the language, particularly in the four major skills of language learning, which are speaking, writing, hearing, and reading. The students, therefore, travel to another institution of learning to intensify these language skills. Initially, there used to be an arrangement for exchange programmes between the three Universities in Nigeria (offering German as a course for a bachelor’s degree) and other universities in Germany for this purpose. However, this is no longer the case. Undergraduate students of German now spend their third year in Lagos (the former capital of Nigeria) at the Goethe Institut (GI) for intensive training. After the training, the three or four students who perform best receive scholarships to study in Germany for a month and then come back to Nigeria to complete their degree. Such “temporary migration” conditions within and outside Nigeria pose linguistic and cultural problems for the students. In this article I am interested in finding ways through which such challenges could be overcome through the proper integration of TOLC in the undergraduate curriculum of GFL lessons in Nigeria.

3.2 Goethe Institut summer courses

Another example of situations that occasion “temporary relocation” outside of Nigeria for students of German (and their teachers) are the summer courses organized by the Goethe Institute (GI). The GI is the biggest language school run by the German government, and it

has branches in most countries of the world. It usually organizes language courses during the summer period, and these are open to both teachers and learners of German all over the world. Teachers of German in Nigeria benefit from these summer courses and therefore find themselves in the “waiting rooms” of “temporary migration” outside of Nigeria at times. Therefore, just like the students, teachers of German in Nigeria also face the problem of temporariness or rather precarity while teaching German.

3.3 Job opportunities

As a graduate of German in Nigeria, there is no limit to the job opportunities for employment in the global world. Apart from working as an employee in embassies or as a diplomat, such graduates can teach German or work as freelance/professional translators and/or interpreters (if they go for further training). These job opportunities occasion short-term relocation at one point or the other. More particularly, the graduate can work as a businessperson shuttling between Germany and Nigeria or work for German companies in Nigeria or vice-versa. Without belabouring the matter, I would like to point to the fact that pedagogical translation taught in additional (in this case foreign) language learning could form a basis for the professional translation necessitated during these job employments. Having considered the notion of precarity, temporality and insecurity, and how they are occasioned by travelling during the learning of GFL in Nigerian Universities, I intend to review studies on translation in Additional Language Learning (ALL) by scholars of translation in the following section to see whether TOLC could make a difference.

4. TRANSLATION IN ADDITIONAL LANGUAGE LEARNING (ALL)

As mentioned above, there are numerous studies on translation in ALL. Scholars such as Jim Cummins, Maria González Davies and Christopher Mellinger are examples of leading researchers in this field. Only selected sources are considered in this paper, given the lack of space and the availability of resources. The scholarly works to be reviewed on the subject are from Nigeria, the USA, and Europe.

4.1 The Nigerian context

Iloh (1997) posits that pedagogic translation has not been emphasized in literature. She positions her discussion within three frameworks when arguing for translation as a technique in foreign language acquisition. She focuses on acquisition process, language proficiency and verification. Although she concludes with suggestions regarding the use of translation in ALL, she still maintains that students find translation very difficult and that it yields very few positive results due to the “jumbled” approach of both pedagogical and professional translation in foreign language learning. I find her study relevant to mine because pedagogic translation enhances Translation in Other Learning Contexts (TOLC).

Ifesieh (2008) appraised the use of Grammar Translation (GT) in foreign language learning, particularly in the Nigerian setting. GT is, however, an opposite approach to teaching translation in ALL when compared to Translation in Other Learning Contexts (TOLC). TOLC is rather student-centred while GT is teacher centred. In addition, TOLC occurs in a collaborative environment focusing on group work and reflective activities. In contrast, GT focuses on the teacher. Despite Ifesieh’s postulation of the negative effects of GT in foreign language learning, he still advocates for a “maximal resuscitation of GT approach in language acquisition and learning” (Ifesieh 2008, p. 31) by claiming that a very good understanding of the form in a

language would produce an excellent functional and communicative use of language. His argument for a functional approach to language teaching with respect to translation is relevant for this study because translation should not only be taught in classrooms but should have a specific goal. This requires ALL teachers to assume a functional approach in teaching translation. Oyedele (2012) analyses the use of translation in the curricula of GFL at three Universities in Nigeria, namely the University of Ibadan (UI), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and University of Nigeria, Nzukka (UNN). Although her study reveals that translation is included in the course curriculum of the three Universities, she argues that translation needs to be given an appropriate place and attention in the teaching of German as a degree course in these institutions (cf. Oyedele 2012, pp. 167–168). In this study, however, I depart from Oyedele's (2012) analysis by not placing the focus on how translation would benefit further studies of German at the postgraduate level. Furthermore, I do not pose the challenge to the Goethe Institut as a key agent in playing a major role in the teaching of translation to both teachers and learners of GFL as Oyedele (2012) postulates.

Gyuse et al (2019) provide a detailed discussion of the place of French in Nigeria as a country and at Nigerian Universities rather than a discussion about the role of translation in the teaching of French as a second official language in Nigeria. The scholars barely discuss the role of translation in French studies in Nigeria, but they indicate the number of units allocated to it using a diagram representative of the course curriculum of one of the higher institutions of learning in Nigeria. Although the argument for the inclusion of translation in French studies in Nigeria is not clear, their study is relevant to the discussion in this paper because they regard translation as relevant for additional (in this case foreign and second) language learning and acquisition within the Nigerian context.

The studies reviewed above show that translation studies is relevant in ALL in the Nigerian setting. However, it has not yet been shown how TOLC could be used to profit learners of foreign languages in Nigeria, particularly of German. This review is carried out with the aim of showing the dearth of research in the Nigerian context in the area of TOLC and therefore attempts to fill an aspect of this gap. The situation in Nigeria poses the problem that not all learners of German have the opportunity to go to Germany, due to financial and logistical constraints, and if they are able to go, they face severe linguistic and cultural barriers.

4.2 The US context

Mellinger (2017) reviews the history of the inclusion of translation studies in language teaching in the US context and states that “significant work is still needed to investigate the role interpreting may play in language acquisition” (ibid, p. 242). In his article, he postulates three major gains of translation and interpreting in language studies by relating the three areas (i.e. translation, interpreting and language studies) to their confluence and divergence. This article is relevant for my study not only because it describes the relationship between translation and language studies but particularly due to the indication that interpreting needs to be given more attention in language studies. I shall develop this point further in the subsequent sections of this paper.

The reflection of Colina and Lafford (2018) on translation as what is termed “transcreation” is congruent to my views of translation as a tool. Such an engagement with translation studies does not just conceive the subject as an interlineal activity but considers the point that it is a language-mediation process that enables various types of related cross-linguistic activities. As such, Colina and Lafford (2018) posit that translation should be taught as a fifth skill

besides the four major skills of language learning, particularly of Spanish in the context of the US. Thus, the incorporation of translation in the language class should include teaching translation both as a means and as an end. Despite the relevance of these studies in the US, the peculiarities of GFL in Nigeria are not captured in this context (this is expected since the focus is on the US) and therein lies the research gap.

4.3 European context

The works to be reviewed in this section are articles written by the research scholar Maria González Davies between 2015 and 2018. González Davies (2015) views translating as translanguaging in the context of Additional Language Learning (ALL). The term ALL is adopted here considering that the concept of ALL was developed in relation to TOLC. Although an additional language does not infer hierarchy between languages, in this study, I choose to adopt the approach of TOLC in ALL for foreign language learning because German is studied as a foreign and not as an additional language in Nigeria. Basically, her studies (González Davies 2018; Wilson & González Davies 2016, Corcoll Lopez & González Davies 2015) focus on the role of plurilingualism in translation in ALL. In postulating different approaches for translation in multilingual contexts, she indicates other areas of research like Translation in/for Other Learning Contexts (TOLC), Additional Language Learning (ALL) and Plurilingual Communicative Competence (PCC). For her, plurilingualism is an advantage that leads to multi-competence (Cook 1999, 2016; Hall & Cook 2012) when informed translation methods are employed in the language classroom. Multicompetence studies the ways in which the brain of bi- or plurilingual speakers is different from that of monolinguals. Besides proposing multi-competence and TOLC, she considers that the interdependence hypothesis (Cummins 1979, 1984, 2007, 2008), translanguaging (Canagarajah 2011; Garcia 2009; Williams 1994) and pedagogically-based code-switching (Corcoll 2011) all have their gains for language learning with the involvement of translation.

Her studies are relevant to mine because Nigerian students of German all speak at least two languages apart from German. Given this fact, the plurilingual competence of the students will be an additional point of reference in this article. This is viewed against the background knowledge that English serves as the lingua franca in the country considering the multiplicity of different ethnic groups in it. Consequently, Translation for Other Learning Contexts (TOLC) as proposed by González Davies (2014) forms the theoretical basis for this article.

5. TRANSLATION FOR OTHER LEARNING CONTEXTS (TOLC)

González Davies (2014, p. 2; 2018, p. 6) defines TOLC as translation to acquire linguistic mediation skills and intercultural competence in fields other than translation studies. TOLC in this sense is different from professional translation studies or translation as an end since its goal is not to acquire professional translator competence. TOLC, therefore, benefits from informed translation practices by exploring how translation helps to improve both linguistic and cultural competencies through the acquisition or learning of mediation skills for other learning contexts besides translation studies. Translation, in this case, is used to develop intra- and interpersonal skills based on the fact that it is employed to go beyond the traditional comprehension and transfer of lexical, syntactic, pragmatic or cultural aspects of language (González Davies 2018).

In contrast to other methods of approaching translation, TOLC sets out a new model of plurilingual development and draws from translation studies as well as linguistics, educational psychology,

humanistic pedagogy, and socio-constructivism instead of transmissionism. Transmissionism is a teaching style focused on transmitting facts without regard to the individual student. TOLC also draws on the educational premises of connectivism and the interdependence hypothesis as opposed to the interference hypothesis and the compartmentalization of languages in the intellectual space (González Davies 2018, p. 4). TOLC additionally centres on the express utilization of translation in ALL (just like the application of L1 and code switching) and aims at investigating how translation can improve both general linguistic competence and mediation expertise. Moreover, TOLC involves a reflection on how best to relate instructive goals and learning techniques with translation skills in order to improve language learning. In addition, it considers translation as a means of comprehending the morphosyntactic, lexicosemantic or pragmatic and cultural aspects of a language. Translation, in this case, is used to develop intra- and interpersonal skills based on the fact that it is employed to go beyond the traditional comprehension and transfer of lexical, syntactic, pragmatic or cultural aspects of language (González Davies 2018). Consequently, this framework views translation competence as an array of specific linguistic, encyclopaedic and transferential abilities, alongside specific intra- and relational skills that may improve language learning (González Davies 2014, p. 10).

The proposed approach to TOLC in consonance with theoretical principles of the plurilingual paradigm is inspired by postulations by various scholars in the field of language learning. The basic proposition is that language learning should be supported as a plurilingual and not a monolingual activity since most societies in the world are multilingual and not monolingual. Findings that inform and underlie the theoretical framework of TOLC are interdisciplinary, and they will be referred to without much discussion. One of them is the position regarding the use of L1 in the Second Language Learning Classroom (Macaro 2001). Here, the optimal position (Macaro 2001, p. 535), which suggests that there may be pedagogical value in using L1 in the language classroom, is adopted by González Davies (2014). Another idea that informs the framework is the Anatomical Model of Language Learning (Skinner 2010). Here, González Davies (2014) argues that the Direct Method (that is, using only the additional or foreign language in the language classroom) holds losses rather than gains for language learning. She also bases the TOLC theory on the notion of plurilingualism/multilingualism as advocated by Aronin and Singleton (2012) as a “key strategy for building (inter)linguistic and intercultural communicative competence” (González Davies 2014, p. 5). The development of intercultural competence and mediation skills is another concept underlying the notion of TOLC. Here González Davies (2014) refers to the term “tertiary socialization” by Byram (2008) where the aim is to replace the familiar with the new. Furthermore, González Davies draws from work in multi-competence (Cook 2001, 2007), connectivism and the Interdependence Hypothesis (Cummins 1984), the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner 2002) and Language of Thought in Second Language Learning as posited by Kern (1994) and Cohen (2011). The concept of multi-competence was defined by Cook (cited in González Davies 2018, p. 5) as “the knowledge of two or more languages in the same mind”. Connectivism assumes that all knowledge is related, and thus, this idea can be related to knowledge regarding languages and cultures. The Interdependence Hypothesis refers to cross-linguistic transfer, which causes learners to rely on their previous knowledge when trying to access meaning in the additional language. The Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, as described by González Davies (2014, p. 6), “favours a holistic approach to language acquisition that rejects simplification and compartmentalisation.” In this model, it is believed that linguistic, psychological, social and contextual factors interrelate to produce multilingual proficiency. Language of thought is also differentiated from language of reference through the identification

of the language used mentally when translating consciously and unconsciously. The language of thought can be studied through the way learners access their L1 or other language through mental or conscious translation when learning a new language. The proper understanding of the concepts described in this paragraph are relevant for this study because they are all involved in the translation exercises proposed for integration into GFL lessons in Nigeria.

In this article, the scope of TOLC is expanded to include translation practices, which are meant for the acquisition of both interlinguistic and intercultural skills in ALL for special purposes. GFL lessons in Nigeria normally include German for special purposes in the curriculum of the universities teaching German at the undergraduate level. Thus, I argue, TOLC could be applied with success in German language learning for special purposes. Such special purposes include diplomatic employment, tourism, business, political engagements, philosophizing, computer linguistics and so on. TOLC, as I regard it in this study, encompasses any use of translation in the additional (in this case foreign) language classroom that includes interlinguistic and intercultural exchange, which goes beyond the oral or written comprehension but also includes the development of the student's capabilities in handling problematic encounters of the "waiting room". Given this, I consider translation in the following section within the framework of TOLC in the course curriculum of three universities in Nigeria.

6. TOLC IN GERMAN AS A FOREIGN LANGUAGE IN NIGERIA

In this section, I investigate how translation is taught in the curriculum of three universities in Nigeria, namely University of Ibadan (UI), Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU) and University of Nigeria, Nzukka (UNN), offering B.A. German as a degree course. Thereafter, I provide an example of how translation could be included in the curricula within the framework of TOLC. I follow this up with some suggestions of practical TOLC activities. The following table shows how translation exercises are included in the GFL lessons at the three universities mentioned above.

Table 1: Translation in GFL Lessons at the three respective universities

University	Academic Year	Semester	Nature of Translation Exercise	Units	Course Title
University of Ibadan (UI)	2nd	1st	Theories and Practice of Translation	3	Practical Translation
	3rd	1st	Translation Practice	2	General Translation I
		2nd	Translation Practice	2	General Translation II
	4th	1st	Translation Practice	3	Advanced Translation I (German to English)
		2nd	Translation Practice	3	Advanced Translation II (English to German)

University	Academic Year	Semester	Nature of Translation Exercise	Units	Course Title
Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)	4th	1st	Translation Practice	3	Translation: German to English
		2nd	Translation Practice	3	Translation: English to German
University of Nigeria, Nzukka (UNN)	3rd	1st	Translation Practice	2	Introduction to Translation I
		2nd	Translation Practice	2	Introduction to Translation II
	4th	1st	Translation Practice	3	Advanced Translation I
		2nd	Translation Practice	3	Advanced Translation II

The table above shows that translation is offered as a course at the three universities in the fourth academic year. While UI introduces a translation course as early as the first semester in the second year, UNN first introduces it in the third year while OAU does not introduce it at all until the fourth year. It must, however, be noted that the students from the three universities spend the third year together at the Goethe Institut in Lagos, and they all take uniform courses at that time. Therefore, although translation is listed as part of the courses to be taken in the 3rd year by UI and UNN students, that is not necessarily the case because the courses taken in Goethe Institut are grammar courses. Other intensive courses taken there are listening, writing and reading-comprehension courses. This leads us to posit that the major translation courses taken by students of the three universities are only in the first and second semesters of the fourth and final year. Despite this fact, it is not recorded in the curricula that theories and methods of translation are included in the translation classes although, in most cases, the translation courses taken in the fourth academic year are regarded as being “advanced”. Another salient point to note is the lack of traces of interpreting or interpreting courses in the translation classes.

Because TOLC profits from informed translation practices to develop intra- and inter-personal and professional skills and transfer of skills, I suggest that relevant translation theories and practices be introduced to the Nigerian students of GFL right from the earliest stage of German language learning, i.e. the first academic year. My suggestions are indicated in bold print beside the courses. It is suggested that, keeping in mind the goal of teaching German for special purposes, a teacher of GFL should include translation activities within the framework of TOLC. In doing this, intercultural and mediation competence should be included as suggested in the following. The reason for not making general recommendations across the three institutions even though they all award a degree in German is because the course curriculum for bachelor's degree in these institutions differ from one another. The table below shows the recommended translation practices in GFL courses for the three universities.

Table 2: Recommendations for Translation in GFL Courses

University	Academic Year	Course Code	Semester	Course Title	Translation Exercise
University of Ibadan (UI)	1st	ESG 105	1st	Speech and Conversation	Basic theories of Interpreting
		ESG 104	2nd	Oral and Aural Comprehension II	Introductory Interpreting Practices
	2nd	ESG 209	1st	Practical Translation	Basic theories of translation
		ESG 208	2nd	Reading Comprehension and Text	General Translation Practice
	4th	ESG 405	1st	Advanced Translation I	Interpreting Practice: TOLC
		ESG 406	2nd	Advanced Translation II	Translation Practice: TOLC
Obafemi Awolowo University (OAU)	1st	GMN 107	1st	Oral Communication in German	Basic theories of Interpreting
		GMN 104	2nd	German Phonetics and Conversation	Introductory Interpreting Practices
	2nd	GMN 205	1st	Landeskunde I	Basic theories of translation
		GMN 202	2nd	Introduction to German Language Study	General Translation Practice
	4th	GMN 411	1st	German Dissertation and Oral	Interpreting Activity: TOLC
		GMN 412	2nd	German for Special Purposes II: Tourism	Translation Activity: TOLC

University	Academic Year	Course Code	Semester	Course Title	Translation Exercise
University of Nigeria, Nzukka (UNN)	1st	GER 161	1st	Oral German I	Basic theories of Interpreting
		GER 164	2nd	Oral German II	Introductory Interpreting Practices
	2nd	GER 233	1 st	World Literature in German	Basic Theories of Translation I
		GER 212	2nd	German Grammatical Structure II	General Translation Practice
	4th	GER 363	1st	Communicative Skills I	Interpreting Activity: TOLC
		GER 364	2nd	Communicative Skills II	Translation Activity: TOLC

In the suggestions above, translation studies courses are not meant to replace the respective courses but to complement them. Thus, the course content should be directed towards the acquisition of interlinguistic and intercultural skills through informed translation and interpreting strategies in the course outlines. The translation practice courses, which involve TOLC, should be geared towards different career interests. Translation can be beneficial to students in this case if the requirements for the professional practice are clearly defined and can be teamed up with translation exercises. This will help students develop linguistic and intercultural competence to adapt better and/or more easily whenever they travel. We believe that background knowledge gained by the students in the field of interpretation and translation in the 1st and 2nd academic years respectively would benefit them in coping with the TOLC activities suggested in the fourth academic year below.

In linking theory and practice, the following TOLC activity is proposed against the background knowledge of the plurilingualism of the students. González Davies (2004) shows practical teaching ideas for translation informed by research and observation. However, the suggested TOLC activity in the following is tailored towards German for special purposes, e.g. tourism and diplomatic engagement. A teacher of German can adapt the activity to suit other contexts like politics, philosophy, literary criticism, business, etc.

Table 3: Interpreting Activity – TOLC (Tourism)

Academic Year	4th
Semester	1st
Groupings	Maximum number of 4 students in a group
Approximate timing	30 minutes

Steps	(a) The teacher gives background linguistic and cultural knowledge of tourism in Nigeria and Germany
	(b) The teacher puts the students in groups and assigns roles to each of them: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1st student represents the advertisement company and financial advisor • 2nd student represents the travel agency and transport services • 3rd student represents the hotel and catering services • 4th student represents the tour guide and souvenir recommender
	(c) Assignment: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i. Students are to take turns according to their number and act accordingly while the remaining three students play the role of tourists. ii. The activity is repeated. The first 15 minutes should be acted out in imaginary "Nigeria" while the remaining 15 minutes should be acted out in imaginary "Germany". iii. In "Nigeria", the students are to make use of standard English and pidgin English. iv. In "Germany" they are to make use of German and standard English.

In the above suggestion, it would be advisable to ask students to write a joint summary of the discussion in the AL (in this case German) in order to help inform the teacher about the success or failure of the exercise. At the same time, students could be asked to write a reflective essay as described in service-learning portfolios.

Table 4: Translation Activity – TOLC (Political Engagement)

Academic Year	4th
Semester	2nd

Steps	(a) The teacher gives background information on politics in Germany and Nigeria in the German language through newspapers, magazines, and recorded television programmes e.g. news broadcasts.
	(b) Students are required to write political speeches in English that are similar to what they have read and understood in German newspapers, magazines, and television news.
	(c) Students are required to reproduce political speeches in German that are similar to what they have read and assimilated from Nigerian newspapers, magazines, and television news.
	(d) Students are required to point out difficult areas linguistically, e.g. codeswitching in German or Nigerian newspapers and magazines.
	(e) Students are required to point out difficult areas culturally, e.g. the transfer of different political systems like “Prime Minister” which exists in Germany but not in Nigeria or “President” which exists in both countries but has different political roles in the two countries.

From the above, the translation and interpreting activities proposed are not in terms of concrete source and target texts, but translation and interpreting in these contexts are achieved as the students relate their linguistic and cultural experiences in Nigeria with Germany and vice versa. The students mentally translate their experiences in Nigeria to Germany and vice versa and then reproduce these experiences verbally, i.e. with languages and culture. By doing so, their multilingualism is harnessed in relations to intercultural competence and their mediation skills. This also benefits their ALL. Thus, their multi-competence is developed through connectivism and the interdependence of their cognitive abilities and language of thought.

From the foregoing, I would like to argue that the suggested translation activities under the framework of TOLC would equip a student with the skills required to deal with the feelings of insecurity that goes with intercultural experiences. This should help either at the workplace or while in transit or in any temporary situation or location in which the students may find themselves, particularly in Germany as a learner of GFL (role play in German would help in achieving this). By taking part in these translation activities either actively or passively, students acquire profitable cognitive and translation skills that are transferable linguistically and culturally. With the background knowledge gained from the teacher and the “practical knowledge” gained from activities in the classroom, students develop a certain level of confidence to maintain stability in precarious situations or when faced with the dangers of the “waiting room”. For instance, TOLC for tourism prepares the student with awareness of vocabulary and ways to adapt culturally when in Germany for the first time. As such, their resourcing skills are boosted. The practical knowledge acquired in the example on tourism above could help them to find accommodation, food and transport – and even engage in some sight-seeing. In the case of political engagements, the student of GFL is prepared through the translation courses to understand that, while both Nigeria and Germany have systems of democracy, there are certain differences, which makes the political systems in both countries dissimilar. Therefore, students are equipped with the foreknowledge of the different political systems in both countries and should therefore find it less challenging whenever they come across differences in political systems. They, therefore, do not assume anything but rather

positions themselves to learn new things. This positioning gives them stability in precarious situations.

5. TOLC AS A TOOL AGAINST PRECARITY

As discussed earlier in this paper, precarity or “waiting room dangers” represent different forms of insecurity experienced as a result of “temporary migration”, particularly in the context of GFL learning. I also explored how German studies in Nigeria contribute to migration within and outside Nigeria. The merit TOLC holds against insecurity in travel for Nigerian students of German (but also for their teachers, who in most cases are also graduates of German in Nigeria and keep learning German either at the postgraduate level or for further training) was discussed in terms of the mediation skills that translation offers in the 4th academic year. This follows on the background knowledge gained in the basic theories and general interpretation and translation practices in the 1st and 2nd year respectively. However, before getting to the fourth academic year, a student can still travel, and I therefore turn, in conclusion, to the benefits of translation in dealing with insecurity in such situations.

In Equivalent Year Abroad Programme (EYAP), for example, a student would be able to employ the already acquired linguistic and cultural competence in the translation and interpreting classes followed in the 1st and 2nd academic years in the intensive cultural and linguistic classes of the third year, which is EYAP. As such, through the translation classes in the EYAP year, the students would be able to mediate concepts and cultural differences because the possibility of misunderstanding is reduced. This, therefore, leads to proper adjustment or adaptive measures during their “temporary migration” to Germany. More particularly, since the students would have been prepared for a career path in the fourth and final academic year, such preparation would have been done through proper linguistic and cultural information being shared in translation classes. The Goethe Institut’s courses provide opportunities for both students and their teachers to migrate within and outside of Nigeria, and informed translation courses would aid the students in comprehension, interaction and adjustment in adapting to the “unfamiliar” environment of the German society. The integration of the proposed translation exercises in this study can prove to be appropriate tools in this regard. TOLC also aids in preparing the Nigerian student of German to be wary of giving improper attention to linguistic and cultural differences in either business, tourism or political engagements as can be seen in the suggested course curricula of the three universities with regard to German for special purposes. This can also be applicable to literary criticism, philosophy, or conflict resolution in diplomatic spheres. Informed translation practices and courses within the framework of TOLC would help to aid against unwelcome misunderstandings in such areas of employment. In other words, my contribution to TOLC is directed towards the acquisition of practical interpersonal skills in translation, which are achievable in ALL for special purposes and which aims at developing adaptive abilities in contexts of temporariness and insecurity.

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